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CULTURE FROM THE SLUMS: PUNK ROCK, AUTHENTICITY AND ALTERNATIVE
CULTURE IN EAST AND WEST GERMANY

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This comparative dissertation explores the new moral politics of authenticity emerging in the Western world in the post-1960s era. Examining the development of the popular music genre punk since the 1970s, this study helps to explain why Germany after decades of dictatorship became democratic and how rock'n'roll contributed to this transformation. Investigating how youths used music to build alternative communities and identities during the Cold War, this project details the often uncomprehending and repressive responses by East and West German authorities. In the East, the genre became a form of opposition to the dictatorial SED regime, while in the West, punk became a political and aesthetic platform for individual and social revolution along more 'authentic' lines—efforts sparking debates about the contentious Nazi past and the future contours of German identity, society and citizenship. Tracking West German youths travelling abroad to London to experience punk first-hand, and then returning home to rearticulate the genre into the local context of the Federal Republic, I follow the spread of popular culture across state boundaries and the consequences of such transmissions. East German authorities at first tried to repress the genre beaming into the GDR via Western radio before reversing course in the late 1980s in a desperate attempt to use popular music to cultivate a distinctive socialist national identity and shore up their waning political legitimacy. But by then it was too late: forced into the Evangelical Churches to escape persecution, punks became the foot-soldiers of the opposition and helped, in the end, to bring down the Berlin Wall. Detailing the consequences of the 1960s on democratic change in the Federal Republic and contributing to new literature stressing the space for alternative identities and practices in the East German dictatorship, fundamentally, this dissertation argues for the importance of punk and popular cultural in contributing to modern German democracy, national identity and pluralist society.

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While only a single author stands on the cover page, there are countless individuals standing behind that person responsible for its production. They are generally accountable for all the good parts, while clearly, all the mistakes and infelicities are my own.

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Introduction: Punk Rock on the Spree: Musical Subculture in Divided Germany

Why Germany? Why Punk?

The Ramones are perhaps the most famous punk band in history. Getting their start in 1974, the Ramones became central figures of the emerging New York punk scene centered around Max's Kansas City and CBGBs on the Lower East Side.¹ While never experiencing mainstream commercial success—their only album to be certified gold was the compilation LP *Ramones Mania* (1988)—the Ramones are considered one of the most influential punk bands of all-time alongside British acts the Sex Pistols and the Clash. Their image is iconic: leather jackets, ripped jeans, and bowl-cut shaggy haircuts. Their music was a reaction against 1970s rock and was a return to 1950s stripped-down rock'n'roll. Featuring loud power-chords, straight-forward 4/4 time drumming, and lyrics drawn from daily life growing-up in New York City, the Ramones tried to play as fast as humanly possible. Their live shows were akin to a military assault. Yelling out '1-2-3-4,' the Ramones would launch into a short, fast and furious set, and over the course of their twenty-plus years of constant touring, played an astonishing 2,263 shows.² Inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame on 18 March 2002 for their historic contributions to popular music,

¹ The history of the Ramones is well-documented. See Johnny Ramone, *Commando: The Autobiography of Johnny Ramone* (New York: Abrams Image, 2012); Mickey Leigh and Legs McNeil, *I Slept With Joey Ramone: A Punk Rock Family Memoir* (New York: Touchstone, 2010); Vera Ramone King, *Poisoned Heart: I Married Dee Dee Ramone* (Phoenix, AZ: Phoenix Books, 2009); Monte A. Melnick and Frank Meyer, *On The Road with the Ramones*, revised edition (London: Bobcat Books, 2007); Legs McNeil and Gillian McCain, *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk*, 2nd ed. (New York: Grove Press, 2006); Everett True, *Hey Ho Let's Go: The Story of the Ramones*, updated edition (London: Omnibus Press, 2005); Dick Porter, *Ramones: The Complete Twisted History* (London: Plexus Publishing, 2004); Dee Dee Ramone, *Legend of a Rock Star: A Memoir* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2002); Dee Dee Ramone and Veronica Kofman, *Lobotomy: Surviving the Ramones*, 2nd ed. (New York: Da Capo Press, 2000); and Jim Bessman, *Ramones: An American Band* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

² "Ramones Biography." <http://www.rockhall.com/inductees/ramones/bio/> [Retrieved 8 July 2013]. In his induction speech for the Ramones, Pearl Jam singer Eddie Vedder claimed they played precisely 2,269 shows. For a partial reprinting of his speech, see Holly George-Warren, ed. *The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. The First 25 Years* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009), p.163.

the Ramones were the first punk act to receive such accolades. That same year, *Spin* magazine named them the second most influential band in history trailing only the Beatles.³

Correspondingly, the Ramones Museum opened its doors in 2005 and is dedicated to the ‘Fast Four’—Joey, Johnny, Dee Dee and Tommy (and Marky, and Richie, and Elvis, and C.J., the other ‘brothers’ who have been ‘Ramones’ over the years). Full of memorabilia produced over the course of their career, one can find historical treasures such as autographed photographs, old concert posters, limited-edition tour T-Shirts, and even Marky’s signed (and very used!) sneakers. The Ramones Museum is part of a wider movement in punk and popular music that works to preserve the memory of cultural revolutionaries for those too young to have seen them play at CBGBs in the 1970s but who still think *Rocket to Russia* (1977) is a great rock’n’roll album. As the originators of the genre are either reaching old age or dying (three of the four original Ramones have passed away), punk is increasingly becoming enshrined in houses of remembrance to be worshiped for its historical importance. As the genre has progressively become connected to the politics and history of democratic musical production, punk is now considered a crucial element of the West’s cultural legacy.⁴

But the Ramones Museum is not located in the Bowery, or on the Lower East Side, or anywhere in New York for that matter. Rather, the Ramones Museum can be found in Mitte, on Krausnickstraße 23, a block from the Spree River, just off the touristy Oranienburgerstraße in Berlin, once again capital of reunited Germany in the heart of Europe. Opened originally in Kreuzberg, the traditional (West) German punk stronghold, but forced to move because the landlord tripled the rent, the Ramones Museum was founded by Florian Hayler in September

³ “50 Greatest Bands Of All Time,” *Spin*, February 2002.

⁴ Consider the recent exhibition on punk fashion in The Metropolitan Museum of Art that ran from 9 May through 14 August 2013. Andrew Bolton, Richard Hell, John Lydon, and Jon Savage, *Punk: Chaos to Couture* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013).

2005. After attending his first Ramones concert in 1990, Hayler began collecting Ramones-themed memorabilia that came to cover the walls of his apartment. In the early years of the new millennium, Hayler—so the flyer documenting the genesis of the museum claims—was given an ultimatum by his then-girlfriend: either the memorabilia goes or she does.⁵ And while she is now long gone, the Ramones Museum approaches its ten-year anniversary and has been patronized by tens of thousands of visitors from all over the world including many of the protagonists from the 1970s. The museum, according to Hayler, is for fans the world over, a dedicated “Site of Music History,” what Pierre Nora called a *lieux de mémoire*.⁶ “People of all persuasions stop by, from punks to professors,” Hayler explained to *Neues Deutschland* in 2006, “[e]veryone who has ever heard the Ramones were immediately under their spell.”⁷ Even a rudimentary scan of the guest books substantiate these claims as fans from all over the world have left their signatures amid rejoinders of ‘Punk’s Not Dead!’ and ‘Gabba Gabba Hey!’ that speaks to the power of punk as an historic entity, a transnational community, an impetus for alternative culture, and a soundtrack for the politics of daily life.

At first glance it may seem strange that the Ramones Museum can be found in Berlin and not New York, but upon closer examination, it makes sense because the shrine is representative of the deep cultural and political relevance of alternative culture and punk in Germany. In no other country has the genre delved deeper into the socio-cultural and political woodwork than in the Berlin Republic. From swarms of younger punks encountered daily in parks, trains, and bars

⁵ “Welcome to Ramones Museum Berlin: Here’s a few things you should know about this museum.” (Berlin: Ramones Museum, n.d.), n.p.

⁶ See Pierre Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire*, 7 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1984-92), translated as *The Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*, 3 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996-98); and Pierre Nora, *Rethinking France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999-2010). Compare with Peter Carrier, “Places, Politics, and the Archiving of Contemporary Memory in Pierre Nora’s *Les lieux de mémoire*,” in *Memory and Methodology*, ed., Susannah Radstone (Oxford: Berg, 2000), pp.37-57.

⁷ Sebastian Krüger, “Gammeljeans hinter Glas,” *Neues Deutschland*, 5-6 August 2006. See also Roger Repplinger, “Der Punk im Glasschrank,” *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 12 February 2006.

to women fashionably dying their hair shades of red, blue and purple, to the constant blaring of punk music from the radio, concert halls and public demonstrations, the genre has established firmer roots in Germany than anywhere else in the world. Nor is it confined to a small subculture of youths. During the 2006 World Cup held in Germany, for example, Bayern München's star middle-fielder Bastian Schweinsteiger sparked a national hair-style trend when he sported a Mohawk haircut on the pitch.⁸ In 2001, Jürgen Teipel, a former fanzine author and concert organizer, published an oral history on the subculture entitled *Verschwende Deine Jugend: Ein Doku-Roman über den deutschen Punk and New Wave*. With a cast of more than one hundred characters reminiscing about the late 1970s and early 1980s, the book was a best-seller, has since gone through an astonishing eleven pressings, had a film based on the interviews that premiered at the 2005 Berlinale, and was reissued in an expanded version in 2012.⁹ Bernd Michael Lade, whom long-time viewers recognize as Commissar Kain from ARD's immensely popular crime-drama series *Tatort*, is a former East Berlin punk who drummed for Planlos and sang for Cadavre Exquis in the 1980s.¹⁰ One can find punk boutiques and mail order enterprises in the major cities of the Federal Republic, the electronics giant Saturn has several sections devoted to the genre in their music departments, and a number of huge punk festivals—Force Attack, Punk im Pott, and the Punk-Rock-Rodeo—draw tens of thousands annually. Despite punk exploding first in London and New York in the 1970s, the genre has arguably had a more lasting and deeper

⁸ It also helped that Schweinsteiger played particularly well during Germany's unexpected run to the semi-finals during the tournament. See "Schweinsteiger als Klobürste verspottet," *Focus-Online*, 18 June 2006, http://www.focus.de/sport/fussball/wm2006/wm-frisuren_aid_110590.html [Retrieved 8 July 2013].

⁹ Compare Jürgen Teipel, *Verschwende Deine Jugend: Ein Doku-Roman über den deutschen Punk und New Wave* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001); with Jürgen Teipel, *Verschwende Deine Jugend: Ein Doku-Roman über den deutschen Punk und New Wave*. Erweiterte Fassung (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2012).

¹⁰ Gunnar Leue, "Kain ist tot. Punk lebt," *Märkische Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20-21 September 2008, p.3; Gunnar Leue, "Punk mit Pantoffeln," *Das Magazin*, December 2007, pp.54-57; and "Wir standen mit einem Bein im Knast," *Der Tagesspiegel*, 26 August 2005, p.23.

cultural resonance on German culture, society and politics than it has in either the United States or Great Britain.

The claim for deeper punk relevance in Germany is more than evident if one explores how the genre has penetrated into the very structures of cultural life in the Berlin Republic after 1989. Some of the country's biggest international music stars—Einstürzende Neubauten, Nina Hagen, die Toten Hosen, and Rammstein—all began their careers as punks, and the enormous Rock am Ring festival—Europe's largest open-air festival drawing approximately 600,000 concert-goers annually—has featured a number of headline German punk acts such as die Toten Hosen and die Ärzte.¹¹ The use of critical and expressive German-language lyrics in rock'n'roll finds its original popularization in West German punk, as do the internationally famous musical genres of techno and German Hip Hop.¹² Some commentators estimate that the alternative music

¹¹ Einstürzende Neubauten has also represented West Germany in numerous international events such as the Biennale in Paris (1982), the Dokumenta in Kassel (1982), and the World Exhibition in Montreal (1986). See "Einstürzende Neubauten," in *Das NDW-Lexicon: Die Neue Deutsche Welle – Bands und Solisten von A bis Z*, ed., Christian Graf (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), pp.69-73.

¹² On techno in Germany, see Felix Denk and Sven von Thülen, *Der Klang der Familie: Berlin, Techno und die Wende* (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2012); Tobias Rapp, *Lost and Sound: Berlin, Techno und der Easyjetset* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2009); Elizabeth Bridges, "Berlin™: Techno and the Ambient Politics of Venue," in *Mediating Germany: Popular Culture between Tradition and Innovation*, ed., Gerd Bayer (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2006), pp.92-106; and Marcel Feige, *Deep in Techno. Die ganze Geschichte des Movements* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2000). On German Hip-Hop, see Maria Stehle, "Ghettos, Hoods, Blocks: The Sounds of German Space in Rap and Hip-Hop," in *Germany in the Loud Twentieth Century: An Introduction*, eds., Florence Feiereisen and Alexandra Merley Hill (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp.157-173; Leonard Schmieding, "Boom Boxes and Backward Caps: Hip-Hop Culture in the GDR," *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute*, 'East German Material Culture and the Power of Memory,' Supplement 7 (2011), pp.67-86; Jannis Androustopoulos, "Multilingualism, Ethnicity and Genre in Germany's Migrant Hip Hop," in *Languages of Global Hip Hop*, ed., Marina Terkourafi (London and New York: Continuum, 2010), pp.19-43; John T. Littlejohn and Michael T. Putnam, "Empowerment through Taboo: Probing the Sociolinguistic Parameters of German Gangsta Rap Lyrics," in *Languages of Global Hip Hop*, ed., Marina Terkourafi (London and New York: Continuum, 2010), pp.120-138; Matt Garley, "Realkeepen: Anglicisms in the German Hip-Hop Community," in *Languages of Global Hip Hop*, ed., Marina Terkourafi (London and New York: Continuum, 2010), pp.277-299; Kati Burchart, *Deutsche Rapmusik der neunziger Jahre: Kulturtransfers im Mainstream* (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 2009); Michael T. Putnam and John T. Littlejohn, "National Socialism with Fler? German Hip Hop from the Right," *Popular Music and Society*, vol.30, no.4 (October 2007), pp.453-468; Patricia Anne Simpson, "Battle Rhymes: Measures of Masculinity," in *Mediating Germany: Popular Culture between Tradition and Innovation*, ed., Gerd Bayer (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2006), pp.18-36; Timothy S. Brown, "'Keeping it Real' in a Different 'Hood': (African-) Americanization and Hip Hop in Germany," in *The Vinyl Ain't Final: Hip Hop and the Globalization of Black Popular Culture*, eds., Dipannita Basu and Sidney J. Lemelle (Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2006), pp.137-150;

scene in Germany—more or less institutionally and ideologically founded by punk, as we will see—accounts for around 20% of the German music market which is itself the third largest market in the world after the United States and Britain.¹³ *Spex*, Germany's largest magazine devoted to popular music, fashion and culture, is published bimonthly with a circulation figure surpassing 20,000 copies, and started as a punk fanzine in Cologne in 1980.¹⁴ Berlin, with its artistic cultural locales of Kreuzberg and Prenzlauer Berg, has become a mecca for tourists seeking 'alternative culture' and the city today is one of the biggest tourist destinations in Europe thanks in part to the imagination of punks and other alternatives from the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁵ German punks even have their own political party, the German Anarchist Pogo Party, or APPD (*Anarchistische Pogo-Partei Deutschland*), that polled a stunning 5.3% in the St. Pauli district during municipal Hamburg elections in 1997, thereby becoming the fourth strongest party, while Angela Marquardt, a former East German punk, was elected to the Bundestag as representative

Elizabeth Loentz, "Yiddish, *Kanak Sprach*, Klezmer, and HipHop: Ethnolect, Minority Culture, Multiculturalism, and Stereotype in Germany," *Shofer: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, vol.25, no.1 (2006), pp.33-62; Sascha Verlan and Hannes Loh, *25 Jahre HipHop in Deutschland* (Innsbruck, AU: Hannibal, 2006); Mike Wagner, "Rap is in the house," in *Wir wollen immer artig sein...: Punk, New Wave, HipHop und Independent-Szene in der DDR 1980-1990*, eds., Ronald Galenza and Heinz Havemeister (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2005), pp.601-622; Levent Soysal, "Rap, Hiphop, Kreuzberg: Scripts of/for Migrant Youth Culture in the WorldCity Berlin," *New German Critique*, no.92 (Spring-Summer 2004), pp.62-81; Gabriele Klein and Malte Friedrich, *Is This Real? Die Kultur des HipHop* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2003); Hannes Loh and Murat Güngör, *Fear of a Kanak Planet. HipHop zwischen Weltkultur und Nazi-Rap* (Hofen: Hannibal, 2002); Tom Cheeseman, "Polyglot Politics: Hip Hop in Germany," *Debatte*, vol.6, no.2 (1998), pp.191-214; and Dietmar Elflein, "From Krauts with Attitudes to Turks with Attitudes: Some Aspects of Hip-Hop History in Germany," in *Popular Music*, vol.17, no.3 (October 1998), pp.255-265.

¹³ Hollow Skai, *Alles nur geträumt: Fluch und Segen der Neuen Deutschen Welle* (Innsbruck: Hannibal, 2009), p.8.

¹⁴ Anne Waak and Max Dax, eds., *Spex: Das Buch. 33 1/3 Jahre Pop* (Berlin: Metrolit, 2013); and Tim Klütz, "POP TALK – Wie Pop in Sounds und SPEX zur Sprache kam," in *Pop am Rhein*, hrsg., Uwe Husslein (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2008), pp.160-189.

¹⁵ On the history of 'alternative tourism' in West Germany, see Anja Bertsch, "Alternative (in) Bewegung. Distinktion und transnationale Vergemeinschaftung im alternative Tourismus," in *Das Alternative Milieu. Antibürgerlicher Lebensstil und linke Politik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Europa 1968-1983*, hrsg. Sven Reichardt und Detlef Siegfried (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010), pp.115-130. Timothy Brown has argued that Kreuzberg became "the major destination for would-be bohemians in West Germany in the late 1960s and '70s." Italics in original. Timothy S. Brown, "Music as a Weapon? *Ton Steine Scherben* and the Politics of Rock in Cold War Berlin," *German Studies Review*, Vol.32, Nr.1 (February 2009), p.7. See also, Olaf Leitner, *West-Berlin! Westberlin! Berlin (West)! Die Kultur – die Szene – die Politik. Erinnerungen an eine Teilstadt der 70er und 80er Jahre* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2002).

of the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) between 1998 and 2002.¹⁶ While punk remains a subcultural musical form, the genre's wider influences on mainstream German culture, politics, and society are profound.

How do we explain the genre's remarkable relevance and deep roots? What can punk and popular culture more generally tell us about Germany and German history? Fundamentally, in East and West Germany during the 1970s and 1980s, punk became a vehicle for individual and societal democratization and this study investigates how and why the genre became endowed with such tremendous political and cultural significance. During these decades, youths used popular music to build alternative communities and unconventional identities that sought to mark adherents off from the political and cultural mainstream, activities which worked to pluralize both German societies. Despite their differing political, ideological, economic, social, and cultural compositions, in both German states, punk became a means for individuals to explore marginal identities and create the types of meaningful communities they felt were lacking in existing society. While inflected differently depending on which side of the Berlin Wall they happened to be, nonetheless, punk scenes in both states were instrumental in helping to liberalize German society from below. In the East, the genre became a form of opposition to the dictatorial SED regime, while in the West, punk was a political and aesthetic platform for individual and social revolution along more 'authentic' lines—endeavors sparking debates about the contentious Nazi past and the future dimensions of German national identity, society, and citizenship.

One of the central questions to be asked of modern Germany is how, after decades of authoritarianism, dictatorship, war and genocide, was nation and society able to transform into a modern, stable, and inclusive democracy after 1945, so much so that in the new millennium,

¹⁶ See Angela Marquardt, *Was ich bin, was mir stinkt, was ich will* (Cologne: Kippenheuer & Witsch, 1999). On the APPD, see Archiv der Jugendkulturen, ed., *Die Partei hat immer Recht! Die gesammelten Schriften der APPD* (Berlin: Verlag Thomas Tilsner, 1998).

Germany has emerged as a democratic and pluralistic pillar of the Western world, and the heart of the European Union? The majority of scholarship produced to date has focused primarily on the political and economic dimensions to this question. Scholars argue that under American tutelage, Germans learned to vote and spend and in so doing, became integrated into the Western world as a normal democracy after disastrous detours through fascism and state socialism. For these scholars, the experience of reconstruction, the adoption of the social market economy, the participation in parliamentary democracy, and the return of civil society are all essential elements in the growth of Germany into a proper, stable, Western democracy.¹⁷ Into this framework, the 1960s student movement is seen as either a threat to or fulfillment of West German democracy.¹⁸ Linked to this argument is the suggestion that because these processes did not take place in the GDR and because state and society were so thoroughly dominated by the totalitarian Social Unity Party or SED (*Sozialistische Einheits Partei*), that it was only with reunification that former East Germans could experience and partake in the full flowering of democracy and therefore modernity.¹⁹ Thus scholars who see these top-down political processes as the central factors in explaining German democracy focus on the political and economic institutions that emerged (or did not emerge) in both German states, and especially on crucial moments in which democracy was tested (and bested) such as the international Cold War encounters between East and West (Berlin Blockade, Berlin Wall, missile crisis) and the domestic struggles for greater liberty (the 1953 and 1968 revolts, terrorism and dissent) that led to the collapse of state socialism and subsequent reunification of Germany in 1989/1990.

¹⁷ See Heinrich August Winkler, *Germany: The Long Road West*, 2 vols., trans. by Alexander J. Sager (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006-2007); Konrad H. Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995*, trans. Brandon Hunziker (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); and Axel Schildt, *Ankunft im Westen. Ein Essay zur Erfolgsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1999).

¹⁸ See Nick Thomas, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany: A Social History of Dissent and Democracy* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2003), pp.1-4.

¹⁹ See Katherine Pence and Paul Betts, "Introduction," in *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics*, eds., Katherine Pence and Paul Betts (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008), pp.1-34.

While there is no question that such top-down processes contributed to democratizing German society, it is also true that these processes do not constitute the whole story. What is missing from these analyses is how democratization works from below through cultural politics, identity formation, and social relationships, and the primary aim of my dissertation is to explore how popular culture has contributed to modern German democracy since the 1970s. I argue that punk is representative of the ways in which popular music helped embed ideals about freedom, individuality and independence deep into the everyday world of Germans, and how the structures and networks of musical subculture helped turn these ideas into practices spreading emancipation and liberation throughout German society on both sides of the Berlin Wall. Put simply: popular music was and is a force of democracy rather than a product of it. The importance of punk lies in popular music's ability to absorb larger issues, represent concerns, provoke responses and drive transformations. As such, debates about punk and the contours of subculture within divided Germany were actually contests over what is culture, what is politics, and what is Germany. Scholars have made tremendous inroads into exploring the cultural dimensions of democratic life in the early decades of the postwar era by detailing the multitude of ways in which Germans negotiated the gap between state processes and the culture of everyday life in both states.²⁰ But

²⁰ See Brian M. Puaca, *Learning Democracy: Education Reform in West Germany, 1945-1965* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009); Frank Biess, *Homecomings: Returning POWs and the Legacies of Defeat in Postwar Germany* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006); Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); David F. Crew, ed., *Consuming Germany in the Cold War* (New York: Berg, 2003); Norbert Frei, *Adenauer's Germany and the Nazi Past: The Politics of Amnesty and Integration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Hanna Schissler, ed., *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949-1968* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001); Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Useable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Elizabeth D. Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make? Women and Marital Status in Nazi and Postwar Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1997); Erica Carter, *How German Is She? Postwar West German Reconstruction and the Consuming Woman* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997); Robert G. Moeller, ed., *West Germany Under Construction: Politics, Society, and Culture in the Adenauer Era* (Ann Arbor:

only recently have the first efforts been made to track how individuals contested and altered existing conditions during the last two decades of the Cold War.²¹ The 1960s were a period of tremendous transformation and little is known about how these changes continued (and continue) to shape society and culture in Germany. Democracy is a process that requires constant servicing and especially in the post-1960s era, took innumerable forms that necessitates further attention. While the Marshall Plan or Pershing Missiles are certainly important weapons in democracy's arsenal, so too are Levi jeans and Elvis Presley. Whereas the story of Germany's political rise 'from shadow to substance' is well-known, the question of 'democracy and its discontents' is much less so, and punk is a means of exploring everyday life experiences and how these larger processes played out on the ground.²² By tracking the emergence and development of punk in East and West Germany, I explore how and why the genre became invested with such political and cultural meaning, and the consequences of these endowments.

Three interrelated concerns shaped punk in both German states and they suggest why a history of the genre is useful for exploring the dimensions of these societies during the 1970s and 1980s. In the first place, punk became a motor of change as young Germans imbued the genre with emancipatory potential that allows us to consider how egalitarian principles came to govern ideals and practices on both sides of the Berlin Wall. In the East, this took the form of political opposition as punk style and music were used to critique 'real-existing socialism'—criticism that

University of Michigan, 1997); and Robert G. Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood: Women and the Family in the Politics of Postwar West Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

²¹ Karrin Hanshew, *Terror and Democracy in West Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Timothy S. Brown and Lorena Anton, eds., *Between the Avant-Garde and the Everyday: Subversive Politics in Europe from 1957 to the Present* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011); and Belinda Davis, Wilfried Mausbach, Martin Klimke, and Carla MacDougall, eds., *Changing the World, Changing Oneself: Political Protest and Collective Identities in West Germany and the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s* (New York and Oxford, 2010).

²² Both are subtitles to the well-known history of postwar West Germany. See Dennis L. Bark and David R. Gress, *A History of West Germany: From Shadow to Substance*, vol.1, 2nd edition (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1993); and Dennis L. Bark and David R. Gress, *A History of West Germany: Democracy and Its Discontents*, vol.2, 2nd edition (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1993).

brought the regime down hard on the subculture in 1983. East German authorities believed punk was a product of Western subversion that was corrupting young socialists and tried to eliminate the genre root and branch from GDR society in the mid-1980s. Escaping persecution by seeking protection in the Evangelical Churches, punks forged strategic alliances with dissident groups gathering there and became socialized into the political opposition. In the end, punks contributed to undermining the political legitimacy of the SED by opening up public and discursive space into which crowds surged physically in the autumn of 1989. In the West, punk's aesthetic and musical revolt rooted the genre ideologically in originality, individuality and independence. These notions and the practices that stemmed from them challenged existing conventions from both the conservative Right but also from the liberal New Left. Punks chafed at limits, and sought more sovereignty and freedom in the daily bustle, and both ends of the political spectrum were understood as inhibiting a more meaningful and authentic life. Building independent communication networks and autonomous musical institutions, punk efforts at creating alternative communities democratized the creation and production of popular culture by integrating previously excluded groups such as women into the music industry. Democratization authorized a host of experiments and initiatives that challenged the conventional and became the bases for alternative allegiances. These ideals and activities suggest how social equality and liberty were central to punk, and how the genre is representative of the new forms, contents and sensibilities of cultural politics that emerged in the 1960s. As such, punk helps to explain why democracy has become so entrenched in modern Germany.

The second major theme governing this study is how punk became a basis for alternative identities and social communities among young Germans, and the consequences of these new groups for state and society during these decades. The 1970s and 1980s witnessed an explosion

of exciting new social formations, rethought cultural contents, and innovative politics, all intent on reworking the dominant cultural, social, and political conventions of everyday life. In the West, the 1960s student movement fractured into innumerable and acrimonious splinter-factions in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but from its wreckage emerged a mass of new projects, groups, and commitments which sought to liberalize society through pluralistic politics. In the East, these decades were marked overwhelmingly by political conformity and social conservatism but also increased space within the cracks of the dictatorship to develop unconventional identities and affiliations. Alternative formations and culture in the 1970s and 1980s offered new political, social and cultural identities which youths eagerly sought. What defined these various collectives was a mixture of political activism, a sense of social justice, the elevation of cultural forms and contents, and a deep commitment to experimenting with unusual social relations, structures and politics that scholars have labeled at various times ‘post-material,’ ‘post-national’ or ‘post-modern.’ The principle ideational belief governing these heterogeneous formations was the pursuit of greater personal and communal authenticity in daily life. Thus, independent books shops, environmental activists, communist factory-cells, feminist reading circles, communes, squats, music and drug subcultures—all were part of this large and diverse grouping that scholars now call the ‘alternative scene’ or ‘alternative milieu.’ As will be outlined below, popular music became endowed with ‘authenticity’ and the emergence of ‘alternative culture’ came to assume existential dimensions for those seeking a more moral and ethical life they found lacking in conventional mainstream institutions, communities, cultural forms, and pursuits. Punks in both states experimented with alternative identities in an effort to come to terms with the murderous Nazi past, the boring democratic or socialist present, and an unknown future—all in an attempt to redefine Germanness and German society for a post-1960s world. The quest for personal and

communal authenticity came to be one of the guiding principles informing the politics and culture of individuals during this time period, and the confrontations between these groups, society and the state defined daily life in both German states during the 1970s and 1980s.

Finally, punk is representative of how, in the second half of the twentieth century, politics have become increasingly folded into the realm of culture. As an expressive and representative genre, rock'n'roll is one of the largest cultural phenomenon of the twentieth century, and one of the principal means by which cultural production has been mobilized for political purposes. In the East, Erich Honecker based his authoritarian regime on increased consumerism in exchange for political acquiescence.²³ However, the inability of the SED to adequately fulfill the needs of GDR citizens forced youths and others to seek alternative means of satisfying their desires, and punk became one of these alternatives. Music had long played a central role in the cultivation of socialist political legitimacy, and in the late 1980s, the SED sought to marshal popular music to shore up the Party's waning popularity. In supporting a host of GDR punk bands in a desperate attempt to prop up their increasingly unpopular regime, this reversal by the SED suggests the deep imbrication of music and politics, and their mutual reinforcing or destabilizing potential. In the West, the creation of a national punk scene suggests that politics were progressively understood by youths in cultural terms. Whereas older affiliations such as work or political parties had once attracted the political imaginations of the citizenry, young Germans in the post-1960s world increasingly invested their emotional and political capital in the creation and consumption of music. However, as punk nationalized and was commodified by the music industry, questions about authenticity convulsed the genre and resulted in divisions that tore the collective asunder—splits suggesting the very real limits of subcultural politics. But debates

²³ Jonathan R. Zatlin, *The Currency of Socialism: Money and Political Culture in East Germany* (Washington DC: German Historical Institute, 2007).

about punk were debates about the future dimensions of East and West Germany, as seen in the way that authorities and the mainstream press often reacted with repression and a lack of comprehension to the subculture. In the face of commodification and repression, punks sought to reassert genre authenticity by retreating into an even more inaccessible musical and political subculture. Punk came to assume a central importance in the political and cultural life of young Germans in both Cold War states which suggests why a history of rock'n'roll during these decades is also a history of modern Germany.

Thus, the answer to the questions posed above—Why Germany? Why punk?—is that punk represents one of a variety of alternative cultural endeavors in the 1970s and 1980s that sought to re-enchant daily life. Originating from the wreckage of the 1960s in the West and the stifling repressiveness in the East, these activities offered Germans opportunities to transform themselves and their nation into a modern democratic state and pluralistic society. As such, punk is an ideal lens through which to explore the process of democratization from below in Germany during these decades. Imported to East and West from the US and UK, punk was eagerly embraced by young Germans on both sides of the Berlin Wall who used the genre to challenge traditional social, cultural, and political conventions in the pursuit of individual and collective authenticity. Drawing inspiration from but also reacting negatively to the events and ideas of the 1960s, punk is helpful in tracking the influence of this decade on modern Germany. As an expressive genre and as a subcultural movement, punk is uniquely positioned as both an impetus for change and a means of recording said transformations. With its celebration of originality, experimentation and diversity, punk in West Germany was a political and aesthetic program for individual and social revolution along more authentic lines while in the East, the genre became the basis for oppositional politics and identity. Crucially, in both states, punk was influential in

democratizing an increasingly multicultural society from the grass-roots by promoting greater emancipation of cultural production and alternative identity, even if subcultural politics could at times also be exclusionary. As such, punk illustrates the increasing importance of popular culture and in this case popular music as a vehicle of political change in the modern age. Music has often been central to German efforts at national and personal identity as we will see below, and for that reason, punk is excellent for highlighting the efforts in coming to terms with German identity in the postwar period. Nor was this process smooth and the moral panic surrounding punk in East and West Germany tells us much about how the margins are essential in debates over the center, both in democracies and in dictatorships. As an expression and medium of tremendous political, social, and cultural change taking place in the East and West during the 1970s and 1980s, punk—I argue—is an ideal means of walking the streets of divided Germany because understanding the history of the subculture is essential for discerning why so many individuals devoted their lives to alternative politics and culture during this time, why authenticity came to assume such importance for Germans, and how German society and culture has transformed since the 1960s.

Kultur aus den Slums: Alternative Culture, Authenticity and Alltagsgeschichte in East and West German History

Ugly made-up youths, wearing ripped clothes with Nazi-insignia and dog-collars, protesting unemployment and boredom in industrial society are on display. Their primitive ‘Punk-Rock’ is being successfully marketed by the record industry. Jet-setters from New York to Munich find the ‘lumpen-fashion’ to be the latest trend. But real punks are already critical about the big fuss: “Something crooked’s going on here.”

“Punk: Nadel im Ohr, Klinge am Hals,” *Der Spiegel*, Nr.4 (23 January 1978), p.140

The title of my study is borrowed from an article in *Der Spiegel* that sought to explain punk to the German public in early 1978. The cover featured swastika-wearing London punks, Dave Vanian from UK act The Damned dressed like Dracula and the cross-dressing transvestite singer Wayne County (now Jayne County). *Der Spiegel* accompanied these controversial images with a sensational headline: “Punk. Kultur aus den Slums: brutal und häßlich” (Punk. Culture from the Slums: brutal and ugly). The title and accompanying images, by emphasizing ugliness, violence, and transgression, was intended to shock staid German burghers (was that not the job of punks themselves rather than the press?). But it likewise contains much truth about how punk was understood and mobilized by East and West Germans which is why I have appropriated *Der Spiegel*'s title for my own. The word ‘slums’ is an Anglo-American import much like the music genre itself and is charged with a complex series of connotations and meanings. With explicit references to socio-economic and racial or ethnic segregation and marginalization, and implicit suggestions of political and cultural inferiority, the term played off long-standing German fears of American cultural hegemony and anxious responses to earlier popular music genres such as jazz.²⁴ Slums meant squalor, crime, poverty, lower-class, danger, disorder—and Germans reacting to punk, as we will see, constantly invoked these terms and connotations to suggest that

²⁴ See Mary Nolan, “Anti-Americanism and Americanization in Germany,” *Politics & Society*, Vol.33, Nr.1 (March 2005), pp.88-122; Heide Fehrenbach, *Race after Hitler: Black Occupation Children in Postwar Germany and America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Maria Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins: The German-American Encounter in 1950s West Germany* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Volker Berghahn, *American and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Kaspar Maase and Wolfgang Kaschuba, eds., *Schund und Schönheit: Populäre Kultur um 1900* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2001); Kaspar Maase, “Establishing Cultural Democracy: Youth, ‘Americanization,’ and the Irresistible Rise of Popular Culture,” in *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West nGermany, 1959-1968*, ed., Hanna Schissler (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp.428-450; Poiger, *Jazz, Rock and Rebels*; Heide Fehrenbach and Uta G. Poiger, eds., *Transactions, Transgressions, Transformations: American Culture in Western Europe and Japan* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000); Konrad H. Jarausch and Hannes Siegrist, eds., *Amerikanisierung und Sovietisierung in Deutschland 1945-1970* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1997); Alf Lüdtkke, Inge Marssolek, and Adelheid von Saldern, eds., *Amerikanisierung: Traum oder Alpentraum in Deutschland des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1996); Mary Nolan, *Visions of Modernity: American Business and the Modernization of Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Volker Berghahn, *The Americanisation of West German Industry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

the genre was both foreign and a menace. But punks themselves also gravitated towards the identities embedded within the concept of slums that gave their subculture a working-class edge, fervently claiming it as their own. Positioning themselves as alternatives to the mainstream—more imagined than reality, as we will see—punks embraced these marginal spaces eagerly and the identities which came with them to relentlessly negotiate the existing terms of cultural politics in both German states. Perhaps most importantly, while slums implied danger, they also suggested authenticity and indeed possibilities that German youths believed were a means of revolutionizing daily life. Punks embraced slums because they believed it spoke to their non-acceptance of the status quo and their efforts to protect themselves from corruption. The liminality which slums represented—as an identity and as a culture—allowed young Germans to challenge dominant mainstream conventions and open up new vistas of marginal distinctiveness that promised individuals more meaningful social relationships and communities.

The term ‘slums’ also has connotations of ‘alternatives,’ ‘margins’ and ‘marginality,’ and these terms are used throughout this study to denote individuals, groups, thoughts, and practices that were positioned on the outside of the majority or relegated to the sidelines. On both sides of the Berlin Wall, marginal figures and the activities of those who lived their lives in opposition to the mainstream were an essential aspect of the greater whole because they pointed towards the possibility of difference. Marginal figures and their actions contested dominant notions about what it meant to be German, how to relate to the state, what was the responsibility of citizens, how they were to live their lives. But as non-conformists, even if divorced from the center, these individuals were well-placed to challenge unquestioned assumptions about life in the Federal Republic or the German Democratic Republic and in so doing, forced the core to respond to their rhythms on the periphery. Thus the margins—as space, identity and relationship—are essential in

our understanding of modern Germany, and how punks and others tried to separate themselves from the mainstream through alternative cultural praxis which, at the same time—paradoxically even—was indispensable to the construction of the whole. Marginality is therefore a theoretical construct placing the relationship between center and periphery at the forefront, while at the same time suggesting a way of rethinking German history in the 1970s and 1980s.²⁵

‘Slums’ also highlights how German history for this period has been narrated. Ten years ago, Michael Geyer and Konrad Jarausch implored scholars to “rethink German histories from the margins” to “decenter received conceptions of what it meant to be German at a given time.”²⁶ The point, warned Geyer and Jarausch, was not to add “previously silenced voices to the general chorus” but to communicate the “enormous diversity of life stories and group experiences” lost in the homogenizing processes of nations and states.²⁷ Demonstrations, communes, squatting, riots, drug and music subcultures—these were the images that filled the daily press, police stations, city assemblies, and public discourse during the 1970s and 1980s. They attest to a widespread disenchantment felt by many Germans with their societies and document the ways young people sought to imagine new social relations and communities far from the mainstream, efforts that posited culture as the means to do so. Punk can illuminate some of these life stories. Instead of understanding these incidents as barometers of crisis, it is necessary to explore how these contests were essential in shaping the experiences of Germans caught up in these debates.

As a platform for political and cultural revolution, punk provided youths with a soundtrack to break with dominant hegemonies and the tools to renegotiate their world along

²⁵ For some helping directions on why exploring ‘the center’ and ‘the margins’ might be useful for rethinking German history, see Geoff Eley, “How and Where Is German History Centered?” in *German History from the Margins*, eds., Neil Gregor, Nils Roemer, and Mark Roseman (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), pp.268-286.

²⁶ Konrad H. Jarausch and Michael Geyer, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), p.83.

²⁷ Jarausch and Geyer, *Shattered Past*, pp.59, 83.

what they perceived to be more ‘authentic’ lines. Alternative culture has a long and influential tradition in German history. Whereas scholars in the 1940s and 1950s wrote from the perspective of national homogeneity, in the 1960s, social historians began excavating the alternative social worlds of workers, women, and minorities until then excluded from historical analysis, and started detailing the diversity of German history.²⁸ Despite the repopulation of the past with new historical subjects, however, the over-arching narrative of cultural and social homogeneity remained—though peopled with innumerable new subjects—since the hallmarks of modernity and the (modern) nation-state was a flattening of difference and growing uniformity imposed by the center on the periphery.²⁹ But as Ronald Grigor Suny has eloquently argued, identities are “fluid, multiple, fragmented, and constantly in need of hard work to sustain,” an explanation suggesting that individual and social identity is continually fraught with movement and not as homogeneous or static as they appear.³⁰ Alternative identities that rub the mainstream roughly therefore have the potential to illuminate how the core includes and excludes, and how the margins or periphery can provide safe-haven for those who think and act differently.

However, with the exception of working-class history, it was only in the 1980s that scholars began to seriously explore how alternative groups were fundamental co-constituents of nation and society rather than indexes of malady, backwardness or stunted development. Under the intellectual influence of postmodernism and the historical archaeology of empire and post-colonial studies, scholars of modern German history have become increasingly aware of how the margins has helped shaped the mainstream, an alertness suggesting that modernity and the

²⁸ On this historiography, Geyer and Jarausch, *Shattered Past*. See also Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History: The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present* (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1983).

²⁹ See, for example, Ernst Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983).

³⁰ Ronald Grigor Suny, “Back and Beyond: Reversing the Cultural Turn?” in *American Historical Review*, Vol.107, Nr.5 (2002), p.1485.

nation-state may not necessarily need to reduce diversity and difference to the extent that scholars have previously thought.³¹ In the main, however, studies of the German margins have been overwhelmingly devoted to the study of social, religious, and especially, ethnic divisions; a legacy of the Nazi era, the margins has been explored almost exclusively in its relation to the genocidal exclusionary practices of the Third Reich vis-à-vis Jews and other ostracized racial minorities.³² While commendable, this stress has in turn inhibited research in other directions: the over-emphasis on coercion and exclusion vis-à-vis diversity has ensured that the study of the margins is—in the words of recent scholars—embedded in “a ‘lachrymose history’ of suppression, segregation, and murder,” instead of accentuating dialogue or open encounters moving German society towards greater diversity.³³ Thus, even in the postwar period, while the margins have received more consideration, the accent remains on ethnic minorities, especially Turkish migrant culture.³⁴ The lack of study in the popular culture margins is, in these respects, glaring because cultural politics have become one of the most important defining characteristics of modern Germany, especially in the post-1968 era.

Studying the cultural margins during the 1970s and 1980s is essential because of the extent and influence that alternative culture has had on both German states during these decades. In perhaps no other state does alternative culture have deeper roots than in reunited Germany, as the host of projects that were called into being during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s have re-

³¹ See especially, Neil Gregor, Nils Roemer, and Mark Roseman, eds. *German History from the Margins* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006).

³² See, for example, Robert Gellately and Nathan Stoltzfus, eds., *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

³³ Neil Gregor, Nils Roemer, and Mark Roseman, “Introduction,” in *German History from the Margins*, eds., Neil Gregor, Nils Roemer, and Mark Roseman (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), p.2.

³⁴ See Rita Chin, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Ruth Mandel, *Cosmopolitan Anxieties: Turkish Challenges to Citizenship and Belonging in Germany* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2008); Tina Campt, *Other Germans: Black Germans and the Politics of Race, Gender, and Memory in the Third Reich* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004); and Petra Fachinger, *Rewriting Germany from the Margins: “Other” German Literature of the 1980s and 1990s* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001).

ordered everyday life to such an extent that the major political party that emerged from this milieu—the Greens—has become one of the largest parliamentary parties in the nation and a model for ecological political organizations the world over. At its height in the early 1980s in West Germany, the ‘alternative scene’ or ‘milieu’ had numbers surpassing the million mark as tens of thousands of ‘projects’—the term designating collective ventures within the scene—were undertaken in an effort to rethink contemporary German society along more communal and idealistic—and less material and individualistic—lines.³⁵ Drop-in drug centers, independent publishing presses, holistic homeopath clinics, experimental day-care facilities, housing co-operatives, avant-garde music and art galleries—all worked towards offering Germans an alternative means of participating in unconventional collectives, and in doing so, revitalized daily living in the Federal Republic during the 1970s and 1980s.³⁶

In the East, while dwarfed numerically by the larger Western scene, alternative culture was perhaps more important historically since from the margins of socialist life—small reading circles, tentative political associations, unofficial artistic performances in attics, underground leaflets and samizdat publications—came the ideas and communities that would form the nucleus of the dissident opposition that would in the end help bring down the Berlin Wall.³⁷ The alternative scene was constituted less through formal associations or institutions than through a loose-web of like-minded individuals sharing commitments towards personal and group

³⁵ Sven Reichardt and Detlef Siegfried, “Das Alternative Milieu. Konturen einer Lebensform,” *Das Alternative Milieu. Antibürgerlicher Lebensstil und linke Politik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Europa 1968-1983*, Sven Reichardt and Detlef Siegfried, eds. (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010), pp.9-24.

³⁶ See Sven Reichardt and Detlef Siegfried, eds., *Das Alternative Milieu. Antibürgerlicher Lebensstil und linke Politik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Europa 1968-1983* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010); Robert P. Stephens, *Germans on Drugs: The Complications of Modernization in Hamburg* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007); *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, “Die Siebzigerjahre. Gesellschaftliche Entwicklungen in Deutschland,” Vol.44 (2004); Sabine von Dirke, “All Power to the Imagination!”: *The West German Counterculture from the Student Movement to the Greens* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).

³⁷ For a comprehensive history, see Ehrhart Neubert, *Geschichte der Opposition in der DDR 1949-1989* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2000).

authenticity, an emphasis on social justice, and connected through independent networks and node-points such as the underground press, scene bars and restaurants, communication and youth centers, activist causes, and political demonstrations. Punk was an essential constituent of the alternative scene in both nations as we will see and its adherents populated the diverse projects that defined the loose collective while the genre's music helped direct energies in a multitude of ways on both sides of the Berlin Wall.

As one of the more flamboyant and dramatic participants in alternative culture during the 1970s and 1980s, punk is an ideal prism by which the impact of the margins on the center can help us to reassess these decades historically. As a barometer gauging disaffection, the margins can tell us how punks, squatters, environmentalists, and many other groups strove to re-orient their daily lives in ways they felt were more 'authentic' and 'real'—efforts which more often than not put them into direct conflict with society and authorities. These conflicts tell us much about the stakes involved politically, socially, and culturally during this period, and how the dialectical relationship between mainstream and margins worked together to construct identity and belonging. The margins in this sense became loci for change, and their study can show us how individuals sought to renegotiate the mainstream terms of daily life through alternative culture and practices. As the authors of a recent collection on the margins in German history remind us, "While the center defined what was marginal, the margins encroached upon and redefined the territory of the center. Minority groups...engaged the center and thereby altered its contours and character. Approached from the perspective of the margins, the center appears less homogenous and finite, more fluid and tenuous. Both sides—the dominant and the dominated, the central and the marginal—remained not only internally heterogeneous but also mutually

implicated.”³⁸ In the West, punk was critical in shaping the music industry and sparking debate about the contours of German identity and community, while in the East, the subculture provided youths with oppositional sounds to challenge the dictatorial regime. By exploring the structures, institutions and networks that punk helped fashion, my study suggests that democratic practices in postwar Germany can be found in culture, and that popular music drove this period of transformative change as individuals posited new moral behaviors and practices to guide one’s life in a more ‘authentic’ manner: as a slogan appearing in one punk fanzine pointedly asked, “Living means more than simply existing? Are you living?”³⁹

This question points to the centrality of ‘authenticity’ for punk, a complex notion lying at the ideological heart of the alternative scene, and one of the more elusive concepts in the modern era. With connotations of ‘truth,’ ‘real’ and ‘not false,’ the term ‘authenticity’ is used to describe and define practices and behaviors, laws and spaces, artifacts and events, conditions or processes that we attribute ‘originality’ to, or to which we assign ‘worth.’ We seek out ‘authentic’ food, travel to ‘authentic’ locales, search for ‘authentic’ experiences; and while we have difficulty trying to define it, ‘authenticity’ nonetheless structures our daily lives.⁴⁰ Emerging first from the concept of sincerity in the early modern period, as Lionel Trilling argued classically, under the impact of social and economic modernization, the notion of authenticity came to inform how one could present their inner self to others in society genuinely.⁴¹ Under the influence of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Romantic thinkers in the nineteenth-century, modern society increasing came to be seen as inhibiting the true self, and the pursuit of authenticity was understood as a

³⁸ Neil Gregor, Nils Roemer, and Mark Roseman, “Introduction,” in *German History from the Margins*, eds., Neil Gregor, Nils Roemer, and Mark Roseman (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), p.2.

³⁹ *Hamburger Mottenpost*, Nr.2 (Hamburg: 1986), n.p.

⁴⁰ For a concise statement on the use of authenticity in our daily lives, see Charles Lindholm, *Culture and Authenticity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008).

⁴¹ Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971).

means of challenging the falsehoods produced by modern politics and culture, of staying true to one's inner beliefs despite the pressures society's conventions placed upon the individual.⁴² As such, authenticity was a goal towards which individuals strived, one that legitimated practice, preserved agency, signaled resistance, and much more. Perhaps most importantly for this study, authenticity came to signal an opposition to modernity or at least, a means of over-coming the threat modern life presented to the individual self; thrashing against the heavy chains of convention, the searcher for authenticity expressed their inner genuineness by following the beat of their own drum, as the saying goes.⁴³ While it would be wrong to characterize it as anti-modern, reactionary or conservative, nonetheless, the quest for personal authenticity is fundamentally underwritten by the belief that what produces inauthenticity is modern society with its emphases on massification, conformity and convention. But through a celebration of radical individualism and heroic opposition to society's norms, one's personal authenticity could nonetheless be rediscovered and reemerge for others to see.

Scholars have recently begun to study how notions of authenticity guided radicals in the 1960s, and how they used authenticity to distance alternative culture from mainstream society that was found to be inauthentic.⁴⁴ Labeling their own endeavors as 'genuine' or 'real' in contrast

⁴² Marshall Berman, *The Politics of Authenticity: Radical Individualism and the Emergence of Modern Society*, New Edition (London and New York: Verso, 2009). See also Jerrold Seigel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe since the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

⁴³ Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge, Mass, and London: Harvard University Press, 1991).

⁴⁴ See Detlef Siegfried, "White Negroes: The Fascination of the Authentic in the West German Counterculture of the 1960s", in *Changing the World, Changing Oneself: Political Protest and Collective Identities in West Germany and the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s*, eds., Belinda Davis, Wilfried Mausbach, Martin Klimke, and Carla MacDougall (New York and Oxford, 2010), pp.191-215; Detlef Siegfried, "Authentisch schwarz: Blues in der Gegenkultur um 1970," in *Ich hab den Blues schon etwas länger: Spuren einer Musik in Deutschland*, eds., Michael Rauhut and Reinhard Lorenz (Bonn and Berlin: Stollfluß, 2008), pp.216-227; Sven Reichardt, "Authentizität und Gemeinschaftsbindung. Politik und Lebensstil im linksalternativen Milieu vom Ende der 1960er bis zum Anfang der 1980er Jahre", in *Forschungsjournal Neue Soziale Bewegungen*, Heft 3 (September 2008), pp.118-130; Detlef Siegfried, "Superkultur: Authentizität und politische Moral in linken Subkulturen der frühen siebziger Jahre," in *Bürgersinn mit Weltgefühl: Politische Moral und solidarischer Protest in den sechziger und siebziger Jahren*, ed., Habbo Knoch (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), pp.251-270.

to the debased bourgeois society that they were rejecting, radicals sought to restore meaning to their lives by grafting notions about authenticity onto their political and generational revolt. The alternative scene that emerged out of the 1960s was decisively influenced by these notions about authentic living, either as a guide for future endeavors or as an idea to be wrestled with and transformed. As we will see, in the punk scene, the politics of authenticity were central to governing the subculture. Authentic praxis in both German states became legitimacy and truth that authorized a range of activities as diverse groups since the 1960s—hippies, feminists, peace advocates, environmentalists, squatters, and punks—strove to reorient their daily lives in ways they felt were more ‘authentic’ and ‘real.’ In the East, authenticity became a platform for oppositional politics while in the West, the concept promised an alternative for youths bored with the mainstream conformity and the mass marketed quality of life in the Federal Republic. In both German states, authenticity was a continually negotiated space in which practices and ideas were dialectically-shaped even while its politics were used to mark punk off from the mainstream and locate authentic living on the margins.

But the margins also reflect the 1970s and early 1980s in the history of divided Germany. In literature on both East and West Germany, these decades constitute what Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried have called a historiographical “no-man’s-land.”⁴⁵ In most Western nations, the 1970s and early 1980s are looked down upon as a wasted and “eminently forgettable decade”—to quote Bruce J. Schulman, writing about the American context—especially since these years are bookended by the revolutionary years of ‘1968’ and ‘1989.’⁴⁶ But as Thomas Lindenberger

⁴⁵ Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried, “Youth, Consumption, and Politics in the Age of Radical Change,” in *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980*, eds., Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), p.7.

⁴⁶ See Bruce J. Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Books, 2001), p.xi. On ‘1968’ and ‘1989’ as caesuras, see Konrad H. Jarausch, “1968 and 1989: Caesuras, Comparisons, and Connections,” in *1968: The World Transformed*, eds., Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert, and

gently reminds us, postwar German history contains “four and not two decades” and punk is a movement through which to reconstruct narratives of these forgotten decades.⁴⁷ If one thinks about the 1970s, a host of mostly negative associations are immediately conjured: political ennui and stagflation, unemployment and terrorism, disco and drugs, and above all, bad hair and bad fashion. The underwhelming nature of these images is only amplified when compared to the refreshing political commitment of youths in the 1960s or the careerist ambitions and successes of the eighties generation. Punk is often mobilized to illustrate the 1970s. Take for example the recent description of punk as the crisis-laden image of the late 1970s from a recent state-sponsored exhibition on rock’n’roll in Germany: “A resigned world outlook accompanied punk at the end of the 1970s. With their penchant for offensive behavior and demonstrable spirit of poverty, punks provoked not only adults but also slightly older youths as well. While older brothers and sisters are excited by rearmament, nuclear power-pants and an allegedly threatening Big-Brother state, younger siblings answer with resignation: ‘No Future’ is the universal slogan.”⁴⁸ This description is accurate in the sense that punk is an acceptable image of the 1970s, just not of crisis and despair as most narratives have it, but rather of the explosion of creative energies and initiatives that sought to restore meaning to this stagnant world.

Historiography on the interstices between ‘1968’ and ‘1989’ has been spotty and one of the major goals of *Culture from the Slums* is to contribute to our understanding of daily life during these decades, to explore the consequences of the Sixties for everyday Germans, and to chart how Easterners and Westerners experienced the pre-history of reunification. In the West,

Detlef Junker (Washington, DC and Cambridge, UK: German Historical Institute and Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp.461-477.

⁴⁷ Thomas Lindenberger, “Everyday History: New Approaches to the History of the Post-War Germanies,” in *The Divided Past: Rewriting Post-War German History*, ed., Christoph Kleßmann (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), p.58.

⁴⁸ Stiftung Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, ed., *Rock! Jugend und Musik in Deutschland* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2005), p.8.

we now have an enormous literature on the complex of events known as ‘1968’ even if such scholarship is dominated by the recollections of the ’68ers themselves.⁴⁹ Literature on the ramifications of ‘1968’ focuses overwhelmingly on the various liberation groups that emerged out of the collapsed student movement that are grouped under the rubric of the New Social Movements.⁵⁰ While these works are exemplary in detailing the new social formations that arose in the 1970s and 1980s—the feminist, ecology, and peace movements being the most well-known—they remain narrowly political. While perhaps due to the phenomenal political success of the Greens, the result has been that the more broad-based changes in mentalities and cultural experiments inaugurated by the Sixties have remained underexplored.⁵¹ Only very recently have scholars begun exploring some of the deep structural and economic transformations that took place during the Seventies.⁵² However, these works almost universally attempt to locate the ills

⁴⁹ The literature on ‘1968’ in Germany is enormous. See, for example, Gerrit Dworok and Christoph Weissmann, eds., *1968 und die 68er: Ereignisse, Wirkungen und Kontroversen in der Bundesrepublik* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2013); Wolfgang Kraushaar, *Achtundsechzig: eine Bilanz* (Berlin: Propyläen, 2008); Götz Aly, *Unser Kampf: 1968 – ein irritierter Bluck zurück* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2008); Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth, eds., *1968. Handbuch zur Kultur- und Mediengeschichte der Studentenbewegung* (Stuttgart and Weimar: Verlag J. B. Metzler, 2007); Christina von Hodenberg and Detlef Siegfried, eds., *Wo ‘1968’ liegt. Reform und Revolte in der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006); Wolfgang Kraushaar, *1968 als Mythos, Chiffre und Zäsur* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2000); Claus Leggewie, “Laboratory of Postindustrial Society: Reassessing the 1960s in Germany,” in *1968: The World Transformed*, eds., Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert, and Detlef Junker (Washington, DC and Cambridge, UK: German Historical Institute and Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp.277-294; and Wolfgang Kraushaar, *1968. Das Jahr, das alles verändert hat* (Munich: Piper, 1998).

⁵⁰ The literature on the New Social Movements in Germany is vast, but for a comprehensive introduction, see Roland Roth and Dieter Rucht, eds., *Die sozialen Bewegungen in Deutschland seit 1945. Ein Handbuch* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2008). Still profitable are: Christoph Butterwegge and Hans G. Jansen, eds., *Neue Soziale Bewegungen in einer alten Stadt. Versuch einer vorläufigen Bilanz am Beispiel Bremens* (Bremen: Steintor, 1992); Roland Roth and Dieter Rucht, eds., *Neue soziale Bewegungen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1987); Joachim Raschke, *Soziale Bewegungen. Ein historisch-systematischer Grundriß* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1985); and Karl-Werner Brand, Detlef Büsser, and Dieter Rucht, *Aufbruch in eine andere Gesellschaft: Neue soziale Bewegungen in der Bundesrepublik* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1983).

⁵¹ On the Greens, see Gayil Talshir, *The Political Ideology of Green Parties: From the Politic of Nature to Redefining the Nature of Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Thomas Scharf, *The German Greens: Challenging the Consensus* (Oxford: Berg, 1994); Andrei S. Markovits and Philip S. Gorski, *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1993); and E. Gene Frankland and Donald Schoonmaker, *Between Protest and Power: The Green Party in Germany* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992).

⁵² See Thomas Hertfelder and Andreas Rödder, eds., *Modell Deutschland. Erfolgsgeschichte oder Illusion?* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007); Anselm Doering-Manteuffel and Lutz Raphael, *Nach dem Boom: Perspektiven auf die Zeitgeschichte seit 1970* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008); and Konrad H.

of the new millennium in the 1970s, and as such, are not necessarily interested in writing the history of the 1970s and 1980s so much as they are in writing “the history of the present” in the words of Dietmar Süß.⁵³ We likewise have a vast literature on ‘1989’ and reunification—especially concerning political decision-making—which often stresses Germany’s return to the Western world after disastrous detours into fascism and state socialism, the triumph of democratic awakenings, and the victorious end of the Cold War.⁵⁴ Thus, while both ‘1968’ and ‘1989’ attract considerable attention, the marginal space in-between remains obscure, and even studies which do examine this period, the focus remains on institutional politics and the state, and not on how everyday West Germans experienced these decades.

Historical literature on East Germany is considerably more varied. Since the collapse of the Eastern state and opening of socialist archives, the past two decades have seen an explosion of studies detailing in minutiae the efforts by the state to exert control over the citizenry of the German Democratic Republic. Especially prominent here is work on the feared secret police (the Ministry for State Security or Stasi).⁵⁵ Scholars have offered several interpretative frameworks to understand how the SED state was able to survive for so long only to collapse so quickly. These theories range from a ‘totalitarian’ model of total control to a more benevolent ‘welfare dictatorship’ that offered benefits but demanded conformity and consent in exchange.⁵⁶ Others

Jaraus, ed., *Das Ende der Zuversicht? Die siebziger Jahre als Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008).

⁵³ Dietmar Süß, “En Route to a Post-Industrial Society? Western German Contemporary History Writing on the 1970s and 1980s,” *Contemporary European History*, Vol.18, Nr.4 (2009), pp.521-529.

⁵⁴ See Heinrich August Winkler, *Germany: The Long Road West*, 2 vols., trans. by Alexander J. Sager (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006-2007); and Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (London: William Heinemann, 2005).

⁵⁵ See Gary Bruce, *The Firm: The Inside Story of the Stasi* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010); Mike Dennis, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality* (London: Pearson, 2003); Jens Gieseke, *Mielke-Konzern: Die Geschichte der Stasi, 1945-1990* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2001); John O. Koehler, *Stasi: The Untold Story of the East German Secret Police* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999); and David Childs and Richard Popplewell, *The Stasi* (London: Macmillan, 1996).

⁵⁶ For the ‘totalitarian’ model, see especially Klaus Schroeder, *Der SED-Staat: Partei, Staat und Gesellschaft, 1949-1990* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1998). Konrad H. Jaraus has coined the term ‘welfare dictatorship.’ See

have tried to position themselves somewhere in between, suggesting that the state sought to “overrule” society even if such efforts were never total.⁵⁷ There has similarly been a host of studies, often written by participants themselves, illuminating the work of oppositional activists who resisted the demands of the state while working diligently—and often in extreme danger—to undermine the SED and eventually bring down the Berlin Wall.⁵⁸ While both dictatorship and resistance literatures stress opposing emphases in their interpretations of the rhythms of the GDR, they are nonetheless equally governed by a similar dichotomy that pits state versus society. Thus, in the literatures on both East and West Germany of the 1970s and 1980s, the focus often remains on institutional politics and the drama of the state with a corresponding neglect of how everyday Germans made sense of their lives under democracy or socialism.

Since the 1980s, however, scholars have begun excavating the complex cultural worlds of East and West Germans in an attempt to get a better appreciation of how ordinary citizens experienced life in both states. No longer content to piece together the flow of legislation or track the waxing and waning of protest parties, scholars have begun asking pertinent questions about how individuals understood their lives, experienced daily life, or made sense of their environs in an effort to better understand the past. Concerning the Federal Republic, we now have rich scholarship examining the immediate postwar period, and the 1950s and early 1960s. Scholars have detailed how West Germans rebuilt a nation shattered by dictatorship, division, and war, the rise in economic growth and consumerist drives, the impact of changing gender norms and sexuality, and the attempts to forge new national identities while overcoming the burdensome

Konrad H. Jarausch, “Care and Coercion: The GDR as Welfare Dictatorship,” in *Dictatorship as Experience*, ed., Konrad H. Jarausch (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 1999), pp.47-69.

⁵⁷ Jürgen Kocka, “Eine durchherrschte Gesellschaft,” in *Sozialgeschichte der DDR*, eds. Hartmut Kaeble et al. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1994), pp.547-553. The phrase was originally Alf Lüdtke’s, but Jürgen Kocka used it to formulate the theory. See Alf Lüdtke, “„Helden der Arbeit”—Mühen beim Arbeiten. Zur mißmutigen Loyalität von Industriearbeitern in der DDR,” in *Sozialgeschichte der DDR*, eds. Hartmut Kaeble et al. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1994), p.188.

⁵⁸ See Neubert, *Geschichte der Opposition in der DDR*.

Nazi past.⁵⁹ These works are valuable contributions to our understandings about how Germans in the West dealt with the legacy of Nazism and reconstructed their destroyed and divided nation.

But the real advances have been made in the study of the East due in large part to the vast archival material available to scholars of the ‘second dictatorship.’ In the last decade, a host of important studies have begun to explore the ‘limits of dictatorship’ as the title of one collection succinctly put it, in an attempt to study how ordinary East Germans experienced dictatorship as ‘normality.’⁶⁰ Examining what Mary Fulbrook has called the “honeycomb state,” scholars have begun investigating the deep interpenetration between state and society, and how the SED was pushed from the grass-roots as much as it pulled.⁶¹ These works have illuminated daily life ‘behind the Berlin Wall’ to quote another recent title, and are helpful in conceptualizing how everyday Germans experienced the state.⁶² Under this interpretative framework, the dichotomy between state and society collapses as the plethora of individual interests and concerns collide and are constantly reformed.⁶³ As these scholars suggest, by investigating the daily living patterns and the mundane worries of citizens, we can begin to paint a realistic picture of what life was like for a kid growing up in Düsseldorf or Magdeburg in the late 1970s. Unfortunately, as in

⁵⁹ See Puaca, *Learning Democracy*; Biess, *Homecomings*; Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*; Crew, ed., *Consuming Germany in the Cold War*; Frei, *Adenauer’s Germany and the Nazi Past*; Schissler, ed., *The Miracle Years*; Moeller, *War Stories*; Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*; Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make?*; Herf, *Divided Memory*; Carter, *How German Is She?*; Moeller, ed., *West Germany Under Construction*; and Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*.

⁶⁰ Richard Bessel and Ralph Jessen, eds., *Die Grenzen der Diktatur: Staat und Gesellschaft in der DDR* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996); and on ‘normality,’ Mary Fulbrook, ed., *Power and Society in the GDR, 1961-1979: The ‘Normalisation of Rule’?* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009).

⁶¹ Mary Fulbrook, *The People’s State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), pp.235-249.

⁶² Patrick Major, *Behind the Berlin Wall: East Germany and the Frontiers of Power* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁶³ See Jeannette Z. Madarasz, *Conflict and Compromise in East Germany, 1971-1989: A Precarious Stability* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Joshua Feinstein, *The Triumph of the Ordinary: Depictions of Daily Life in the East German Cinema, 1949-1989* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Mark Allinson, *Politics and Popular Opinion in East Germany, 1945-1968* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Corey Ross, *Constructing Socialism at the Grass-Roots: The Transformation of East Germany* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000); and Alan L. Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth: Historical Mythology and Youth Propaganda in the German Democratic Republic, 1945-1989* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999).

the West, the majority of these works remain located in the 1950s and 1960s, and the literatures on both German states desperately need to be extended into the 1970s and 1980s, one of the primary goals I have set for *Culture from the Slums*.

There are a number of reasons why examining popular music is an ideal medium for tracking the deep transformations taking place and advancing our understanding of both German societies during the latter half of the Cold War. Musical expression and cultural production can get at some of those alternative life-stories demanded by Geyer and Jarausch, and explore how debates about national identity or the impact of state initiatives affected the lives of everyday Germans. As numerous scholars have argued over the years, popular music is an excellent means of delineating the imbrication of state and society, and the ordinary and exceptional.⁶⁴ As a cultural entity into which tremendous meaning can be bestowed, rock'n'roll was appropriated by young Germans who undertook extensive efforts to conceptualize their nations, experiences and lives musically. Lyrics give us a sense of the concerns and interests occupying the minds of young Germans during this period while concert experiences suggest the desire for meaningful community. The debates circulating within the media facilitate our appreciation of how the margins and center constituted one another while recordings and musical production help us take stock in attempts to reorder society from the bottom-up and top-down. What becomes overwhelmingly apparent when examining the activities and initiatives undertaken by young Germans during this period is—to put it colloquially—they put their money where their mouths were as their politics increasingly found expression in the production of culture.⁶⁵ And these

⁶⁴ See Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton, eds., *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2003); Keith Negus, *Popular Music in Theory: An Introduction* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1996); Tony Bennett, Simon Frith, Lawrence Grossberg, John Shepherd, and Graeme Turner, eds., *Rock and Popular Music: Politics, Policies, Institution* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993); and Richard Middleton, *Studying Popular Music* (Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press, 1990).

⁶⁵ For classic statements on the imbrication between culture and politics, see James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988);

practices helped formulate—as William H. Sewell Jr. has argued—the “thin coherence” of cultural meaning that helped them understand their lives and experiences.⁶⁶ Especially relevant here is the genre punk which, as we will see, began as a form of grass-roots critique of the 1970s in the West and the SED regime in the East but quickly evolved into a receptacle whereby Germans in both countries could debate the nature of the past, present and future, part of the explanation for its immense popularity and relevance today.

Music has historically often been at the heart of efforts to define and constitute German identity and belonging. Whether in Felix Mendelssohn’s revival of Bach’s St. Matthew Passion in 1829 or in Richard Wagner’s attempt to define Germanness through music in his 1878 tract *What is German?* or even in Commandant Rudolf Höss’ order that Jewish prisoners perform concerts on Sunday afternoons in Auschwitz, throughout German history, music has often been instrumental in the pursuit of personal and national rejuvenation, perhaps more so in Germany than in any other country.⁶⁷ As historians Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter have put it, the concepts ‘German’ and ‘music’ merge so seamlessly that their connection is “hardly ever questioned.”⁶⁸ Why? What are the consequences of this association? Studying punk facilitates an exploration into how popular music became an arena for debates about national and individual identity in the 1970s and 1980s, and offers the possibility of examining how in both German states, individuals used punk to posit alternative forms of identity and community in opposition

Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983); and Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

⁶⁶ William H. Sewell, Jr., “The Concept(s) of Culture,” in *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture*, eds., Victoria Bonnell and Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp.35-61, here 49-50.

⁶⁷ Celia Applegate, *Bach in Berlin: Nation and Culture in Mendelssohn’s Revival of the St. Matthew Passion* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005); Shirli Gilbert, *Music in the Holocaust: Confronting Life in the Nazi Ghettos and Camps* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005); and Hannu Salmi, *Imagined Germany: Richard Wagner’s National Utopia* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999).

⁶⁸ Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter, “Germans as the “People of Music”: Genealogy of an Identity,” in *Music and German National Identity*, eds. Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), p.1.

to mainstream society. Through punk, we can gain insight into how culture was understood during these decades—especially imported foreign culture—and how state and society response to the genre, tells us much about the similarities and differences between democratic and socialist societies. In doing so, we can see how punk is part of a long tradition of defining Germanness through the arts, and as a catalyst for political consolidation and resistance to cultural and political hegemony.

The historiography of punk is extensive if incomplete. Both the American and British cases have been minutely documented. But as is common in the history of rock'n'roll—what we can call 'rock'n'roll myopia'⁶⁹—punk has generally been the preserve of journalists, rock critics, and especially former protagonists whose study of the British and American cases slip into easy sensationalism, parochialism, over-the-top claims and a penchant for only relating the musical genre to the history of popular music. While we have extensive treatments of punk in the 1970s—especially of the New York and London scenes—the literature is overwhelmingly episodic and rarely tracks the longer socio-cultural changes that punk expressed and helped inaugurate. The anecdotal nature of punk literature is both reflective and is reinforced by the fact that oral history has been the dominant historical methodology of the genre. Thus the necessity for a detailed analysis of punk from an expansive vantage point is a corrective, especially locating the wider cultural and social inflections that punk has inspired. The emphasis on the subjective has provided students of the genre with rich veins of sources to mine, and building upon this foundation, scholars have made a number of critical interventions by focusing on punk's relations to politics, gender, religion, race, and, above all, class by especially the sociologists working at the renowned Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham

⁶⁹ I would like to thank Peter Fritzsche for this term.

during the 1970s and 1980s.⁷⁰ Scholars have even begun tracking punk on the periphery far away from New York and London, exploring how the genre was transmitted across cultures and rearticulated in differing locales, a trend to which my study contributes.⁷¹

And yet, despite these important beginnings, our body of knowledge on punk—especially globally—is dated and lacking, and the historiography of punk in Germany reflects the same limitations that we have observed present in the Anglo-American context. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the genre generated tremendous commentary as contemporaries in both East and West Germany tried to make sense of the subculture, to explain its origins, goals, and impact on society. While punk was infrequently lumped in with the growing literature on the New Social Movements by critics who then (as now) were focused on the institutional political nature of these groups, the commentary on punk at the time reflected contemporary attempts to understand the many alternative projects emerging out of the Leftist milieu. Despite a lull of interest in the 1990s, the new millennium witnessed an enormous resurgence of attention to the genre and we will explore precisely why this punk renaissance happened when it did in the Epilogue of this study since it is representative of how punk has helped individuals deal with the rigors of reunification and is reflective of the larger memory-culture of modern Germany as a whole. And while we have countless studies of punk in the United Kingdom and the United States, not a single monograph on the German punk scene in English exists, despite the subculture’s tremendous cultural and political resonance.

⁷⁰ For a detailed history of these developments, see Dennis Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism in Postwar Britain: History, the New Left, and the Origins of Cultural Studies* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997). For a reflective consideration of the role of theory in the development of the CCCS by the former director, see Stuart Hall, “Cultural Studies and the Centre: some problematics and problems,” in *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79* (London: Hutchinson, 1980), pg.15-47.

⁷¹ See Emma Baulch, *Making Scenes: Reggae, Punk, and Death Metal in 1990s Bali* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007); and Anna Szemere, *Up from the Underground: The Culture of Rock Music in Postsocialist Hungary* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001).

In comparing punk in both states moreover we can assess how both democratic capitalism and state socialism dealt with alternative cultural politics and a musical genre not rooted in the German tradition. What becomes clear is that Western democracy was able to integrate cultural politics that included significant dissent and opposition much more effectively than authoritarian socialism. While this conclusion may not be particularly dramatic, what is remarkable is how punk criticism in the Federal Republic in fact worked to strengthen democracy by giving space to individuals to develop diverse pluralities of identities and institutions and thus emancipating marginal communities. In the East, by contrast, the opposite took place as criticism continually eroded legitimacy and the alternative affiliations promoted by punk worked to weaken state socialism. Despite punk's incendiary rhetoric, the intent of the genre in the West was never to overthrow parliamentary government but to give individuals dissatisfied with life in the Federal Republic a chance to explore alternative desires and participate in unconventional communities which the capitalist and democratic system was able to accommodate. Of course, punk provoked debate over the precise limits of alternative expression and its constitution. But it was precisely through these conflicts that the genre helped strengthen democracy. In this manner, the West was infinitely more flexible than the East in terms of integrating criticism into the very structures of daily life. By contrast, punk opposition in the East threatened the state almost immediately and reactions such as repression only undermined the regime further. Whereas opposition was quickly incorporated into the hegemonic structures of the West, in the East, dissent remained outside and thus could function as a platform for destructive opposition. Indeed, capitalism and democracy were so successful at co-opting punk opposition that by 1983, the genre had for all intents and purposes ceased to function as a producer of alternatives, whereas in the East, punk remained antagonistic until the very end of

the SED regime. By studying punk in comparative national contexts, we can get a better understanding of how competing ideological nation-states were able to institutionalize dissent (or not) and how cultural politics are critical in helping us to comprehend the final two decades of the Cold War.

It is here that *Alltagsgeschichte* or the history of everyday-life has the potential for enriching our understanding of the 1970s and 1980s. Emerging in West Germany in the 1980s in response to the dominance of the Bielefeld school of social history, *Alltagsgeschichte* proposed “a shift in the perspectives of historical knowledge” privileging the everyday world, rather than a top-down view that political history tends towards.⁷² While not a methodology with a particular historical subject, *Alltagsgeschichte* nonetheless provides the empirical tools to re-orient our view about how people experienced everyday power hierarchies, constructed networks and institutions, and adapted to external influences in the process of negotiating social reality.⁷³ As such, locating historical study in the behaviors, practices, and relations of individuals on the micro-level is central to de-centering the state centered political narratives that Geyer and Jarusch have criticized: as one example among many, we will see how the year 1983 for both Eastern and Western punks (though for very different reasons) was the critical moment in the

⁷² Thomas Lindenberger, “Everyday History: New Approaches to the History of the Post-War Germanies,” in *The Divided Past: Rewriting Post-War German History*, ed., Christoph Kleßmann (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), p.46. For a longer exposition on the uses of *Alltagsgeschichte* for GDR history, see Thomas Lindenberger, “Die Diktatur der Grenzen. Zur Einleitung,” in *Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn in der Diktatur. Studien zur Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR*, ed., Thomas Lindenberger (Cologne: Böhlau, 1999), pp.13-44.

⁷³ While not a programmatic statement, the collection is representative of *Alltagsgeschichte*: Alf Lüdtke, ed., *The History of Everyday Life. Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life*, trans. W. Templer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995) [originally published as Alf Lüdtke, ed., *Alltagsgeschichte. Zur Rekonstruktion historischer Erfahrungen und Lebensweisen* (New York and Frankfurt: Campus, 1989)]. For two older statements on *Alltagsgeschichte*, see Geoff Eley, “Labor History, Social History, *Alltagsgeschichte*: Experience, Culture, and the Politics of the Everyday—a New Direction for German Social History?” *Journal of Modern History*, Vol.61, Nr.2 (June 1989), pp.297-343; and David F. Crew, “*Alltagsgeschichte*: A New Social History “From Below”?” *Central European History*, Vol.22, Nr.3-4 (1989), pp.394-407. For a recent overview of the methodology and its interpretative benefits, see Paul Steege, Andrew Stuart Bergerson, Maureen Healy, and Pamela E. Swett, “The History of Everyday Life: A Second Chapter,” in *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol.80, Nr.2 (June 2008), pp.358-378.

history of German punk, and not ‘1968’ or ‘1989’ as normative narratives of the postwar years generally postulate.

The most important and influential theoretical models associated with Alltagsgeschichte have been Alf Lüdtke’s twin concepts of *Herrschaft* and *Eigen-Sinn*, concepts that inform my (and many others’) reading of German history.⁷⁴ Translated roughly as ‘(political) domination’ and ‘self(ish)ness’ (or the ‘pursuit of one’s own interests’), *Herrschaft* and *Eigen-Sinn* can usefully be deployed to explore how individual agency and collective groupings perceive and interpret reality, how state and society demands are balanced with individual goals and adapted ambitions, and how social reality itself is continually being negotiated and reconstructed by external pressure and internal push-back. *Herrschaft* and *Eigen-Sinn* are means of exploring—again in Lindenberger’s words—the “permanent interrelation and mutual interpenetration of ‘*Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn*,’ of the imperatives of political domination and the interests, needs and commitments inherent to the way people tried to live *their* lives.”⁷⁵ Whereas the concepts of domination and *Eigen-Sinn* have perhaps found their best articulation in the historiography of the GDR, this study examines these concepts both in the GDR and FRG, in the case of the latter through a ‘soft despotism’ of mainstream conformity and consensus rather than outright dictatorship.⁷⁶ Alltagsgeschichte thus has the potential to help us better understand how people and not states experienced these decades by detailing their belief systems, motivations, and

⁷⁴ See especially Alf Lüdtke, “Cash, Coffee-Breaks, Horseplay: *Eigensinn* and Politics among Factory Workers in Germany circa 1900,” in *Confrontation. Class Consciousness, and the Labor Process. Studies in Proletarian Class Formation*, eds., Michael Hanagan and Charles Stephenson (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986), pp.65-95; Alf Lüdtke, ed., *Herrschaft als soziale Praxis. Historische und sozial-anthropologische Studien* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991); and Alf Lüdtke, *Eigen-Sinn. Fabrikalltag, Arbeitererfahrungen und Politik vom Kaiserreich bis in den Faschismus* (Hamburg: Ergebnisse Verlag, 1993).

⁷⁵ Thomas Lindenberger, “Everyday History: New Approaches to the History of the Post-War Germanies,” in *The Divided Past: Rewriting Post-War German History*, ed., Christoph Kleßmann (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), p.52.

⁷⁶ For example, see the collection Alf Lüdtke and Peter Becker, eds., *Akten. Eingaben. Schaufenster. Die DDR und ihre Texte: Erkundungen zu Herrschaft und Alltag* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997).

practices that help us better understand how social reality is constructed by subjective responses and appropriations to objective structures.⁷⁷

The source material for this study makes Alltagsgeschichte a particularly well-informed methodology for the exploration of everyday life. What makes the post-1960s period so rich and exciting is the emergence of a host of non-governmental organizations, local collectives and associations, and especially the explosion of the mainstream and alternative press. The grass-roots politico-cultural movements that emerged during the post-1960s era—the women’s movement, the ecological movement, the peace movement, and, in this case, punk—brought with them a democratization of the historical source base. In the West, fanzines, independent newspapers, recordings, images, and films document in minute detail the activities of young Germans as they embarked on efforts of renovation. And in the past ten years, an explosion of ‘punk memory’ has taken place—exhibitions, oral histories, memoirs—which further complement the existing materials and which will be a source of discussion in the epilogue. That groups such as punk sought to carve out alternative space tells us that we need to look beyond federal archives if we are to tell their stories. Moreover, popular music culture—with its emphases on materiality and collecting—contributes decisively in enabling the scholar to reconstruct the ebb and flow of the West German punk scene from the ground up.

For East Germany, the situation is radically different. The collapse of the socialist state has produced the peculiar situation in that the files of the dictatorship are much more accessible than that of the democracy, one of the primary reasons why historiography on the GDR is much more advanced than literature on the FRG. In East Germany, early on, punk was politicized by

⁷⁷ Reinhard Sieder calls this the ‘praxeological mode of knowledge’: “the double constitution of social reality by both ‘objective’ structures and ‘subjective’ appropriation results in a continuous change of perspectives in historiographical practice itself.” See Thomas Lindenberger, “Everyday History: New Approaches to the History of the Post-War Germanies,” in *The Divided Past: Rewriting Post-War German History*, ed., Christoph Kleßmann (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), p.48.

the state which sought its eradication from GDR society, and as such, state concerns were tremendously consequential for the subculture, and this is reflective in the fact that I use significantly more government sources than in the West, especially the files of the former secret police. So while on the one hand, state records are indispensable for telling the story of East German punk, on the other, they are not as necessary for the history of West German punk and it is precisely these source unbalances and convergences that lend punk so well to a comparative study of East and West.⁷⁸ While the alternative press in the East was relatively nonexistent when compared with the West, nonetheless, a tremendous amount of interviews, recordings, pictures, and print material appeared in Western publications. As part of Eastern punk's efforts at challenging the SED information dictatorship, these all help shed light on the Ostpunk scene. Moreover, what will become evident from my use of state files is that the scholar can read these sources backwards to illuminate the concerns of the state vis-à-vis society which helps to reconstruct the interpenetration between both entities. Early on I decided not to undertake official interviews (though I talked with participants informally). Since my study is not an oral history, I felt that interview material would only figure as additional details and would not substantially rework my findings methodologically. Moreover, since significant source material that I use comes from published oral histories or interviews, I felt that participant accounts are already well represented. I leave it up to the next researcher to write an oral history of German punk.

In Chapter 1, I provide a background sketch of the history of music in Germany. Tracing the rise to prominence of music as a source for national identity and personal politics over the course of the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries, I explore the political, social and cultural transformations experienced in the postwar era to help explain why punk found such fertile roots

⁷⁸ See the comments on the unbalance of sources by Thomas Lindenberger, "Everyday History: New Approaches to the History of the Post-War Germanies," in *The Divided Past: Rewriting Post-War German History*, ed., Christoph Kleßmann (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), pp.58-59.

in divided Germany. Beginning with Part I, I look at the establishment of punk in West Germany in the late 1970s, how members of the subculture sought to define the genre based on notions of authenticity, and how expansion, popularity, and consumerism came together to create a crisis of authenticity for the subculture in 1983. In Chapter 2, I sketch how punk came to West Germany via the media and the energy of ‘punk tourists’ who put their foreign knowledge into practice and carved out thriving scenes in Düsseldorf, Hamburg and West Berlin. In Chapter 3, I examine the role of Alfred Hilsberg, a journalist at *Sounds*, who saw in punk the kernel of a new German popular music culture, and tried to articulate and popularize a political ideology that was to inform the subculture in the coming years with its emphasis on experimentation, diversity, do-it-yourself activism, and what has come to be known as *Anderssein*. In Chapter 4, I explore how youths used punk to explore Germanness and began working through contemporary concerns in a radically subjective manner as the genre became caught up in larger debates about national and individual identity. Efforts to develop a new popular music form rooted in German lyrics and German sounds were controversial and began to rent the subculture between the so-called Kunstpunks who favored more experimental music and Hardcores who favored more hard-rock. In Chapter 5, I explore the various Do-It-Yourself (DIY) projects that punk called into being to flesh out the institutional structures of the subculture. As the genre expanded, youths across the Federal Republic wrote fanzines, set up clubs and independent record labels to sell punk products at record stores. However, by the early 1980s, as a result of expansion and popularity, West German punk attracted the interest of the music industry which commodified the subculture and released a watered-down version called the *Neue Deutsche Welle* (New German Wave or NDW). In Chapter 6, I examine how the NDW-boom forced punks into an existential choice between consumerism and authenticity. Finally, in Chapter 7, I explore the consequences

of the NDW and how the commercialization of punk discredited the Kunstpunk variant while elevating Hardcore. Convinced after the experience of the NDW that state and society was bent on destroying the genre, punks retreated into a subcultural ghetto filled with violence and extremism that closed down the possibilities of *Anderssein*.

In Part II, I detail the arrival of punk in the GDR, and the consequences of transnational cultural transfer for East Germany. In Chapter 8, I examine the emergence of punk in the GDR, its ideology and structures, and why youths flocked to the subculture. By comparing the ideology of East German punk with the already described Western version, I explore the similarities and differences between the two states. In Chapter 9, my focus shifts to state responses to punk, and especially that of the secret police or Stasi. In 1983, the state moved to repress the punk subculture by declaring ‘Harte gegen Punk,’ and I look at how and why the SED decided to react as it did after several years of uneasy tolerance. In Chapter 10, I explore the consequences of ‘Harte gegen Punk.’ Forced to seek shelter in the Protestant Churches, the punk subculture became incorporated into the emerging oppositional groups of the mid-1980s and would provide the soundtrack and foot-soldiers in the coming protests against the state. Finally, in Chapter 11, I again turn to the state and explore how the SED tried to dilute the genre’s resistant message by promoting a group of state-sponsored punk bands called ‘die anderen Bands’ in the final years of the GDR. I end with an Epilogue that considers the memory of punk in reunited Germany and how the history of the subculture is indicative of efforts to make incomplete national halves whole again.

Chapter 1: The German Autumn: Popular Music in East and West Germany in the 1970s

‘Are you living?’: Popular Music and German History

For many youths during the 1970s and 1980s, punk provided the answer to the question posed by a Hamburg fanzine in the mid-1980s—“Living means more than simply existing: Are you living?”⁷⁹ Music has historically been influential in the politics of individual and national identity in the German-speaking lands, and in order to understand how punk became invested with such political import, it is necessary to review how ‘German’ and ‘music’ became so imbricated. Over the course of the nineteenth-century, classical music rose to prominence as a means to articulate national identity. These beliefs were transferred to the field of popular music in the first-half of the twentieth-century as light entertainment music—dance and swing tunes, Schlager, and jazz—rose to prominence. Following the destructiveness of the Second World War, Germans returned to music as a means of rejuvenating the nation in both its democratic and socialist variant. When considering the history of postwar popular music in East and West Germany, we can divide the epoch into three chronological periods: reconstruction (1945-1956), rebellion (1956-1971), and reinvention (1971-1989). While there was considerable overlap among these phases, this rough periodization is helpful in thinking through the meanings and directions of popular music in both states since the end of the Second World War, how rock’n’roll can help us better understand the postwar years, and why punk has come to mean so much for so many Germans since the 1970s.

Historians agree that the first associations between music and national identity are to be found in the latter half of the eighteenth-century when ‘Germany’ was still a ‘geographical

⁷⁹ *Hamburger Mottenpost*, Nr.2 (Hamburg: 1986), n.p.

expression,' to borrow Klemens von Metternich's celebrated phrase.⁸⁰ In the years prior and after the French Revolution, composers and cultural critics vaguely gestured towards some sort of nominal cultural unity in the German lands.⁸¹ However, confined as they were to courts and town churches which were regional and provincial in their orientation, it was writers on music—critics and journalists—rather than musicians who were instrumental in locating Germanness in musical artistry, especially during and after the Napoleonic campaigns.⁸² While music ranked far behind literature and language in national traditions or constructions of cultural identity, over the course of the nineteenth-century, music increasingly gained prominence.⁸³ In part, the growing civic associational life in German towns facilitated an explosion of singing groups, orchestras, and choirs that became the backbone to the rising power and influence of the bourgeoisie whose taste cultures largely shaped the 'imagined' German nation.⁸⁴ The growing prestige of music can be seen by the changes in listening patterns among audiences: whereas a century before, orchestras had provided background noise for card games, by the second-half of the nineteenth-century,

⁸⁰ For an overview on the rise of German nationalism, see Hagen Schulze, *The Course of German Nationalism: From Frederick the Great to Bismarck, 1763-1867*, trans. Sarah Hanbury-Tenison (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991). For music's place within the emerging association of culture and German national identity, see James Sheehan, *German History, 1770-1866* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp.144-206, esp. pp.151-152.

⁸¹ See Schulze, *The Course of German Nationalism*, pp.54-55; and Thomas Nipperdey, *Germany from Napoleon to Bismarck 1800-1866*, trans. by Daniel Nolan (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1996), pp.262-274.

⁸² Mary Sue Morrow, "Building a National Identity with Music: A Story from the Eighteenth Century," in *Searching for Common Ground: Diskurse zur deutschen Identität 1750-1871*, ed., Nicholas Vazsonyi (Cologne: Böhlau, 2000), pp.255-269.

⁸³ On the importance of literature and language in the development of national identity, among others, see Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London and New York: Verso, 1991); and Ernst Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983). For an excellent overview of the transformation of marginal profession to cultural dominance over the course of the nineteenth-century, see Tim Blanning, *The Triumph of Music: The Rise of Composers, Musicians and Their Art* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 2008). On Germany specifically, see Barbara Eichner, *History in Might Sounds: Musical Constructions of German National Identity, 1848-1914* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2012); and Ryan Minor, *Choral Fantasies: Music, Festivity, and Nationhood in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (New York: Cambridge, 2012).

⁸⁴ Antje Pieper, *Music and the Making of Middle-Class Culture: A Comparative History of Nineteenth-Century Leipzig and Birmingham* (New York: Palgrave, 2008). See also Sheehan, *German History, 1770-1866*, pp.533-535; and Nipperdey, *Germany from Napoleon to Bismarck*, pp.472-474.

concert performances were essential aspects of social standing.⁸⁵ By the mid-nineteenth-century, the concept of the *Kulturnation* was used by nationalists to signify the cultural unification of Germany that politically remained fragmented.⁸⁶ Unification brought with it an intensification of musical life—concerts, orchestras, operas, professionalization—that became indices of national strength and prestige in the international arena as the newly forged nation-state began flexing its muscles.⁸⁷ Composers such as Beethoven and especially Wagner began locating the moral and spiritual fortitude of peoples and states in musical production.⁸⁸ By the turn-of-the-century, then, the German musical tradition had been established and the association ‘German’ and ‘music’ as a single concept was complete: it is telling in this regard that compositions then as now are often compared to those produced by the three Bs—Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms—whose work has become a central part of the Western musical canon.⁸⁹

But it took the First World War and the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 for the potential instrumentalization of music in the interests of the modern state to become fully realized. Artists were mobilized by all combatants to contribute to the war effort, and once fighting had ended, to commemorate their sacrifices.⁹⁰ Under communism in the USSR, musical instruction became a central part of efforts to educate individuals as proper ‘comrades’ in the interests of world-wide revolution.⁹¹ The politicization of music was likewise to be found on the contested streets of

⁸⁵ See James H. Johnston, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

⁸⁶ See Sheehan, *German History, 1770-1866*, pp.836-852, and Nipperdey, *Germany from Napoleon to Bismarck*, pp.267-268, 484-488.

⁸⁷ See, for example, the important *Cäcilien Verein* that sought to reform church music for German Catholics during the late 19th and early 20th century and its deep political imbrications. Margaret Stieg Dalton, *Catholicism, Popular Culture, and the Arts in Germany, 1880-1933* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), pp.151-162.

⁸⁸ For Beethoven’s contradictory political outlook, see David Dennis, *Beethoven in German Politics, 1870-1989* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), pp.24-31.

⁸⁹ Applegate and Potter, “Germans as the “People of Music,”” p.1.

⁹⁰ See Glenn Watkins, *Proof through the Night: Music and the Great War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

⁹¹ Marina Frolova-Walker and Jonathan Walker, *Music and Soviet Power, 1917-1932* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2012); Neil Edmunds, ed., *Soviet Music and Society under Lenin and Stalin: The Baton and Sickle*

Weimar Germany, as both KPD and NSDAP incorporated musical content and form into their marches and called for bans on supposed ‘communist’ or ‘fascist’ performances in their politics of democratic de-stabilization.⁹² With the Nazi seizure to power in 1933, music became a central institution in the consolidation of the racial state and the power hierarchies of the regime.⁹³ Everyday citizens were expected to cultivate their racial selves by listening to ‘German’ music such as Wagner or performing ‘Germanic’ tunes, key activities denoting individual participation in the collective Volksgemeinschaft.⁹⁴ Under the Nazis, Goebbels wielded enormous political authority as head of the Reich Chamber of Culture, the umbrella organization governing musical life in the Third Reich, and defining musical Germanness became a means of inclusion and exclusion. ‘Deviant’ musical forms such as jazz that was associated with ‘degeneracy’ and ‘Jews’ were used by individuals to protest state policies, or ostracized by the Nazi state that persecuted non-conformist musicians and shipped ‘racial offenders’ off to the death camps in the East: under the Nazis, musical taste, interest, and allegiance became a matter of life and death.⁹⁵ Thus by the end of the Nazi era, music in its myriad forms, genres, and practices, has functioned as a means of asserting cultural and national distinctiveness, and as a vehicle for identity politics for well over a century.

(London: Routledge, 2009); and Amy Nelson, *Music for the Revolution: Musicians and Power in Early Soviet Russia* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004).

⁹² For a comparison of composition under authoritarian governments, see Friedrich Geiger, *Musik in zwei Diktaturen. Verfolgung von Komponisten unter Hitler und Stalin* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2004).

⁹³ Michael H. Kater and Albrecht Riethmüller, eds., *Music and Nazism: Art under Tyranny, 1933-1945* (Laaber: Laaber, 2003); Michael H. Kater, *Composers of the Nazi Era: Eight Portraits* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Pamela M. Potter, *Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the End of Hitler's Reich* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Michael H. Kater, *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and their Music in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); and Alan E. Steinweis, *Art, Ideology & Economics in Nazi Germany: The Reich Chambers of Music, Theater, and the Visual Arts* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

⁹⁴ Brian Currid, *A National Acoustics: Music and Mass Publicity in Weimar and Nazi Germany* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

⁹⁵ See Michael H. Kater, *Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

Reconstruction, 1945-1956: Rebuilding German Musical Cultures

War's end did not cease music's politicized condition in Germany, nor its role as a medium for national and individual aspirations. During the first decade of the postwar period, both American and Soviet authorities sought to quickly reconstruct musical life destroyed by dictatorship, war and genocide. As a number of scholars have now shown, these efforts were part and parcel of the emerging Cold War rivalry as music was used to integrate both German states into the competing blocs while at the same time, helping to foster either democratic or socialist ideals in an effort to eradicate all traces of Nazism among the German populace.⁹⁶ In the West on 4 May 1945, already before the official end of the war, Radio Hamburg had begun broadcasting and in the first two postwar years, the Allied High Commission, the authority governing the German state in the American, British, and French zones of occupation, re-established the dense German radio-net and a number of stations such as Südwestfunk (SWF) and Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk (NWDR) came on-air.⁹⁷ Along with the numerous Allied stations providing overseas servicemen with musical entertainment—American Forces Network (AFN), Rundfunk im amerikanischen Sektor (RIAS), and the British Forces Network (BFN)—the idea was to try and re-establish normal life as soon as possible, and light music on the radio was one means to do so.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Toby Thacker, *Music after Hitler, 1945-1955* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007); Amy C. Beal, *New Music, New Allies: American Experimental Music in West Germany from the Zero Hour to Reunification* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Elizabeth Janik, *Recomposing German Music: Politics and Musical Tradition in Cold War Berlin* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); David Monod, *Settling Scores: German Music, Denazification, and the Americans, 1945-1953* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005); and Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

⁹⁷ See Arnulf Kutsch, "Rundfunk unter alliierter Besatzung," in *Mediengeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, ed., Jürgen Wilke (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1999), pp.59-90.

⁹⁸ Konrad Dussel, *Deutsche Rundfunkgeschichte*, 3. Überarbeitete Auflage (Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2010).

In what was to become the Federal Republic of Germany, the centrality of music in these early postwar years was based on two increasingly interdependent premises. On the one hand, music was mobilized by both the Allies and local German authorities to reconstruct the defeated nation. Alert to the privations suffered by the German population and fearful that the Western zones of occupation would succumb to communist sympathies, authorities in the West sought to combat these tendencies with cultural and consumer offerings. What made musical life attractive for both Allies and German authorities was its cultural tradition stretching well back into the pre-1933 years and as such, could be mobilized relatively free from charges of Nazism: as the patchy de-nazification records suggest, most composers and musicians—even if deeply complicit with Nazi policies—were able to soon return to work.⁹⁹ In the late 1940s and early 1950s, as Germans tried to forge a post-Nazi present, music became part of these endeavors by supplying alternative forms of allegiance to the discredited nation-state, especially classical music that, it was argued, was misused by Nazism but under the correct stewardship could return to its (rightful) place in the Western cultural canon.¹⁰⁰ That certain music styles such as jazz or avant-garde experimentation were actively persecuted by the Nazis only enhanced their potential for democratic rehabilitation.¹⁰¹ On the other hand, music was also central to Allied and German efforts at integrating the state into the Western alliance with the United States in the emerging Cold War confrontation between the capitalist West and the communist East. To this end, musical offerings were promoted by the Allied authorities supervising the defeated nation as a means of inculcating the democratic spirit, especially through numerous American-German

⁹⁹ Both the family and Christianity were similarly salvaged since they were believed to have been relatively uncorrupted by Nazism. See Robert G. Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood: Women and the Family in the Politics of Postwar West Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). On de-nazification, see especially Thacker, *Music after Hitler*; Monod, *Settling Scores*; and Kater, *Composers of the Nazi Era*.

¹⁰⁰ Janik, *Recomposing German Music*.

¹⁰¹ Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*.

cultural exchanges and initiatives.¹⁰² While de-nazification trials in the immediate postwar years showed an incredible degree of complicity within the musical profession, fears that punishment would foster revanchist thought and the desire for quick re-integration meant that questionable conduct in the past was dismissed in favor of present exigencies.¹⁰³ When the Federal Republic came into being in 1949 as a result of currency reform, music began to play an even larger role in the growing conflict that increasingly split the world into two hostile ideological camps.

The increase and variety of musical offerings in the Federal Republic during the early 1950s shows the importance of music as a cultural commodity, especially since ‘entertainment’ music (Unterhaltungsmusik or ‘U-Musik’) was radically outpacing ‘serious’ music (Ernstmusik or ‘E-Musik’) in terms of audience sizes, listening patterns, and market share, numbers that point towards the greater import of the former to the latter: whereas in 1907, 63% of albums sold were classified as ‘E-Musik,’ by 1929, this number had fallen to 25%; in 1964, the divide between ‘U-Musik’ and ‘E-Musik’ had grown to 79.6% versus 20.4%; by 1968 it was at 86.9% to 13.1%; and by 1980, the percentage of classical music broadcast on the radio had dropped to a mere 8%.¹⁰⁴ The entertainment musical form that dominated Western airwaves during reconstruction was Schlager (meaning ‘hits’), a genre featuring catchy melodies and easy listening, with songs about mountains, sunny lakes, and the joys of simple life and love.¹⁰⁵ Tracing its roots to

¹⁰² Beal, *New Music, New Allies*.

¹⁰³ Thacker, *Music after Hitler*; Monod, *Settling Scores*; and Kater, *Composers of the Nazi Era*.

¹⁰⁴ See Hanna Brunhöber, “Unterhaltungsmusik,” in *Die Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Band 4: Kultur*, ed., Wolfgang Benz, aktualisierte und erweiterte Neuauflage (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1989), p.169; and Konrad Dussel, “The Triumph of English-Language Pop Music: West German Radio Programming,” in *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980*, eds. Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), p.135.

¹⁰⁵ On Schlager, see Christoph Nonn, “Der Schlager und die westdeutsche Gesellschaft nach 1945,” in *Musik – Macht – Staat. Kulturelle, soziale und politische Wandlungsprozesse in der Moderne*, eds., Sabine Macking and Yvonne Wasserloos (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Rupprecht, 2012), pp.259-286; Julio Mendivil, *Ein musikalisches Stück Heimat. Ethnologisches Beobachtungen zum deutschen Schlager* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2008); Edward Larkey, “Just for Fun? Language Choice in German Popular Music,” in *Global Pop, Local Language*, eds., Harris M. Berger and Michael Thomas Carroll (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2003), pp.131-151; and Elmar Krauschaar, *Rote Lippen. Die ganze Welt des deutschen Schlagers* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1983).

nineteenth-century Viennese light music, the genre's increase in popularity during the 1920s and 1930s was intimately linked to the rise of the gramophone and the increase in musical production and consumption of light music during this period.¹⁰⁶ In the immediate postwar period, there was a tremendous revival in Schlager; by the 1950s and early 1960s, artists such as Freddy Quinn and Conny Froboess had sold millions of records. Sung in German, the thematic contents of Schlager oscillated lyrically between sentimental love songs about home and romantic escapades in far-away locales, a tension between the familiar and the exotic that some have suggested represents a certain moral disorientation following the experience of fascism.¹⁰⁷ But in utilizing the native tongue, Schlager was considered—especially by young radicals in the 1960s as we shall shortly see—provincial and conservative, a reactionary and nostalgic genre that idealized a timeless past that National Socialism and modernity had destroyed, part of the postwar Heimat movement that dominated German cultural offerings during the reconstruction period.¹⁰⁸ And it is this rejection of all things 'German' that helps explain in part the wide appeal of rock'n'roll that defines the second phase of popular music in postwar German history during the 1960s.

In the East, socialist efforts were likewise committed to reconstructing defeated Germany, though, as the self-proclaimed 'anti-fascist state,' the German Democratic Republic was theoretically unburdened by the legacy of Nazism having made a complete break with the

¹⁰⁶ Edward Larkey, "Postwar German Popular Music: Americanization, the Cold War, and the Post-Nazi-Heimat" in *Music and German National Identity*, eds. Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp.235-237.

¹⁰⁷ See Osman Durrani, "Popular music in the German-speaking world," in *Contemporary German Cultural Studies*, ed., Alison Phipps (London: Arnold, 2002), pp.201-204.

¹⁰⁸ M.O.C. Döpfner and Thomas Garms, *Neue deutsche Welle. Kunst oder Mode? Eine sachliche Polemik für und wider die neudeutsche Popmusik* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1984), p.14. On the postwar Heimat movement, see Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); and Alon Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance: Promises and Limits of Writing History* (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

past and could focus on the creation of a distinct workers popular music culture.¹⁰⁹ In the immediate postwar years, the Soviet Military Administration of Germany (SMAD) quickly recognized the importance popular music would play rebuilding a Soviet satellite state: already by the summer of 1945, SMAD had re-established radio broadcasting.¹¹⁰ The desire was to use popular music—swing, light entertainment, Schlager, dance, and later jazz and rock’n’roll (once these forms became acceptable)—to educate the general public and mould them into proper socialist citizens.¹¹¹ The question, however, always remained: what was proper socialist popular music?¹¹² While the SED was never able to develop a comprehensive definition, especially in the early years—a conundrum explaining the various moral panics and repressions over new genres of popular music entering the GDR—authorities usually pointed towards indigenous East German forms and specific ‘worker and peasant’ content rather than Western copies.¹¹³ Nonetheless, despite theoretical vagueness, popular music was considered an important part of socialist cultural policy and a form of ideological training similar to other programs incorporating leisure and edification—the various activities of the FDJ or the Young Pioneers come to mind—popular music was intended as fun but also educational.

Rebellion, 1956-1971: Rock’n’Roll and Revolt in Divided Germany

¹⁰⁹ See Alan L. Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth: Historical Mythology and Youth Propaganda in the German Democratic Republic, 1945-1989* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999); and Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1997).

¹¹⁰ Bernd Lindner, *DDR: Rock & Pop* (Cologne: Komet Verlag, 2008), pp.13-14.

¹¹¹ See Mark Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs and Rock ‘n’ Roll: Teenage Rebels in Cold-War East Germany* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009); and Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*.

¹¹² See Kerstin Armborst-Weihs, “Musik als ‘Waffe des sozialistischen Aufbaus’? Zum Musikleben in der Sowjetunion zwischen Parteidoktrin und Avantgarde,” in *Musik – Macht – Staat. Kulturelle, soziale und politische Wandlungsprozesse in der Moderne*, eds., Sabine Macking and Yvonne Wasserloos (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Rupprecht, 2012), pp.215-238.

¹¹³ See especially Toby Thacker, “The fifth column: dance music in the early German Democratic Republic”, in *The Workers’ and Peasants’ State: Communism and Society in East Germany under Ulbricht, 1945-1971*, Patrick Major and Jonathan Osmond, eds. (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp.227-243.

The arrival of rock'n'roll to both German states in the mid-1950s and then the explosion of Beat music following the enormous international success of the Beatles in the early 1960s, signals the shift into the second, rebellious phase of the postwar history of popular music. By the time Elvis set foot in Bremerhaven on 1 October 1958 to begin his military service, rock'n'roll fever had overtaken the Federal Republic. Transmitted especially by films such as *Blackboard Jungle* (1955) and *Rock Around The Clock* (1956), new technologies such as jukeboxes (50,000 in West Germany by 1960), and music by artists such as Elvis Presley, Bill Haley, Chuck Berry and Little Richard, rock'n'roll spread like wildfire across the Federal Republic beginning in 1955.¹¹⁴ In the late 1950s, dance-halls and record stores began catering to young Germans whose consumptive desires and increased spending-power combined to contribute to the booming economy, while a number of youth magazines such as *Bravo*, first published on 26 August 1956 and within three years had 1.66 million readers, began directing youth tastes.¹¹⁵ Accompanying this expansion were controversies over the rebellious behavior of rock'n'roll fans—between 1956 and 1958, for example, as many as 93 riots broke-out involving crowds of youths over fifty—as these debates were wrapped up in German efforts at reconstituting gender norms and Cold War identity following Nazism and war.¹¹⁶ The enormous international success of the Beatles in the early 1960s only accelerated these trends. The Star-Club, one of the dives along Hamburg's Reeperbahn where the Beatles first got their start, was visited by one million visitors

¹¹⁴ Stiftung Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, ed., *Rock! Jugend und Musik in Deutschland* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2005), p.36.

¹¹⁵ Stiftung Haus der Geschichte, *Rock! Jugend und Musik in Deutschland*, p.36. On *Bravo*, see Kaspar Maase, *Bravo Amerika: Erkundungen zur Jugendkultur der Bundesrepublik in den fünfziger Jahren* (Hamburg: Junius Verlag, 1992).

¹¹⁶ Stiftung Haus der Geschichte, *Rock! Jugend und Musik in Deutschland*, pg.37. On the debates about rebellious behavior among youths, see Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*.

a year in 1965.¹¹⁷ Countless German ‘Beat bands’ formed during the 1960s and began playing Anglo-American-style rock’n’roll. By the end of the 1960s, giant rock festivals were taking place on German soil: Jimi Hendrix even played his last show ever in West Germany at the Love-and-Peace Open Air festival on the island of Fehmarn on 6 September 1970.¹¹⁸

Essential in the reception and appropriation of American-style rock’n’roll into the Federal Republic was the discovery of ‘youth.’ One of the key developments influencing the emergence of youth culture was the major demographic changes occurring in the Western world. The so-called ‘baby boom’ following the end of the Second World War had transformed West German society: while at the end of the 1950s, less than a quarter of West Germans were under the age of 15, by 1970/1971, 43 percent of the population was under 30.¹¹⁹ These numbers speak to a society growing younger but more importantly, to the corresponding import of youth and youth culture in said society.¹²⁰ The increased numbers of youths in the Federal Republic led to a massive, what Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried have called, “over-saturation” of the education system: in the FRG, the numbers attending university rose between the first half of the 1960s to the first half of the 1970s from 18.3 to 30 percent.¹²¹ As youths began attending post-secondary schools in droves, they delayed their entry into the work-force—and correspondingly, adulthood—which soon stretched the category of youth to include all those under the age of 30. While the overloaded education system would contribute decisively in politicizing youths during

¹¹⁷ On the Star Club, see Ulf Krüger and Ortwin Pele, *The Hamburg Sound. Beatles, Beat und Grosse Freiheit* (Hamburg: Ellert und Richter, 2006); and Günter Zint, *Große Freiheit 39. Vom Beat zum Bums, vom ‘Starclub’ zum ‘Salambo’* (Munich: Heyne, 1990).

¹¹⁸ Stiftung Haus der Geschichte, *Rock! Jugend und Musik in Deutschland*, pp.52-61.

¹¹⁹ Detlef Siegfried, “Understanding 1968: Youth Rebellion, Generational Change and Postindustrial Society,” in *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980*, eds., Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), p.64.

¹²⁰ Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried, “Youth, Consumption, and Politics in the Age of Radical Change,” in *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980*, eds., Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), p.18.

¹²¹ Schildt and Siegfried, “Youth, Consumption, and Politics in the Age of Radical Change,” p.18.

the latter half of the 1960s, perhaps more critically, such ‘delays’ led to an increased emphasis on leisure time and consumptive activities among young people.

These changes were reflected in the shifting understandings of what constituted ‘youth’ in the postwar period.¹²² In the mid-1950s, sociologists, psychologists, and advertisers, were starting to talk about ‘teenagers,’ ‘youth’ and ‘youth culture’ as collectives that previously had been subsumed under categories of class or gender.¹²³ Economic prosperity in the 1950s and 1960s—commonly known in West Germany as the *Wirtschaftswunder* or ‘Economic Miracle’—fundamentally changed consumption patterns in the Federal Republic. For example, the number of households with televisions rose from 17.6 in 1960 to 80.3 percent in 1974.¹²⁴ The number of privately owned automobiles tripled between 1960 and 1970 from 4.5 million to 14 million—and by 1980, had nearly doubled again to 23 million.¹²⁵ If one examines refrigerators, dishwashers, and other household appliances that scholars use to signify increased social and economic wealth, the numbers are similar.¹²⁶ Nor was it simply middle-class households that were experiencing such growth, as working-class families increasingly shared in the prosperity, and between 1962 and 1973, working-class ownership of automobiles rose from 22 to 66 percent, television ownership rose from 41 to 92 percent, ownership of record players from 18 to 46 percent, and ownership of telephones from 22 to 34 percent.¹²⁷ As West Germany rebuilt itself after the devastation of war with the help of American Marshall Aid funds, more and more

¹²² For the historical treatment of the changing idea of what constituted ‘youth’ in modern Europe, see Jon Savage, *Teenage: The Prehistory of Youth Culture, 1875-1945* (New York and London: Penguin Books, 2008); Michael Mitterauer, *A History of Youth*, trans. by Graeme Dunphy (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993); and John R. Gillis, *Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations, 1770-Present*, expanded edition (New York: Academic Press, 1981).

¹²³ Kaspar Maase, “Establishing Cultural Democracy: Youth, ‘Americanization,’ and the Irresistible Rise of Popular Culture,” in *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949-1968*, ed., Hanna Schissler (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp.428-450.

¹²⁴ Schildt and Siegfried, “Youth, Consumption, and Politics in the Age of Radical Change,” p.23.

¹²⁵ Schildt and Siegfried, “Youth, Consumption, and Politics in the Age of Radical Change,” p.13.

¹²⁶ See especially Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958-c.1974* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

¹²⁷ Schildt and Siegfried, “Youth, Consumption, and Politics in the Age of Radical Change,” p.13.

middle- and working-class youths found themselves with increased leisure time and increased purchasing power. These expansions contributed decisively in transforming consumptive practices and cultural forms into the central political concerns of young Germans in the Federal Republic by the mid-1960s, changes that scholars are increasingly fore-grounding as the key interpretative lens for understanding both youth and politics from the 1960s onwards.

As purchasing power among youths increased, experts began to speak of an ‘affluent society’ or the ‘teenage consumer.’¹²⁸ And while the debates over these categories need not detain us here, what they tell us about West German society in the 1950s and 1960s is that experts were recognizing the emergence of a new historical subject. As young men and women increasingly exercised their new-found buying power, consumptive practices became transmission belts for youth culture, especially American popular cultural forms and contents which were greeted on the Continent with a traditional mixture of fear from older critics and desire by youths.¹²⁹ Conservative commentators and leftist theorists greeted the emerging youth culture with apprehension—the former feared foreign infiltration while the latter claimed that capitalist consumerism was de-politicizing buyers and thus rendering them apathetic. Young Germans explored different ways of living through identity-forming aspects of youth culture such as increased sexual activity or listening to rock’n’roll.¹³⁰ These new contents and forms led to increasingly challenging encounters between mainstream German society and youth culture, part of which became the generational revolt in the 1960s.

¹²⁸ Mark Abrams, *The Teenage Consumer* (London: London Press Exchange, 1959); and John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958).

¹²⁹ For similar debates in France, see Richard Ivan Jobs, *Riding the New Wave: Youth and the Rejuvenation of France after the Second World War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007).

¹³⁰ See Detlef Siegfried, *Time Is On My Side: Konsum und Politik in der westdeutschen Jugendkultur der 60er Jahre* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006).

These considerable social and economic transformations during what historians are now calling the ‘long Sixties’ (1958-1974), were central to the influence of rock’n’roll in the Federal Republic.¹³¹ The success of Bill Haley, Elvis and the Beatles inspired a wave of German artists such as singers Peter Kraus, Udo Jürgens and Ted Herold who copied their Anglo-American forerunners both in style and lyrical content, and often re-recorded hit songs in German or sang their own material in English.¹³² English-language lyrics became a means of asserting creative legitimacy and global competitiveness as German was considered inappropriate for rock’n’roll.¹³³ English was seen as a means of committing the Federal Republic to the United States, NATO and the democratic West.¹³⁴ Moreover, a move away from German lyrics was linked to the desire to erase any hint of nationalism from the fledgling democracy after Nazism. As rock’n’roll increasingly came to represent rebellion, English became a soundtrack for opposition while German—and by extension Schlager—represented conservative national orthodoxy. The consequence of this dichotomy meant that German popular music entered an “imitative phase” as Edward Larkey has argued, in which German acts aped their Anglo-American brethren as the number of German Beat band names beginning with ‘the’—The Lords or The Rattles, for example—well indicates.¹³⁵

¹³¹ Arthur Marwick is perhaps the strongest proponent of this periodization but more and more scholars are working from this framework. For a succinct overview, see Arthur Marwick “Youth Culture and Cultural Revolution of the Long Sixties,” in *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980*, eds. Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), pp.39-58. For his magisterial study, see Marwick, *The Sixties*. For scholars applying this periodization to Germany, see especially Axel Schildt, Detlef Siegfried, and Karl Christian Lammers, eds., *Dynamische Zeiten. Die 60er Jahre in den beiden deutschen Gesellschaften* (Hamburg: Christians, 2000).

¹³² See Hermann Haring, *Rock aus Deutschland West. Von den Rattles bis Nena: Zwei Jahrzehnte Heimatklang* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1984).

¹³³ The belief that Germany/German was not a good land/language for rock’n’roll dominates most accounts. See Ulrike Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton: Die Anfänge von Punk und New Wave in Deutschland 1977-’82* (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2002), pp.112-113.

¹³⁴ Beal, *New Music, New Allies*.

¹³⁵ Larkey, “Just for Fun?” p.135.

As the use of English-language lyrics suggest rock'n'roll became deeply imbricated into political struggles during the 1960s, especially the generational revolt of the student movement that is short-handed by the terms '1968' or 'the Sixties.' In the wake of collapse in 1945, and the formation of the Federal Republic in 1949, the conservative Christian Democratic Union (Christlich Demokratische Union or CDU) and their Bavarian sister-party the Christian Social Union (Christlich Soziale Union or CSU) ruled West Germany until 1966 under the long-time Chancellorship of Konrad Adenauer and his successor Ludwig Erhard, the finance wizard who engineered the Wirtschaftswunder. Domestically, under Adenauer and Erhard's tutelage, government and polity had concentrated on rebuilding the shattered West German economy and social fabric by locating and strengthening traditions that were felt to have resisted Nazism best under the Third Reich especially Christian values, the family, and the free market, of which as we have just seen, rebuilding musical life was a part. Adenauer was committed to integrating the FRG into the Western world, and by the mid-1950s, the Federal Republic was part of NATO, had regained the right to field an army, and was the critical ally of the United States in Europe in its global confrontation with the Soviet Union in the Cold War. And while not every initiative proposed by Adenauer went uncontested, nonetheless, by the 1960s, the CDU had transformed West Germany politically and socially.¹³⁶ The party's principal political opposition was the traditional leftist worker-party, the Social Democrats (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands or SPD), that at Bad Godesberg in 1959 renounced revolution once-and-for-all as an instrument of attaining political power and committed itself to parliamentary politics in the FRG.¹³⁷ Yet the Bad Godesberg decision, while critical in attracting substantial middle-class votes, also meant

¹³⁶ See, for example, the debates over rearmament during the 1950s. See Michael Geyer, "Cold War Angst: The Case of West-German Opposition to Rearmament and Nuclear Weapons," in *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949-1968*, ed., Hanna Schissler (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp.376-408.

¹³⁷ Heinrich Potthoff and Susanne Miller, *The Social Democratic Party of Germany, 1848-2005*, trans. by Martin Kane (Bonn: Dietz, 2006).

that the radical tradition of the SPD was rejected as the mass party moved to the center of the political spectrum.

In 1966, unable to achieve a majority, the CDU had entered into coalition with the SPD, the so-called ‘Grand Coalition.’ In response to this decision—which effectively left the center-right liberal Free Democratic Party (Freie Demokratische Partei or FDP) as the opposition party after polling a mere 8 percent of the vote—student radicals such as Rudi Dutschke and others in the former-SPD youth organization Socialist German Students’ League (Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund or SDS) that had been expelled for radicalism in 1962, called on students to initiate opposition outside the political system. Thus, the Extra-Parliamentary Opposition (Ausserparlamentarische Opposition or APO) was born amid fears that the Grand Coalition threatened West German democracy through its control of government in a country only two decades removed from dictatorship.¹³⁸ Marked by an over-riding concern with the lack of political alternatives, the early period of the APO was characterized above all by public dissent as student demonstrators took to the streets, held sit-ins and teach-ins, signed appeals and petitions, and organized conferences to protest the political hegemony of the governing coalition between the state’s two biggest political parties.

Beginning by protesting authoritarian conditions in the universities, the APO quickly broadened its focus to national politics, especially foreign policy, and in particular, West Germany’s support of the United States’ war in Vietnam.¹³⁹ While once the paragon of virtue thanks to its victory over fascism, the controversial war in South-East Asia tarnished the moral

¹³⁸ Nick Thomas, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany: A Social History of Dissent and Democracy* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2003).

¹³⁹ The literature on the student movement and 1968 is enormous, but see Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth, eds., *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956-1977* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); and Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth, eds., *1968: Handbuch zur Kultur- und Mediengeschichte der Studentenbewegung* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2007).

shine of the United States for young West Germans.¹⁴⁰ Students increasingly protested the U.S. and its allies for waging an ‘imperialist’ war against an ‘indigenous nationalist liberation movement.’¹⁴¹ The critique of the United States prompted a renewed interest in the recent history of the Nazi past as German students confronted their parents with accusations of continuity between the Third Reich and the Federal Republic, charges bolstered by New Left theorists such as Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Herbert Marcuse from the Frankfurt School.¹⁴²

These cultural and political shifts affected the music scene profoundly. English-language rock’n’roll came under suspicion as German radicals grew disillusioned with the United States and the Liedermacher (singer-songwriters) folk-scene witnessed a boom of German-language artists such as Franz-Josef Degenhardt and later Konstantin Wecker.¹⁴³ As the war continued in South-East Asia and German youths viewed the US as dangerously endangering the global village, ’68ers began to doubt the moral righteousness of their Western allies. Their rejection of America was transferred to rock’n’roll, and overtly political bands such as Ton Steine Scherben began vocalizing critiques of West German society in their native-tongue, which was now felt to be more direct and honest.¹⁴⁴ Urging listeners to “Macht kaputt was euch kaputt macht” (destroy what is destroying you) and claiming that “Musik ist eine Waffe,” (Music is a weapon) the Scherben and others sought musical outlet for their politics, an important precursor of German

¹⁴⁰ On the global dimensions of the antiwar protests, see Martin Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); and Andreas W. Daum, Lloyd C. Gardner, and Wilfried Mausbach, eds., *America, the Vietnam War, and the World: Comparative and International Perspectives* (Washington, DC: German Historical Institute, 2003).

¹⁴¹ Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

¹⁴² Wolfgang Kraushaar, ed., *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung: Von der Flaschenpost bis zum Molotowcocktail*, 3 vols. (Hamburg: Rogner & Bernhard, 1998).

¹⁴³ David Robb, ed., *Protest Song in East and West Germany since the 1960s* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2007).

¹⁴⁴ Kai Sichtermann, Jens Johler, and Christian Stahl, *Keine Macht für Niemand: Die Geschichte der Ton Steine Scherben* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2008); Wolfgang Seidel, ed., *Scherben: Musik, Politik und die Wirkung der Ton Steine Scherben* (Mainz: Ventil, 2008); Hollow Skai, *Das alles und noch viel mehr. Rio Reiser – Die inoffizielle Biografie des Königs von Deutschland* (Munich: Heyne Verlag, 2006); and Rio Reiser, *König von Deutschland: Erinnerungen an Ton Steine Scherben und mehr* (Fresenhagen: Möbius Rekords, 2001).

punk.¹⁴⁵ Tensions between the student protesters and proponents of the state (government, police, *Bild*) climaxed on 2 June 1967 when, during a demonstration protesting a visit of the Iranian Shah to West Berlin, student Benno Ohnesorg was shot dead by a policeman. The ensuing outrage—the next week a hundred thousand students marched in protest—radicalized the already agitated student demonstrators, while fears of disorder and violence gave opponents grist for the social panic about potential Leftist or even communist revolution.

In the East, the arrival of rock'n'roll was met with deep suspicion by SED authorities who feared the rebelliousness and emancipatory claims that accompanied the music genre, even as Ulbricht half-heartedly attempted to instrumentalize the genre to support the regime. In the 1950s, SED authorities saw rock'n'roll as a kind of cultural Trojan Horse sent from the West and lambasted Anglo-American dance music then beaming across the border via RTL, RIAS, and AFN as 'debased' and 'decadent' which Eastern experts dismissed as 'U-Musik' as opposed to the serious 'E-Musik' played in the GDR.¹⁴⁶ Despite restrictions on Western listening habits—on 2 January 1958, the Ordinance on Programming for Entertainment and Dance Music (Anordnung über die Programmgestaltung bei Unterhaltungs- und Tanzmusik) stipulated that Western musical content for dance hall bands and radio could never exceed 40 percent—East Germans continued tuning in to Western music, especially accessible in divided Berlin.¹⁴⁷ To combat increased Western musical hegemony, East German cultural experts developed a socialist popular music culture as outlined during the 1959 Bitterfeld Conference. Lipsi dance steps and the later Pertutti dance became popular music culture alternatives to the profit driven capitalist

¹⁴⁵ Timothy S. Brown, "Music as a Weapon? *Ton Steine Scherben* and the Politics of Rock in Cold War Berlin," in *German Studies Review*, Vol.32, Nr.1 (February 2009), pp.1-22.

¹⁴⁶ Wiebke Janssen, *Halbstarke in der DDR: Verfolgung und Kriminalisierung einer Jugendkultur* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2010); Mark Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs and Rock 'n' Roll: Teenage Rebels in Cold-War East Germany* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009); Thacker, "The fifth column," pp.235-236; and Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*.

¹⁴⁷ See Lindner, *DDR: Rock & Pop*, p.30; and Olaf Leitner, *Rockszenen DDR: Aspekte einer Massenkultur im Sozialismus* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1983), p.48.

music industry.¹⁴⁸ However, neither the Berlin blockade in the late 1940s, nor jamming Western radio signals seemed to staunch the flow of Western popular music into the GDR.¹⁴⁹

On 13 August 1961, and with the grudging consent of Moscow, the SED under Ulbricht erected the Berlin Wall, dividing the city and Germany, a decision that Uta Poiger argues was as much to shut Western culture out of the GDR as to keep Eastern residents in.¹⁵⁰ However, the development of rock'n'roll in the West could not be ignored by SED authorities because the Berlin Wall was unable to stop Western radio waves from penetrating deep into East Germany. Accepting the inevitable, Ulbricht introduced liberalizing measures in the early 1960s as part of his efforts to reform the economy. These reforms included considerable concessions to youth culture, especially evident in his 1963 Youth Communiqué in which he urged older socialists to confront the “uncomfortable questions” posed by youths and to accept their desires for leisure-time activities.¹⁵¹ In 1965, following this pronouncement, Amiga, the state-owned and sole record label in the country, released several Beatles LPs and Singles.¹⁵² ‘Beat’—as rock was called in the East to distinguish it from the West—swept through the GDR. The 1963 Youth Communiqué, the 1964 Youth Law (*Jugendgesetz*), and the 1964 Ordinance on the Performance of Dance and Entertainment Arts (*Anordnung über die Ausübung von Tanz- und Unterhaltungskunst*), all called for the increased integration of youth in the GDR, and

¹⁴⁸ Thacker, “The fifth column,” pp.237-238; Leitner, *Rockszenen DDR*, p.48.

¹⁴⁹ Lindner, *DDR: Rock & Pop*, pp.14, 39; Thacker, “The fifth column,” pp.232-234.

¹⁵⁰ Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*, p.208. On the controversial thesis that the GDR *forced* the Soviets to build the Wall against their wishes, see Hope M. Harrison, *Driving the Soviets Up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-1961* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

¹⁵¹ See Marc-Dietrich Ohse, *Jugend nach dem Mauerbau: Anpassung, Protest und Eigensinn (DDR 1961-1974)* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2003), pp.64-66.

¹⁵² Mark Fenemore, “The limits of repression and reform: youth policy in the early 1960s”, in *The Workers' and Peasants' State: Communism and Society in East Germany under Ulbricht, 1945-1971*, Patrick Major and Jonathan Osmond, eds. (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp.177-179; Michael Rauhut, *Rock in der DDR, 1964 bis 1989* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2002), pp.25-27.

specifically the development of ‘socialist’ “guitar-groups” (Gitarrengruppen).¹⁵³ By 1965, thousands of beat bands had formed, especially in the south and around Leipzig with local heroes the Butlers leading the way.¹⁵⁴

However, popular music was quickly caught up in the politics of the day. As conservative backlash against Ulbricht and his liberal policies mounted, hard-line critics decried Beat music as representative of Ulbricht’s lax policies. After a 15 September 1965 Rolling Stones concert in West Berlin ended in riots, SED hardliners such as ideologue Kurt Hager and Erich Honecker, then head of security for the Central Committee (Zentralkomitee or ZK) and favorite to succeed Ulbricht as head of the SED, felt they had gathered enough evidence of emerging criminality among youths as a result of the lenient Beat policy to attack Ulbricht.¹⁵⁵ In October, the SED ZK ruled to ban Beat groups and the Eastern media began attacking Beat bands and their fans for their decadent and Western-inspired activity.¹⁵⁶ In protest, on 30 October 1965, up to six hundred Beat musicians and fans took to the Leipzig streets only to be beaten and dispersed by police in the infamous Leipzig Beat Riots.¹⁵⁷ At the 11th Party Plenum in December 1965, Honecker famously condemned the “destructive tendencies” (schädliche Tendenzen) in that decade’s East German art and until the 1970s, Beat music was officially condemned. The regime supported instead more socialist alternatives—such as the modestly successful Singebewegung (Singing

¹⁵³ Lindner, *DDR: Rock & Pop*, pp.44, 48; Fenemore, “The limits of repression and reform,” pp.177-182. On the Youth Communiqué generally, see Siegfried Dübel, *Dokumente zur Jugendpolitik der SED* (München: Juventa Verlag, 1964).

¹⁵⁴ See Dorothee Wierling, “Youth as Internal Enemy: Conflicts in the Education Dictatorship of the 1960s,” in *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics*, Katherine Pence and Paul Betts, eds. (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008), pp.157-182; Dorothee Wierling, “Der Staat, die Jugend und der Westen. Texte zu Konflikten der 1960er Jahre,” in *Akten. Eingaben. Schaufenster. Die DDR und ihre Texte: Erkundungen zu Herrschaft und Alltag*, Alf Lüdtke and Peter Becker, eds., (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997), pp.223-240; and Michael Rauhut, *Beat in der Grauzone. DDR-Rock, 1964 bis 1972: Politik und Alltag* (Berlin: BasicDruck, 1993).

¹⁵⁵ Leitner, *Rockszene DDR*, pp.49-53; Fenemore, “The limits of repression and reform,” pp.181-183.

¹⁵⁶ ZK decision on 11 October 1965, “Zu einigen Fragen der Jugendarbeit und dem Auftreten der Rowdygruppen.” See Lindner, *DDR: Rock & Pop*, pp.52-53.

¹⁵⁷ Lindner, *DDR: Rock & Pop*, pp.56-57; Rauhut, *Rock in der DDR*, pp.34-36; Fenemore, “The limits of repression and reform,” pp.183-184; Wierling, “Youth as Internal Enemy,” p.163.

Movement)—in a failed attempt to placate young East Germans.¹⁵⁸ And while the global student protests that we collectively know as 1968 did not pass without tremors in East Germany, in no way was the experience in the West replicated in the GDR even if many of the ideas of the Prague Spring were to work their way throughout society as we shall see.¹⁵⁹ But the failure of Ulbricht to reform the economy which increasingly lagged behind its more dynamic Western cousin and his inability to solve a number of intra-party squabbles doomed the strongman from Leipzig.¹⁶⁰ In the early 1970s, with the help of Moscow, Honecker was able to engineer a power-transfer that sent Ulbricht off into the socialist sunset.¹⁶¹

Reinvention, 1971-1989: Reimagining Popular Music in East and West Germany

The accession of Honecker in the East and the collapse of the student movement in the West mark the transition into the final phase in the history of postwar German rock'n'roll, a period in which artists and bands sought to reinvent popular music in both German states and which punk is an essential aspect of these efforts. In the West, the collapse of the student movement was a prerequisite for these developments. Despite considerable support among students and young Germans, the APO was never able to fundamentally influence government policy, more than

¹⁵⁸ Despite the ban, Beat bands continued to play but were forced to continuously break-up and re-form under a new name. See Rauhut, *Beat in der Grauzone*. On the 11th Party Plenum, see Günter Agde, ed., *Kahlschalg. Das 11. Plenum des ZK der SED 1965: Studien und Dokumente*, expanded edition (Berlin: Aufbau, 2000). On the *Singebewegung*, see David Robb, “The GDR *Singebewegung*: Metamorphosis and Legacy,” in *Monatshefte*, Vol.92, Nr.2 (2000), pp.199-216.

¹⁵⁹ Timothy S. Brown, “‘1968’ East and West: Divided Germany as a Case Study in Transnational History,” *American Historical Review*, Vol.114, Nr.1 (February 2009), pp.69-96; Ohse, *Jugend nach dem Mauerbau*, pp.133-219; and Dorothee Wierling, “Opposition und Generation in Nachkriegsdeutschland. Achtundsechziger in der DDR und in der Bundesrepublik,” in *Deutsche Vergangenheiten – eine gemeinsame Herausforderung. Der schwierige Umgang mit der doppelten Nachkriegsgeschichte*, eds., Christoph Kleßmann, Hans Misselwitz, and Günter Wichert (Berlin: Ch. Links, 1999), pp.238-252.

¹⁶⁰ Jeffrey Kopstein, *The Politics of Economic Decline in East Germany, 1945-1989* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), pp.41-72.

¹⁶¹ Monika Kaiser, *Machtwechsel von Ulbricht zu Honecker: Funktionsmechanismen der SED-Diktatur in Konfliktsituationen 1962 bis 1972* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997).

evident in its inability to halt the passing of the controversial Emergency Laws in 1968.¹⁶² After several years of political wrangling, in May of that year, the Grand Coalition was finally able to pass a cluster of legislation and constitutional amendments known collectively as the Emergency Laws that provided the government with stronger executive power in the event of a ‘national emergency’ that students, unionists, and Leftist had opposed. Necessitating a two-thirds majority in the Bundestag due to constitutional amendment, the passage of the laws were only possible with the support of the SPD whose more centrist members were anxious to show the more moderate party course post-Bad Godesberg with support for these measures. Conflict between student demonstrators and state authorities escalated in the months leading up to the vote. On 11 April 1968, in front of the SDS office on the Kurfürstendamm in West Berlin, Rudi Dutschke was shot three-times by the disturbed right-wing youth Josef Bachmann. Dutschke survived the shooting but never really recovered and died in 1979 due to complications from the assassination attempt. Student protestors blamed the Axel Springer publishing conglomerate for inciting hatred against Dutschke and students, and tried to shut down delivery of the daily newspapers, especially the Springer tabloid *Bild*. During the next few weeks, an unprecedented wave of demonstrations, violence, and vandalism (known as the ‘Easter Unrest’) gripped the Federal Republic as the APO tried in vain to stop the passage of the Emergency Laws.

The failure of the APO to stop the Emergency Laws bewildered students and radicals, and marked the end of the anti-authoritarian phase of the student movement and the conditions from which the alternative scene emerged.¹⁶³ Unable to achieve tangible political results, the APO broke apart into innumerable small Marxist-Leninist and Maoist groups, the so-called K-

¹⁶² For the course of these events, see Nick Thomas, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany: A Social History of Dissent and Democracy* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2003); and Andrei S. Markovits and Philip S. Gorski, *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1993).

¹⁶³ See Sven Reichardt and Detlef Siegfried, eds., *Das Alternative Milieu. Antibürgerlicher Lebensstil und linke Politik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Europa 1968-1983* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010).

Gruppen (Kommunistische Gruppen or Communist Groups), all vying for leadership that usually pitted them against one another rather than their supposed ‘class’ enemies, and that, in several extreme cases, even resulted in terrorism.¹⁶⁴ Despite their ideological squabbles, they nonetheless all agreed that the working-class was the key ‘revolutionary subject’ and its resistance to joining German students in May 1968 (in contrast to France, for example) was the principle cause for the failure of the APO. The post-1968 period is therefore marked by a concerted effort to win the working-class to ‘the cause’ with the establishment of numerous grass-roots interest groups (Basisgruppen) and workplace cells (Betriebsgruppen). To this end, students often abandoned university studies to join their ‘comrades’ and work in factories where they helped form reading circles, agitated, and organized, all in an attempt to expand the popular base of the APO. In the five years between 1968 and 1973, a glut of political groups formed—the German Communist Party (Deutsche Kommunistische Partei or DKP), the Marxist/Leninist Communist Party of Germany (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands/Marxisten-Leninisten or KPD/ML), the Communist Party of Germany (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands or KPD), or Communist Band of West Germany (Kommunistischer Bund Westdeutschlands or KBW)—but their numbers remained small and were unable to exert much political influence in their attempt to ‘organize the masses,’ despite recent attempts by participants to paint the 1970s as a “red decade.”¹⁶⁵

A major feature of this era was a return to theory, which is why this period is often called the dogmatic or orthodox phase of the student movement. The goal was to locate the failure of

¹⁶⁴ On the K-Gruppen, see Gunnar Hinck, *Wir waren wie Maschinen: Die bundesdeutsche Linke der siebziger Jahre* (Berlin: Rotbuch Verlag, 2012); Andreas Kühn, *Stalins Enkel, Maos Söhne: Die Lebenswelt der K-Gruppen in der Bundesrepublik der 70er Jahre* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2005); and Gerd Koenen, *Das rote Jahrzehnt: Unsere kleine deutsche Kulturrevolution, 1967-1977* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2001).

¹⁶⁵ Koenen, *Das rote Jahrzehnt*. But compare with Massimiliano Livi, Daniel Schmidt, and Michael Sturm, eds., *Die 1970s Jahre als schwarzes Jahrzehnt: Politisierung und Mobilisierung zwischen christlicher Demokratie und extremer Rechter* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2010).

the APO in theory by returning to Marx and the ‘objective’ analysis of society. The inability of the APO to achieve its goals was disillusioning for many whose political and social lives were governed by their faith in revolutionary progress, and as such, the failure of the working-class to mobilize behind the students was blamed on the loose organization of the APO rather than any divergent goals between workers and students. Disciplined and hierarchical, the K-Gruppen demanded renewed political commitments by students who were forced to come to terms with their perceived bourgeois hang-ups in brutal group therapy sessions in which members were forced to admit their sins in an attempt to ‘master’ their weaknesses. The return to theory sought to distance militants from the heady emotionalism of the anti-authoritarian phase (another so-called cause of the failure) that pushed adherents towards more ‘objective’ insights. To this end, all facets of the ‘personal is political’ were jettisoned as bourgeois self-absorption. But the descent into Leftist orthodoxy was alienating, and many dropped out of activist politics as a result, and support for the K-Gruppen correspondingly declined precipitously.¹⁶⁶ The growth and proliferation of alternative ‘scenes’ in the late 1960s and early 1970s—drug cultures, communes, land-co-ops—were thus in part a response to the dogmatic turn.¹⁶⁷ The disillusionment and questioning turn inwards in the early 1970s, that at the time was called the *Tendenzwende* (a ‘change in direction’ or ‘sentiment’), was a period in which current and former activists were unsure of what direction to take the rapidly disintegrating student movement.

Government policies during this phase only seemed to compound the confusion. After two decades of conservative rule, the SPD was swept into power with Willy Brandt’s call to

¹⁶⁶ At their zenith, the K-Gruppen were comprised of no more than 20,000 members. See Franz-Werner Kersting, “Juvenile Left-wing Radicalism, Fringe Groups, and Anti-psychiatry in West Germany,” in *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980*, Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried, eds. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), p.356.

¹⁶⁷ See Sabine von Dirke, “*All Power to the Imagination!*”: *The West German Counterculture from the Student Movement to the Greens* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).

‘dare more democracy’ in 1969.¹⁶⁸ The SPD and FDP coalition under Brandt’s Chancellorship seemed to be a triumph for democracy and liberalism, but once in power, the SPD proved to be increasingly indistinguishable from the recently departed conservative Christian Democrats in the eyes of radicals. Diplomatic recognition of East Germany was an important step in Brandt’s foreign policy, but his continued support for the United States and its ever expanding war in Vietnam soured the goodwill achieved by Ostpolitik.¹⁶⁹ Domestically, the SPD further alienated young people with the promulgation of the Radikalenerlass, a law known popularly as the Berufsverbot (professional ban) because it sanctioned the dismissal of state-employees (e.g. teachers) if they were or had been connected with radical groups.¹⁷⁰ Coupled with the earlier Emergency Laws, the Berufsverbot was vague enough to raise fears of political intimidation, and the incredible over-reaction by the state to domestic terrorism in the 1970s only seemed to confirm the more paranoid historic correlations between contemporary society and the early 1930s.¹⁷¹ As frustrated members of the former-APO turned to violence—especially the Red Army Faction (RAF) and the June 2 Movement (Bewegung 2. Juni)—attempts to apprehend

¹⁶⁸ See Gerard Braunthal, *The German Social Democrats since 1969: A Party in Power and Opposition*, 2nd edition (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994).

¹⁶⁹ Carole Fink and Bernd Schaefer, eds., *Ostpolitik, 1969-1974: European and Global Responses* (Washington, DC: German Historical Institute, 2009); Julia von Dannenberg, *The Foundations of Ostpolitik: The Making of the Moscow Treaty between West Germany and the USSR* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); and M.E. Sarotte, *Dealing with the Devil: East Germany, Détente and Ostpolitik, 1969-1973* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

¹⁷⁰ According to Gerard Braunthal, between 1972 and 1978, more than 2 million people were screened by the *Verfassungsschutz* (internal security agency) for possible ‘unconstitutional’ activities. In the end, 1,250 applicants were rejected on political grounds, 265 were dismissed, and 2,100 had disciplinary proceedings enacted. See Gerard Braunthal, “Public Order and Civil Liberties,” in *Developments in West German Politics*, eds., Gordon Smith, William E. Paterson, and Peter H. Merkl (London: MacMillan, 1989), p.311. And more generally, Gerard Braunthal, *Political Loyalty and Public Service in West Germany: The 1972 Decree against Radicals and Its Consequences* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990).

¹⁷¹ Nick Thomas argues convincingly that paranoia and imagined fears (from both the state and radicals) played an important part in the history of the student movement and the descent into terrorism. See Thomas, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany*.

suspects resulted in enormous campaigns to find and prosecute terrorists.¹⁷² Worried the CDU would claim they were ‘soft on terrorists,’ the SPD brought the full weight of state power onto groups who engaged in fire-bombings, assassinations, kidnappings, and armed robberies to fund their activities. Many critics saw the methods used by the state in its ‘war on terror’ as undemocratic.¹⁷³ An enormous debate emerged about means and ends which gave terrorists an unprecedented level of popular support: at the funeral in West Berlin on 15 May 1976 of Ulrike Meinhof, one of the leaders of the RAF, for example, a demonstration of over four thousand people turned up.¹⁷⁴ As a result, from the perspective of leftists, a period of social conservatism descended over the Federal Republic in the 1970s, and during key moments such as the ‘Deutscher Herbst’ (German Autumn) in 1977, a climate of intense fear and social panic gripped the nation.

Amidst these political, social, and cultural transformations, the 1970s ‘alternative scene’ emerged. Terrorism and Leftist orthodoxy disappointed large segments of the political Left who instead responded by a return to the ‘subjective,’ as activists and cultural revolutionaries began exploring the social and political dimensions of the ‘margins.’ Punk was one element of this ‘alternative scene’ which included squatters, radical environmentalists, feminists, peace activists, anti-imperialists, do-it-yourself enthusiasts, and many more who formed a loose network linked through alternative events, spaces, and associations.¹⁷⁵ While it difficult to put numbers and dates

¹⁷² See Karrin Hanshew, *Terror and Democracy in West Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); and Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

¹⁷³ Karrin Hanshew, “Daring More Democracy? Internal Security and the Social Democratic Fight against West German Terrorism,” in *Central European History*, Vol.43, Nr.1 (2010), pp.117-147.

¹⁷⁴ Stefan Aust, *Baader-Meinhof: The Inside Story of the R.A.F.*, trans. by Anthea Bell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.262. See also Sarah Colvin, *Ulrike Meinhof and West German Terrorism: Language, Violence, and Identity* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009).

¹⁷⁵ Sven Reichardt and Detlef Siegfried, “Das Alternative Milieu. Konturen einer Lebensform,” in *Das Alternative Milieu. Antibürgerlicher Lebensstil und linke Politik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Europa 1968-1983*, eds., Sven Reichardt and Detlef Siegfried (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010), pp.9-24.

to the emergence of this milieu, the early-1970s seems to be the moment when critics began to speak about an ‘alternative scene.’¹⁷⁶ The goal of this milieu was not to reform society per se (though this certainly was an outgrowth) but to provide alternatives to established culture and society for individuals who could live a moral life as best they could, along the political, social, and cultural lines they desired: as die tageszeitung put it so well, “the point is not to change society but to have a house where you can live differently.”¹⁷⁷ Stressing individual and group experimentation, members of the alternative milieu were convinced that personal discovery was the path to the kind of authentic living that politics and reform had denied: Kommune I member Dieter Kunzelmann’s quip, “What does the Vietnam War have to do with me? I’ve got orgasm problems!” is characteristic of the belief that individual, subjective experience was the route to overcoming structural problems inhibiting personal authenticity.¹⁷⁸ The ideological underpinnings sought primarily to overcome exploitative or hierarchical relations (political, social, economic, cultural, and gendered), and made room for radical individualism and difference that could free the individual from tyrannical structures (the state) and conventions (social conformity) that inhibited authentic living.¹⁷⁹ Above all, this meant constructing unconventional institutions, networks, and spaces that were conducive to alternative pursuits and

¹⁷⁶ Michael Vester, “Alternativbewegungen und neue soziale Milieus. Ihre soziale Zusammensetzung und ihr Zusammenhang mit dem Wandel der Sozialstruktur,” in *Das Alternative Milieu. Antibürgerlicher Lebensstil und linke Politik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Europa 1968-1983*, eds., Sven Reichardt and Detlef Siegfried (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010), p.27.

¹⁷⁷ Cited in Andrei S. Markovits and Philip S. Gorski, *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1993), p.82.

¹⁷⁸ Cited in Steven L.B. Jensen, “‘Youth Enacts Society and Somebody Makes a Coup’: The Danish Student Movement between Political and Lifestyle Radicalism,” in *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980*, Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried, eds. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), p.225.

¹⁷⁹ See Detlef Siegfried, “White Negroes: The Fascination of the Authentic in the West German Counterculture of the 1960s,” in *Changing the World, Changing Oneself: Political Protest and Collective Identities in West Germany and the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s*, eds., Belinda Davis, Wilfried Mausbach, Martin Klimke, and Carla MacDougall (New York and Oxford, 2010), pp.191-215; and Sven Reichardt, “Authentizität und Gemeinschaftsbindung. Politik und Lebensstil im linksalternativen Milieu vom Ende der 1960er bis zum Anfang der 1980er Jahre,” in *Forschungsjournal Neue Soziale Bewegungen*, Vol.3 (September 2008), pp.118-130.

the 1970s witnessed a raft of projects devoted towards this end: independent city newspapers, self-help retreats, drop-in centers, youth groups, and others that sought to translate these ideas into concrete everyday praxis.¹⁸⁰ The important point about the alternative milieu was that it was not precisely in opposition to dominant mainstream society, but rather sought to offer alternatives to it; and much of the efforts by members were directed towards carving out and defending hard-won spaces for alternative practices against the homogenizing impulses of mainstream society.

The re-emphasis on the subjective and the personal as political in the ‘alternative scene’ re-invigorated those disillusioned by the turn to theory, especially those whose personal concerns dove-tailed with their political concerns. The turn away from pure theory and towards other political issues led to the rise of a variety of New Social Movements focusing on concerns including feminism, environmentalism, and gay liberation. In the K-Gruppen, women felt their concerns about sexual hierarchies and concrete issue like abortion were being pushed aside by their male counterparts who declared the overthrow of the bourgeois order as the primary goal.¹⁸¹ As a result, small groups began to organize around small, local issues, divorced from the more theoretically-inclined factions, but whose formations coalesced around a single-issue: women’s groups in 1971 protesting the anti-abortion clause in criminal code; squatters protesting speculation and the housing shortage in the later 1970s; environmental groups demonstrating against ecological destruction. From the New Social Movements, the Green Party emerged as the most prominent political alternative in West Germany.

Political issues fed the Greens’ success. In 1973, Brandt was forced from office following the Günter Guillaume spy-debacle and the doubly managerial and technocratic Helmut Schmidt

¹⁸⁰ Reichardt and Siegfried, “Das Alternative Milieu. Konturen einer Lebensform,” pp.11-12.

¹⁸¹ Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

became Chancellor. In 1973, the global economic recession hit the Western world hard, a consequence of oil shortages stemming from the Six Day War between Israel and several Middle Eastern states that resulted in bleak futures especially for young people preparing to enter the contracting workforce as unemployment reached levels not seen since the Great Depression.¹⁸² Compounding the erosion of support for the SPD was the decision to station American Pershing II missiles in the late 1970s, known as the double-track decision.¹⁸³ One response to the political alienation was the formation of the Greens. An avowedly leftist party that sought to pick up the slack lost by the SPD, the Greens based their party platform on environmentalism and pacifism and had representatives in state legislatures and the Bundestag by 1983.¹⁸⁴ However more important to our story was the other response: political disinterest. What is critical here is the belief that government and parliamentary politics could no longer solve the issues confronting citizens, that the state was no longer the arbiter of personal and national authenticity. Thus a host of social groups formed out of alienation from the state, including communes, co-ops, alternative bookstores, drug rehab centers, and the punk subculture.¹⁸⁵

Music played a key role in re-orienting individuals lost amid the consequences of the collapse of the APO in the late 1960s and early 1970s. For some such as Ton Steine Scherben, the West Berlin political rockers whose angry but emotional lyrics became the soundtrack for 1970s and 1980s protest, music was a means of continuing the political activism begun in the

¹⁸² See Niall Ferguson et al., *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010). On America, see Andreas Killen, *1973 Nervous Breakdown: Watergate, Warhol, and the Birth of Post-Sixties America* (New York: Bloomsburg, 2006). For perspectives on how the events of 1973 have transformed Germany, see Konrad H. Jarausch, ed., *Das Ende der Zuversicht? Die siebziger als Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 2008); and Anselm Doering-Manteuffel and Lutz Rapheal, *Nach dem Boom: Perspektiven auf die Zeitgeschichte seit 1970* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 2008).

¹⁸³ Jeffrey Herf, *War By Other Means: Soviet Power, West German Resistance, and the Battle of the Euromissiles* (New York and Toronto: The Free Press, 1991).

¹⁸⁴ E. Gene Frankland and Donald Schoonmaker, *Between Protest and Power: The Green Party in Germany* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992), pp.68-72, esp. Tables 4.1 and 4.2.

¹⁸⁵ See Hermann Glaser, *Die Kulturgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Band 3: Zwischen Protest und Anpassung 1968-1989* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1990), pp.111-132.

APO, and especially elevating the anarchist leanings of the student movement against the more authoritarian sensibilities of the K-Gruppen.¹⁸⁶ But many others sought a complete break with the music forms of the 1960s; from these efforts emerged Krautrock.¹⁸⁷ A genre that reached its highpoint in the early 1970s, Krautrock was an effort at sorting through the debris of German traditions and history. Bands such as Can, NEU!, Faust, Guru Guru and Tangerine Dream all created elaborate soundscapes that drew their inspirations from outer space or Eastern religions, themes which were explicitly non-national or transnational.¹⁸⁸ Fusing elements of psychedelic rock, funk, free jazz, avant-garde electronic and sound manipulation, these bands tried to write and record music that posited a sharp break with Anglo-American forms, a Stunde Null in popular music. But Krautrockers did not intend to substitute Germanness in place of Anglo-Americanism but rather espoused a universal or European sensibility.¹⁸⁹ As critic David Stubbs has articulated, these efforts were attempts at historical and cultural emancipation: “Krautrock was about cultural self-reassertion, an implicit attempt to be free of both the dark past of their immediate forefathers and a determination to create a new musical autonomy, a homegrown music which took its cue from Britain and America but was not utterly dependent or absolutely subsidised by its culturally overbearing allies.”¹⁹⁰ These musical endeavors were efforts at reinventing musical production, of which punk would become a crucial part; nor is it any

¹⁸⁶ Timothy S. Brown, “Music as a Weapon? *Ton Steine Scherben* and the Politics of Rock in Cold War Berlin,” in *German Studies Review*, Vol.32, Nr.1 (February 2009), pp.1-22.

¹⁸⁷ On Krautrock, see Nikos Kotsopoulos, ed., *Krautrock: Cosmic Rock and Its Legacy* (New York: Black Dog Publishing, 2010); Henning Dedekind, *Krautrock: Underground, LSD und kosmische Kuriere* (Innsbruck, AU: Hannibal, 2008); Andy Wilson, *Faust: Stretch Out Time, 1970-1975* (The Faust Pages, 2006); and Archie Patterson, *Eurock: European Rock & the Second Culture* (Portland, OR: Eurock Publishing, 2002).

¹⁸⁸ The name ‘Krautrock’ was given to the bands by British critics though they themselves were not fond of it since they sought to distance themselves from any hint of nationalism. See *Krautrock: The Rebirth of Germany* (DVD, director Benjamin Whalley, 2009). See also Jennifer Shryane, *Blixa Bargeld and Einstürzende Neubauten: German Experimental Music: ‘Evading do-re-mi’* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2011), pp.38-41.

¹⁸⁹ See Arne Koch and Sei Harris, “The Sound of Yourself Laughing: Faust and the Politics of the Unpolitical,” in *Popular Music and Society*, Vol.32, Nr.5 (December 2009), pp.579-594.

¹⁹⁰ Kotsopoulos, ed., *Krautrock*, p.17.

surprise, as we will see, that many of the punks were heavily influenced by the Krautrock bands even if they departed from their forerunners' penchant for apolitical, twenty-minute songs.

At the same time, several singers and bands began experimenting with German lyrics and these efforts were picked up by punks and extended, a crucial element joining but also separating punk from earlier efforts at reinvention. After unsuccessfully singing in English in the early 1970s, Udo Lindenberg switched to German with the release of *Daumen im Wind* (1972). The following year, Lindenberg released the acclaimed *Andrea Doria* (1973) with hit-singles "Alles klar auf der Andrea Doria" and "Cello," and throughout the 1970s and 1980s released a number of German-language albums.¹⁹¹ Kraftwerk, the legendary electronica outfit, when they began experimenting with vocals, used repetitive German-language lyrics, especially on their international hit "Autobahn" (1974), to celebrate advances in mobility and technology.¹⁹² Ton Steine Scherben used German as a means of better connecting with their listeners and their problems.¹⁹³ Agit-prop bands such as Floh de Cologne and Lokomotiv Kreuzberg, or Krautrock outfits like Faust, Amon Düül, Can, and Guru Guru, over the course of the 1970s, all began experimenting with German-language lyrics. However, despite their critical reception, none of these acts achieved popular success: Lindenberg's break-through album *Andrea Doria*, for instance, only sold 100,000 copies and reached just number 23 on the German Charts; the Scherben were banned from radio-play because of their incendiary lyrics; and even Kraftwerk were more famous internationally than in West Germany, and not for their German-language lyrics. And so while both Lindenberg and the Scherben were important precursors to punk, they

¹⁹¹ Edward Larkey, "Postwar German Popular Music: Americanization, the Cold War, and the Post-Nazi Heimat," in *Music and German National Identity*, eds., Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp.239-243; and Hermann Haring, *Rock aus Deutschland West. Von den Rattles bis Nena: Zwei Jahrzehnte Heimatklang* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1996), pp.77-82.

¹⁹² See Sean Albiez and David Pattie, eds., *Kraftwerk: Music Non-Stop* (New York: Continuum, 2011); and Pascal Bussy, *Kraftwerk: Man, Machine and Music*, 3rd ed. (London: SAF Publishing, 2005).

¹⁹³ See Jennifer Shryane, *Blixa Bargeld and Einstürzende Neubauten: German Experimental Music: 'Evading do-re-mi'* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2011), pp.36-38.

nonetheless remained exceptions as the West German music charts were populated by foreign acts such as ABBA and Smokie throughout the late 1970s. In fact, West Germany's most successful global artists—such as the Scorpions or Lake—sang in English because it was believed that German-language lyrics could not succeed internationally.¹⁹⁴

In the first few years of his leadership as First Secretary of the GDR's Socialist Unity Party, Erich Honecker was looked upon as a reformer and his succession as head of the SED over the aging Walter Ulbricht was accompanied by cautious hopes for change. Honecker's brokering of the Berlin-Agreements with the West in 1972 stabilized the flagging economy, consumer production was ramped up, and a relaxation of the strict censorship laws seemed to point towards a new, more open society. Part of the explanation for Honecker's early popularity was his use of popular music to promote the regime and solidify SED authority.¹⁹⁵ At the Fourth conference of the SED Central Committee in December 1971, Honecker confirmed that art in the GDR was now free of "taboos," a declaration welcomed by artists across the country.¹⁹⁶ In April 1972, a dance music conference (Tanzmusikkonferenz) was held as SED authorities attempted to define the place of rock in the GDR, and in October of that year, a huge talent competition—Der Werkstattwoche 'Jugendtanzmusik'—was held to promote GDR popular music, an event many scholars see as the beginning of Eastern rock.¹⁹⁷ As part of the build-up towards hosting the X. Weltfestspiele der Jugend in 1973, a number of events and decisions by the SED encouraged Easterners to again pick up guitars.¹⁹⁸ These initiatives indicate how important popular music

¹⁹⁴ See Hollow Skai, *Alles nur geträumt: Fluch und Segen der Neuen Deutschen Welle* (Innsbruck: Hannibal, 2009), p.65.

¹⁹⁵ See Dan Wilton, "The 'Socialisation' of the State: Sport for the Masses and Popular Music in the GDR," in *Power and Society in the GDR, 1961-1979: The 'Normalisation of Rule'?* ed., Mary Fulbrook (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009), pp.102-129.

¹⁹⁶ Leitner, *Rockszenen DDR*, pp.66-67.

¹⁹⁷ Rauhut, *Rock in der DDR*, pp.52-53; Lindner, *DDR: Rock & Pop*, pp.92-93; and Peter Wicke and Lothar Müller, eds., *Rockmusik und Politik: Analysen, Interviews und Dokumente* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 1996), pp.202-206.

¹⁹⁸ Wilton, "The 'Socialisation' of the State," pp.106-109.

was for SED attempts at cultivating a distinctive GDR identity and socialist culture following Honecker's ascension and one of the reasons why scholars often consider the 1970s to be the 'golden age' of the GDR as the dictatorship became 'normal' to East German citizens.¹⁹⁹

These early promises, however, quickly went unrealized. Throughout 1973 and 1974, artists repeatedly ran afoul of cultural functionaries who patrolled the borders of the acceptable in the socialist state over both content and form.²⁰⁰ If songwriters were too critical of the regime, they faced repression. For example, in November 1976, after receiving permission to tour the West, Wolf Biermann, a critical singer-songwriter, was refused entry back into the GDR and had his citizenship revoked. A storm of protest ensued and a number of prominent literary figures including Heinrich Müller and Christa Wolf signed a declaration delivered to the Politbüro that demanded justice for Biermann, but to no avail.²⁰¹ The Biermann affair inaugurated a wave of emigration, and many of the most beloved East German musicians left for the West including Nina Hagen, Veronika Fischer and Klaus Renft, then part of the most popular GDR band, the Klaus Renft Combo.²⁰² The Biermann affair indicates the complicated relationship between the state and popular music under Honecker: while willing to encourage popular music to help build an Eastern socialist identity, the SED would not countenance open discussions about the future direction of the GDR or calls for reform. Moreover, the SED deeply feared musicians' ability to

¹⁹⁹ Mary Fulbrook has been insistent in arguing for the 'normalcy' of the SED dictatorship that became routine for Easterners by the 1970s and 1980s. See Mary Fulbrook, ed., *Power and Society in the GDR, 1961-1979: The 'Normalisation of Rule'?* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009); and Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005).

²⁰⁰ On the role of cultural functionaries in the GDR, see Esther von Richthofen, *Bringing Culture to the Masses: Control, Compromise and Participation in the GDR* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009).

²⁰¹ On the Biermann affair, see Fritz Pleitgen, ed., *Die Ausbürgerung: Anfang vom Ende der DDR* (Berlin: Ullstein, 2001); and Roland Berbig et al., eds., *In Sachen Biermann: Protokolle, Berichte und Briefe zu den Folgen einer Ausbürgerung* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 1994).

²⁰² Rauhut, *Rock in der DDR*, pp.88-93. On the Klaus Renft Combo, see Delle Kriese, *Nach der Schlacht. Die Renft-Story, von der Band selbst erzählt* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 1998); and Klaus Renft, *Zwischen Liebe und Zorn. Die Autobiografie* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 1997)

reach mass audiences and as 1976 became 1977, the dreams of a more-open socialist state for many were dead.²⁰³

Part of the explanation for Honecker's replacement of Ulbricht was Moscow's desire for rapprochement with the West, a goal achieved under the auspices of Ostpolitik with the German-German Agreements in 1972. But closer Western integration also meant increased Western influence in the GDR, a development that SED leaders recognized had the potential to threaten East German identity.²⁰⁴ Built upon the moral righteousness of the anti-fascist victory over fascism in the 1930s and 1940s, and the romance and self-fulfillment of labor, GDR heroic narratives of self-legitimacy became less relevant to a younger generation of GDR citizens reaching adulthood in the 1970s.²⁰⁵ Among young East Germans, there was an increasing tendency to look to the West, especially as the SED leaders were reluctant to countenance Western-styled youth culture and leisure activities.²⁰⁶ Moreover, the inability of the Eastern economy—beginning already in the 1970s—to provide the material goods necessary for the outward political conformity began undermining the Honecker compromise almost from the beginning.²⁰⁷ To reaffirm Eastern identity, Honecker developed a policy of Abgrenzung—a term

²⁰³ Mark Allinson, "1977: The GDR's Most Normal Year?" in *Power and Society in the GDR, 1961-1979: The 'Normalisation of Rule'?* ed., Mary Fulbrook (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009), pp.253-277. Nor was the state unaware of the restlessness of the population. See Henrik Bispinck, ed., *Die DDR im Blick der Stasi 1977: Die geheimen Berichte an die SED-Führung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 2012).

²⁰⁴ See Stefan Wolle, *Die heile Welt der Diktatur. Alltag und Herrschaft in der DDR 1971-1989* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1999), esp. pp.67-74. On efforts to construct an East German national identity, see Jan Palmowski, *Inventing a Socialist Nation: Heimat and the Politics of Everyday Life in the GDR, 1945-1990* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

²⁰⁵ See Josie McLellan, *Antifascism and Memory in East Germany: Remembering the International Brigades, 1945-1989* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2004); and Alan L. Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth: Historical Mythology and Youth Propaganda in the German Democratic Republic, 1945-1989* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999).

²⁰⁶ See Milena Veenis, *Material Fantasies: Expectations of the Western Consumer World among the East Germans* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012); Anna Saunders, *Honecker's Children: Youth and Patriotism in East(ern) Germany, 1979-2002* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007); and Alan McDougall, *Youth Politics in East Germany: The Free German Youth Movement 1946-1968* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004).

²⁰⁷ See Eli Rubin, *Synthetic Socialism: Plastics & Dictatorship in the German Democratic Republic* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Jonathan R. Zatlin, *The Currency of Socialism: Money and Political*

translating to ‘delimiting’ or ‘fencing off,’ an attempt to dissociate the East from increasing Western influence accompanying détente—and ramped up the ideological warfare: educational policies increased their condemnation of the West and capitalist decadence; the militarization of GDR society increased; the Eastern press spiced their lauding of the SED with features on drugs, suicide and unemployment in the West; and Eastern authorities renewed efforts at developing an indigenous socialist culture, especially mobilizing rock music.²⁰⁸ Thus popular music became a crucial plank under Honecker upon which to build and develop a socialist Germany.

While on the one hand repressing bands that were too Western focused or critical of the SED, Eastern rock that was approved by the authorities reached its musical peak in the 1970s. Bands such as Karat, City, Stern Combo Meißen and the Puhdys became immensely popular, recording numerous best-selling albums with Amiga, playing sold-out shows, and occasionally even receiving the privilege of touring in the West. Eastern rock bands are characterized by technical proficiency and—in the 1970s at any rate—political commitment to the socialist state.²⁰⁹ Under Honecker, there was an enormous expansion of the Free German Youth (Freie

Culture in East Germany (Washington DC: German Historical Institute, 2007); Judd Stitzel, *Fashioning Socialism: Clothing, Politics, and Consumer Culture in East Germany* (Oxford: Berg, 2005); Mark Landsman, *Dictatorship and Demand: The Politics of Consumerism in East Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); Philipp Heldmann, *Herrschaft, Wirtschaft, Anoraks: Konsumpolitik in der DDR der Sechzigerjahre* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004); and Ina Merkel, *Utopie und Bedürfnis. Die Geschichte der Konsumkultur in der DDR* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1999).

²⁰⁸ See Matthias Steinle, *Vom Feindbild zum Fremdbild. Die gegenseitige Darstellung von BRD und DDR im Dokumentarfilm* (Konstanz: UvK, 2003); John Rodden, *Repainting the Little Red Schoolhouse: A History of Eastern German Education, 1945-1995* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Corey Ross, “‘Protecting the accomplishments of socialism’? The (re)militarisation of life in the German Democratic Republic”, in *The Workers’ and Peasants’ State: Communism and Society in East Germany under Ulbricht, 1945-1971*, Patrick Major and Jonathan Osmond, eds. (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), 78-93; Bernd Eisenfeld and Peter Eisenfeld, “Die Militarisierung von Erziehung und Gesellschaft in der DDR. Die politische Instrumentalisierung und Ächtung pazifistischer Einstellungen,” in *Materialien der Enquete-Kommission „Überwindung der Folgen der SED-Diktatur im Prozeß der deutschen Einheit.“ (13. Wahlperiode des Deutschen Bundestages) Band IV/1: Bildung, Wissenschaft, Kultur*, Deutscher Bundestag, Hrsg. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1999), pg.640-742; and Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe’s Name: Germany and the Divided Continent* (New York: Random House, 1993), pp.189-191.

²⁰⁹ On Ostrock, see Puhdys, *Abenteuer Puhdys* (Berlin: Neues Leben, 2009); Gerd Dehnel and Christian Hentschel, eds., *Es brennt der Wald... Die Rockszene im Ostblock* (Berlin: Neues Leben, 2008); and Christian Hentschel and Peter Matzke, *Als ich fortging... Das große DDR-Rock-Buch* (Berlin, 2007); Jürgen Balitzki, *electra. LIFT. Stern*

Deutsche Jugend or FDJ), youth clubs (Jugendklubs) and cultural centers (Kulturhäusern) where official and amateur acts could perform concerts.²¹⁰ In the 1970s, GDR radio expanded, especially its focus on youth programming.²¹¹ Beginning in 1970, the GDR began hosting the international ‘Festival für politischen Liedes’ (Festival of Political Songs), a 10-day event featuring progressive bands from around the world. For Honecker, as former First Secretary of the FDJ, the question of youth involvement in the state was incredibly important for the future of the GDR, and he sought to mobilize popular music as a means to this end. What became known as Ostrock dominated the popular music scene in East Germany in the 1970s and was a welcomed international ambassador for the regime eager to cultivate political legitimacy abroad.

Despite a few high-profile scandals such as the Biermann affair or repression of the small if unpredictable Blues scene, Eastern rock and popular music enjoyed tremendous popularity and prominence both with East German fans and the SED—as long as they stayed in line.²¹² And stay in line they did; over the course of the 1970s, rock music was fully domesticated into the East German political and cultural world, a subjection of popular music to politics has no parallel in the West. And it was the complete subordination of popular music to state ideology and structures that was instrumental in the emergence of punk in the GDR. The rise of Honecker and his revised economic and social policies meant tremendous changes for cultural policy generally, and popular music more specifically. Economically, the shift from a society geared towards production to one rooted in consumerism meant that Honecker sought to base his popularity and power, not on a future utopia but on the ability of the SED to deliver the goods in the here-and-

Combo Meißen: Geschichten vom Sachsenreier (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2001); and Jürgen Balitzki, *Rock aus erster Hand* (Berlin: Lied der Zeit, 1985).

²¹⁰ Lindner, *DDR: Rock & Pop*, p.136. See also Fulbrook, *The People's State*, pp.136-137.

²¹¹ Edward Larkey, *Rotes Rockradio. Populäre Musik und die Kommerzialisierung des DDR-Rundfunks* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2007).

²¹² On the Blues scene, see Michael Rauhut and Thomas Kochan, eds., *Bye Bye, Lübben City: Bluesfreaks, Tramps und Hippies in der DDR*, Erweiterte Neuausgabe (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2009); and Lindner, *DDR: Rock & Pop*, pp.112-115.

now.²¹³ Fundamentally, the Honecker era was to be underwritten by increased material benefit and a rising standard in socialist living in exchange for public political conformity.

Yet Honecker's efforts at mobilizing popular music for political purposes were constantly stymied by the very means of its production, blockages that help explain why punk was attractive to Eastern youths and why the genre functioned as a platform for resistance. From the beginning, the East German music industry was designed to be an alternative to the Western capitalist music system. It was to be controlled by the SED, and function as a cultural and political arm of the state in its war against the West. In the 1950s and 1960s, however, the Eastern music industry was a confused jumble of competing bureaucracies and interests that helps explain the bipolar thaws and crackdowns that characterized popular music-making in the GDR as we have seen. But in 1973, the system was reorganized under the auspices of the Committee for Entertainment Arts (Kommittee für Unterhaltungskunst or KfU), a mass organization through which the SED sought more effective control over musical production and performance.²¹⁴ An umbrella organization, the KfU was composed of different sections covering the different types of artists in the GDR and theoretically at least, all entertainers had a say in the organization: thus rock and jazz musicians, singer-songwriters, composers and other performers had their own sections devoted to promoting their specific genres within the larger East German cultural world. Since the KfU was populated half by SED administrators and half by musicians and artists, the organization gave the latter a measure of power within the institution and also a hand in their own subjection. Consequently, the KfU functioned as both an administrative body and a union, and was charged with regulating the cultural life of the GDR: assigning pay; granting concerts; allocating musical equipment; and reviewing lyrical content. In contrast to the West, record sales

²¹³ Zatlin, *The Currency of Socialism*; and Jeannette Z. Madarász, *Conflict and Compromise in East Germany, 1971-1989: A Precarious Stability* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

²¹⁴ Wilton, "The 'Socialisation' of the State," pp.102-129.

were not the basis for salary, but rather—since musicians were state employees—the number of concerts determined a musician’s salary. Since the number of concerts—and thus salary—was decided by the KfU, musicians had a vested interest in involving themselves in the KfU due to the privileges it could grant. Nonetheless, artist power was constrained. Similarly to the Politbüro in relation to the Volkskammer, the KfU had a much smaller secretariat—the Generaldirektion—that set the agenda, and was staffed by cultural administrators drawn from the SED eager to exercise executive power.²¹⁵

As a result, the structures of the KfU ensured that the popular music industry in the GDR remained conservative. And what ensured the perpetuity of this system was the lack of market forces regulating the East German music industry. While the KfU was charged with salary and concert distribution, it was not responsible for selling records or concerts. Concert ticket prices were fixed at 5.05 Marks regardless of the band or concert venue (and tickets were usually distributed as political favors beforehand, usually meaning a shortage for the public). Likewise record prices were fixed at 16.05 Marks regardless of production or material costs, as was the number of records produced irrespective of popularity or demand. Thus, as Eastern listeners tuned out Eastern rock bands over the 1970s and 1980s, the GDR produced an enormous amount of records no one bought, and spent a considerable amount of money supporting bands that no one enjoyed. In fact, the KfU had no control over which bands the state record company Amiga recorded or who was playing on the radio since these decisions fell under different ministerial bailiwicks. In place of market forces, musical production was decided by political exigencies and

²¹⁵ Peter Wicke and John Shepherd, “‘The Cabaret is Dead’: Rock Culture as State Enterprise – The political organization of Rock in East Germany,” in *Rock and Popular Music: Politics, Policies, Institutions*, eds., Tony Bennett, Simon Frith, Lawrence Grossberg, John Shepherd and Graeme Turner (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), pp.25-36. On the structures and institutions of the East German music industry, see Lindner, *DDR: Rock & Pop*; Rauhut, *Rock in der DDR*; Wicke and Müller, eds., *Rockmusik und Politik*; Micheal Rauhut, *Schlamei und Lederjacke. Udo Lindenberg, BAP, Underground: Rock und Politik in den achtziger Jahren* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 1996); Rauhut, *Beat in der Grauzone*; and Leitner, *Rockszenen DDR*.

bureaucratic power struggles. Instead of popularity and the production of music that spoke to fans, political loyalty regulated success. This state of affairs encouraged politically neutered lyrics (reviewed by the KfU), uncontroversial concert performances (distributed by the KfU and performed in state concert halls), and active political involvement on the front lines of socialist culture—in the KfU. In return, privileges such as concert performances, recording sessions, and even the rare Western tour were doled out by the KfU. Therefore, musical consumption in the form of record sales was irrelevant to musical production; musicians and bands owed the state for their livelihood, not their fans.

Fundamentally, the KfU augmented the labyrinthine bureaucracy that musicians and bands needed to navigate in the GDR, what Peter Wicke and John Shepherd have appropriately called the “bureaucracy of rock.”²¹⁶ Most damaging, the political economy of the Eastern music industry ensured that reform of the system was next-to-impossible, one of the many ‘blockages’ that scholars such as Detlef Pollack and Ralph Jessen have suggested characterized the GDR from the 1970s onwards.²¹⁷ Beginning in 1963, as state employees, musicians needed to receive advance degrees in music from universities in East Berlin or Dresden.²¹⁸ Musicians needed to perform before a panel who graded their performance which then determined their state salary, a procedure that rewarded experienced, technically proficient, and conservative musicians.²¹⁹ Likewise, beginning in 1962, bands needed to apply for a playing permit, and were required to perform a concert—the so-called Einstufung (Assessment) concert—that a panel would judge, reviewing their music, lyrics, dress style, and performance, and assign a ranking between low

²¹⁶ Wicke and Shepherd, “‘The Cabaret is Dead’,” p.26.

²¹⁷ Detlef Pollack, “Modernization and Modernization Blockages in GDR Society,” in *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, ed., Konrad H. Jarausch, trans. by Eve Duffy (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), pp.27-45; and Ralph Jessen, “Mobility and Blockage during the 1970s,” in *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, ed., Konrad H. Jarausch, trans. by Eve Duffy (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), pp.341-360.

²¹⁸ Lindner, *DDR: Rock & Pop*, p.43.

²¹⁹ Lindner, *DDR: Rock & Pop*, pp.43-44.

(Grundstufe) and high (Sonderstufe). Since salary and concerts depended upon Einstufung rank, and the jury assigning rank was composed of members of the KfU, Einstufung was a critical procedure regulating the industry.²²⁰ Moreover, the panels were often composed of SED cultural administrators who knew little of music-making but a lot about political loyalty. Since advancing in the Eastern music industry was not related to record sales, newer bands, trying to break into the industry could not build upon fan popularity, sound experimentation or reinvention of musical genre as they could in the West. And since the older bands dominated the KfU and the committees regulating concert assignments and record contracts, newer bands were at a severe disadvantage at breaking into the mainstream. Even the prohibitive costs of musical equipment put younger bands at a disadvantage. Michael Rauhut estimates that to outfit a rock band in the GDR would cost between 200,000 and 750,000 Marks due to domestic equipment inferiority, shortages, and the costs associated with importing Western substitutes; indeed, according to a report sent to the Security Department of the Central Committee by customs officials, in 1973, approximately 80-90 percent of all instruments in the GDR originally came from the West.²²¹ Consequentially, by the early 1980s, the popular music industry in the GDR was dominated by a collection of older rock acts appealing to an older audience who used their positions of power to protect their status and privileges by blocking younger bands.

Due to the constraining nature of the East German music industry that rewarded political loyalty instead of artistic innovation, the system was in crisis by the late 1970s and early 1980s because it was unable to create newer acts to replace older ones. Nor was the SED unaware of all the difficulties hindering the Eastern music industry. In a frank report delivered to the FDJ Central Council by Hartmut König, FDJ Secretary and Philip Dyck, head of the FDJ Cultural

²²⁰ There were four grades of Einstufung: 1) Grundstufe (4 Mark per hour) 2) Mittelstufe (5 Mark per hour) 3) Oberstufe (6,5 Mark per hour) and 4) Sonderstufe (8,5 Mark per hour). See Lindner, *DDR: Rock & Pop*, p.44.

²²¹ Rauhut, *Rock in der DDR*, pp.11, 19-20.

Department in May 1987, the authors identified the many problems plaguing the torpid system. As the authors make clear, Eastern rock as it then existed was rapidly losing its hold on the imagination of youth in the GDR and thus endangering the entire politico-cultural initiative that Honecker had been cultivating.²²² By the late 1970s, Eastern rock bands had perfected a musical style that, for political reasons, countless artists' began repeating much to the boredom of fans. As a study examining musical tastes conducted by the Central Institute for Youth Research (ZIJ) in Leipzig makes absolutely clear, in 1979, 49 percent of youths preferred music originating in the GDR; by 1984, the figure had dropped to 31 percent; and by 1985, had plunged even further to 22 percent.²²³ Especially in the early 1980s, when a whole range of musical genres were incubating in the West and arriving East via radio, the Eastern rock scene was tired and well-past its due. Under capitalism, record sales and touring regulates the production of music. Artists selling more records and performing more concerts gain the economic freedom to cultivate their artistic sensibilities which in turn gives them political and artistic autonomy. The production of music under capitalism means that consumers (fans) have tremendous economic power in rewarding or punishing producers of music (artists); as such, musicians need to cultivate their fans in order to be successful. In the West, the state stays relatively aloof from artistic decisions, even if deeply invested in the many conglomerates who own record labels: theoretically, the state remains free from artistic direction, giving artists autonomy to pursue their creative sensibilities free from political considerations. As such, the artist is dependent upon consumers for their livelihood, and this relationship between production and consumption within the market regulates the capitalist music industry. Thus, while the SED was able to create a situation of

²²² SAPMO-BArch, DY 24/11381, Entwicklungstendenzen der DDR-Rockmusik und Vorschläge für ihre weitere Förderung (Vor. Nr.: 7/9/87), 16 June 1987, pp.1-30.

²²³ BArch, DC 4/705, Holm Felber, Tendenzen der Beliebtheit von Formen populärer Musik aus dem Hitlistenvergleich 1979/1984/1985, November 1985, p. 4.

dependency within the GDR music industry that could ensure political loyalty, the system was unable to reproduce itself, and remained fragile and susceptible to outside criticism.

Germany in 1977: Punk Rock and the Rebirth of Rock'n'Roll

Into these complex national circumstances punk arrived from the US and the UK to the FRG and the GDR.²²⁴ Punk began not with a single band or song, but as a series of musical and textual antecedents in the late 1960s and early 1970s that were responding to mainstream society and rock'n'roll culture at the time. Dissatisfied with music being produced by both the self-absorbed progressive rock acts and the more commercial-oriented pop bands, many youths sought a return to rock'n'roll that would reconnect performers and their audiences. With the failure of the Great Society and social divisions brought about the Vietnam War in the United States and the growing economic downswing caused by the oil crisis and de-industrialization in England, punk emerged as a means to revitalized daily life among young people. Punk began with American bands such as the Seeds, the MC5s, or the Stooges, who produced a kind of stripped down rock'n'roll that is sometimes called garage rock or proto-punk. These bands featured outrageous personalities—Iggy Pop but also Jim Morrison—whose emotional rawness and personal destructiveness spoke to an inner truthfulness unmatched by the psychedelic rock outfits of the late 1960s and early 1970s whose spacey music was ethereal and distancing compared to the loud in-your-face performances of the Stooges or the Doors.²²⁵ Channeling rock'n'roll through the very fiber of their being, these bands and figures united their music and lyrics with their beings, embodied

²²⁴ And not only in the US and UK. See Clinton Walker, ed., *Inner City Sound: Punk and Post-Punk in Australia, 1976-85* (Portland, OR: Verse Chorus Press, 2005).

²²⁵ See Clinton Heylin, *From the Velvets to the Voidoids: The Birth of American Punk Rock*, Updated Edition (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2005).

physically and psychically by their rambunctious stage-shows. For many, rock'n'roll had become too tame, and punk became the means by which to make it dangerous again.

Musically, punk was a response to the instrumental virtuosity of progressive rock outfits such as Yes or Genesis, and the excesses and self-importance of more mainstream rock'n'roll groups like Led Zeppelin or Pink Floyd.²²⁶ Instrumentation was simplified: electric guitars, bass, drums, and vocals. Early punk bands wrote short, fast songs, driven by a guitar-based drone featuring rapid, repetitive power chords and no guitar solos. Lyrics were shouted at listeners, and centered on the trivialities of daily life, and political and social issues. Consciously avoiding the narcissism of 1970s rock'n'roll, punk lyrics eschewed the kind of sentimentalism prevalent in most rock songs and instead sought directness as a more honest relationship between individuals and the world, and did so by touching on numerous controversial subjects—drugs, sex, crime—unambiguously, and indeed, crudely. Early punk kept rock'n'roll's traditional verse-chorus format and 4/4 time signature, though from the 1980s onward, Hardcore acts increasingly emphasized speed over songwriting.²²⁷ The rejection of musical proficiency was quintessential to

²²⁶ The literature on punk is enormous. See John Robb, *Punk Rock: An Oral History* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2012); Brian Cogan, *The Encyclopedia of Punk*, reprint edition (New York: Sterling, 2010); DK Publishing, *Punk: The Whole Story*, reprint edition (New York: DK Publishing, 2008); Clinton Heylin, *Babylon's Burning: From Punk to Grunge* (London: Viking, 2007); Alex Ogg, *No More Heroes: A Complete History of UK Punk from 1976 to 1980* (London: Cherry Red, 2007); Legs McNeil and Gillian McCain, *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk*, reprint edition (New York: Grove Press, 2006); Stephen Colegrave and Chris Sullivan, *Punk: The Definitive Record of a Revolution* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2005); Jon Savage, *England's Dreaming: Anarchy, Sex Pistols, Punk Rock, and Beyond*, revised edition (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2002); Marc Spitz and Brendan Mullen, *We Got the Neutron Bomb: The Untold Story of L.A. Punk* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2001); Roger Sabin, ed., *Punk Rock: So What? The Cultural Legacy of Punk* (London: Routledge, 1999); Adrian Boot and Chris Salewicz, *Punk: The Illustrated History of a Music Revolution* (New York: Penguin Studio, 1997); Tricia Henry, *Break All Rules!: Punk Rock and the Making of a Style* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1989); Dave Laing, *One Chord Wonders: Power and Meaning in Punk Rock* (Milton Keynes, UK: Open University, 1985); Virginia Boston, *Punk Rock* (London: Penguin Books, 1978).

²²⁷ On Hardcore, see Steven Blush, *American Hardcore: A Tribal History*, 2nd edition (Port Townsend, WA: Feral House, 2010); Mark Andersen and Mark Jenkins, *Dance of Days: Two Decades of Punk in the Nation's Capital* (New York: Akashic, 2009); Ian Glasper, *Trapped in a Scene: UK Hardcore, 1985-1989: Frontline Reports from the Hardcore Punk Underground* (London: Cherry Red, 2010); George Hurchalla, *Going Underground: American Punk, 1979-1992* (Stuart, FL: Zuo Press, 2006); Ian Glasper, *Burning Britain: The History of UK Punk, 1980-1984* (London: Cherry Red, 2004); Michael Azerrad, *Our Band Could Be Your Life: Scenes from the American Indie Underground, 1981-1991* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 2001);

punk style, and part and parcel of the democratizing impulse of musical production behind the Do-It-Yourself philosophy. Records were produced quickly with very little mastering as bands tried to capture their live sound in the studio, meaning that album sounds were raw. At the heart of punk was a commitment to break the conventions of rock'n'roll both lyrically and musically.

Punk was embraced and championed by writers who found mainstream popular music culture of the day stale and a number of magazines such as *Rolling Stone* and *Creem* began proselytizing a new type of rock'n'roll. A preeminent champion of the genre was Lester Bangs, an American rock critic, whose 10,000 word review of the Stooges *Funhouse* album in 1970 was a landmark essay on revolutionary potential that punk could provide.²²⁸ Clinton Heylin argues that the origins of punk should be located in these rock journalists who elaborated the ideology *avant la lettre*.²²⁹ The actual term punk was used first to describe the new music by Ed Sanders from New York band, The Fugs, and later that same year by Bangs and fellow critic Dave Marsh in 1970 and 1971—though the term etymologically stretched back into the sixteenth century with Shakespeare and has variously meant ‘prostitute,’ ‘garbage,’ ‘ruffian,’ and ‘scum’—and was later spread by John Holmstrom and his *Punk Magazine*.²³⁰ These early musical pioneers used the term as a signifier for themselves as the ‘lowest of society,’ but crucially, ones divorced from the pretenses and conventions of society, and as such, authentic. Between 1974 and 1976, an alternative scene grew up in New York City around the Mercer Arts Center in Greenwich Village and the bars Max’s Kansas City and CBGBs in lower Manhattan as a host of bands such as the Ramones, Television and Patti Smith, all contributed to the rising genre.

²²⁸ Reprinted in Lester Bangs, *Psychotic Reactions and Carburetor Dung: The Work of a Legendary Critic: Rock 'N' Roll as Literature and Literature as Rock 'N' Roll* (New York: Vintage, 1988), pp.31-52.

²²⁹ See Heylin, *Babylon's Burning*.

²³⁰ See John Holmstrom, *The Best of Punk Magazine* (New York: HarperCollins, 2012). On the etymology of punk, see “A Punk Etymology,” in *Punk: An Aesthetic*, ed., Johan Kugelberg (New York: Rizzou International Publications, 2012), pp.348-351.

But while punk originated in America, it was popularized globally by the British in 1976. In the UK, punk is associated above all with Malcolm McLaren—fashion designer, sometime radical, impresario, entrepreneur—and his creation, the Sex Pistols. Involved briefly in the Paris events of May 1968, McLaren was taken with the Situationist International whose slogans would influence his fashion design and ideological outlook.²³¹ In London, he and his partner Vivienne Westwood owned a clothing store on Kings Road where they created elaborate fashions for their young customers, the beginnings of punk's sartorial revolution. After a brief sojourn in New York managing the New York Dolls, McLaren returned to the British capital intent on translating those ideas in the UK. Putting together a band featuring Johnny Rotten on vocals, McLaren's the Sex Pistols played their first show in November 1975 at St. Martin's School of Art. In the early months of 1976, the Sex Pistols drew more media attention with their violence filled concerts and obnoxious interviews. Realizing the liberating potential that punk could infuse into rock'n'roll, a number of other London-based bands such as the Clash and the Damned quickly followed their lead. On 4 June 1976, the Sex Pistols ventured north to Manchester: while only about forty people witnessed that concert, the audience included the Buzzcocks, and those who went on the form Joy Division and The Fall.

As word spread beyond the capital, punk exploded throughout the UK over 1976. Aided by a scandalized media that broadcast every further insult, youths from all over the island began forming bands and playing shows. In July, the Ramones came to London for the first time and played to 2,000 people in the packed Roundhouse. In August, the 'European Punk Rock Festival'

²³¹ There is heated debate about the influence of the Situationist International on punk with most suggesting it had little practical import. If it did influence punk, it was mostly in the iconography and with several (albeit key) figures such as McLaren or Jamie Reid. See Robert Garnett, "Too low to be low: Art pop and the Sex Pistols," in *Punk Rock: So What? The Cultural Legacy of Punk*, ed., Roger Sabin (New York: Routledge, 1999), pp.17-30. For the most outspoken proponent of this argument see Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

was held in Mont-de-Marsan in France with the Damned and the Clash as headliners. Women formed a number of punk bands in the summer of 1976 such as the Slits, X-Ray Spex, Siouxsie and the Banshees, and the Adverts. In September, a two-night festival was held in London at the 100 Club. Featuring the Sex Pistols, the Damned, and the Clash, the show is mostly remembered for the arrest of Sid Vicious who threw a glass that destroyed a young girl's eye. In October, the first singles started to appear with the Damned's "New Rose" taking the honors, followed by the Vibrators and in November, the Sex Pistols' anthem "Anarchy in the U.K." In early December, on national television, Steve Jones from the Sex Pistols called the host Bill Grundy of *Thames Today* a "dirty fucker" to national outrage. Two days later the Sex Pistols, the Clash, and the Damned set out on a national tour that saw numerous cancellations, violence, and further indignities. By 1977, scandal had ensured that punk had become a new genre of rock'n'roll ripe for appropriation—which Germans eagerly did.

Chapter 2: The Origins of Punk Rock in the Federal Republic of Germany

“na endlich, real people”: Punk Rock and the Search for Authenticity

we finally arrive around 8 o'clock in the evening. today is only the third [August] and we still have the whole next day free. this godforsaken hole doesn't make a particularly good impression, and we're the only punks for miles. [...]

the next morning we combed the hotels in search of the bands. it turns out that there are still no bands in town, so we decide to invade the grandest hotel in town (rarely have i seen a lousier hovel). we sit there from 11 until 1 but nothing was happening. we head back to our hotel because we become tired from drinking too many cokes.

hardly 10 minutes have passed when we hear english from downstairs. “at last, real people” we think to ourselves, and Janie throws one of his valued glances into the courtyard and who happens to be standing there trying to explain to the confused landlady that two rooms are needed? correct: the Damned.

Mary Lou Monroe, *The Ostrich*, Nr. 4 (Düsseldorf: 1977), pg.2

Janie Jones is arguably the most famous German punk. Born Peter Hein in 1957, Jones adopted his nom-de-guerre from the title of his favourite song by UK punk rockers the Clash. Growing up in Düsseldorf, in the industrial heartland of the Federal Republic of Germany, Jones was frustrated with the direction his life was taking him. Tired with school, unfulfilled at work, bored with the possibilities that life was presenting to him—a normal past, a common future—Jones sought originality, excitement, distinction, something to enliven the ordinariness of growing up in mid-1970s West Germany, something that would give his life the meaning that he felt it was lacking. Into this maelstrom of too-young world-weariness and premature disappointment—he was nineteen afterall—Janie Jones began to read about a new musical genre sweeping across the British Isles in the summer of 1976.

Immediately recognizing his desires in the new sounds and images, Jones was energized by punk and the burgeoning alternative collective that grew up around the scene bar in the inner-

city, the Ratinger Hof. As he would later observe, Hein underwent an incredible re-birth: “In the span of three months, after I saw the light, I was reborn. Suddenly...the innocent apprentice P. Hein was transformed into the world’s most dangerous Punk-Rock-Terrorist Janie J. Jones.”²³² Playing in numerous bands, Jones wrote for West Germany’s first punk fanzine *The Ostrich*, and was the first Düsseldorf punk to don a leather jacket.²³³ Together with fellow rebel Mary Lou Monroe (born Franz Bielmeier) and others, Jones formed Charley’s Girls, one of the first West German punk bands. Feted by the press in the coming years for his innovative lyrics, Jones played in a number of famous bands. In 1978, Charley’s Girls disbanded in mid-concert to form *Mittagspause*, one of the first punk bands to start singing in German.²³⁴ Later—after discovering ska during a trip to the UK—Jones sang for the bands Fehlfarben and Family 5. One of the few Düsseldorf punks with a full-time job—at Rank Xerox, a company where Hein would work for twenty-five years—Jones had money to spend on new records arriving at the local record store Rock On; as Harry Rag (born Peter Braatz and frontman for S.Y.P.H.) later recalled, Jones always had one of the half dozen new releases put aside for him every weekend, “...that’s why he was considered the Pope.”²³⁵ Forming one of West Germany’s first independent record labels (Welt Klang Rekords), Jones helped record *Monarchie und Alltag* in 1980, Fehlfarben’s first studio release, an LP recently considered by both *Rolling Stone* and *Spex* to be the single most

²³² Ulrike Groos et al., eds. *Zurück zum Beton: Die Anfänge von Punk und New Wave in Deutschland 1977-’82* (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2002), p.132.

²³³ Markus Oehlin said Janie Jones looked like a “Christmas Tree” because of all the badges on his jacket. Jürgen Teipel, *Verschwende Deine Jugend: Ein Doku-Roman über den deutschen Punk und New Wave* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001), p.55. On Jones as a central figure at the Ratinger Hof, see *Bla Bla*, Nr.1 (Düsseldorf: 1978), pp.5-6; Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.91, 108.

²³⁴ On the opening night of the nightclub SO 36 in West Berlin, Charley’s Girls literally took a ‘lunch break’ (*Mittagspause*) in the middle of their set—they set up a table on stage and ate doners—and when finished they resumed their show as *Mittagspause*. See Alfred Hilsberg, “Punk-Schlacht an der Mauer,” *Sounds*, Nr.9, September 1978, pp.12, 14.

²³⁵ Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.108-109, here 109.

important German-language album of all time.²³⁶ While turning his back on Fehlfarben and punk in 1981 to protest the popularization of the genre—a complicated storyline that will occupy us in later chapters—Jones/Hein is synonymous with West German punk.

But in 1977, Jones was just another youth arriving in southern France after a seventeen hour train journey to watch the Damned and the Clash play at punk’s international coming-out party at the Mont-de-Marsan festival in August 1977.²³⁷ Arriving two days before the festival began, Jones and Monroe bummed around the city looking for action. Searching for the bands at the major hotels without success, Jones and Monroe returned to their “inhospitable” hotel to find out that the Damned were staying there as well: upon hearing English in the courtyard below, Jones and Monroe were overjoyed—“at last, real people.” Soon, the boys from Düsseldorf were sitting around with members of the Damned, the Jam, and the Maniacs, trading badges, swapping stories, and verbally abusing nearby Roxy fans (“that’s not punk anymore!”). The concert itself was a moment of pure ecstasy for Jones and Monroe. Moving with ease between the backstage to talk with “our tommies” and the front row of the concert to catch a number of French and foreign bands, the youths imbibed an evening of musical bliss. As the Clash stormed the stage in the late evening, Monroe could only mobilize an earlier moment from the past that had restored meaning and community to Germans to give readers a sense of the historic nature of punk: “indescribable. an orgy. since the thousand-year reich, nothing has carried away the people in such a manner.”²³⁸ The report detailing Jones and Monroe’s trip to southern France that appeared in *The Ostrich* is an incredible document suggesting why some German youths were so drawn to punk in the late

²³⁶ *Rolling Stone*, German edition, Nr.11 (2004), pg.17; “Die 100 Alben des Jahrhunderts,” *Spex*, December/January (1999/2000). See also “Fehlfarben,” in *Das NDW-Lexicon: Die Neue Deutsche Welle – Bands und Solisten von A bis Z*, ed., Christian Graf (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), p.95.

²³⁷ On Mont-de-Marsan, see Clinton Heylin, *Babylon’s Burning: From Punk to Grunge* (London: Viking, 2007), pp.150-151.

²³⁸ *The Ostrich*, Nr.4 (Düsseldorf: 1977), pp.2-8.

1970s: the search for meaning, the boredom of everyday life, the easy mixture of fandom and musicianship, the transnational material and cultural exchanges, the flirtation with fascism, the disciplining use of authenticity, the creation of new communities, and the desire for alternatives.

As punk exploded in England, reports on the genre began reaching the Federal Republic via the mainstream media. Curious youths like Jones—intrigued by the stories, sights and sounds—began traveling to London to get first-hand glimpses of the subculture, and by the end of 1977, energized by what they had seen, began fashioning punk scenes in the major cities of West Germany. Each city developed its own distinctive punk styles and sounds, a situation that would contribute to dividing the German punk scene in the early 1980s. On the one hand were those youths who were more adventurous and innovative sonically, who saw in the genre a means to revolutionize rock'n'roll and came to be called the Kunstpunks (Art-Punks). On the other hand were those who came to be called Hardcores, who understood punk as a platform for social revolution and were committed to radical leftist politics mixed with harder rock music. While the coming split will occupy many of the following chapters, in the late 1970s, these varying inflections meant that West Germany boasted a multitude of punk styles that built on the existing institutions of the alternative milieu, even as punk contents sought to separate Seventies youths from their Sixties predecessors. Düsseldorf had a more experimental bent reflecting the close relationships between musicians interested in de-constructing rock'n'roll and influenced by the artists around Joseph Beuys' Kunstakademie and his influential claim that 'Everyone's an artist.'²³⁹ In Hamburg, by contrast, punk developed a more straight-forward hard rock sound reflecting both the port-city's tougher working-class identity and the long connections to British

²³⁹ Commentators at the time argued that punks were following up Beuys' principles about the democratization of art. See Jan Marek, "Dilettanten auf dem Genie-Podest. Zurück zur Trivialkultur: Ein Ausweg aus der Sackgasse der Moderne," *Weltwoche*, Nr.1, 3 January 1985, p.29.

rock'n'roll.²⁴⁰ Youths in West Berlin, encircled by the Wall and on the front-line of the Cold War, were at the same time more political, more experimental, and also more fatalistic.²⁴¹ This potent mixture reflected the heavily politicized local environment and the apparent lunacy of cultural production by those anticipating imminent nuclear destruction.

As the 1970s became the 1980s, punks fashioned new structures and networks to support the burgeoning scenes that gave creative youths outlets to experiment with alternative identities. In 1977, *The Ostrich* was published by a collective of Düsseldorf authors including Janie Jones and within three years, hundreds of fanzines were connecting scenes across the country. Young owners founded new clubs such as the Rater Hof in Düsseldorf, SO 36 in West Berlin, and Krawall 2000 in Hamburg to cater to the new sensibilities of the subculture. Promoters began staging concerts in the cities and increasingly in the provinces, and national events such as the Zick Zack festivals in Hamburg's Markthalle drew audiences in the thousands. Journalists, especially at *Sounds*, the country's leading popular music magazine, began championing the genre as a new and specifically German cultural endeavour. Entrepreneurs opened a host of new record shops such as Rip-Off in Hamburg, Rock-o-Rama in Cologne, and the Zensor in West Berlin to meet the growing demand for punk music from eager consumers. Major English and American acts such as Lou Reed and the Clash toured West German cities and even the Sex Pistols were booked to play the Markthalle on 24 January 1978 but broke up ten days before after their infamous Winterland Ballroom concert in San Francisco. As the 1970s came to a close, punk had become firmly rooted culturally and socially in the everyday world of West Germany.

²⁴⁰ See Alan Clayson, *Hamburg: The Cradle of British Rock* (London: Sanctuary Publishing, 1998).

²⁴¹ See Wolfgang Müller, *Subkultur Westberlin, 1979-1989. Freizeit, überarbeitete* (Hamburg: Philo Fine Arts, 2013).

Punk Tourismus and the Origins of Subculture in West Germany

“Who snoozes, loses”

Slogan spray-painted by N. U. Unruh in the Eisengrau clothing-store in West Berlin, circa 1979²⁴²

Punk did not originate in the Federal Republic but crossed to the Continent from the United States and especially the United Kingdom via the mainstream media whereupon eager young Germans quickly rearticulated the genre back home. Youths flocked to the sites of UK punk after learning about them from the mainstream media that had quickly glommed onto the shocking images of British punk. Relaying their findings to enthusiasts waiting back home, alternative travellers acted as cultural mediators between Britain and the Federal Republic, a development indicative of the important role of consumptive practices among alternative and youth culture in the postwar period.²⁴³ Returning to the Federal Republic from the UK with what Pierre Bourdieu termed ‘cultural capital,’ these transnational figures were able to help youths rearticulate the genre into the particularities of West Germany in the 1970s.²⁴⁴ And as in earlier moments of German rock’n’roll history, US and UK musical forms were identified as ‘the real thing,’ sought out, imported, and quickly adapted to the local German context. By examining how punk came to West Germany, we can get a sense of how important the press, radio, and television were in

²⁴² Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.155.

²⁴³ See Anja Bertsch, “Alternative (in) Bewegung. Distinktion und transnationale Vergemeinschaftung im alternative Tourismus,” in *Das Alternative Milieu. Antibürgerlicher Lebensstil und linke Politik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Europa 1968-1983*, eds., Sven Reichardt and Detlef Siegfried (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2010), pp.115-130.

²⁴⁴ See Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996); Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); and Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1977). Sarah Thornton has sought to extend to the concept of ‘cultural capital’ to subcultures as ‘subcultural capital.’ See Sarah Thornton, *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1996).

introducing Anglo-American cultural forms to young Germans and how the media was able to suture the diverse threads comprising punk into a cohesive object of alternative style.

As the biography of Janie Jones illustrates, Germans learned of punk via two sources: first, the media, particularly the foreign—especially British—music press and radio; and second, by travelling to London to experience UK punk first-hand. Beginning in the summer and autumn of 1976, punk became a mainstay of the UK news industry, a situation only increasing following the Sex Pistols' profanity-filled live television interview with host Bill Grundy on 1 December 1976 for *Thames Today*.²⁴⁵ Eagerly seizing upon scandal to sell copy—especially tabloids such as *The Sun* or *The Daily Mirror*—the British mainstream press used punk to bemoan declining morals among British youth and the nation more with every new outrage fuelling the hand-wringing even further.²⁴⁶ In contrast, the UK music press—weeklies such as *Melody Maker*, *Sounds* and the *New Musical Express (NME)*—saw in punk a kind of rock'n'roll Risorgimento following what was perceived by some critics to be a period of musical malaise during the early-to-mid-1970s.²⁴⁷ Musically-inclined Germans long accustomed to following international music trends through the British music press were thus kept abreast of the spectacular events taking place continuously in London during 1976 and into 1977. For example, Alfred Hilsberg, the *Sounds* journalist who 'discovered' punk in Germany, and Wolfgang Büld, the influential filmmaker whose films *Punk in London* (1977) and *Brennende Langweile* (1979) helped popularize the genre worldwide, both read *Melody Maker* and the *NME* religiously.²⁴⁸ Detailing

²⁴⁵ See Heylin, *Babylon's Burning*; Jon Savage, *England's Dreaming: Anarchy, Sex Pistols, Punk Rock and Beyond*, rev. ed. (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2002).

²⁴⁶ See Heylin, *Babylon's Burning*; Savage, *England's Dreaming*.

²⁴⁷ Heylin makes the argument that the British music press invented punk before the fact in the early 1970s in their desire for a 'new' rock'n'roll. See Heylin, *Babylon's Burning*, pp.2-8.

²⁴⁸ Hollow Skai, *Alles nur geträumt: Fluch und Segen der Neuen Deutschen Welle* (Innsbruck: Hannibal, 2009), pp.24, 87. Büld's films were quite influential. *Brennende Langweile* received the highest viewer ratings to that date in history on ZDF's series *Kleines Fernsehspiel* when first broadcast on 11 January 1979. *Punk in London* was also

the new styles emerging in the UK capital and connecting Germans to the English music scene, the British music press served as an intermediary between the UK and the Federal Republic.

The West German mainstream press quickly followed suit. Attuned to shifting aesthetic tastes, already in 1976, articles began appearing in West German youth magazines. In September of that year, articles featuring the leading bands of US and UK punk began appearing in *Bravo*, then West Germany's largest youth periodical with a weekly circulation figure of more than one million readers: by the end of the year, *Bravo* had run features on the Ramones, the Clash, the Damned, and several on the Sex Pistols with Johnny Rotten even gracing the cover.²⁴⁹ The West German dailies, tabloids, and magazines also picked up on punk, though in contrast to the teen-magazines' celebration of punk style and aesthetic innovation, more serious reportage tended to focus on punk's nihilism, violent behavior and especially the genre's flirtation with fascism. Quickly, punks adorned with swastikas became a favourite image mobilized by the media in the late 1970s to decry youthful decadence and belief that punk represented a new form of fascism.²⁵⁰ While we will explore how the mainstream press constructed punk for the public in detail in coming chapters, what is important about these early exposés was that they teased Germans with snippets and pictures but never provided enough information or images to satisfy curious youths.

very influential for Janie Jones and Harry Rag. *Brennende Langweile* (DVD, director Wolfgang Büld, 1979); and *Punk in London* (DVD, director Wolfgang Büld, 1977). See also *The Ostrich*, Nr.7 (Düsseldorf: c.1978), pp.17-18.

²⁴⁹ *Bravo* circulation rose to 1.66 million by the early 1960s. See Stiftung Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, ed., *Rock! Jugend und Musik in Deutschland* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2005), p.36. *Bravo* had used the term "punk" to describe Eddie and the Hot Rods already in 1975. See "Eddie and the Hot Rods," *Bravo*, Nr.2, 30 December 1975, p.12. See "Ramones. Man muß sie lieben – oder hassen!" *Bravo*, Nr.37, 2 September 1976, pp.6-7; "Punk Rock. Sex Pistols" *Bravo*, Nr.41, 30 September 1976, pp.2-5; "Verdammt gut, diese Gruppe Damned!" *Bravo*, Nr.42, 7 October 1976, pp.4-5; "Punk Rock. Clash," *Bravo*, Nr.46, 4 November 1976, pp.68-69; and "Feuer frei für Sex Pistols!" *Bravo*, Nr.48, 18 November 1976, p.46.

²⁵⁰ For examples of these early articles, see "Punk," *Szene Hamburg*, Nr.11, November 1977, pp.18-19; "Ratten in Jeans," *Der Spiegel*, Nr.16, 11 April 1977, pp.212-215; and Olaf Leitner, "Punk-Rock oder: der Protest als Illusion," *Blickpunkt*, Nr.263, 1 November 1977, pp.18-20.

In the first hour of punk, image played a crucial role in elaborating the genre to West German audiences. Fashioned in bondage gear, ripped clothes, and bright, garish colors, the first wave of British punks were flamboyantly and outrageously dressed, and camera lenses zoomed in eagerly to capture the vividly-attired youths. Newspapers and television programs latched onto punk fashions, abetted by youths' desires to shock observers with their sartorial revolution.

Perusing the memoir literature on punk for what I call 'conversion stories,' one is immediately struck by the repeated references to mainstream media introducing the author to punk for the first time.²⁵¹ Punks cite *Bravo* or their local newspapers more often than not, especially if 'converted' to punk in the late 1970s. Male, the first West German punk band, formed in late 1976 after reading about London youths in the *Rheinischen Post*. Ralf Real Shocks, a Duisburg fanzine writer, was introduced to punk by *Bravo* in late 1976. Tommy Molotow, singer of Canalterror and Molotow Soda, saw the Sex Pistols on the popular ZDF television program Disco with host Ilja Richter. These examples can be extended almost indefinitely.²⁵² In most cases, images of punks appearing in the media drew young Germans to the genre. Leather outfits suggested taboo sexual desires, metal chains as fashion gestured towards the imbrications of slavery and consumerism, haircuts and makeup outwardly expressed the ugliness punks purported to see in mainstream society. Through these fashion codes London punks became photogenic objects of desire for young Germans.

Part of the explanation for the allure is simple: unable to hear the bands performing in the UK, German youths did not know exactly what punk sounded like. The infrequency of punk on

²⁵¹ Ironic considering punks supposedly disdained mainstream commercial products. Andreas Küttner, "Punk und BRAVO, BRAVO und Punk," in *50 Jahre BRAVO*, ed., Archiv der Jugendkulturen (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen, 2006), pp.123-138. See the interview with two young punks in Rolf Lindner, *Punk Rock oder: Der vermarktete Aufruhr* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Freie Gesellschaft, 1978), pp.8-11.

²⁵² Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, pg.39; IG Dreck auf Papier, ed., *Keine Zukunft war Gestern: Punk in Deutschland* (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen, 2008), pp.15-17; "Das Male-Interview," in *Rock Session 4: Magazin der populären Musik*, eds., Klaus Humann und Carl-Ludwig Reichert (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1980), p.189; Alfred Hilsberg, "Rodenkirchen is burning – Krautpunk," *Sounds*, Nr.3, March 1978, p.24.

the radio at first meant that youths were often unable to connect the images they saw in the mainstream press with the music. Some youths like Willi Wucher (born Wolfgang Schmitz), the legendary Duisburg fanzine writer and musician, heard the Sex Pistols on the radio but only later discovered that he had listened to punk.²⁵³ Barney Incognito—founder of Incognito Records—heard the Damned’s “New Rose” single in late 1976, and saw a magazine with pictures of punks in early 1977, but it was only after a trip to London in the summer of 1977 that he was able to link the images to the sounds.²⁵⁴ Especially in 1976 and 1977, before UK punk bands began entering the recording studio en masse, Germans were quite literally unable to hear what punk sounded like, and were thus at the mercy of journalists trying to describe punk music. Rock writers tried to convey the energy and aggressiveness of punk, especially focusing on the concert experience and how it was different than anything seen previously. In describing a Sex Pistols concert, *Bravo* emphasized the stale nature of conventional 1970s rock culture with the virility and vigour of the new punk scene: “But now...the fans go wild. And it is totally different wildness than by the rock gods. In contrast, a Pink Floyd concert is a lame pensioner’s ball! Johnny Rotten and Co. see themselves as new harbingers [of what’s to come] in the now sterile rock industry.”²⁵⁵ Still, it was difficult to imagine what was so new about punk musically, and more often than not, efforts at reworking rock’s traditional vocabulary proved inadequate. Hence authors fell back on images to convey the shocking nature of the genre since they had difficulty doing so with words pointing to the long-standing complexity with trying to articulate the specific emotional resonance of music into words by critics in the modern era.²⁵⁶ Nor were

²⁵³ IG Dreck auf Papier, ed., *Keine Zukunft war Gestern*, pp.14-15.

²⁵⁴ IG Dreck auf Papier, ed., *Keine Zukunft war Gestern*, pp.17, 19.

²⁵⁵ “Sie rocken, uns zu schocken,” *Bravo*, Nr.35, 18 August 1977, p.19.

²⁵⁶ It is difficult to distinguish a Sex Pistols show from a hard rock show based on a *Bravo* description: “...most of the punk-rock fans imbibe the hellish-thunder sound of the Sex Pistols like a drug, while they dance and twitch in front of 1000-watt speakers.” “Sex Pistols im Skandal-Gewitter!” *Bravo*, Nr.5, 20 January 1977, pp.8, 10.

record stores much help: Sun Records on the Ku'damm in West Berlin advertised Australian hard rock act AC/DC as punk throughout 1976 and 1977, a designation probably picked up from *Bravo*.²⁵⁷

But while the dearth of punk sounds and the fleeting imagery hampered German access to the genre, it was nonetheless clearly located geographically in the UK, and youths were urged to seek out punk in London for themselves—which they did, taking to the roads and rails to travel to London and elsewhere to get first-hand glimpses of punk. The sense of urgency propelling youths abroad is noteworthy because it points to the desire felt by Germans to participate in this new, alternative world, and the fear of missing it suggests an awareness of the genre's historical import almost within moments of its birth, a very modern sensibility that finds parallels with other moments of historic import.²⁵⁸ While the present-day listener is saturated with music, German youths of the mid-to-late 1970s, reliant as they were on weekly British and monthly German magazines, and songs played on foreign radio programs such as John Peel's show on the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) or Radio Luxembourg (RTL), were almost universally denied (immediate) access to punk music. So while *Bravo* claimed that punk “will soon shake everything up in German too” and advised readers to prepare for “[t]he new music wave that is about to roll over us,” impatient young Germans actively sought out the genre in London and punk *tourismus* became a major factor constituting the early scene in the Federal Republic.²⁵⁹

As numerous scholars have argued, tourism and consumerism has been decisive in spreading cultural forms and youth culture in the West during the postwar period and punk was

²⁵⁷ In 1976 and the early part of 1977, *Bravo* referred to the Australian rockers as ‘punk rock.’ See *Bravo*, Nr.38, 9 September 1976, pp.5, 64; *Bravo*, Nr.49, 25 November 1976, p.70; *Bravo*, Nr.5, 20 January 1977, p.40.

²⁵⁸ See Peter Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present: Modern Time and the Melancholy of History* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2004).

²⁵⁹ “Punk Rock. Sex Pistols,” *Bravo*, Nr. 41, 30 September 1976, p.3.

no different.²⁶⁰ Youths travelled to London as part of school trips while others spent their Christmas holidays in the UK.²⁶¹ Germans frequently crossed over the border into the Low Countries to visit clubs hosting punk bands in Amsterdam and Brussels.²⁶² And while rare, some even managed to reach New York City and Paris.²⁶³ These trips abroad brought youths face to face with punk and left lasting impressions, especially the trips to London which became the foremost musical destination among young Germans.²⁶⁴ Universally, German punks spent their time in the UK capital exploring the famous punk spaces they had read about in the British and West German press.²⁶⁵ Concerts figured prominently as youths descended onto the Nashville, the Hope and Anchor, the Roundhouse, and other legendary sites of UK punk rebellion. The busy London nightlife meant that punk shows occurred most evenings, and youths could arrive, pick up the most recent issue of *Sounds*, and head to whichever club happened to be hosting a punk band that night. The purpose was not to see a specific band per se but to partake physically in the concert experience that they had read about; to dance with other sweaty youths, to listen to strange sounds, and to participate in different forms of community.²⁶⁶ Days were spent perusing the offerings at Rough Trade, Albatros and Virgin Records, stocking up on fanzines and LPs that

²⁶⁰ On tourism, see Kevin Meethan, *Tourism in Global Society: Place, Culture, Consumption* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001). On tourism in Germany, see Rudy Koshar, *German Travel Cultures* (New York: Berg, 2000); and Joshua Hagen, *Preservation, Tourism and Nationalism: The Jewel of the German Past* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006). On tourism and youth culture, see Axel Schildt, "Across the Border: West German Youth Travel to Western Europe," in *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980*, eds., Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), pp.149-160; and Richard Ivan Jobs, *Riding the New Wave: Youth and the Rejuvenation of France after the Second World War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), pp.116-121.

²⁶¹ IG Dreck auf Papier, ed., *Keine Zukunft war Gestern*, pp.14, 17, 54; *The Ostrich*, Nr.7 (Düsseldorf: c.1978), n.p.

²⁶² *Heimatblatt*, Nr.2 (Düsseldorf: 1979), n.p.; *Heimatblatt*, Nr.3 (Düsseldorf: 1979), pp.8-9.

²⁶³ *The Ostrich*, Nr.4 (Düsseldorf: 1977), pp.2-9; *The Ostrich*, Nr.7 (Düsseldorf: c.1978), n.p.; *No Fun*, Nr.18 (Hanover: 1978), n.p.

²⁶⁴ See IG Dreck auf Papier, ed., *Keine Zukunft war Gestern*, p.26.

²⁶⁵ After arriving in the Nashville for a free concert, the author spent his time trying to imagine what it must have been like to watch the Sex Pistols play there. *Pretty Vacant*, Nr.5 (Hamburg: 1979), n.p.

²⁶⁶ Tourism scholars write that the pursuit of 'existential experiences' has become a crucial element in tourism. See Erik Cohen, "Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism," in *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol.15, Nr.3 (1988), pp.371-386; Nina Wang, "Rethinking Authenticity in Tourism Experience," in *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol.26, Nr.2 (1999), pp.349-370; and Meethan, *Tourism in Global Society*, pp.90-113. See *Pretty Vacant*, Nr.5 (Hamburg: 1979), n.p.; and *Der Aktuelle Mülleimer*, Nr.2 (Böblingen: 1980), n.p.

were hard to find in the FRG and the ‘travel diaries’ that began appearing in German fanzines even gave prospective shoppers tips on where to find the best deals.²⁶⁷ As Mary Lou Monroe put it, the wares in these stores were “those we did not even dare to dream about in Germany.”²⁶⁸ And no trip to the UK capital would be complete without the obligatory trip to King’s Road to gawk at (over-priced) punk fashion.²⁶⁹

The ritual visitation of these consumptive locales in the UK capital—concert halls, record shops, and clothing stores—comprised “a full London tour” that punks of the first-hour rushed to complete, as Janie Jones put it in one such ‘travel diary’ published in the Düsseldorf fanzine *Heimatblatt*.²⁷⁰ Arriving in London under blue skies, Jones spent the first couple of days buying records and attending concerts in some of the smaller clubs around town (seeing the Crooks in the Nashville, for example). Spending a week in the western district of Notting Hill, the site of the Portobello Road Market, the Notting Hill Carnival, and the 1976 unrest that inspired the Clash song “White Riot,” the climax of Jones’ trip was a Gang of Four concert at the Lyceum where he saw for the first time the Specials, a Coventry-based ska band that would influence his own musical style with *Mittagspause* and *Fehlfarben*. Reporting on the clothes that London punks were wearing—“people with crazy hairstyles, ruined clothes, zippers on everything, plaid pants with straps and chains around the legs, safety pins in the face, and fake tiger-print patches on the ass”—Jones’ staccato sentences try if implicitly fail to convey the existential experience that he lived at the Lyceum that night:

then came the specials. people are pushing [and shoving] in front of the stage,
everyone freaks out at the first words, hats were waved, rude bwoys, rude bwoys,

²⁶⁷ See *Bericht der U.N.-Menschenrechtskommission über Menschenrechtsverletzungen in der BRD*, Nr.3 (Hanover: 1980), n.p.

²⁶⁸ *The Ostrich*, Nr.7 (Düsseldorf: c.1978), n.p. See also *Pretty Vacant*, Nr.5 (Hamburg: 1979), n.p.

²⁶⁹ *The Ostrich*, Nr.7 (Düsseldorf: c.1978), n.p.; *Heimatblatt*, Nr.5 (Düsseldorf: 1979), n.p.; *Der Aktuelle Mülleimer*, Nr.2 (Böblingen: 1980), n.p.

²⁷⁰ *Heimatblatt*, Nr.5 (Düsseldorf: 1979), n.p.

rude bwoys, three blacks (or two?) four whites, all in second-hand suits, some with dark sunglasses, others with bluebeat hats, gangsters, ska, bluebeat rules, the new dance music is the old dance music, from the first moment there was no question whatsoever that this [music] is the next big thing. or maybe not. at any rate, lunacy. a mix of ska and rock that carries you away. one dances the moonstomp to it which is not dissimilar to the moonpogo, to link arms and sway from side to side is allowed in specials-land.

Watching the Mekons, who came onstage next, Jones was astounded that while none of the band appeared to be able to play their instruments, nonetheless, “from them something fantastic came out,” before returning again and again to how great the Specials were: “at any rate this was the best gig of the year and the specials, mannnnnn, the specials, crazy...” The feelings of excited newness, of pleasurable seeing, of bodily participation, of foreign discovery and healthy surprise are palpable in punk ‘travel diaries.’

Early German fanzines are filled with ‘travel diaries’ of punks visiting foreign locales, transmitting vital information and advice to youths back home about how the punk scene could and should be imagined in the Federal Republic. While the mainstream press identified London as the site of authentic punk, it rarely offered the extended details that youths craved, and young Germans took it upon themselves to travel to London and report back to their brethren about their experiences abroad, writing in fanzines as cultural experts. A combination of ‘fan’ and ‘magazine,’ fanzines were the preeminent media appropriated by punks to disseminate information and exercise authority within the subculture, and we will explore the contribution of fanzines to the development of punk and alternative cultural institutions more extensively in Chapter 5. Filled with information, ‘travel diaries’ were a staple of early punk fanzines and a means of conveying to those unable to travel abroad what ‘real’ punk was like. By idealizing how punk should be in West Germany, and what the Germans needed to do to create a similar

subculture in the FRG, ‘travel diaries’ were important texts for youths back home reinterpreting what they read about to implement the lessons learned in their own indigenous scenes.

While youths arriving in London spent considerable time shopping and conversing with foreign punks, it was the concert experience that was both the highlight of the trip and the literary climax in their subsequent reports. The show descriptions tried to describe to German readers punk sounds. Full of action words—energy, fun, aggression, and loud—the musical descriptions tried to capture the spontaneity and power of the early London punk scene. The use of English signalled cultural fluency and international solidarity as authors tried to transmit the unique feeling of community within the punk scene. The collapsed distance between band and audience was emphasized, and ‘travel diaries’ often talked about musicians as just other members of the crowd, dancing or sitting at the bar talking with their fans, and then suddenly up front singing or playing. These concert reviews were instrumental in the popularization of punk in the Federal Republic because they inspired youths to achieve something similar within their own communities. As one punk remembered, “These reports were positive experiences in an otherwise rather dreary life – the daily boredom in a hostile environment.”²⁷¹

As such, the ‘concert’ in ‘travel diaries’ functioned less as a realistic attempt at detailing the event, but rather as a suggestion that this experience was within reach and could be had by all. And by democratizing the availability of these authentic experiences, ‘travel diaries’ pushed youths towards the creation of these moments and scenes in the West Germany as well. Saturated with feeling, the accounts appearing in punk fanzines elevated the concert to the level of spiritual or existential experience, as the language Monroe used to describe an Adverts show in Dingwalls that he and Jones attended on 29 December 1977 in London: “this is what one lives for, it’s all

²⁷¹ Cited in Paul Ott and Hollow Skai, eds., *Wir waren Helden für einen Tag: Aus deutschsprachigen Punk-Fanzines 1977-1981* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1983), p.138.

the same, i don't need no bearded guru to show me the light, no orgasm, no money for me to buy any shit, no speed to get me high, with the purchase of these tickets for the 29th in London, i have received the best trip money can buy."²⁷² The concert became a regenerative moment for those disillusioned with the offerings of mass youth culture in the late 1970s: as 'Gasman' wrote about a 999 gig at the Marquee, the show had "restored my faith in honest music that is fun."²⁷³ While we want to be careful about the hyperbole in such statements, nonetheless, the emotional language made readers feel that something special was happening in London and many were fearful that they (the Germans) were missing a moment of key historical import: arriving in Bristol in late 1978 or early 1979, Hollow Skai, author of the fanzine *No Fun*, learned to his relief that punk had only just recently arrived, and concluded tellingly, "we Germans aren't too far behind the times then..."²⁷⁴

One consequence of the physical proximity and traffic between West Germany and London was to ensure the cultural hegemony of UK punk over the US variant, at least in the early years. Whereas West Germans could get into a Volkswagen and soon arrive in London, New York was far less accessible.²⁷⁵ Dependent as Germans were on the British music press for information about the international punk movement, the US scene received considerably less press than the UK scene. For West Germans, British punk represented the most authentic models for emulation. In fact, travelling to London became so commonplace that Benno Blittersdorf, author of the renowned Bremen fanzine *Endlösung*, was fed up with "(PUNK) TOURISMUS!" Embittered that "EVERY IDIOT IS GOING TO LONDON" and as a result no local punks were around during the summer holidays, Blittersdorf complained that, "THERE ARE NOW MORE

²⁷² *The Ostrich*, Nr.7 (Düsseldorf: c.1978), n.p.

²⁷³ *The Ostrich*, Nr.4 (Düsseldorf: 1977), p.39.

²⁷⁴ *No Fun*, Nr.26/27 (Hanover: c.1978/1979), cited in Ott und Skai, *Wir waren Helden für einen Tag*, p.126.

²⁷⁵ *Ants*, Nr.3 (Augsburg: 1980), pp.14-15.

WEST GERMAN PUNK IN LONDON AND IN THE SURROUNDING AREA THAN IN BREMEN.”²⁷⁶ The frequency of British-German travel speaks to the international character of music and youth subculture in the postwar period, and to the role played by consumer culture and tourism in the spread of early punk culture to the FRG. London, in the minds of many, became a sort of ‘punk El Dorado’ filled with concerts and LPs, entertainment and existential experiences, an idealized archetype for aspiring Germans coming home to the Federal Republic to work towards.

Wall City Rock: Punk in Düsseldorf, Hamburg and West Berlin

I’ve been living near the wall
 Out of my window I can see it all
 I can’t ignore it cause it’s not fair
 On the horizon is the GDR

Wall City Rock (x4)

Bodyguards on patrol
 Passport is ready for control
 Got no visa can’t get in
 That’s the life in Berlin

Wall City Rock (x4)

It’s so unnatural but it still has atmosphere
 You just have to watch the people living here
 24 hours this city stays alive
 Only if you’re tough you might survive

Wall City Rock (x4)

Berlin city is the one
 The only city to have some fun
 You can do anything
 Get on your feet and start to sing

²⁷⁶ *Endlösung*, Nr.8 (Bremen: 1980), p.11.

Wall City Rock (x4)

PVC, "Wall City Rock," Wall City Rock (Incognito 097, 1997)

The trips to London and beyond were the decisive first steps towards the creation of the West German punk scene. Youths were urged to venture forth and then actively rearticulate what they saw in the UK capital back home in the Federal Republic. Writing in *The Ostrich* in late 1977, 'Gasman' insisted that his fellow Germans "travel to London and hear" what was happening there and then "bring about the same situation here in Germany."²⁷⁷ Bringing punk back to West Germany was to be the labor of these early explorers, and the narratives punks told about their adventures abroad were meant to inspire and direct the movement back home. Once they began travelling to and fro, punks quickly established alternative bridgeheads in the urban centers of the Federal Republic, and Düsseldorf, Hamburg, and West Berlin were the three metropolitan cores that became the most influential in shaping early West German punk. While the punk scene in Düsseldorf was heavily influenced by the artistic milieu and the more experimental aspects of punk aesthetics, youths in Hamburg were oriented towards the more hard-rock inflections and working-class identity. Meanwhile, in West Berlin, the subculture built upon existing alternative structures and meshed them with radical leftist politics. These early scenes sought to carve out spaces that rejected both mainstream society and the New Left alternative milieus even as—paradoxically—they often shared many of the very same ideas, structures, and networks that they ostensibly claimed to reject. Thus, one of the main contradictory threads running through punk was the continuities with the 1960s and other alternative social movements in spite of the constant claims of rupture. Contributing to this tension, in the first years especially, was that the

²⁷⁷ *The Ostrich*, Nr.4 (Düsseldorf: 1977), p.41.

major city scenes were developing somewhat independently from one another, circumstances contributing greatly to the genre's diversity and dynamic nature.

West Berlin in the 1970s was a haven for artistically-minded youths who sympathized overwhelmingly with the New Left who drove the events of the 1960s. In an effort to populate the divided city located deep in communist territory, Bonn subsidized the former German capital heavily, and young people eager to avoid military conscription flocked to the cheap rents in West Berlin neighborhoods such as Schöneberg and Kreuzberg.²⁷⁸ Die Ärzte, a Kreuzberg punk band, poked fun at this situation in their song "West Berlin:" "We come from Swabia / and don't want to serve / Service with a weapon is simply not healthy / We want to study sociology in peace / and not march in the army the whole day long / But there is an answer / I know where to go – West Berlin!" But as an artistic melting pot, the city was young, imaginative and experimental, and these characteristics were conducive to nurturing the burgeoning punk scene, especially those impulses critiquing existing aesthetics. "Berlin was such an artist's idyll," remembered Gudrun Gut, member of DIN A Testbild, Mania D. and Malaria!, "The rents were low. One could experiment a lot without starving at the same time."²⁷⁹ While small at first, the Berlin scene was nonetheless vibrant because nearly everyone involved was an artist and was in a band.²⁸⁰

On the front line of the Cold War, the West Berlin punk scene was steeped heavily in irony and black humour that reflected the proximity of the city to potential nuclear destruction.²⁸¹

Contemporary observers such as Alfred Hilsberg and more recent scholars have suggested that

²⁷⁸ In 1983, subsidies from Bonn totaled 10.5 billion marks, 53 percent of the city's income. By 1986, this number had dropped to 8 billion marks. See Charles W. Haxthausen and Heidrun Suhr, eds., *Berlin: Culture and Metropolis* (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), p.xxii, n.11; and Roger Karapin, *Protest Politics in Germany: Movements on the Left and Right since the 1960s* (University Park, PA.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), p.68.

²⁷⁹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.232.

²⁸⁰ Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.75.

²⁸¹ Frank A. Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging: Von Punk zu NDW* (Mainz: Ventil Verlag, 2007), pp.7-8.

this location gave West Berlin's musical production its authentic edge.²⁸² Division, the Berlin Wall, and nuclear war were constant presences in the West Berlin punk scene. The opening of the famous SO 36 club in Kreuzberg on 13 August 1978—the 17th anniversary of the Berlin Wall—was celebrated by the crowd who, urged on by opening act PVC, sang a stirring rendition of 'Happy Birthday' to the concrete barrier.²⁸³ For some like Gut's band mate Beate Bartel, punk helped youths come to terms with the city surrounded by barbed wire.²⁸⁴ Others like Neonbabies and Ideal singer Annette Humpe, saw the Wall as protection—not against the East, but against consumerism and the petit-bourgeois mentality of the West: "West Germany was so narrow and petit-bourgeois (Spießergebrösel) for me. And Berlin was beautifully encircled. This was good protection against the stupid West Germans. There I felt totally at home. I found the Wall to be just super."²⁸⁵ The use of irony and black humor was a means of confronting while at the same time distancing the imminence of mass death, a consequence of Cold War politics beyond youth control that the popular slogan of the day "Living not just surviving" well captures.²⁸⁶

With its concentrations of students and a tradition of leftist politics, punk easily slid into West Berlin's radical political scene. For many, participation in punk was identical with involvement in the numerous alternative projects popping up around the city. Early Kreuzberg punk bands such as Katapult and Äztussis, for example, both lived in communes while a number of later West Berlin bands—Einstürzende Neubauten perhaps most famously but also lesser

²⁸² Hilsberg, "Rodenkirchen is burning," pp.20-24. See especially Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, esp. pp.74-76; and Barbara Hornberger, *Geschichte wird gemacht. Die Neue Deutsche Welle. Eine Epoche deutscher Popmusik* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2011), pp.209-217.

²⁸³ Immortalized on the opening track to the compilation album *S.O. 36* (Ignition/Rip Off 065, 1980). See also the fanzine *T4: Mauerausgabe* (West Berlin: 1978). For a description of the opening concert, see Hilsberg, "Punk-Schlacht an der Mauer," pp.12, 14.

²⁸⁴ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.44.

²⁸⁵ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.115.

²⁸⁶ Bernd Hahn and Holger Schindler, *Punk – die zarteste Versuchung, seit es Schokolade gibt* (Hamburg: Buntbuch Verlag, 1983), p.217.

known Hardcore acts such as Vorkriegsjugend, were actively involved in the squatting scene.²⁸⁷ Popular music in West Berlin had long socialized youths into radical politics. Michael ‘Bommi’ Baumann, in his celebrated memoirs, recalls how his road to the June 2 Movement (Bewegung 2. Juni) and terrorism began with the Beatles and Stones, Radio Luxembourg and the American Forces Network.²⁸⁸ However there was always significant tension between punk and the leftist politics pursued by the New Left and the alternative milieu. Whereas the ’68ers were especially concerned with theoretically locating the failure of the APO in Marxist debate, punks elevated actions over words, part and parcel of the genre’s rejection of the dogmatic New Left’s penchant for endless debates and internecine squabbles.²⁸⁹ The emphasis on theoretical discussions especially alienated youths who were drawn to punk as an aesthetic and social revolt. As Margita Haberland, bassist for the Abwärts, a former ’68er and roommate of RAF terrorist Gudrun Ensslin, explained, her decision to turn her back on feminist politics and concentrate instead on punk was quite conscious: “Back then there were with women always these endless discussions until it got to the point. And with us [punks] it was simply a matter of doing.”²⁹⁰ Likewise Jäki Eldorado, the self-styled first punk in West Germany, put it, after living in a number of Wohngemeinschaften (communal living spaces or WGs), he came to realize that, “I just couldn’t

²⁸⁷ Jürgen Stark and Michael Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel? Punk – New Wave – Neue Welle* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Freie Gesellschaft, 1981), p.110; Albrecht Koch, *Angriff auf’s Schlaraffenland. 20 Jahre deutschsprachige Popmusik* (Frankfurt and Main: Ullstein, 1987), pp.114-116; Hornberger, *Geschichte wird gemacht*, p.74. See also *Preiserhöhung*, Nr.3 (Hamburg: 1979), p.10. As Justin Hoffmann points out, squatting was another form of DIY. See Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton*, p.168.

²⁸⁸ Michael ‘Bommi’ Baumann, *How It All Began: The Personal Account of a West German Urban Guerrilla*, trans. by Helene Ellenbogen & Wayne Parker (Vancouver, BC: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2000), pp.19-24. Baumann was also present at early West Berlin punk concerts. See Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.64.

²⁸⁹ However, the elevation of actions over words does place punk alongside terrorism in this facet. This is not to suggest that punk held any of the same ideals, just that in typologizing reactions to the failure of the APO and student movement, punk—like terrorism—sought to continue the revolution in action. For a detailed discussion about the imbrications of terrorism and West German punk, see Cyrus Shahan, “The Sounds of Terror: Punk, Post-Punk and the RAF after 1977,” in *Popular Music and Society*, Vol.34, Nr.3 (2011), pp.369-386.

²⁹⁰ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.62.

get on with this humourless milieu.”²⁹¹ Thus punks gravitated towards those alternative projects and politics—demonstrations, squatting, benefit concerts—that promised more immediate action.

Punk emphasis on activity separated the genre from the more doctrinaire '68ers and authorized an enormous outburst of media projects, independent record stores, and new club spaces. In West Berlin, the first hangout for punks was the Punk Haus on the Kurfürstendamm. Originally named the Funk Haus, the owner quickly caught wind of the new trend and changed the name accordingly.²⁹² Later spaces such as the Kant-Kino run by legendary manager Reinhard ‘Conny’ Konzack hosted punk concerts even if the threat of riotous destruction always meant that these spaces were tenuous.²⁹³ Early converts and voyagers to London such as the Zensor (Burkhard Seiler) travelled to the UK and stuffed his suitcases full of singles and LPs. Returning to West Berlin, the Zensor resold these products at flea markets and concerts until he opened his Zensor-Laden and mail order business in 1979.²⁹⁴ Punk *tourismus* in this way was as material as it was experiential.

Whereas older German bars and 1960s student clubs sought to fill their spaces with relaxing chairs and tables—traditional German *gemütlichkeit*—punk spaces were meant to be unnerving, uncomfortable—painful even—to simulate the distance between individuals and the alienation of modern life. Bare spaces, white walls, neon, and disposable consumer materials were all features of these new haunts. Tables were often absent except for standing drink tables that mimicked those found in train stations and offered tired legs no respite. Windows, instead of sheltering patrons with white, sheer, or frilly drapes, were blacked out or left bare for the world to stare unnervingly inwards. Clean lines and coldness were intended rather than warmth which

²⁹¹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.27.

²⁹² Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.64; Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, pp.71-72; Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, p.55. See also *New Order*, Nr.1 (West Berlin: 1977), n.p.

²⁹³ Stark and Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel?* p.79.

²⁹⁴ Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.78.

had been a key ideological imperative promoted by the '68ers.²⁹⁵ Kiev Stingl, a Hamburg rocker associated with early punk, expressed the move from warm to cold: “Earlier I made warmth and warmed up the cold people artistically, but now I make cold, and from this coldness, everyone can now draw from this their own warmth, has the potential to notice their own individual warmth.”²⁹⁶ The coldness in both the music and the spaces was intended to reflect the frostiness in existing social relations that walled off punk from the 1960s even as it harked back to older Weimar traditions of distance and coolness.²⁹⁷ Indeed, many Berlin bands such as Einstürzende Neubauten and Malaria! cultivated a specifically 1920s decadent aesthetic inspired by Weimar.²⁹⁸ These spaces were meant to upset visitors, to keep them on edge but alert, and to guard against complacency. SO 36, the famous club still located on Oranienstraße in Kreuzberg, named after the old Berlin postal code, and helped run by the famous West German visual artist Martin Kippenberger, was a long rectangular hall filled with neon lights that made it seem “that one immediately looked ill.”²⁹⁹ With a floor covered in metal plates rescued from an industrial site (and later ripped up and used to package the famous SO 36 compilation LP), the club reminded patrons of a “neon-illuminated walk-in freezer.”³⁰⁰ Even traditional business practices

²⁹⁵ See Sven Reichardt, “Is ‘Warmth’ a Mode of Social Behaviour? Considerations on a Cultural History of the Left-Alternative Milieu from the Late 1960s to the Mid 1980s,” in *Behemoth: A Journal on Civilization*, Nr.2 (2010), pp.84-99.

²⁹⁶ “Kiev Stingl: Hart wie Mozart – Interviewt von Klaus Plaumann,” in *Rock Session 4: Magazin der populären Musik*, eds., Klaus Humann und Carl-Ludwig Reichert (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1980), p.146.

²⁹⁷ For example, when the Dschungel moved to Nurnberger Str., the walls were painted white to give it a sanitized look. Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.116. On distance and coolness in Weimar, see Helmut Lethen, *Cool Conduct: The Culture of Distance in Weimar Germany*, trans. by Don Reneau (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

²⁹⁸ Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.76; Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.116, 234. On the similarities between 1920s Weimar and 1970s/1980s West Berlin, see Jennifer Shryane, *Blixa Bargeld and Einstürzende Neubauten: German Experimental Music: ‘Evading do-re-mi’* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2011), pp.64-67.

²⁹⁹ Cited in Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.44.

³⁰⁰ Günter Franzen and Boris Penth, *Last Exist. Punk: Leben im toten Herz der Städte* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1982), p.174. To Male, S.O. 36 reminded them of the Rater Hof. See Hilsberg, “Punk-Schlacht an der Mauer,” p.12.

were reinvented: at SO 36, instead of paying a cover price to attend concerts, customers could pay with artwork.³⁰¹

Whereas West Berlin was an artistic melting pot attracting youths to punk with calls to reinvent aesthetics, Hamburg built upon a long-standing rock'n'roll scene and especially its links to the United Kingdom. In the 1950s and 1960s, Hamburg had been a central destination for Anglo-American rock'n'roll in West Germany due to its close proximity to the UK.³⁰² Featuring a large concert hall—the Markthalle opened in March 1977—numerous smaller clubs in the St. Pauli and Karolinien neighbourhoods—most famously, the Beatles got their start there—and the headquarters of *Sounds* magazine, Hamburg in the 1970s had a rich local rock tradition that punk built upon. The first Hamburg punk shows were at the Easy in the nearby suburb of Bergedorf before moving to the Winterhuder Fährhaus as early as 1977.³⁰³ A number of large international acts such as the Clash played Hamburg early on, drawing attention to the genre and helping to promote the local scene.³⁰⁴ Punk in Hamburg quickly centralized around a band called Big Balls & The Great White Idiot. Older rockers with long-hair, the Big Balls subsequently became pariahs within the West German punk scene that looked upon them as poseurs as we will see but early on they were instrumental in promoting the first generation of Hamburg bands by providing equipment and opportunities for the younger punk acts to open for them.³⁰⁵ Heavily influenced by UK acts that often played the city, Hamburg's punks actively cultivated working-class

³⁰¹ Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.77; Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, p.68.

³⁰² See Ian Inglis, *The Beatles in Hamburg* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012); Robert P. Stephens, *Germans on Drugs: The Complications of Modernization in Hamburg* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007); Clayson, *Hamburg: The Cradle of British Rock*; and Hilsberg, "Rodenkirchen is burning – Krautpunk," p.23. More generally, see Frederic M. Kopp, *Rocking the Federal Republic: Rebellious Youth and Music in West Germany, 1945-1990* (Dissertation: University of Illinois at Chicago, 2001), pp.145ff.

³⁰³ Michele Avantario, "1977-1987: Von Krawall bis Totenschiff. Punk, New Wave und Hardcore," in *Läden, Schuppen, Kaschemmen: Eine Hamburger Popkulturgeschichte*, ed., Christoph Twickel (Hamburg: Edition Nautilus, 2003), p.43; and Stark and Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel?* p.145.

³⁰⁴ Avantario, "1977-1987: Von Krawall bis Totenschiff," pp.46, 50-52.

³⁰⁵ *Rock Musik*, Nr.3 (Hamburg: 1979), p.4; Avantario, "1977-1987: Von Krawall bis Totenschiff," p.53; Stark and Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel?* pp.137, 148-150.

identities and styles associated with the Clash, and the names of the city's early bands—the Coroners, the Razors, the Buttocks, and others—show the indebtedness to British punk. These appropriations meshed well with the port-city's tough, masculine image, and outsiders especially enamoured with the English scene—such as Janie Jones—considered Hamburg punks “authentic.”³⁰⁶

Like West Berlin, Hamburg was a center of leftist activism and many punks in the city emerged from these circles, embraced similar radical political traditions and institutional drives, even if they sought to separate the genre from the New Left.³⁰⁷ Klaus Maeck, for example, was originally part of the Sponti movement and ran a communication and information center called the Schwarzmarkt (Black Market) in the mid-1970s.³⁰⁸ After hearing the Sex Pistols, Maeck was converted to punk. At first, Maeck sold records, fanzines, and badges at shows, but in 1979 he opened the Rip Off record store which was “more of a meeting place than a record store.”³⁰⁹ The original idea for Rip Off, according to Maeck, was to become an institutional core, a central hub around which like-minded individuals could connect and a distribution center for products manufactured along punk lines: “Back then, there were hardly any records. But in my mind, I had already developed this idea of selling independently produced records. Because in the normal record stores there was nothing like that.”³¹⁰ Similarly, Krawall 2000, a small club on the fish market with financial support from Eugen Honold, author of the fanzine *Pretty Vacant*,

³⁰⁶ *Total Control*, Nr.1 (Düsseldorf: 1977), pp.12-17

³⁰⁷ See the comments by Michael Ruff about how the Karolinenviertel was an underground alternative scene. Avantario, “1977-1987: Von Krawall bis Totenschiff,” p.58.

³⁰⁸ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.63.

³⁰⁹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.138. See also *Ants*, Nr.3 (Augsburg: 1980), p.5; and *Heimatblatt*, Nr.6 (Düsseldorf: 1979), p.5.

³¹⁰ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.138. See also Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, pp.94-95; Avantario, “1977-1987: Von Krawall bis Totenschiff,” pp.47-49; and Stark and Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel?* pp.170, 194.

opened in May 1979.³¹¹ A dive by any stretch of the imagination, Krawall 2000 drew large crowds on Friday nights as hundreds would cram inside for concerts while a like number would loiter outside. According to Alfred Hilsberg, “That was a horror-club. To experience a concert there was pure torture. I always stood outside and watched from there. It was unbearable inside. There was only room for 50 people. But there were 200 in there. Everyone stood on top of one another. The bands were spit on. They spit back. And everyone found it fantastic.”³¹² According to participants, Krawall 2000 was a haven for punks in the Hafenstadt: “the atmosphere makes it possible for one to get rid of the accumulated stresses of the day, sometimes a little bit gruffly and with beer, but that is all completely harmless and, more importantly, sincere.”³¹³

Whereas Hamburg punks combined music and radical politics, they strictly separated art and punk. “In Hamburg there was a strict separation between punks and artists,” Hilsberg has since remembered, “the people here [Hamburg] regarded with hostility everything that was considered art.”³¹⁴ The division between punk as an aesthetic identity and punk as social practice defines the history of punk in West Germany. The rejection of art was due in part to the long-time rocker image and masculine working-class identity cultivated by Hamburgers but was also socially based, since Hamburg punks were decidedly more working-class than their middle-class or upper working-class counterparts in Düsseldorf.³¹⁵ The close proximity to London meant that Hamburg youths were often privy to new trends developing in the Anglo-American world much quicker than those in other cities. Indeed, the Big Balls thought that Hamburg had more in common with London than Munich, a belief underscoring the heterogeneous nature of the early

³¹¹ See *Preiserhöhung*, Nr.3 (Hamburg: 1979), pp.12, 14; *Rock Musik*, Nr.3 (Hamburg: 1979), pp.3-13; and Avantario, “1977-1987: Von Krawall bis Totenschiff,” pp.56-58.

³¹² Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.139; and Avantario, “1977-1987: Von Krawall bis Totenschiff,” pp.56-58. See also IG Dreck auf Papier, ed., *Keine Zukunft war Gestern*, p.26.

³¹³ *Rock Musik*, Nr.3 (Hamburg: 1979), p.3.

³¹⁴ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.164

³¹⁵ See Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton*, p.158; and Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, p.183.

West German punk scene.³¹⁶ *Sounds* reporters such as Hilsberg usually held court nightly in the Karolinenviertel bars such as the Marktstube across from Rip Off, and spent hours debating music with youths.³¹⁷ The Hardcore scene that would eventually emerge in the Federal Republic during the early 1980s—a development that we will explore later—for all intents and purposes originated in Hamburg. An emphasis on stripped down rock’n’roll fundamentally separated Hamburg from the more experimental music coming out of Düsseldorf. Whereas the Hamburg bands saw punk as music to be played “loud and at one-hundred-percent,” in the words of Coroners guitarist Gode, the Düsseldorf artists saw in punk a means of reinventing rock’n’roll.³¹⁸

Any discussion of punk in Düsseldorf must begin with the Ratinger Hof. A stone’s throw from the nearby Kunstakademie where artistic luminaries such as Joseph Beuys taught, the Ratinger Hof was long a gathering place for intellectuals and alternatives.³¹⁹ Acquired in 1977 by Carmen Knoebel and her husband Imi (soon to become a well-known painter), the new proprietors decided that renovations were in order. “When I took over the Ratinger Hof,” recalled Knoebel, “this was still a bar with tablecloths....Then, in 1977, we undertook a total renovation. The influences for the new look came from art. Simply from radical thinking. Cleaning up. *Clean*. The people are the essential part. We plastered the walls. Almost like CBGBs in New York.”³²⁰ White walls, neon lights, and a couple of tall standing tables gave the bar the look and feel of a train station. In the words of bar DJ and Mittagspause drummer Markus Oehlen, the Hof was “totally simple.”³²¹

³¹⁶ Stark and Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel?* p.142.

³¹⁷ Avantario, “1977-1987: Von Krawall bis Totenschiff,” pp.58-60.

³¹⁸ Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.59-60.

³¹⁹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.49; Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, pp.36-37.

³²⁰ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.50. See Franz Bielmeier’s call for a German CBGBs in *The Ostrich*, Nr.3 (Düsseldorf: 1977), n.p.

³²¹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.50.

The bar quickly attracted those influenced by the new sounds coming from London. As Mary Lou Monroe remembered, he and Janie hung out at the Hof continuously: “At the time, this was the coolest bar. Even though there were still no punks about but rather New Agers and Hippies. But there were no forced purchases.”³²² Carmen let local acts like Mittagspause and ZK practice in the basement.³²³ With mirrors lining the walls, the Hof seemed to expand when empty and enclose the individual when packed to full capacity, a deliberate attempt to capture spatially a mood oscillating between alienation and claustrophobia. Quickly, word spread and soon youths spent their afternoons in the Hof playing pinball, drinking cola and talking rock’n’roll. Thomas Schwebel, guitarist at first for S.Y.P.H. and later Mittagspause and Fehlfarben, remembered hearing about a bar where individuals with his musical interests congregated. Gabi Delgado-Lopez, singer for Deutsch-Amerikanischen Freundschaft (D.A.F.), did not know anyone but, interested in punk’s energy, he headed down to the Hof to meet people.³²⁴ Soon, the youths all formed bands and began playing the club by pushing together two billiard tables to form a stage: Harry Rag, singer for S.Y.P.H., has estimated that between twenty and thirty bands were founded at the Hof.³²⁵ Hilsberg, writing for *Sounds*, arrived in Düsseldorf to interview Charley’s Girls, Sten Guns and TV Eyes for his first feature on West German punk in early 1978 and marvelled at the club’s ambience. “A bar,” he wrote, “that, in contrast to the turmoil of the eating, fleecing, and swaying of the old city center, reminds me more of a waiting room with its glaring neon-lights atmosphere.”³²⁶ Knoebel, the “Mother of the Movement” as some call her now, began taking more of an interest in the music her customers were interested in, and began booking

³²² Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.49.

³²³ Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.81, 100, 158.

³²⁴ Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.50, 75.

³²⁵ Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.130-131; Harry Rag, “Ratinger Hof 77-80,” <http://www.ratingerhof.de/Erinnerungen77-80.html> [Retrieved 8 July 2013].

³²⁶ Hilsberg, “Rodenkirchen is burning – Krautpunk,” p.22.

English acts to play the Hof—the Wire concert in late 1978 was an especially influential event for many youths present—and fronted the money to record Mittagspause’s first studio release, a double-single in 1979, and founded with Harry Rag the independent record label Pure Freude.³²⁷

The institutional support the Ratinger Hof provided to punk was exceeded only by the intellectual nourishment. As commentators frequently note, the Düsseldorf bands were much more experimental than punk coming from other cities, even more so than West Berlin, and there are several reasons for this difference.³²⁸ The proximity and influence of avant-garde electronica pioneers Kraftwerk is one explanation. Its members were often found in the scene bars before heading into the studio for their evening recording sessions.³²⁹ But it was the mixture of artists around Beuys (whose class often met in the bar) and youths interested in new music that was critical in the development of the punk sounds coming out of Düsseldorf.³³⁰ Beuys’ central claim ‘Everyone’s an artist’ anticipated punk by a decade and his students at the Free International University—especially those who became known as the Jungen Wilden (Young Wild Ones) and the Neue Wilde (New Wild Ones)—would mix with the youths gathering at the Hof (and some, such as brothers Markus and Albert Oehlen, and Moritz Reichelt, would soon join their ranks).³³¹

As Bernward Malaka, drummer for Male and later die Krupps, reflected, the artists hanging out

³²⁷ According to Campino, Carmen was so important because she was so encouraging. Teipel, *Verschwenne*, pp.130-131, 147-148. See also Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.36. Viewing big name acts from the UK was often the moment inspiring local Germans to start forming bands. See the comments from Jürgen Kramer about an Ultravox concert in Stuttgart in *Einige Millionen*, Nr.3 (Gelsenkirchen: 1978), p.6.

³²⁸ See, for example, *Preiserhöhung*, Nr.2 (Hamburg: 1979), p.13. See also Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.62; Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, pp.62-68; Stark and Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel?* p.200; and IG Dreck auf Papier, ed., *Keine Zukunft war Gestern*, pp.34-35.

³²⁹ See Pascal Bussy, *Kraftwerk: Man, Machine and Music*, 3rd ed. (London: SAF Publishing, 2005).

³³⁰ For the most thorough treatment of the relationship between visual culture and punk in Düsseldorf, see Thomas Groetz, *Kunst-Musik: Deutscher Punk und New Wave in der Nachbarschaft von Joseph Beuys* (Berlin: Martin Schmitz Verlag, 2002). See also Rainer Weber, “„Gibt es ein Leben nach dem Hof?“,” *Der Spiegel*, Nr.6 (1989), p.204.

³³¹ The ‘Jungen Wilden’ and ‘Neue Wilde’ were groups of neo-expressionist artists who were against minimalism that featured several prominent West German punks. See Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, pp.64-65.

in the Hof found the punks “cool and super.”³³² While the youths often found the artists boring and irrelevant because they were content to paint for one another and not confront society with their work—according to Malaka, “To us, the word ‘artist’ had negative connotations. Similar to ‘affected.’ To us, it was not authentic”—punks nonetheless learned much about de-constructing the medium of rock’n’roll from them.³³³ The mixture of avant-garde thought and punk sounds gave the Hof an unstable but dynamic ambience, a space ripe with the potential for danger: according to D.A.F. guitarist Wolfgang Spelmans, the Hof “was an atmospheric bar. And aggressive. That was no safe place.”³³⁴

Jürgen Kramer is a case in point. A student under Beuys in the early part of the decade, Kramer spent the mid-1970s ruminating “about the value of art within society.”³³⁵ Attracted to punk music, Kramer saw in punk a means of reconstructing humanity: “Music got me thinking, once again about my beginnings, my original conception, and related in connection with Beuys to an existential question.”³³⁶ Kramer took these new ideas and used them to rework visual culture by creating several of the many fanzines coming out of the Düsseldorf region that were on the cutting edge of blending politics, music, and art.³³⁷ Beginning as *Einige Millionen* before morphing into *Neue Welle* and *Die 80er Jahre*, by the end of the 1970s, Kramer’s fanzines became forums by which individuals debated the nature of punk and the role of music and art in transforming society.

Nor was Kramer alone. A raft of projects imbricating art and punk cropped up around Düsseldorf during the late 1970s. The Art Attack Gallery in Wuppertal featured exhibitions by

³³² Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.52. Diedrich Diedrichson suggests that artists were drawn to punk because they sought a medium to best express themselves and demystify art, and saw in punk a means to do so during the late 1970s. See Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton*, p.143.

³³³ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.52.

³³⁴ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.132.

³³⁵ Groetz, *Kunst-Musik*, p.19.

³³⁶ Groetz, *Kunst-Musik*, p.20.

³³⁷ See Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, pp.64-65.

figures such as Czech artist Milan Kunc and performances by *Mittagspause*, and was run by Frank Fenstermacher and Moritz Reichelt—musicians in *der Plan* and later *Fehlfarben*, and founders of the *Ata Tak* record label.³³⁸ The experimentalism was especially apparent in how Düsseldorf youths responded to new musical instrumentation and they were at the absolute forefront in mobilizing musical technology. The late 1970s witnessed an explosion of technological advances, especially with synthesizers and sequencers. Whereas in the 1960s and early 1970s synthesizers had been large and very costly affairs, by the end of the decade, companies such as Korg and Moog were developing cheaper and more flexible models which Düsseldorf punks eagerly experimented upon. In this manner, musical innovation was married to experimenting with identity. According to Martina Weith, founding member of *Östro 430*, “1978 in Düsseldorf – that was like primeval soup. No one could play an instrument. But everyone running around played in at least two bands.”³³⁹

The drive towards musical experimentation was part of a much larger move towards individual renovation that we will explore in detail in the next chapter. Punk for many of the Düsseldorfers was about reworking one’s identity, an act of tearing one’s self apart and then reconstructing yourself more authentically. Weith and others remembered that, “Everyone could do everything. In the *Ratinger Hof* everything was possible. Because everyone did it.”³⁴⁰ Not content with one’s past, youths in the *Ratinger Hof* used punk to don new personas by simply walking through the front doors. Franz Bielmeier remembered being unhappy with himself, with his life, and used punk to reinvent himself: “I wasn’t satisfied with my whole identity. With my whole life. And all of a sudden, I had a new identity and was accepted by everyone. From that point on, I would never have described punk as a trend. For me, punk was sacred. Everything

³³⁸ Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.52. On *Art Attack*, see Groetz, *Kunst-Musik*, pp.120-129.

³³⁹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.130.

³⁴⁰ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.130.

else was only important in that it was in contrast to punk – and there it once again had to do with punk.”³⁴¹ Members of DIN A Testbild loved that you could experiment with punk, that you were not restricted to playing the same songs in the same manner, that every live show had the potential to be different, a new performance.³⁴² Jäki Eldorado in West Berlin gave himself a new identity, a new name, and in so doing, realized, “you have no history.”³⁴³ However one had to fight for their place, their identity, and their authenticity: according to Male and later die Krupps singer Jürgen Engler, “Regarding everything that has to do with respect and frankness, there was also a nasty dimension [to punk]. I always felt that I had to fight for every milimeter. There was no easy togetherness. One had to prove oneself every day. And one had to earn the ‘Okay’ from others.”³⁴⁴ As Ralf Dörper remembered, no one asked Peter Hein why he worked at Rank Xerox all day because nightly at the Ratinger Hof, he was Janie Jones.³⁴⁵ The Düsseldorf punk scene became the Ratinger Hof, so much so, that Peter Hein even claims that “There was only punk in Germany for one year, summer 1977 to summer 1978, in one city, on one street, and in one bar,” a powerful statement on how the genre is remembered that we will return to in the Epilogue.³⁴⁶ Fehlfarben and D.A.F. bassist Michael Kemner has probably summed up punk in Düsseldorf best when he has remarked that, “these lyrics “Cut your hair before you oversleep / change your friends as others would change their shirts” [from the Fehlfarben song ‘Gottseidank nicht in England’]—that was the challenge: Reinvent yourself! That was the whole point. At the time, people were ready for change. They didn’t want this whole ’68er-rubbish anymore.”³⁴⁷

³⁴¹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.40.

³⁴² Stark and Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel?* pp.86-87.

³⁴³ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.43.

³⁴⁴ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.107.

³⁴⁵ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.106.

³⁴⁶ Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton*, p.131.

³⁴⁷ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.258.

Exploring the Social Dimensions of West German Punk

If we step back from the individual city scenes for a moment, we can get a broader sense of the size and structure of the West German punk scene in the late 1970s. At first, punk was almost exclusively an urban phenomenon and very much linked to establishments devoted to nurturing the genre such as Rip Off, SO 36 and the Ratinger Hof. In larger cities such as Bremen, Munich, and Hanover, a number of specialty record shops sprang up. Concert venues and scene bars were established. A network of alternative publications began linking these far-flung bastions of punk together. These musical institutions and subcultural networks were instrumental in rooting the genre in local communities and public space. In cities where these institutions were founded, small but ultimately thriving local scenes emerged. Bands started performing live and young Germans began appearing publicly in collectives rather than as individuals. In 1979 and 1980, punk spread throughout the countryside but early on, it was hard to experience the genre away from the metropolitan centers. If youths in the provinces were interested in the music, they could catch snippets of punk sounds via the radio, especially international stations such as the BBC and Radio Luxembourg, but if they wanted to experience the community of the genre or attend punk shows—the only way to consume West German punk in the first few years—then they needed to come to the cities; movement which only increased the public prominence of the genre.³⁴⁸

Above all, the early punk subculture was made up of youth, especially those in their teens or early twenties putting their average birth year in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Thus, from the standpoint of age cohort, members of the ‘punk generation’ grew up benefitting from the economic successes of the *Wirtschaftswunder* but were too young to have participated in its

³⁴⁸ See Thomas Lau, *Die heiligen Narren: Punk 1976-1986* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1992), pp.104-105.

rejection during the student revolts of the late 1960s.³⁴⁹ Learning of the genre from magazines like *Bravo*, radio and television programs directed towards the youth market, or from their peer-groups, school-aged youngsters in the gymnasium and vocational institutions made up the majority of the early scenes whether as audiences or musicians. Indeed, many of the first punk shows were staged at school events such as the infamous Charley's Girls/Male concert in Rodenskirchen that attracted Alfred Hilsberg and his first major report on the genre in *Sounds*.³⁵⁰ Others attracted to punk were already finished with school and working as apprentices giving them added free time for leisure and more importantly, disposable income. But it was not strictly a world of teenagers despite the rhetoric coming from the genre. Many older youths in their twenties—and a few even older—saw in punk a continuation of the cultural revolution begun in the 1960s, linking the genre to the earlier generation of student radicals, and to the alternative milieu and emerging New Social Movements in the late 1970s. The diffusion of 'post-material' or 'post-industrial' ideas and the elevation of authenticity as a moral compass for more meaningful living were crucial in binding together these diverse worlds as we will see in the next chapter.³⁵¹ Moreover, as had happened in the 1960s, older individuals such as Alfred Hilsberg, Carmen Knoebel, and others who were sympathetic to the ideas and practices of the subculture were incredibly influential in rooting the genre in West Germany in the late 1970s.³⁵² Because these individuals were in positions of power both inside and outside the scene—whether as bar

³⁴⁹ On 1968 as generational revolt, see Heinz Bude, "The German *Kriegskinder*: origins and impact of the generation of 1968," in *Generations in Conflict: Youth revolt and generation formation in Germany 1770-1968*, ed., Mark Roseman (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1995), pp.290-305.

³⁵⁰ Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.157-158; and Hilsberg, "Rodenkirchen is burning – Krautpunk."

³⁵¹ On the rise of post-material and post-industrial thought, see Ronald Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977); and Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

³⁵² Arthur Marwick calls this practice by reformist liberals 'measured judgement.' See Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958-c.1974* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), esp. pp.13-14, 19.

or record store owners, journalists or record label executives—they could use their influence to nurture the subculture and ensure its growth during its fragile early days.

While the age structure of punk is fairly uncomplicated, the social composition of the subculture is considerably less straight-forward. Observers of punk in the UK early on argued that punk was an expression of working-class protest, and scholars of the subculture have generally repeated these early claims with greater frequency than actually proving them.³⁵³ Partly this was a reflection of the more class-stratified British society and the rhetoric coming from early UK punks who claimed the genre was a musical expression of the lumpenproletariat. But more important, perhaps, was the role of leftist intellectuals who, disappointed with the failure of the working-class to join the student movement during the 1960s, increasingly studied working-class youth subcultures as a new revolutionary subject. The scholars associated with the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham are preeminent here, and much scholarship since the 1970s has been devoted to combating these relatively unsubstantiated repetitions.³⁵⁴ In the late 1970s, cultural critics in the Federal Republic adopted British categories relatively wholesale and—with the exception of the Düsseldorf scene—agreed that West German punk was a predominantly working-class phenomenon.³⁵⁵ The exclusion of Düsseldorf can be traced to Hilsberg who, enamoured with the Rhine-scene and put off by Hamburg punks, early on assumed that the more adventurous and experimental musicians reflected middle-class artistic sensibilities and the rougher edges of the subculture reflected a working-class upbringing.³⁵⁶ But

³⁵³ The work done by the sociologists at the Birmingham Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies were essential in propagating these claims. See the programmatic statement in Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, eds., *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1976).

³⁵⁴ Simon Frith and Howard Horne have definitively shown that a large majority of those artists associated with punk early-on came from the British Art Colleges and thus not from working-class backgrounds. See Simon Frith and Howard Horne, *Art into Pop* (London: Methuen, 1988).

³⁵⁵ See, for example, Paula Almquist, “Punk-Rock,” *Stern*, Nr.43 (October 1977), pp.74-82.

³⁵⁶ “Almost all NRW [North-Rhine Westfalen] punks attend high school. Next goal: Abitur.” Hilsberg, “Rodenkirchen is burning – Krautpunk,” p.22.

these assumptions also reflect long-standing leftist beliefs in the authenticity of working-class culture and the artificial nature of bourgeois sensibilities that especially flourished in the student movement and later alternative milieu.

While there is certainly some truth to these claims as our quick tour of the early scenes indicated, it is nevertheless almost impossible to substantiate these claims without sociological evidence, of which there is very little. Occasionally, after confrontations between punks and police that resulted in arrests, the mainstream press analyzed the social composition of those taken into custody, part of their attempt to make sense of the subculture. Thus, *Welt am Sonntag*, for example, presented the West Berlin scene as a mixture of middle- and lower-class youths, when it examined 114 punks arrested in the first six months of 1981, of whom 51 were secondary students, 31 apprentices, 13 workers, 18 professionals, and 1 attending university.³⁵⁷ Of 119 punks who came into contact with the Hanover police between October 1979 and December 1980, 66 had finished school while 53 still attended school.³⁵⁸ Of the school-aged youths, 21 were in grammar school (Gymnasium), 10 in secondary school (Realschule), 6 were in comprehensive schools (Hauptschüler and Gesamtschüler), 3 were vocational students (Berufsvorbereitungsschulen), 11 were in technical colleges (Fachschüler), 1 was taking evening classes, and another gave no answer. Of those who had finished secondary education, 35 held a school-leaving certificate (Hauptschulabschluß), 18 an advanced certificate (Mittlere Reife), 6 a basic certificate (Schulabschluß), 1 the university-required certificate (Abitur), another had completed studies at a professional training school (berufsbildende Schule), while 5 did not provide answers. Of the 42 youths who gave job descriptions of their fathers, 18 were salaried employees, 12 were skilled workers, 7 were laborers, 3 were civil servants, and 2 were

³⁵⁷ "Punker aus heiler Welt," *Welt am Sonntag*, Nr.31, 2 August 1981, p.14.

³⁵⁸ See Christa Mahrad, "Punks. Daten aus einer Großstadt," *Deutsche Jugend*, Nr.8 (1981), pp.360-364.

independently employed.³⁵⁹ Scarce figures such as these can be found scattered throughout the mainstream press of the Federal Republic and while leaning towards the lower rungs of the social ladder, they do not do so overwhelmingly which suggests that the social composition of punk is considerably more varied than often assumed, certainly for West Germany.

Further problematizing these neat divisions is anecdotal evidence. While there was certainly no shortage of youths drawn from the middle-class in the Düsseldorf scene, this was not always true. Frank Fenstermacher remembered clearly that Janie Jones (who “comes like me from a working-class family or, at any rate, a lower middle-class house”) worked at Rank Xerox for twenty-five years, and was proud of his working-class affiliations.³⁶⁰ Others, by contrast, came from more prosperous families. Meikel Clauss, guitarist for KFC and later Nichts, sought in punk a means to escape his privileged social status: “I come from a quite rich neighborhood in Düsseldorf. Oberkassel. I had always tried to flee from there.”³⁶¹ KFC’s volatile singer Tommi Stumpf was the son of prominent lawyer Heinz Peters who defended members of the RAF Kommando Holger Meins in the late 1970s.³⁶² In Hamburg, by contrast, following the Pöseldorf riot in May 1980 (see Chapter 7), commentators were shocked that a majority of the 79 arrested punks came from “solid middle-class families.”³⁶³ According to *Bild*—not the most charitable commentator on the genre—Hamburg’s punks were not social outsiders: “Almost all have an apprenticeship. Their parents: office employees, businessmen, skilled workers.”³⁶⁴ In Hanover, the local scene was split between the more artistic and affluent Nordstadt-punks and the harder

³⁵⁹ Mahrada, “Punks. Daten aus einer Großstadt,” p.362.

³⁶⁰ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.286.

³⁶¹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.171.

³⁶² Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.206.

³⁶³ Thomas Vinsor Wolgast, “Jugendliche „Punker“ werden in Hamburg gewalttätig,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Nr.106, 7 May 1980, p.7.

³⁶⁴ “Die Grosse Schlacht der Punker,” *Bild (Hamburg)*, Nr.104, 5 May 1980, p.5.

working-class Gossenpunks (alley or gutter punks) in the south.³⁶⁵ In West Berlin, those gravitating towards punk were socialized most deeply into the radical politics of the alternative milieu such as the squatting movement and therefore chose to consciously abandon the trappings of typical middle-class social status even if many had once been born into these households.

Thus, no easy correlation between social milieu and subcultural community can be made. More important is Dick Hebdige's observation that, regardless of actual social background, punks almost universally performed working-class identity.³⁶⁶ There are a number of reasons for the importance of the performative aspect of class. This stance was part of punk's rejection of the student generation which was overwhelmingly composed of middle-class youths. According to Gabi Delgado-Lopez, the performative aspect of class was rooted in their rejection of the '68ers: "Differently than with the Hippies, our admiration of workers had absolutely no humanistic reasons. We were very cynical. We didn't want to make anything better or more beautiful for the people. We only used it. As a model."³⁶⁷ A few early observers of punk felt that the 'myth' of punk originating from the working-class is rooted in the lyrics: as Bernd Hahn and Holger Schindler put it, "Punk is therefore not a direct expression of the problems of working-class youths—as such, proletarian music—but rather, it is music that reflects social realities and artistic process."³⁶⁸ Regardless of where these assumptions came from, punks worked to reinforce them. Campino, singer with ZK and later with die Toten Hosen, has remembered that KFC pretended they came from the working-class because they felt it would give them more

³⁶⁵ Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, pp.85-86.

³⁶⁶ Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style* (New York & London: Routledge, 1979).

³⁶⁷ Teipel, *Verschwenne*, p.110.

³⁶⁸ Underline in original. Hahn and Schindler, *Punk – die zarteste Versuchung*, p.48.

credibility to their songs since they came from a privileged background.³⁶⁹ Fundamentally, the performance of class was a means of giving punk legitimacy in the eyes of protagonists.

The gender composition of the West German punk scene is somewhat easier to assess. As was the case in both Britain and the United States, the West German punk scene was dominated by young men.³⁷⁰ At the same time, however, in contrast to the two Anglo-American scenes, women seem to have found more creative space, and there seems to have been more women involved in West German punk, especially in the early years. There are a number of factors for this dissimilarity, some stemming from the punk genre itself and others more specific to the German context. As we saw, in West German popular music traditions, women were in the main confined to the Schlager genre as singers and rarely participated in rock'n'roll culture that was defined as an exclusively male expressive style. Women were likewise almost completely excluded from the production side of the music industry and from music journalism with a few exceptions. Thus, popular music in the Federal Republic was almost entirely talked about, written, produced and performed by men, even if women have been the dominant consumers of popular music since the 1960s.³⁷¹ But punk challenged these gendered restrictions and thus, Hollow Skai is correct in arguing that punk enabled women for the first time in West German history to participate more actively in rock'n'roll culture.³⁷²

The emancipatory claims of punk—‘here’s a chord, here’s another, here’s a third, now go form a band’—urged women to pick up instruments and start making music. In the first years of punk, a host of punk bands featuring only women were founded—Unterrock, Östro 430, Mania

³⁶⁹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.151.

³⁷⁰ But see Maria Raha, *Cinderella’s Big Score: Women of the Punk and Indie Underground* (Emeryville, CA: Seal Press, 2005).

³⁷¹ See Klaus Farin, *Jugendkulturen in Deutschland, 1950-1989* (Paterborn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2006).

³⁷² Hollow Skai, *Punk: Versuch der künstlerischen Realisierung einer neuen Lebenshaltung*, reprint (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen, 2008), pp.153-157.

D., Malaria! and X-mal Deutschland—and a number of others—Hans-a-Plast, Neonbabies and die Abwärts—featured female musicians and not just as singers. Women began taking control of distribution and musical production. Hans-a-Plast, for example, helped form one of the first independent record labels No Fun with Hollow Skai in Hanover. Many of the early fanzines were created by women such as *T4* or *Magazin für Verliebte*. Nor were these marginal figures but were in fact central to the burgeoning early scenes such as Östro 430 or Mania D., and especially Nina Hagen. A former East German film and singing star who had emigrated West after the expulsion of her step-father Wolf Biermann, Hagen became the early enfant terrible of the West German punk scene. With her powerful voice, dramatic make-up, extreme dress, and scandalous behavior—famously she demonstrated on Austrian television how women masturbated much to the uncomfortableness of her older male interlocutors—Hagen became an international punk celebrity that raised the profile of the genre while serving as a model for young female punks.³⁷³

However, as with social composition, the gendered dimensions of West German punk were not universal, and local particularities were important in shaping specific cities. Thus, those scenes gravitating towards the harder edges of the subculture, such as in Hamburg or Duisburg, were almost exclusively male. Willi Wücher has remembered that the early history of the latter scene is decidedly “Men’s History” (Männergeschichte).³⁷⁴ That these harder scenes were found predominantly in the more industrial cities points perhaps to a relationship linking class and gender, a correlation bolstered by the fact that most of the bands featuring women came from Düsseldorf, Hanover, West Berlin, and other more middle-class milieus. While figures on the gender divisions of West German punk are even scarcer than those examining class, the occasional press reports do offer some suggestive data. Thus in the study cited above, of the 119

³⁷³ See Nina Hagen and Marcel Feige, *Nina Hagen: That’s Why the Lady is a Punk* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003).

³⁷⁴ IG Dreck auf Papier, ed., *Keine Zukunft war Gestern*, p.24.

punks coming into contact with the Hanover police between October 1979 and December 1980, 99 were men meaning 1 in 6 were women.³⁷⁵ Similarly, in Hamburg, of the 61 punks arrested during a confrontation following a concert by the Stranglers in late 1979, 7 were women, numbers that correspond to arrest ratios in the following year as well.³⁷⁶ While these isolated figures only offer fleeting glimpses, what does seem clear is that women seem to have made up fifteen or even twenty percent of local punk scenes in the Federal Republic in the late 1970s—especially in the larger cities—although in many smaller regional scenes considerably less so. And while these numbers do not overwhelm, they were nonetheless path-breaking in opening up German rock'n'roll culture to women, and compare especially favourably when stacked against the Anglo-American punk scenes as well.

The anecdotal nature of the social history of West German punk must unfortunately be extended to the exact size of the West German punk scene as a whole, as accurate numbers are nearly impossible to establish with any sense of precision. At the time, contemporary observers in the mainstream press or state authorities greatly inflated the number of punks. In Hamburg, for example, in 1980, press reports at a time of several large riots spoke of several thousand punks in the port-city alone before later scaling back their estimates to around seven hundred which still seems too high.³⁷⁷ In Düsseldorf and West Berlin, the numbers were similar as punk concerts in these cities regularly drew a few hundred and could surpass one thousand if the band was a large international star (much to the disappointment of local German boosters).³⁷⁸ In the many mid-sized cities—Munich, Hanover, Cologne, Bremen, Essen, Duisburg—attendance figures could

³⁷⁵ Mahrad, "Punks. Daten aus einer Großstadt," p.363.

³⁷⁶ "Punker schlugen zu – 61 gefaßt!" *Hamburger Abendblatt*, Nr.278, 28 November 1979, p.8. Compare with "Rache der Punker: Putz im Kino," *Bild (Hamburg)*, Nr.214, 13 September 1980, p.3.

³⁷⁷ Thomas Osterkorn, "Darum bin ich ein Punker," *Hamburger Abendblatt*, Nr.117, 21 May 1980, p.4; and Jürgen Bungert, "Punker. Bürgerschreck aus gute Hause," *Bild am Sonntag*, Nr.23, 8 June 1980, p.26-27. Compare with Knut Teske, "Die „Punker“ werden zum öffentlichen Ärgernis," *Die Welt*, Nr.225, 26 September 1980, p.19.

³⁷⁸ See, for example, Sherlock Preiswert, "Image Verpflichtet! Das letzte Interview mit Slime," *tageszeitung*, 8 February 1984, p.10; and *Todesangst*, Nr.14 (Duisburg: 1984), n.p.

range anywhere from a few dozen to as many as five hundred. And in the innumerable small cities across the Federal Republic, local scenes could range from a dozen to four or five times as much at any given time. To extrapolate from these figures, we can probably talk about a punk scene of a few thousand active members in the late 1970s that rose to six or eight thousand at its peak in the early 1980s with perhaps two or three times as many youths sympathetic to the genre (buying records, going to the occasional concert) but not devoted to the ideology or lifestyle.³⁷⁹ This estimate fits in well with a study done by youth sociologist Dieter Baacke who, in 1981, interviewed a number of youth and discovered that 2% identified themselves as punks, and a further 15% liked punk style.³⁸⁰

These figures collectively allow us to draw an important conclusion; namely that West German punks and the sounds they made did not on the whole emerge from nor reflect some sort of marginal social experience. In this sense, punk was not a ‘Culture from the Slums,’ to revisit *Der Spiegel*’s famous title. To become a punk meant to make a conscious choice that was often accompanied—but not always—by a rejection of a more privileged social background, at least from the performative perspective. Youths discarded any trappings of social standing in their efforts at musical revolution. However, what is important is that while youths drawn to punk came from all walks of life, as the comments above suggest, young Germans recognized that lower- or working-class social standing bestowed a certain legitimacy and credibility on their endeavors and choices. Thus, youths positioned themselves as marginal as a means of validating their rejection of the mainstream and constructed their marginality almost completely through their lifestyle choices and reconstituted identities.

³⁷⁹ See *Hackfleisch*, Nr.3 (Hanover: 1985), n.p.

³⁸⁰ Dieter Baacke, *Jugend und Jugendkulturen. Darstellung und Deutung* (Munich: Juventa, 1987), p.63.

Conclusions

The origins of punk in West Germany are a fascinating detour from traditional scholarship on the subculture that usually involves arguing about whether the genre originated in either the United States or the United Kingdom. Exploring the origins of punk in the Federal Republic speaks to the various modes and means by which punk culture was able to transcend national boundaries through the mobility and industriousness of cultural mediators. The mid-1970s was a period of particular musical and cultural stagnation for many German youths. Too young to have participated in the social upheavals of the 1960s and tired of the authority expressed by the '68ers, a younger generation found in punk a vehicle to explore alternative identities and communities. Speaking for many, Sir Hannes Smith, singer for The Idiots, remembered that, upon listening to punk for the first time on the BBC, "it was as if my whole body and mind exploded. This was the dynamite that I had been waiting for."³⁸¹ Enterprising young Germans travelled to London to experience and consume authentic punk culture and returned to the Federal Republic to put into practice the lessons they had learned abroad. Carving out punk spaces in Düsseldorf, Hamburg, and West Berlin, youths began to construct scenes very different from one another but nonetheless, by the late 1970s, the foundations for a national subculture were in place. As the Seventies segued into the Eighties, punk exploded throughout the Federal Republic causing continuous commentary and controversy.

And yet, already in the early days of punk, fractures about what it meant and how its authenticity should be manifested were materializing. In November 1978, at the newly opened club the Drugstore in the West Berlin neighborhood of Schöneberg, a concert was held to protest rising ticket and beer prices at SO 36 in nearby Kreuzberg. Later that night, urged on by the

³⁸¹ IG Dreck auf Papier, ed., *Keine Zukunft war Gestern*, p.14.

anarchist band Katapult, a group of fifteen to twenty punks (the so-called ‘Commando against Consumer-shit’ [Kommando gegen Konsumscheisse]) raided SO 36. Smashing windows, glasses and stealing the full cash register, the ‘Kommando’ explained in leaflets scattered during the attack (suggesting premeditation) that “We don’t live in Zehlendorf and we don’t buy our clothes at Burghards,” and were taking a stand against the outrageous prices that SO 36 was charging.³⁸² Especially enraged by the 2.50 DM beer price, the ‘Kommando’ action that night is a potent symbol of the strife that would tear apart the West German punk scene in the coming years around issues of popularity, commercialization, and authenticity.³⁸³ As the SO 36 example suggests, the diverse strands of punk ideology and practice were quickly contested as youths began to contentiously negotiate the terms of the subculture in the Federal Republic. The result was a split in the West German punk scene as fans and bands started coalescing around two divergent definitions of punk, each elevating a different interpretation of authenticity over the other. At one end of the spectrum were those youths who saw in punk a means of self-renovation, a soundtrack for individual exploration and identity experimentation. At the other end, were those youths who saw in punk as a political program through which society could be revolutionized. While this split was only a hairline fracture when punk first came to West Germany in 1977, within two years it would become a gaping abyss, a development that we will now turn to in the following chapter.

³⁸² Alfred Hilsberg, “Deutsch-Punk im Winter ‘78/’79,” *Sounds*, Nr.1, January 1979, pp.11-12.

³⁸³ Stark and Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel?* pp.110-111; and *No Fun*, Nr.17 (Hanover: 1978) cited in Ott and Skai, *Wir waren Helden für einen Tag*, p.201. See the interview with Katapult in “Das Katapult-Interview,” in *Rock Session 4: Magazin der populären Musik*, ed. Klaus Humann and Carl-Ludwig Reichert (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1980), pp.227-228.

Chapter 3: Into the Future: *Anderssein*, Alfred Hilsberg, and Punk Ideology in the West

“Man konnte auch anders anders sein!” Punk and the Search for Difference

Tomorrow is the first day of the 1980s. And it will be our decade.

Bettina Köster to Frieder Butzmann at the ‘Geräusche für die 80er’
festival, 29-30 December 1979 in Hamburg’s Markthalle³⁸⁴

The emergence of small but thriving punk scenes in the major cities of the Federal Republic in the late 1970s demanded understanding among contemporaries. Why were young Germans flocking to punk? What did it offer or represent? Fundamentally, punk was rooted not in marginal class status but in the promise of returning meaning to stale lives, of reshaping culture and society, of creating ‘new time’ where possibilities and alternatives were endless as the remarks Bettina Köster made to Frieder Butzmann above tellingly suggest. In associating punk with images of crisis, early commentators lost sight of the possibilities that often accompany such breakdowns. As Janie Jones/Peter Hein theorized in his companion essay to the *Zurück zum Beton* exhibition celebrating the early Düsseldorf punk scene in 2002, since the dawn of time, a “majority” of youth want to grow up like their parents while a “minority” desire something different.³⁸⁵ While we want to take his sweeping statement with a grain of salt, he is nonetheless insightful in suggesting that for many youths in mid-1970s West Germany, the possibilities for difference were circumscribed: to be alternative to the mainstream meant to be a ‘68er; to be, in fact, not very different at all. As Hein described it, to be different back then meant above all to

³⁸⁴ Jürgen Teipel, *Verschwende Deine Jugend: Ein Doku-Roman über den deutschen Punk und New Wave* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001), p.209.

³⁸⁵ Ulrike Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton: Die Anfänge von Punk und New Wave in Deutschland 1977-’82* (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2002), p.131.

wear “overly long hair and baggy clothes.”³⁸⁶ What Hein and others sought in contrast was a new direction, a new feeling divorced from the 1960s—a new sound that was both alternative to the mainstream and alternative to the alternative to the mainstream. Looking back, Hein remembered that punks “were always those, who were in opposition; in opposition, to those who were in opposition.”³⁸⁷ As he has elsewhere recalled, “in an inexplicable manner and way these people and their music spoke to that which had for so long been desired unconsciously. One could also be different differently!”³⁸⁸

The pursuit of *Anderssein*—to be different or the condition of being different—is the most important ideological reference point for understanding punk in the West German context. Underwritten by notions of authenticity, independence, individuality, and an intense desire for originality, *Anderssein* was an ideological attempt to mediate between mainstream conformity on the one hand, and the dogmatic strictures of the New Left on the other, both of which in the eyes of punks, represented attempts to stifle creativity and thus block meaningful life. In this sense, *Anderssein* was an expression of autonomy and a drive for freedom from the past and present in which difference was posited as the future of West Germany. Expressed in a variety of ways as we will now explore, *Anderssein* could at times be contradictory. Especially controversial in this regard was the use of Nazism that was used as a means of distancing punks from the mainstream and the anti-fascist New Left. But these instances of friction point to how punk was beginning to work through the debris of the national past and to articulate a new German identity expressed through music. Moreover, despite the continuous rhetoric positing a break with the 1960s, punk nonetheless built upon practices, thinking, and behaviours articulated by the earlier counter-culture. Thus, punk ideology reveals how ideas emerging in the 1960s were filtering throughout

³⁸⁶ Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton*, pp.131-132.

³⁸⁷ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.22.

³⁸⁸ Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton*, p.132.

West German society, becoming appropriated and subsequently transformed to meet differing political, social, and cultural contexts.

Crucial in weaving together the diverse strands which defined punk ideology was Alfred Hilsberg, an individual probably more responsible than anyone for the enormous success of punk in West Germany. Tirelessly supporting the genre in his *Sounds* magazine column, through his independent record label Zick Zack, and with his concert promotion, Hilsberg enthusiastically disseminated punk throughout West Germany under the slogan “better too much than too little” (Lieber zuviel als zuwenig). An older radical (b.1956) who was involved distantly in the student protests in the early 1970s as an amateur film-maker and journalist, Hilsberg believed that a new German cultural identity could be based in the politics of authentic difference that celebrated independence, diversity and creative experimentation. Impressed by his contact with youths such as Janie Jones, Mary Lou Monroe and other Düsseldorf punks, Hilsberg seized upon the possibilities offered by *Anderssein* and saw within this stylish aesthetic and political pose an accessible form of democracy that moved well beyond what the remnants of the New Left were offering at the time. What made this new identity so exciting for Hilsberg was punk’s emphasis on Do-It-Yourself (DIY) activism and attempts to articulate a German language-based popular music genre that was expressive and grounded in the critique of everyday life. While we will discuss punk’s contest with Germanness (Chapter 4) and DIY endeavors (Chapter 5) later, what is important here is Hilsberg’s identification of punk as a foundation for a new national culture and his early efforts at promoting the genre. Whereas conservative nationalism and leftist populism both tried to submerge the individual within larger political structures and traditions, to Hilsberg, punk was a practical carnival of individuality, a technicolor of heterogeneity that seemed to point more imaginatively towards West Germany’s democratic and diverse future.

Hilsberg articulated and popularized the genre beyond the local city scenes by organizing several national punk festivals and penning several influential articles on punk that appeared in *Sounds* in 1979. But the conflict within punk only grew as the genre nationalized. As punks who held vastly different understandings of what the genre meant came together, splits and divisions started to emerge. The fissures which wracked punk—which will become some of the main storylines in the coming chapters—suggest how the politics of authenticity not only works to integrate but also to ostracize. As punk nationalized, youths debated the nature of the genre and its purposes, and these contests shaped the contours of an increasingly violent subculture.

“Hey Du was starrst du mich an?” *Anderssein*, Fashion and the Articulation of Punk

Ideology

Hey you, what are you staring at
Is there something wrong with me
Oh elder, I don't let it bother me
Ugh, just look at you

I want to be different
Don't want to be just like you
You have a job in an office
And slave away
Oh elder, just leave me alone
Because I can't work like you

Do you want to be an important official
With a house and a garden, oh that would be nice
Hey elder, that's all you see
In your shitty everyday monotony

Sluts, “Anders,” *Bäh!!!* (Aggressive Rockproduktionen 011, 1982)

According to Janie Jones, the choice to become a punk “was a completely conscious decision,” one that marked you off from the mainstream and ushered you into alternative formations and

subcultural community.³⁸⁹ While difficult to answer conclusively, by exploring what youths thought about punk, we can begin to approach—as Jones has alerted us—as to why, “in an inexplicable manner and way these people and their music spoke” to young Germans in the 1970s.³⁹⁰ As we saw, the attractions of alternative culture was appealing to many during the 1970s and the lyrics to “Anders” by the Sluts underscores that many young Germans rejected working in an office, owning a house, and cultivating a garden-plot. Youths were drawn to punk because the genre offered possibilities for reimagining individual identity and social community in ways offered by neither the mainstream nor the New Left during the 1970s. However, the ability to rework one’s identity was always limited and it is important to remember that even though punks sought to dramatically distance themselves from German society, they very often participated in and re-inscribed many of the same criticisms that they levelled against the Federal Republic.

At the heart of punk ideology was the notion of *Anderssein*, a desire for and cultivation of difference, a search for authentic meaning that attracted young Germans and enthusiasts of alternative culture more generally in the 1970s. The drive towards difference authorized aesthetic experimentation and pushed individuals towards community emphasizing diversity rather than homogeneity. As punks of the first hour channelled their creative outbursts into a plethora of projects as we have just seen, individuality was front and center. The extreme sights and sounds were attempts by youths to divorce themselves from the mainstream, to find a personal style that they believed would reflect their inner genuineness. *Anderssein* signalled originality, denied conformity, and posited an internal authenticity to set against supposed external artificiality, a dichotomy that implicitly—if paradoxically—accepted convention as the inauthentic mirror

³⁸⁹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.36.

³⁹⁰ Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton*, p.132.

against which to construct authentic difference. Crucially, *Anderssein* pointed towards an existential craving for independence among young people who felt that freedom could not be found through mainstream political, social, or cultural offerings in the 1970s.

The desire for freedom or independence among West German youths was not a longing for political freedom of the kind that motivated punks in the East that we will explore in the second half of this study, but rather the belief that modern society and especially consumerism—touted as the panacea to dictatorships of the past (Nazi) and present (Communist), and embodied in the much-hailed *Wirtschaftswunder*—was destroying individualism which was the root of democracy and emancipation. Within *Anderssein* were other elements central to alternative culture generally such as the DIY ethos and anti-authoritarianism. Like earlier seekers of authenticity, punks were critical of the perceived manufactured nature of Western culture and sought through DIY practices—whether making clothes or producing independent records—to attain a sense of autonomy, originality, and meaning they felt was lost in Western consumer culture and the political order that underwrote it. *Anderssein* was therefore an attempt to reconcile seemingly contradictory tensions of individuality and community that rested on the shared social pursuit of innovation and originality. DIY, anti-authoritarianism, and anti-consumerism all drew strong continuities to efforts and practices by the New Left and so while punks explicitly rejected '68ers, they still engaged in practices that often originated with them which explains the often contradictory nature of the genre that occur again and again throughout this study. By adopting a stance rejecting both the conservative culture of the *Wirtschaftswunder* and the Sixties generation represented by the New Left, punk's anti-establishment philosophy was an attempt to restore authenticity to life. The slogan 'No Future' was a condemnation of past accomplishments and traditions, but more importantly, a belief that the future was a blank slate

full of possibilities to be shaped freely as the comments by Bettina Köster to Frieder Butzmann that opened this chapter—“Tomorrow is the first day of the 1980s. And it will be our decade”—overwhelmingly illustrates.³⁹¹

As we saw with the figure of Janie Jones, *Anderssein* was a rejection of those pursuits prior generations had found fulfilling, a denial appearing in tabulated form in the Düsseldorf fanzine *Deutschlands Ruhmeshalle*: “Bureaucracy + Arbitrariness + Drunkenness + Job + State Control + Contamination – Individuality – Living Space – Happy Experience – Health = Life.”³⁹² Bored with external demands such as school and work, youths attracted to punk saw in the genre a means of being true to their inner selves which helped to restore authenticity and meaning to their lives.³⁹³ As a young female punk put it, life had been reduced to waiting: “Life practically consists only of waiting. To wait for next Friday; to wait for somebody; to wait to become an adult; to wait for the end of school; oh, what do I know. We are so busy with waiting, that we don’t see at all, what we are waiting for.”³⁹⁴ And it was on the margins where meaningfulness was located. Punk songs that we will explore in detail in the next chapter such as Mittagspause’s “Innenstadtfront” (‘Inner-city Front’) mocked the quiet un-eventfulness of life in mainstream Düsseldorf—“Chaos on the city margins / but not Bilk and Derendorf / the situation is calm / on the inner-city front”—while pointing to the energy coming from the margins.³⁹⁵ To become punk was a very personal decision and one involving a radical break with society. To be different meant to embrace originality and independence, to rework one’s identity aesthetically or behaviourally in an uncompromising manner, to deny societal norms and revel in one’s own

³⁹¹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.209.

³⁹² *Deutschlands Ruhmeshalle*, Nr.3 (Düsseldorf: 1980), n.p.

³⁹³ See *T4*, Nr.6 (West Berlin: 1979), n.p.

³⁹⁴ Günter Franzen and Boris Pentz, *Last Exist. Punk: Leben im toten Herz der Städte* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1982), p.197.

³⁹⁵ Harry Rag considered ‘Innenstadtfront’ a call to arms against boredom: “That was a feeling of a new movement. A fighting attitude. The song was a manifesto. The notion: ‘We’re forming a front against this boredom. Inner-city Front!’” Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.96.

conception of what it meant to be free—all of which contributed to restoring authenticity to daily life.³⁹⁶ Franz Bielmeier found Jones’ insistence on personal authenticity fascinating: “If someone wanted to do something, something that didn’t have anything exactly to do with punk, then he immediately disassociated himself and said: ‘That I can’t do.’ He gave no explanations either. I found this totally punk. It was completely fascinating.”³⁹⁷ The goal was to avoid losing oneself to the pressure of mass society and culture, to fight against it and find alternative outlets for one’s own creativity that could direct one’s own way in the world.

The impulse towards originality was meant to be total and reflect one’s individual self that youths believed was being crushed by mass marketed consumer culture—the ‘successes’ of the Wirtschaftswunder and the ‘hard work’ of the postwar generation. As youths sought freedom in punk, the genre authorized numerous radical identities that young Germans could play with, as we have seen already with Janie Jones. According to Bielmeier punk was about discovering newness: “It was all about originality, but in a clear and defined direction. This direction was oriented, above all, against any form of depth. Against [depth] in music for instance. Against enigmatic remarks. Because back then everything was so full of cryptic remarks.”³⁹⁸ Bernward Malaka, bassist for Male and later die Krupps, put it succinctly when he argued that punk was about pushing the limits of the possible, whether socially, politically, or musically: “How far can you go, until the others can’t follow anymore? Until they say: ‘Enough! This is too hard!’”³⁹⁹ Likewise, Ralf Dörper, keyboardist for S.Y.P.H., put it perhaps more succinctly: “We played with what was possible.”⁴⁰⁰ *Anderssein* meant more than just a rejection of conformity but rather an absolute commitment towards aesthetic and practical independence: or as an early fanzine

³⁹⁶ See the comments by Peter Glaser in Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton*, p.123.

³⁹⁷ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.38.

³⁹⁸ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.34.

³⁹⁹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.35.

⁴⁰⁰ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.42.

writer modified Descartes, “I rebel, therefore I am.”⁴⁰¹ Consuming reports from the media about youths in the UK and US challenging the accepted forms of daily life, German youths were inspired to do the same. As Janie Jones has put it forcefully, suddenly, “one could also be different differently!”⁴⁰² Even more an attitude towards life than a musical style—which would cause endless problems once *Anderssein* was put into musical practice as we will see—punk according to Klaus Maeck was the unshakable belief that “we couldn’t do it, but we simply did it anyway.”⁴⁰³ Suddenly, the boredom that had previously marked cultural life for young people in the FRG was replaced by moments pregnant with anticipation, a mood critic Albrecht Koch has captured well in his description of the late 1970s: “There was something in the air, that on every street corner anything could happen and if one didn’t live every day intensely and paid attention, with ears open, one could miss the decisive decision.”⁴⁰⁴ *Anderssein* represented a celebration of difference and diversity that erased the boredom with which punks characterized West German society and culture.

Aesthetically, these impulses found their expression above all in youth’s experimentation with fashion, and we can use their sartorial experiments as a means to tease out various strands of punk ideology. Probably the most outward expression of punk’s attempted break with mainstream society was the subculture’s emphasis on dramatic and confrontational fashion. As Inga Humpe from the Neonbabies put it, “I really wanted to be unconditionally set off and difficult.”⁴⁰⁵ While the image of the Mohawk haircut and leather jacket covered with metal

⁴⁰¹ *Ffurs*, Nr.0 (West Berlin: 1978), cited in Hollow Skai, *Punk: Versuch der künstlerischen Realisierung einer neuen Lebenshaltung* (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen, 2008), p.61.

⁴⁰² Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton*, p.132.

⁴⁰³ Cited in Hollow Skai, *Alles nur geträumt: Fluch und Segen der Neuen Deutschen Welle* (Innsbruck: Hannibal, 2009), p.191. See also the interview with Korpus Kristi: “With us, the idea ‘negative’ was there, and then we got to the music.” Franzen and Penth, *Last Exit*, p.94.

⁴⁰⁴ Albrecht Koch, *Angriff auf’s Schlaraffenland. 20 Jahre deutschsprachige Popmusik* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1987), p.106.

⁴⁰⁵ Teipel, *Verschwenne*, p.70.

spikes wearing youth is the dominant image of punk, this fashion only came into existence with the conformity of Hardcore in the early 1980s (see Chapter 7).⁴⁰⁶ Postulating a radical break with society, punk fashion in the first years was unrestricted, indicating the importance of originality over conformity since the key aspects of this revolt were spontaneity, elasticity, and the ability to change course quickly depending on context that implied a certain instability to punk that was attractive: Muscha (Jürgen Muschalek), guitarist for Charley's Girls and later film director, loved that you could buy a cheap leather jacket "and put your own symbols on it...and next week, discard it all. [There was] flexibility in the message."⁴⁰⁷ For many, in the early days one did not know what punks wore, and dressed accordingly. As Thomas Schwebel has remembered, "Sometimes we were in the absurdist fantasy-costumes because we had no idea how punks were supposed to look at all."⁴⁰⁸ Bielmeier and others have suggested that punk fashions were an explicit attack on packaged consumer culture and a means of showcasing one's inner originality through modified jackets, pants and shirts that reflected personal style.⁴⁰⁹ Badges and pins were self-made, often baked in the oven or attached to beer bottle caps; one youth, some remember, even fastened cheese slices to his jacket.⁴¹⁰ Sir Hannes Smith, singer from The Idiots, recently described a typical early scene: "From my mother's clothes I made pink and orange costumes, painted my shoes silver like the oven, pierced the back of my jacket with a safety pin and ran a chain from it to an earring in my ear. I ripped and painted my T-Shirts, I covered my jacket with slogans and fashioned my own buttons. I made my own clothes and was very creative about

⁴⁰⁶ See Frank Cartledge, "Distress to impress?: Local punk fashion and commodity exchange," in *Punk Rock: So What? The Cultural Legacy of Punk*, ed., Roger Sabin (London & New York: Routledge, 1999), pp.143-153.

⁴⁰⁷ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.55.

⁴⁰⁸ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.46.

⁴⁰⁹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.37. See Alfred Hilsberg, "Die Revolution ist vorbei – wir haben gesiegt!" *Sounds*, Nr.2, February 1978, p.36.

⁴¹⁰ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.86.

it.”⁴¹¹ Youths flocked to second-hand stores to discover hidden gems to be customized along individual tastes since in the beginning youths could not buy punk fashions.⁴¹² At a fundamental level, punk fashion was about pushing emancipation beyond mere political considerations and returning the personal to the equation.

As in London during the early phase of punk, youths in West Germany began donning provocative clothes to mark themselves off from the mainstream of society, a stylish cultivation of *Anderssein*. Punks used cola or Nivea cream to spike their hair after cutting it short and dying it a variety of colors.⁴¹³ The point of dressing so provocatively was to shock, and the dialectical relationship between punk and society vis-à-vis fashion was part and parcel of the genre’s invasion of public space, an assault indicating the deep imbrication between the mainstream and the margins. As Dick Hebdige has classically argued, the appearance of everyday items in outrageous positions—a safety pin thrust through a cheek—produced shock because the brain associated these objects elsewhere.⁴¹⁴ The movement of everyday household items and more intimate, especially sexual commodities—safety pins, toilet chains, handcuffs, dildos—into public space was an attempt to deconstruct the public/private dichotomy and re-politicize the personal. As Janie Jones suggested, youths used fashion to explore themselves but also to experiment with the reactions their fashion produced: “And in these clothes we experimented a lot with the effects that our fashion produced.”⁴¹⁵ The reactions punks produced are important because the pleasure came from social response, again pointing to the connection between the

⁴¹¹ IG Dreck auf Papier, ed., *Keine Zukunft war Gestern: Punk in Deutschland* (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen, 2008), p.14.

⁴¹² Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton*, p.132.

⁴¹³ Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.32, 35, 51, 212.

⁴¹⁴ Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style* (New York & London: Routledge, 1979).

⁴¹⁵ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.37. See the interview with Korpus Kristi about fashion shocking society: “The citizens could no longer trust their eyes. At first glance, Peter appears neat... Black suit, and short blond hair. But on second glance, something is not right. He is strange because he has a different head and different suit. This makes people angry.” Franzen and Penth, *Last Exit*, p.93.

mainstream and the margins. When putting together one's outfit, irony and exaggeration were key themes.⁴¹⁶ Punks used irony to draw attention, sarcasm to insult, and exaggeration to deflate imagined ideals of beauty.⁴¹⁷ Clothes meant to be tight should be ill-fitting or over-sized as punks sought to create an anti-fashion by rejecting what society held dear. The use of certain common or base materials such as PVC or faux leopard print fur suggested the cheapness of society and dramatized ironically the disposable nature of Western capitalist consumption. Garish colors were used to brighten the dull and boring everyday while chains and leather pointed to sexual fantasy and violence that punks felt society kept repressed behind closed doors.⁴¹⁸

Punks used fashion ironically to document the hatred and ugliness they saw in everyday life. Mutilating clothing was an attempt to externalize the internal ugliness that punks claimed society was rife with. As Hollow Skai explained, the stylized emphasis on hatred and ugliness was part of the punk critique of the status quo: "This threatening appearance can be understood as an expression of the hatred of mainstream citizens, but at the same time, meant that the status quo, the forms and norms of society, could be changed if individuals turned themselves into a public spectacle, caused a sensation, and opposed uniformity."⁴¹⁹ Fashion became a patchwork of different materials and designs, with texts and slogans criss-crossing clothes that were attempts to re-think fashion and externalize the internal individual. The emphasis on spectacle meant that youths could dress up, act out, and experiment—all in stark contrast to the previous boredom. As 16-year old 'Carmen' told *Bravo*, "During the summer holidays I was in London.

⁴¹⁶ Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton*, p.165.

⁴¹⁷ On sarcasm (especially the use of exaggeration and caricature), see John Haiman, *Talk Is Cheap: Sarcasm, Alienation, and the Evolution of Language* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.12-60, esp. pp.33-35.

⁴¹⁸ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.121.

⁴¹⁹ Skai, *Punk: Versuch der künstlerischen Realisierung*, p.165.

There, I had already seen punk bands in the Roxy. I find the fashion funny. At last, there is something original and not boring and unimaginative.”⁴²⁰ Punk anti-fashion, however, became a stylized ugliness that was quickly commodified and reproduced, pointing to a taste hierarchy of unsightliness: Alex Hacke, member of Einstürzende Neubauten, remembered that “[t]here was this high-form of ugliness. For me, this was actually the most important thing: the confrontation with trash. And with disgust.”⁴²¹

Still, the emphasis on ugliness in punk fashion should not be underestimated since it was essential in attracting women to the genre. As Gudrun Gut from Mania D. and Malaria! put it, “To always be spoken to as a woman ... I’m a person.”⁴²² But by dissolving the categories of male and female, new social relations could form and community based on shared associations could emerge. According to one young punk, “The women here have emerged with the men in the punk scene together, this is not a masculine event in that then women also have their place.”⁴²³ And later on she concluded further, “The starting point was different; we got started together as punks and not as men and women.”⁴²⁴ Style became a way of deconstructing conventional gender expectations and ugliness, in helping to move discussion away from beauty. As Inga Humpe put it, she wanted to be “[n]ot beautiful but provocative.”⁴²⁵ Even further, the punk critique of beauty linked the genre to feminists in the West German Women’s Movement who criticized conventional images of women in the mainstream media that advertized

⁴²⁰ “Punk-Pleite made in Germany,” *Bravo*, Nr.49, 24 November 1977, p.67.

⁴²¹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p. 237.

⁴²² Alfred Hilsberg, “Dicke Titten und Avantgarde. Aus grauer Städte Mauern (Teil 2),” *Sounds*, Nr.11, November 1979, p.27.

⁴²³ Franzen and Penth, *Last Exit*, pp.183-184.

⁴²⁴ Franzen and Penth, *Last Exit*, p.184.

⁴²⁵ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.70.

questionable beauty ideals; thus stylized ugliness was yet another essential continuity between punk and the new social movements emerging from the New Left.⁴²⁶

While punk was not the first musical culture to try to demolish gender categorizations as Hollow Skai has suggested, nonetheless, *Anderssein* tried to blur distinctions between men and women with gender-bending outfits: men wore gaudy eye-liner and make-up while women wore pants and heavy military boots, accessories and articles associated with the opposite gender.⁴²⁷

As Beate Bartel remembered, she got into punk because the subculture let her wear pants, something her school and home-life did not.⁴²⁸ Punk allowed Annette Humpe to express herself as a woman without traditional restrictions: “I also wanted to be able to do what I wanted as a woman. To make a total exhibition out of myself. And deal with my own destructiveness. And have no bad conscience about it. I thought that was great: to have this courage to be ugly. Not to be pretty and conformist and cute in order to get recognition but to be the way I wanted to be: sometimes quiet and other times ugly and loud and completely blunt.”⁴²⁹ The over-exaggerated bad taste meant that youths could mix and match as they pleased. Markus Oehlen remembered that Bielmeier helped him understand that “calculated bad taste” was critical “to renovate something.”⁴³⁰ Bad taste, fashion, and aesthetic ugliness were all attempts to express outwardly the inner authenticity and originality that punks were positing through *Anderssein*, and in so

⁴²⁶ See Uta G. Poiger, “Das Schöne und das Hässliche. Kosmetik, Feminismus und Punk in den siebziger und achtziger Jahren,” in *Das Alternative Milieu. Antibürgerlicher Lebensstil und linke Politik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Europa 1968-1983*, eds., Sven Reichardt und Detlef Siegfried (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010), pp.222-243.

⁴²⁷ See Skai, *Punk: Versuch der künstlerischen Realisierung*, p.149. Punk is not even the first musical culture to try and rework gender since Glam Rock in the late 1960s and early 1970s had already pioneered much of what punk picked up and then built upon. See Philip Auslander, *Performing Glam Rock: Gender and Theatricality in Popular Music* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006).

⁴²⁸ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.16.

⁴²⁹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.72.

⁴³⁰ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.82.

doing, were challenging the boundaries of democracy, emancipation, and what was possible culturally in the Federal Republic in the late 1970s.

“Tanz den Mussolini”: Vergangenheitsbewältigung, Fascism and Generational Revolt in West German Punk

Get up
 Shake your hips
 Clap your hands
 And dance the Mussolini
 Dance the Adolf Hitler
 Move your ass
 And dance the Jesus Christ

D.A.F., “Der Mussolini,” *Alles ist gut* (Virgin Records 203644, 1981)

While originality and freedom represented one end of the *Anderssein* spectrum, at the other end was a furious rejection of the 1960s student movement. Following the collapse of the APO in the late 1960s, the remnants entered a period of leftist dogmatism which was seen as inhibiting rather than unlocking possibilities by youths in the later 1970s. As we have seen, youths drawn to punk came overwhelmingly from an age cohort too young to have participated in the events centered around 1968, but had grown up in a West German society reeling from its aftermaths, and still processing the consequences of the challenges provoked by the '68ers. But the Manichean world view put forward by the students that equated their generational revolt with progressivism and any deviation with fascism fuelled a negative response by punks. The strictures against any form of deviance was greeted with total rejection by punks who saw in the ideologically domineering attitudes of the '68ers a new form of fascism, this time from the Left. Scholars of generation have noted how ‘key formative experiences’—after Karl Mannheim—are essential in the constitution of ‘social generations’ by virtue of their common experiences, and

punks bitterly contested the generational claims made by the '68ers and in this sense, functioned as a kind of negative image.⁴³¹ *Anderssein*, with its rejection of all forms of conformity, worked to mobilize youths in the total rejection of punk's elders, the hippies, in an attempt to solve the unresolved issues that had emerged from the 1960s challenge.

The hatred punks felt for the '68ers ran deep. But what late-1970s youth hated most was the monopoly of difference by the 1960s generation. According to sporadic member of Minus Delta t and performance artist padelun, hippies “occupied everything called Protest.”⁴³² Having long-hair was the means—the only means—by which one ‘protested’ West German society during the 1970s, and youths drawn to punk chafed at this limitation. To many such as Coroners guitarist Gode, the rigidity of the Left was just as bad as the conservatism of the Right: “I quickly noticed that all these '68er Hippie-teachers with their long hair were basically as fascist as any priest. Already among the hippies were many who reacted in an extreme manner over my short hair. For them, there only existed short-haired philistine ‘squares’ and long-haired cool dudes. I didn’t make any sense in this dialectal ideology.”⁴³³ What punks wanted was freedom of thought and action, and the moral righteousness of the '68ers was an unwanted restriction on this drive. As Moritz Reichelt has perceptively argued, punk was an important corrective to the dogmatism of the New Left. “Everything was so un-free then. And I wanted to feel free again. I wanted to be as free as possible,” Reichelt remembered, “If you talked with hippies, guaranteed that after five minutes you were talking about nuclear power, and after ten minutes you had such

⁴³¹ See Mary Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives: Generations and Violence through the German Dictatorships* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011); Ulrike Jureit and Michael Wildt, eds., *Generationen* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2005); Jürgen Reulecke with Elisabeth Müller-Lückner, eds., *Generalität und Lebensgeschichte im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2003); Dorothee Wierling, *Geboren im Jahr Eins. Der Jahrgang 1949 in der DDR: Versuch einer Kollektivbiographie* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2002); and Mark Roseman, ed., *Generations in Conflict: Youth Revolt and Generation Formation in Germany, 1770-1968* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

⁴³² Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.73.

⁴³³ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.60.

a gloomy image of the world that you wanted to kill yourself. And for this reason punk was necessary.”⁴³⁴ Janie Jones and Harry Rag wanted to form a political party called the Greys that would celebrate the color of concrete and oppose every proposal suggested by the Greens.⁴³⁵ Ralf Dörper wore leather boots only available in London sex-shops because they were “the best protection against these Green-Alternatives.”⁴³⁶ The political correctness of the hippies was an unbearable burden for many and early punks would often go to great lengths to antagonize them as popular punk buttons of the time well illustrate: “Nuclear Power, Yes!” “Hippies? No Thank You!” and “Vietnam War is Fantastic!”⁴³⁷

The vitriol youths poured on the '68ers attests to the angry generational conflict lurking beneath the surface of the punk revolution. As Franz Bielmeier alerts us, punks embraced the modern world, a stance reflecting the genre's realism: “It comes from the hippies who always claimed that the world was good and everything was possible. We were overjoyed that the world was terrible and bad. From this perspective there was also considerable potential.”⁴³⁸ Nowhere is punk's celebration better understood than in the song “Die Welt ist Schlecht, das Leben ist schön” (The world is bad, but life is beautiful) by der Plan that, while agreeing with the '68ers that the world was perhaps not ideal, nonetheless, argued that life was still beautiful and offered endless possibilities. For punks, the decaying industrial cityscapes of the Federal Republic were sites ripe with potential, not spaces to avoid or reform as environmental groups desired. One early anthem of West German punk, S.Y.P.H.'s song “Zurück zum Beton” (Back to Concrete), revelled in the industrial landscapes of the Ruhr and the gritty materials produced by modern

⁴³⁴ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.83.

⁴³⁵ Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.106-107.

⁴³⁶ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.52.

⁴³⁷ See Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.22, 52; Franzen and Penth, *Last Exit*, p.11; and *Der Aktuelle Mülleimer*, Nr.2 (Böblingen: 1980), p.24.

⁴³⁸ Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.38-39.

society: “Nausea, Nausea, Nature, Nature / I want concrete pure / Blue sky, blue sea / Long live the Concrete Fairy! / No birds, fish, or plants / I’d rather dance on concrete.”⁴³⁹ The greyness of everyday life needed to be depicted realistically, and punk fashion, music, and aesthetics, all marked punk off from the utopian thinking of the 1960s generation as cultural critic Diedrich Diedrichson and others have argued.⁴⁴⁰ While we will explore how punk mobilized the industrial environment lyrically and musically in Chapter 4, many youths were enamoured with machines and industry—“Industriegelände als Abenteuerspielplatz” (Industrial Sites as Adventure Playground) as one song by der Plan put it—in a way that the previous generation would have found horrifying.⁴⁴¹ Punk embracing of the modern world dovetailed with its disdain for hippies as Moritz Reichelt again astutely observed: “There was this feeling, that there were many themes that one could not talk about. If in 1977, you said ‘I like high-rise apartment buildings,’ then you were a real reactionary. Concrete, plastics. All was forbidden.”⁴⁴²

Punk hatred of hippies is nowhere more apparent than their disdain for drugs and alcohol in the early years of the subculture, even if this stance would change dramatically by the early 1980s. In the 1960s, youths had used alcohol and drugs in their generational revolt as a means of liberating themselves from the constraints of narrow-minded thinking.⁴⁴³ In direct contrast, punks in the early years poured scorn on hippies for clouding their minds with alcohol. As with fashion, punk attitudes towards recreational drug use were a means to separate themselves from

⁴³⁹ According to lyricist Harry Rag, “Zurück zum Beton” was an attempt to romance the “everyday greys.” See Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.89.

⁴⁴⁰ Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton*, p.142. In *Utopia Limited*, Marianne DeKoven argues that utopian thinking died between the 1960s and the 1990s, although she links its death to post-modernism. Both authors agree, however, that the 1960s were the last moment of utopian thinking. See Marianne DeKoven, *Utopia Limited: The Sixties and the Emergence of the Postmodern* (Durnham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).

⁴⁴¹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.89. Peter Hein has since claimed that punk originality lay with their acceptance and joy in reality. See Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton*, p.133.

⁴⁴² Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.83.

⁴⁴³ Robert P. Stephens, *Germans on Drugs: The Complications of Modernization in Hamburg* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2007).

the prior generation. For Franz Bielmeier, “Punk in the beginning was for me completely anti-alcoholic,” while Jürgen Engler and Janie Jones drank juice when they were at clubs because punk was “a straight movement.”⁴⁴⁴ Ralf Dörper, founding member of S.Y.P.H. and later die Krupps, has argued that “In the Ratinger Hof days, I only drank Cola and water. That was a straight attitude. The point was: We have a clear head. The point was: Punk is no menacing Hippie-shit.”⁴⁴⁵ Straightness was an attitude requiring the mind to be clear and the body disciplined.

West German punks likewise distanced themselves from drug use by hippies and by US punks. Smoking marijuana or hashish was linked with the 1960s generation and thus taboo. To a certain extent this was because the German scene rejected the New York punk scene. As Thomas Schwebel pointed out, “The American punks were junkies for us. We completely rejected these dumb Richard Hell-idiots.”⁴⁴⁶ Partly this rejection was an aspect of punk’s larger deconstruction of the emphasis on sex, drugs, and rock’n’roll. In their eschewal of drug culture, German punks also emphasized their close ties to the UK punk scene over the American one. According to Jones, “This was the point: we were against drug bands....We were completely England-oriented. We didn’t really take the Americans very seriously because there even the punk-rockers took drugs. That was not okay. At any rate: Americans couldn’t do anything. They were not in.”⁴⁴⁷ As Schwebel argued, punk was about being hyper-aware and disciplined, straight and not clouded: “It was more like: being alert and better and faster than the rest. So not dazed but aware of what was happening.”⁴⁴⁸ In the later years when drugs became much more common in the scene, even

⁴⁴⁴ Italics in original. Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.53, 150.

⁴⁴⁵ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.53.

⁴⁴⁶ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.53.

⁴⁴⁷ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.53.

⁴⁴⁸ Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.76-77.

then punks rejected those drugs associated with the 1960s and used ‘uppers’ and stimulants instead: cocaine, amphetamines, speed, caffeine tablets, and especially ephedrine.⁴⁴⁹

These behavioural practices were part and parcel of punk’s rejection of the ’68ers. But perhaps none was more shocking and controversial than West German punk’s flirtations with fascism. Yet again this trend stems from the attacks on the 1960s generation, the yearnings for originality, and the desire for straightness and to shock. Punk’s relationship to fascism was complex. From the beginning, London and US punks had used Nazi imagery—swastikas, iron crosses—both as ironic symbols denoting present-day authoritarianism and as a means to shock audiences, which the mainstream press picked up quickly and used with the genre’s penchant for S&M clothing as evidence of the subculture’s latent fascism.⁴⁵⁰ As Dick Hebdige first argued, the use of Nazi symbolism was a form of bricolage, a means of shocking viewers by juxtaposing taboo images, of tearing them from their historical context and exhibiting them uncomfortably in the present.⁴⁵¹ In West Germany, the use of Nazi symbols was especially potent due to the historical burden of the German past, and legally in the ban on the public appearance of fascist imagery. Whereas the immediate postwar generation downplayed the Nazi past in an effort to concentrate on the present—intent on rebuilding the West German nation—the 1960s generation had condemned their parents for continued authoritarianism and unreconstructed Nazism, a situation that punks, as we have seen, found likewise in the New Left.⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.16, 76-77, 116

⁴⁵⁰ See Susan Sontag, “Fascinating Fascism,” *Under the Sign of Saturn* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1980), pp.73-105.

⁴⁵¹ Hebdige, *Subculture*, pp.102-106, 116-117; Klaus Farin, *Jugendkulturen in Deutschland, 1950-1989* (Paterborn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2006), p.109; Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, pp.32-34; and Alfred Hilsberg, “Die Revolution ist vorbei – wir haben gesiegt!” *Sounds*, Nr.2, February 1978, p.36.

⁴⁵² There is now a large literature on postwar efforts at dealing with the Nazi legacy. See Hans Kundnani, *Utopia or Auschwitz: Germany’s 1968 Generation and the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Frank Biess, *Homecomings: Returning POWs and the Legacies of Defeat in Postwar Germany* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006). Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the*

The early West German punk scene was rife with Nazi imagery as youths used swastikas, iron crosses and references to Nazism as a means of demarcating the limits of the subculture and rejecting their elders.⁴⁵³ Early fanzines such as *The Ostrich*, *Heimatblatt* and *Preiserhöhung* were filled with swastikas and images of goose-stepping Nazis.⁴⁵⁴ Even the names of many fanzines drew their inspiration from Nazism: *T4*, *KZ-Rundschau*, *New Order* and *Der Stürmer* being some prominent examples. Authors such as ‘Gasman’ penned stories about how the Nuremburg Nazi Party Rallies were the first “punkfestivals,” that Leni Riefenstahl was the “Siouxsie [Sioux] of the 1930s,” and slogans clamoured “The Germans again need a Führer!!!”⁴⁵⁵ Bands such as West Berlin’s Stuka Pilots would dress up for concerts in full Nazi regalia and when the Big Balls added The Great White Idiot as their uniformed and mustachioed singer, they unmistakably toyed with the Nazi past.⁴⁵⁶ Mike Hentz, performance artist and singer for Minus Delta t, would dress up as an SS officer for Carnival in Cologne.⁴⁵⁷ In the same way that the RAF sought to use terrorism to provoke state violence—and thus in a circular manner show that the West German state was an authoritarian state—punks used fascism to provoke authoritarian reactions from the state and the New Left. Franz Bielmeier has remarked that the mobilization of Nazi imagery was

Federal Republic of Germany (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); and Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1997).

⁴⁵³ See Farin, *Jugendkulturen in Deutschland*, p.109; and Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, pp.32-34.

⁴⁵⁴ *The Ostrich*, Nrs. 1-5 (Düsseldorf: 1977); *Preiserhöhung*, Nr.2 (Hamburg: 1979), p.3; *Heimatblatt*, Nr.4 (Düsseldorf: 1979), p.3.

⁴⁵⁵ *The Ostrich*, Nr.4 (Düsseldorf: 1977), p.24; and *Preiserhöhung*, Nr.2 (Hamburg: 1979), p.3.

⁴⁵⁶ *Reine Willkuer*, Nr.1 (West Berlin: 1978), p.1; and *No Fun*, Nr.17 (Hanover: 1978) cited in Paul Ott und Hollow Skai, eds., *Wir waren Helden für einen Tag: Aus deutschsprachigen Punk-Fanzines 1977-1981* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1983), p.203. The Stuka Pilots were not dressing up as Nazis ironically, however, they were serious. See Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.112; and Alfred Hilsberg, “Punk-Schlacht an der Mauer,” *Sounds*, Nr.9, September 1978, p.14. Udo Lindenberg famously condemned punk and especially the Big Balls as fascists. See Jürgen Stark and Michael Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel? Punk – New Wave – Neue Welle* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Freie Gesellschaft, 1981), pp.139-140.

⁴⁵⁷ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.21.

meant as a critique of West German society: “[B]ack then, German society was divorced from feelings; it was like a padded living room with a fat cigar-smoking old Nazi boss in it.”⁴⁵⁸

The use of Nazi imagery was a means of testing the limits of the possible, especially when set against the doctrinaire restrictions not only of the postwar reconstruction generation but also by the ’68ers. Whereas the use of Nazism in the UK or US was usually mustered with the mainstream in mind, in the Federal Republic, the 1960s generation was the clear target; in this sense, parading around with swastikas had almost nothing to do with the Third Reich and everything to do with the ’68ers. According to Bielmeier, responsible for much of the Nazi material found in *The Ostrich*, the fascination with fascism was part of the break with the New Left: “That was a free space. Jokes about Jews were taboo.”⁴⁵⁹ Others concur with Bielmeier. Moritz Reichelt claimed that the use of Nazism was an ironic expression of freedom: “To walk around with a swastika was a symbol of cultural freedom.”⁴⁶⁰ The romanticizing of violence that the Sixties generation had sought to deny with their calls for peace and love were reinstated by punks looking to shock their elders with the supposed brutality of everyday life. According to Bernward Malaka, band member Ralf Dörper used to pen Nazi stories that were “[a] mixture of violence and pornography. It went right to the limit.”⁴⁶¹

These comments point to the usage of Nazism by German punks to demystify fascism and especially to wrest it from the moral control of the New Left. While scholars of Germany ritualistically point to the Historikerstreit and controversial events such as the United States President Ronald Reagan’s visit to the Wehrmacht cemetery in Bitburg in the 1980s as evidence of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (the struggle to master the past), on the ground, there were

⁴⁵⁸ Teipel, *Verschwennde*, p.42.

⁴⁵⁹ Teipel, *Verschwennde*, pp.40, 42.

⁴⁶⁰ Teipel, *Verschwennde*, p.85.

⁴⁶¹ Teipel, *Verschwennde*, p.42.

significantly more varied activities towards this end in the late 1970s and early 1980s that remain unknown.⁴⁶² Nowhere can these processes be better seen than in the controversy surrounding the lyrics to the D.A.F.'s song 'Der Mussolini' from their 1981 album *Alles ist gut* that opened this section. Though the album cracked the German top-twenty charts and was awarded the German Record Prize, immediately, the charge of Nazism was foisted upon the band as critics condemned them for associating Jesus with Hitler and Mussolini in the same sentence.⁴⁶³ It did not help that D.A.F. cultivated an image that called to mind the homoerotic, body-culture notoriously celebrated by the Nazis—they dressed in leathers, were often depicted sweaty and half-naked—the same sort of Nazi chic that Susan Sontag famously condemned for insidiously keeping fascist thought alive only a couple of years prior.⁴⁶⁴ While their name meant *Deutsche-Amerikanische-Freundschaft*, it also consciously evoked the acronym for the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront*, the Nazi labor union.

And while Albrecht Koch is certainly correct that D.A.F. were gifted students of the music industry—"DAF learned from history, not from German history, but from pop history, and did not want to become another conventional and boring band with an equally conventional and boring message"—there is more to "Der Mussolini" than pure publicity.⁴⁶⁵ As we are about to examine in the next chapter with the lyrics of *Mittagspause*, *Male*, and *S.Y.P.H.*, German punk

⁴⁶² These events have generated tremendous commentary. See *Forever in the Shadow of Hitler? Original Documents of the Historikerstreit, the controversy concerning the singularity of the Holocaust*, trans. James Knowlton and Truett Cates (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1993); Peter Baldwin, ed. *Reworking the Past: Hitler, the Holocaust, and the Historian's Debate* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990); Richard J. Evans, *In Hitler's Shadow: West German Historians and the Attempt to Escape from the Nazi Past* (New York: Pantheon, 1989); Charles S. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988); and Geoffrey H. Hartman, ed., *Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

⁴⁶³ Albrecht Koch, *Angriff auf's Schlaraffenland. 20 Jahre deutschsprachige Popmusik* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1987), pp.168-169. "Deutsch Amerikanische Freundschaft (D.A.F.)," in *Das NDW-Lexicon: Die Neue Deutsche Welle – Bands und Solisten von A bis Z*, ed., Christian Graf (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), p.54.

⁴⁶⁴ Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism."

⁴⁶⁵ Koch, *Angriff auf's Schlaraffenland*, pp.168-169.

bands were attempting to reconcile the present with the past, and “Der Mussolini” should be understood in this context: as one more salvo in the effort to normalize the German past. In important ways, punks were working through Theodor Adorno’s famous statement that to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric.⁴⁶⁶ By recognizing the existence of Auschwitz in a generation not responsible for the Holocaust, punks sought to reframe discussion away from the judgement that characterized the 1960s towards a more nuanced and subjective exploration of individual choice. As D.A.F.’s singer Gabi Delgado-Lopez explained, “Der Mussolini” was an attempt to demystify taboos—in this case, the biggest taboo in German history—that would enable youths in the 1970s and 1980s to reconcile themselves to their national past: “Christ and Hitler are harmless. We take pleasure in the freedom to play with things that others say are dangerous.”⁴⁶⁷ But it was precisely this danger that enabled young Germans to stabilize their relations towards their national heritage, to poke fun and deflate the sinister shadows, and in so doing, establish a foundation for the development of a new national music movement.

Yet, at the same time, the genre’s playful if serious interaction with fascism also suggests an emotional attraction to Nazism that usually remains unremarked upon in punk scholarship.⁴⁶⁸ Every once in a while, punks reference Nazism to try and explain the subculture and in so doing, use the Third Reich as the idealized historical reference for a meaningful community of feeling. For example, in an attempt to describe the performance by UK rockers the Clash at the Mont-de-Marsan festival in southern France in the summer of 1977, Franz Bielmeier conjured up the Third Reich and the emotional imaginary of the *Volksgemeinschaft* in an attempt to

⁴⁶⁶ Theodor W. Adorno, “Cultural Criticism and Society,” in *Prisms*, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1967), p.19.

⁴⁶⁷ M.O.C. Döpfner and Thomas Garms, *Neue deutsche Welle. Kunst oder Mode? Eine sachliche Polemik für und wider die neudeutsche Popmusik* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1984), p.111.

⁴⁶⁸ Other scholars have likewise noted how notions of ‘belonging’ and ‘authenticity’ were central to Nazism’s appeal. See Thomas Kühne, *Belonging and Genocide: Hitler’s Community, 1918-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); and Timothy S. Brown, *Weimar Radicals: Nazis and Communists between Authenticity and Performance* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009).

communicate to others the existential event that he had just experienced: “indescribable. an orgy. the people had not been carried away in such a manner since the thousand-year reich.”⁴⁶⁹ When Moritz Reichelt travelled to America during 1979 and criss-crossed the country, he kept an illustrative diary of his journey, and on one page he describes the United States as “a modern Third Reich of Freedom.”⁴⁷⁰ While it is difficult to penetrate exactly what is meant by this unusual pairing, further comments on America elsewhere by Reichelt suggest how these two recombined to create an ideal, especially in regards to the relationship between music and Germanness, a national identity invalidated by the experience of Nazism. As Reichelt noted recently about his trip, it was in America “that I noticed what it was like to move or feel in an authentic popular culture. And how amazing it is when people are developing art out of their indigenous surroundings instead of always importing it,” a clear reference to German punk’s foreign roots.⁴⁷¹

There are only a few hints towards this position but they are telling because they drive to the heart of punk attraction which was to restore meaningfulness to young lives in the late 1970s and the efforts to wrest authenticity and alterity from the ’68ers at all costs. The late 1970s and early 1980s were a period of pessimism for young Germans: unemployment, environmental devastation, nuclear war—all were primary concerns that mobilized millions in the peace and ecology movements and especially within the alternative milieu that rejected capitalism and parliamentary democracy as it was then constituted in West Germany as inimical to authentic living, and are reflected in the famous punk slogans such as ‘No Future’ or ‘No Fun’ that point towards the boredom of everyday life and of the uselessness of expecting a brighter future. Punk sought to rethink community and add spice to life—to make rock’n’roll dangerous again. One of

⁴⁶⁹ *The Ostrich*, Nr.4 (Düsseldorf: 1977), pp.2-8.

⁴⁷⁰ *America the Beautiful. 6 Weeks Amerika: schizophrene drawings by a normal*, Nr.14 (Düsseldorf: 1979), p.4.

⁴⁷¹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.178.

the crucial elements in this was the searching for meaningfulness or authenticity in the everyday relations between individuals and the greater whole which *Anderssein* authorized, and these references to the Volksgemeinschaft should be understood in this context. The references to Nazism then, were attempts by West German punks to articulate an authentic community of feeling and belonging, to equate the punk subculture with this historic referent and to suggest to non-believers what they were missing by divorcing themselves from their elders, the '68ers.

“Aus grauer Städte Mauern”: Alfred Hilsberg and the **Invention** of the *Neue Deutsche Welle*

The Revolution is over – and we have won!

Alfred Hilsberg, “Die Revolution ist vorbei – wir haben gesiegt!”
Sounds, February 1978, pg.32-33

But it was through the efforts of Alfred Hilsberg that these diverse strands of punk ideology were pulled together, and his endeavors in the late 1970s were critical in transforming West German punk into a national entity. While Hilsberg is a controversial figure for reasons we will encounter often, his belief that punk could become the basis for a new national cultural, one that was modern, stylish, experimental, and based in a rejection of older German traditions in favor of innovative avenues of communication and rethought social relations, was profoundly important. Hilsberg’s vision, which became known as the *Neue Deutsche Welle* (New German Wave or NDW), was a means of culturally coming to terms with Germany’s difficult past and complacent present while at the same time positing an emancipatory future rooted in difference. Sweeping the nation in the early 1980s, the NDW became the first internationally popular German music genre in the history of the Federal Republic and, to this day, remains the benchmark for

indigenous musical production (see Chapter 6). Using his powerful editorial position at *Sounds* and his nationally organized concert promotion, Hilsberg was able to direct debate about what constituted punk, what was the future of popular music in West Germany, and how punk and popular music could become the basis for a more robust German national identity. However the move from shock to subculture fundamentally redefined the genre. Punk authenticity authorized unlimited originality and individuality but the demands of subculture demanded homogeneity. As punk nationalized, the movement became increasingly conformist and youths were forced to make decisions that they had largely avoided through their marginality, issues we will explore in the following chapters. But in the late 1970s, Hilsberg was able to articulate for the first time a comprehensive vision of punk which gave national and ideological cohesion to a genre that had remained largely personal and local, and his activism set the agenda for the coming years.

Intrigued by the reports he had read about in the *New Musical Express*, Hilsberg travelled to London to gain first-hand knowledge about what was happening in the British capital in the summer of 1976.⁴⁷² Convinced that punk was ‘the next big thing,’ Hilsberg brought UK-acts the Vibrators and the Stranglers back with him to West Germany in 1977 for a small but influential tour.⁴⁷³ Likening punk to earlier musical revolutions, as he has subsequently explained, Hilsberg saw in the genre the same revolutionary promise as the Beatles in 1963-1964. “I do not mean that punk and the Beatles are one and the same,” Hilsberg clarified, “Punk has a completely different background, style and contents. But there were a few things that I could relate with. It came from below, what had never happened before. And I could not connect with the bombastic music productions from the mid-1970s that everyone threw themselves into at the time.”⁴⁷⁴ This

⁴⁷² Franzen and Penth, *Last Exit. Punk*, p.210; and Stark and Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel?* p.193.

⁴⁷³ PVC formed after seeing the Vibrators in the Kant Kino in West Berlin. Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.87; and Teipel, *Verschwenne*, p.28.

⁴⁷⁴ Franzen and Penth, *Last Exit*, pp.210-211.

historic understanding of punk was an important reference for Hilsberg who sought to nurture the small scenes that had begun springing up in the Federal Republic.

In 1978, Hilsberg began writing for *Sounds*, then the leading German-language popular music monthly that modeled itself after the path-breaking rock journalism of Anglo-American publications such as *Rolling Stone*, *Creem*, *New Musical Express* or *Melody Maker*.⁴⁷⁵ While originally focused on the free jazz scene, by the mid-1970s, *Sounds* had transformed into the voice of intelligent rock and pop journalism in the German-speaking world, and contributing writers such as Manfred Gillig, Jörg Gülden, and Ingeborg Schober were some of the top cultural critics in West Germany.⁴⁷⁶ With a 40,000 monthly distribution figure, *Sounds* covered the international trends in the music industry including UK punk about which the magazine was at first decidedly lukewarm.⁴⁷⁷ However, in February 1978, Hilsberg authored the first of several landmark articles on punk, “The Revolution is over – and we have won!” in which he argued that for youths, punk “is perhaps their first chance in life, like for all disillusioned youths without a degree, work, or identity. [It gives them] something to do, whether in a band, or out on the street.”⁴⁷⁸ Hilsberg detailed how the genre once considered outside the mainstream had now become fully incorporated into the music industry in the UK. While offering much space for critical comments about whether punk had stayed true to its oppositional ideals, Hilsberg focused on the rise of independent labels and record stores that had been instrumental in the explosion

⁴⁷⁵ On the emergence of rock journalism in the late 1960s and early 1970s, see the writings collected in Theo Cateforis, ed., *The Rock History Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2007); and for samples from *Creem* magazine—one of the most influential periodicals fostering rock criticism—see Robert Matheu, *Creem: America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine* (New York: Collins, 2007).

⁴⁷⁶ See Anne Waak and Max Dax, eds., *Spex: Das Buch. 33 1/3 Jahre Pop* (Berlin: Metrolit, 2013); and Tim Klütz, “POP TALK – Wie Pop in Sounds und SPEX zur Sprach kam,” in *Pop am Rhein*, ed., Uwe Husslein (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2008), pp.161-189.

⁴⁷⁷ Skai, *Alles nur getraamt*, p.196.

⁴⁷⁸ Hilsberg, “Die Revolution ist vorbei,” pp.32-36.

and subsequent sustainability of UK punk, a theme he was to continually emphasize and indeed, practice.

In the following issue, Hilsberg turned to punk in West Germany, surveying the growing Düsseldorf, Hamburg, and West Berlin scenes, explored in the previous chapter. In the main, Hilsberg sought to publicize the budding scenes by contrasting them with his previous article about punk in the UK. Suggesting that German punk was lacking the independent structural support—especially small record labels and clubs where bands could play—that was necessary for the full flowering of the scene, Hilsberg detailed the various grass-roots initiatives in the major cities and how, despite difficulties, punks were slowly carving out alternative cultural spaces. What interested Hilsberg the most was the primitive articulation of a specifically German popular music form based especially in German-language lyrics that sought to communicate the daily issues youths were experiencing in the Federal Republic (see Chapter 4). Speaking with Male about their lyrics, the band explained that “fans of their earlier English lyrics could not understand anything. Now we write German songs.”⁴⁷⁹ Likewise Franz Bielmeier now wrote German lyrics “from experience” since he desired to express himself in his native language about the conditions of living in an industrial city.⁴⁸⁰ According to Neat from Dortmund, “[w]e feel uneasy in these cities, and that is how it is for most of us.”⁴⁸¹ Hilsberg contrasted these sentiments with the Hamburg band Big Balls & The Great White Idiot who were dismissed peremptorily by the Düsseldorf punks who condemned them as Anglo-American fakes who threw away their street credibility when they signed with a major label: according to Hilsberg,

⁴⁷⁹ Alfred Hilsberg, “Rodenkirchen is burning – Krautpunk,” *Sounds*, Nr.3, March 1978, p.22.

⁴⁸⁰ Hilsberg, “Rodenkirchen is burning,” p.22.

⁴⁸¹ Hilsberg, “Rodenkirchen is burning,” p.23.

“The [Charley’s] Girls and other Düsseldorf punks insisted that they do not want anything to do with such Imitation-Punks, ‘even if they are personally ok, but their long hair...’”⁴⁸²

Near the end of the article Hilsberg made his first major statement on the possibilities and future of punk in Germany. Suggesting that West Germans had missed their chances in 1954 (rock’n’roll) and 1964 (Beatlemania) to develop their own indigenous popular music culture, Hilsberg believed that the moment was perhaps ripe to throw off, what he (and others) called, the “Pop-Imperialism” of Anglo-American musical dominance. But the foundations for such a revolution needed to be prepared and more work was necessary: “The prerequisite for the development of a socially self-conscious musical genre first needs a change in the groups’ production and distribution relationships.”⁴⁸³ Of critical necessity was the development of an independent infrastructure of small labels, records stores, and distribution ventures that could produce and then disseminate German music as he had begun to observe during his visits to the Ruhr. Crucially, punk needed to develop and evolve, to move beyond a simple reactive stance and begin transforming the very structures of the music industry in West Germany. A few months later at the opening of SO 36 in West Berlin, Hilsberg was pleasantly surprised by the Düsseldorf bands Charley’s Girls/Mittagspause and Male who were attempting to develop German-specific sounds and lyrics in contrast to the English-singing West Berlin-based bands such as PVC: “...but surprising my usual punk-understandings was the attempt to develop an original expressive style. In contrast to the conventional Vibrators-sound coming from most of the Berlin bands, those groups singing in German stood out.”⁴⁸⁴

In 1979, Hilsberg organized three large festivals in the Hamburg Markthalle meant to showcase the diversity of German punk and function as programmatic statements about the

⁴⁸² Hilsberg, “Rodenkirchen is burning,” p.22.

⁴⁸³ Hilsberg, “Rodenkirchen is burning,” p.24.

⁴⁸⁴ Hilsberg, “Punk-Schlacht an der Mauer,” p.14.

future of German popular music. Opened in March 1977, the Markthalle was a large venue near the central train station that could fit 1,500 people. A year prior, Hilsberg had staged there an exhibition on the history of rock'n'roll called "Pictures make the Music" that anticipated many of his ideas of the power of rock'n'roll with its emphasis on DIY and rejection of any "nostalgic, backwards-looking glance," as one of the brochures advertising the show claimed.⁴⁸⁵ However, the Zick Zack festivals (or Markthalle festivals as they are also called) were conceived on an entirely more ambitious level. Influenced by his contact with the Düsseldorf punks and his own observations that indigenous punk was now evolving into something new and potentially revolutionary, Hilsberg wanted an event that would showcase German innovation and bring the various city punk scenes into contact with one another, thereby transforming the local scenes throughout the Federal Republic into a national movement, as the titles of the shows indicate—'Into the Future' (in English originally), 'In die Zukunft' (Into the Future) and 'Geräusche für die 80er' (Sounds for the 1980s). As his column in *Sounds* 'neuestes deutschland' (newest germany) further suggested, Hilsberg was convinced that punk was the progressive and modern future of German popular music.⁴⁸⁶

'Into the Future' was held 24 February 1979 in the Markthalle in Hamburg, and featured local acts Hinterberger's Wut, the Babbits, and Kiev Stingl, Hans-A-Plast from Hannover, Male, S.Y.P.H., D.A.F., Mittagspause and Weltaufstandplan from the Ruhr, PVC and Ffurs from West Berlin, and special guests Kleenex from Zürich. As an eclectic cross-section of contemporary German punk, the line-up was intended to reflect the diversity of the individual city sounds and introduce partisans of the hard rock side of the genre to the more experimental side, and vice-

⁴⁸⁵ Cited in *Rock Musik*, Nr.2 (Hamburg: 1979), p.3.

⁴⁸⁶ The title was also a play on the East German Socialist Unity Party organ *Neues Deutschland*, suggesting that punk was even more progressive and modern than socialism. I would like to thank Katherine Pence for this astute observation.

versa. Over a thousand people packed the Markthalle, a mix of punks from the various cities and locals curious about the new sounds.⁴⁸⁷ While many were upset by *Mittagspause*'s arrival on stage in lumberjack shirts and ship captains' hats—considered an affront to the leather-obsessed Hamburgers (as they was intended)—the general feeling was that 'Into the Future' had achieved its goals of promoting the national scene and pointing the way towards the future.⁴⁸⁸ Crucially, for many like Campino, singer for the Düsseldorf band ZK and later more famously, die Toten Hosen, the first Hamburg concert was the realization of the existence of a German punk scene that was national rather than local: "For me, this first Hamburg night was the confirmation that across the country there were plenty of people who thought like me. That was a great feeling to run around with such a giant bunch of punks in Germany."⁴⁸⁹

The enormous success of the concert convinced Hilsberg to organize a second big show which took place again in the Markthalle on 29 June 1979. Also featuring diverse music—harder bands such as KFC and the Buttocks were off-set with more experimental acts such as DIN A Testbild, Materialschlacht and Geisterfahrer—'In die Zukunft' was a sell-out and hundreds of people milled about outside who could not get tickets.⁴⁹⁰ But the feeling of unity that had marked 'Into the Future' was not repeated during 'In die Zukunft,' succumbing perhaps to the inherent difficulty of trying to recreate the organic authenticity of the first evening with the second.⁴⁹¹ The Hamburg crowd—egged on by KFC and the Buttocks—was decidedly more hostile to the more experimental acts. As Hilsberg later reported in *Sounds*, "for the more experimental bands the pogo-audience had absolutely no patience and attacked them with beer cans and bottles."⁴⁹²

⁴⁸⁷ *Heimatblatt*, Nr.3 (Düsseldorf: 1979), pp.3-5; *Preiserhöhung*, Nr.2 (Hamburg: 1979), pg.11-13; *Pretty Vacant*, Nr.5 (Hamburg: 1979), pg.16-17; and *Rock Musik*, Nr.2 (Hamburg: 1979), pp.7-10.

⁴⁸⁸ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.136. See the positive reviews in *Rock Musik*, Nr.2 (Hamburg: 1979), pp.7-10.

⁴⁸⁹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.137.

⁴⁹⁰ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.163.

⁴⁹¹ I would like to thank Eric McKinley for this insight.

⁴⁹² Alfred Hilsberg, "Punk bis zum Untergang," *Sounds*, Nr.8, August 1979, p.6.

Some participants claimed that half the audience were “plastic (weekend) punks.”⁴⁹³ The crowd did not appreciate the jesting of Campino who arrived onstage dressed in lederhosen.⁴⁹⁴ Bettina Köster, on stage for the first time with DIN A Testbild, was shocked with the violence exhibited by the crowd.⁴⁹⁵ Trini Trimpop of KFC—the only band, so he claimed, to give “Vollgas” (full throttle) during the show—was utterly dismissive of the experimental acts: “So feeble, so intellectual, so rational” he was to later say.⁴⁹⁶

The clashes taking place at the second Zick Zack festival points toward a growing schism developing within the German punk scene and suggests how nationalization provoked critical questions about what precisely constituted punk, answers which increasingly blocked diversity in the name of subcultural cohesion. As we have seen, punk was a mixture of tendencies that often were at odds and we can divide punks ideologically into two camps by ‘In die Zukunft.’ On the one side were those youths committed to experimental music who pushed the limits of what constituted rock’n’roll. Often using synthesizers and machines to produce sound, the so-called Kunstpunks were committed to the development of new forms and rhythms and tried to root their sound in the German language and German experiences. On the other side were youths more oriented towards the hard rock end of punk—the so-called Hardcores—who rejected the German lyrics (at first) and especially experimental instruments and sounds. The Hardcores were especially strong in Hamburg and grew to dominate the genre in the early 1980s. As such, the more hard rock oriented sounds of bands such as the Buttocks, Coroners, and KFC clashed with the experimental soundscapes of groups such as S.Y.P.H. and Weltaufstandplan: whereas the Hardcores wanted to dance aggressively, the Kunstpunks wanted to rework the possibilities of

⁴⁹³ *Heimatblatt*, Nr.6 (Düsseldorf: 1979), p.2.

⁴⁹⁴ Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.164-165.

⁴⁹⁵ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.164.

⁴⁹⁶ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.165.

rock'n'roll. While German punk remained local, the different musical and philosophical outlooks between the two groups ostensibly belonging to the same scene were papered over; but once punk started nationalizing through Hilsberg's endeavors, the animosity exploded.

Hilsberg had deliberately tried to fuse the two scenes together in an attempt to broaden and nationalize the genre. Already at 'Into the Future,' partisans of both sides had condemned one another, and 'In die Zukunft' only reaffirmed the growing hostility. Kid P (aka Andreas Banaski), later critic for *Sounds* but then writing in his fanzine *Preiserhöhung*, complained about Weltaufstandplan that, "anyone who has already heard them knows what came from the stage: no music!!! sounds, noise, words: spoken-word abstract poems: in short—the opposite of rock'n'roll."⁴⁹⁷ Writing in the Hamburg fanzine *Pretty Vacant*, Eugen Honold complained about Mittagspause (lunch break) that "Lunch-nap would be more appropriate."⁴⁹⁸ *HCI*, a Düsseldorf fanzine, whined that Geisterfahrer "made me vomit like I haven't in a long time. The first songs had violin. The rhythm came from a synthesizer—no drums. The lyrics were the absolute stupidest..."⁴⁹⁹ Speaking later about his decision to include both experimental and hardcore bands, Hilsberg defended his choice, saying that he had "the illusion that they [Kunstpunks and Hardcores], through the collision of musical styles, would react and work together positively rather than simply avoiding one another. But from the very beginning, there were fierce disagreements."⁵⁰⁰ Hopeful that familiarity would breed tolerance, and respect, Hilsberg was taken aback by the vitriol both sides heaped upon each other. Describing the event in *Sounds*, he

⁴⁹⁷ *Preiserhöhung*, Nr.2 (Hamburg: 1979), p.13.

⁴⁹⁸ *Pretty Vacant*, Nr.5 (Hamburg: 1979), p.17.

⁴⁹⁹ *HCI*, Nr.1 (Düsseldorf: 1980), p.6.

⁵⁰⁰ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.164.

disappointingly concluded that punk was akin to other “so-called movements (musical and otherwise): splits and sects.”⁵⁰¹

Despite the setback, Hilsberg still hoped punk would take the next step towards realizing its revolutionary potential and sought to force the issue. The heart of the matter was the direction of popular music in Germany, and Hilsberg was more than convinced that German lyrics and rhythms were the future. Using his editorial pulpit, Hilsberg published a three-part series on punk in West Germany that appeared in *Sounds* near the end of 1979 entitled “Aus grauer Städte Mauern,” (From Grey City Walls) a series coining the term *Neue Deutsche Welle* that was tremendously influential with artists and fans. While he has subsequently claimed that the term NDW was forced upon him by his editors and scholars have rightly pointed out that others used the term before him, Hilsberg nonetheless popularized the term and genre that would dominate the German music industry in the early 1980s even if his specific vision and use of the term was considerably different from how it subsequently developed.⁵⁰² Seizing upon the efforts of groups such as Male, Mittagspause and S.Y.P.H. who had begun singing in German and experimenting with non-traditional rock’n’roll sounds, Hilsberg argued that punk had begun evolving into a new form of specifically German popular music. The very term *Neue Deutsche Welle* reflected the newness and future-oriented nature of the music, as well as the national-inflection that was to distinguish the genre from Anglo-American New Wave or Post-Punk. Crucially, Hilsberg argued that this new music could function as a platform for opening up West German society by democratizing the music industry, giving youths an arena to debate the nature of the German

⁵⁰¹ Hilsberg, “Punk bis zum Untergang,” p.6.

⁵⁰² Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.9; and Teipel, *Verschwennde*, p.141. Thomas Groetz correctly points out that Jürgen Kramer used the term ‘Neue Welle’ for the third edition of his fanzine *Einige Millionen* in August 1978. Thomas Groetz, *Kunst-Musik: Deutscher Punk und New Wave in der Nachbarschaft von Joseph Beuys* (Berlin: Martin Schmitz Verlag, 2002), p.24. See also Frank A. Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging: Von Punk zu NDW* (Mainz: Ventil Verlag, 2007), p.12; and Barbara Hornberger, *Geschichte wird gemacht. Die Neue Deutsche Welle. Eine Epoche deutscher Popmusik* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2011), pp.38-39.

past, present, and future, and providing the nation with a soundtrack for new social and cultural relations freed from conservative tradition and leftist dogma. By arguing that German national identity could be rooted in difference, diversity, and independence—all the hallmarks of a modern, democratic, and multicultural society—we can see how Hilsberg sought to move beyond the New Left via musical and cultural production.

As Hilsberg explained in the opening lines of the first article, he was not going to present the next musical “supergroup,” but rather let the artists and fans describe punk themselves.⁵⁰³ What followed was a montage of the West German punk scene in the major cities of the Federal Republic. Broaching a number of salient issues then concerning punk that we will touch on often—origins, politics, generational conflict, gender inequalities—Hilsberg offered a panorama of conflicting impulses and activities. The sum total, however, was a drive towards reworking existing categories of meaning along more authentic lines: “The New Wave in West Germany is no unified political / musical movement. Their regional differences, their insistence on ‘old’ values and search for ‘new’ contents and forms all work towards more productive / creative processes rather than their destruction.”⁵⁰⁴ Asking Michael Ruff from *Geisterfahrer* (and fellow *Sounds* reporter) about punk inspiring you to start your own band, Ruff suggested that with music, “you can influence people. They can say: I can do that also. I got a kick out of seeing the Vibrators on stage.”⁵⁰⁵ As Hilsberg stated rhetorically in the second article, “[S/he] who thinks up new life and societal values, must also search for new expressive styles.”⁵⁰⁶

In Hilsberg’s final article, he detailed efforts by individuals to set up independent record labels and stores to produce and distribute German punk, people he called the *Macher* or ‘doers.’

⁵⁰³ Alfred Hilsberg, “Neue Deutsche Welle. Aus grauer Städte Mauern,” *Sounds*, Nr.10, October 1979, p.20.

⁵⁰⁴ Hilsberg, “Dicke Titten und Avantgarde,” p.24.

⁵⁰⁵ Hilsberg, “Dicke Titten und Avantgarde,” p.25.

⁵⁰⁶ Hilsberg, “Dicke Titten und Avantgarde,” p.22.

Hilsberg featured alternative record stores like Burkhard Seiler's Zensor-shop in West Berlin that "attempts more through organization to create the New Wave scene," or Klaus Maeck's Rip-Off-store in Hamburg. "In contrast to earlier in the alternative-scene," wrote Hilsberg, "Klaus alias Max alias Ivan Rip-Off sees in Punk a new approach to self-realization. The returns on sale of self-made and imported buttons are meagre as he positions his shop between consumerism and communication. But the humanistic side of business for Klaus is more important: 'Already with the mail order you come into correspondence with people, and in the shop it is much more direct.'" ⁵⁰⁷ The Rock On record store in Düsseldorf was helping to produce Male's first LP *Zensur & Zensur*. ⁵⁰⁸ Franz Bielmeier's new label Rondo was producing singles under the motto "Höre-staune-gute Laune" (Hear-amazingly-good-moods). As Hilsberg explained, "Rondo is not some ordinary firm and doesn't dance to the old tunes but is an ambitious and personal business endeavor....Rondo will not release any old music that is sure to land on its desktop." ⁵⁰⁹ The mixture of DIY activism, individuals committed to experimentalism, and the creation of alternative structures was the key—in Hilsberg's mind—to a flourishing German punk scene.

DIY was a life-style choice linking the punk generation to the 1960s that rejected passive consumption in favour of active creation. The Kreuzberg punk groups Katapult, Auswurf, and Ätztussis were featured as model examples of DIY. Squatters living communally, the Kreuzberg bands practiced and worked together repairing leather-goods: when asked whether they were living 'alternatively,' Katapult responded that, "Not for us, for us it is nothing else imaginable or possible. Any other form of life is no alternative." ⁵¹⁰ Gudrun Gut and Bettina Köster from Mania

⁵⁰⁷ Alfred Hilsberg, "Macher? Macht? Moneten? Aus grauer Städte Mauern," *Sounds*, Nr.12, December 1979, pp.45, 47.

⁵⁰⁸ Hilsberg, "Macher? Macht? Moneten?" p.46.

⁵⁰⁹ Hilsberg, "Macher? Macht? Moneten?" p.46.

⁵¹⁰ Hilsberg, "Neue Deutsche Welle," p.24.

D. and Malaria! ran the second-hand clothing store Eisengrau and practiced in the back.⁵¹¹ Eva Gossling, saxophonist in Mania D., was likewise interested in activism: “I’m involved in order to do something other than simply consume.”⁵¹² As Hilsberg explained, shops like Zensor’s “are critical because they function as communication-centers.”⁵¹³ And the pioneering work that figures such as Carmen Knoebbel at the Ratinger Hof and Martin Kippendorf at SO 36, were crucial in nurturing the alternative lifestyle.⁵¹⁴ And while these lives were difficult, they were nonetheless extolled as authentically grounded in independence because they eschewed the easy commercialism that so often was associated with the 1970s rock’n’roll lifestyle.

As Hilsberg explained, in the UK where the major record labels had quickly signed early punk bands and elevated them to star-status, the same had not happened in the Federal Republic. In West Germany, the music industry had quickly abandoned attempts to commercialize the genre (see Chapter 5), and only now after three years were the first small independent labels and record stores beginning to produce and carry West German punk bands’ records.⁵¹⁵ The lack of interest in the West German punk scene by the music industry, according to Hilsberg, meant that in contrast to the UK scene, FRG punk was more open and not corrupted by the concerns of commercialism: “The musical styles over there [UK] are already marketed at a very high level and thus isolated from the underground. Here, everything is much freer.”⁵¹⁶ What separated the West German music market from the UK or American was the very lack of power of the music industry. Whereas in the US or UK the music industry was much more expansive throughout the entertainment sector, in West Germany, the industry was less able to capitalize quickly on

⁵¹¹ Hilsberg, “Neue Deutsche Welle,” p.24.

⁵¹² Hilsberg, “Dicke Titten und Avantgarde,” p.27.

⁵¹³ Hilsberg, “Macher? Macht? Moneten?” p.46.

⁵¹⁴ Hilsberg, “Macher? Macht? Moneten?” pp.45, 46-47.

⁵¹⁵ Hilsberg, “Macher? Macht? Moneten?” p.45.

⁵¹⁶ Franzen and Penth, *Last Exit*, p.207.

emerging trends and thus German punk music could remain more independent—and according to Hilsberg more authentic.⁵¹⁷ This was important because keeping the scene smaller meant maintaining the credibility of punk ideals. “Large halls are—still—not interested in the new music and neither are they appropriate spaces for most bands to communicate directly with audiences,” argued Hilsberg.⁵¹⁸ The inability of earning a living through music was important because it meant that the bands could maintain total artistic freedom and thus remain authentic. Mittagspause singer Janie Jones hit the nail on the head when he exclaimed, “I cannot imagine, doing that [playing in a band] *full time* because then you have to live from it. All the fun would disappear.”⁵¹⁹

But the efforts by Hilsberg to nationalize the scene did not pass without controversy. On 29 December 1979, the split in the West German punk scene manifested itself physically at the last of the *Zick Zack* festivals—‘Geräusche für die 80er’—once again held in the Markthalle in Hamburg. Again Hilsberg commissioned a mixture of Kunstpunks (Salinos, Liebesgier, Minus Delta t and Tempo) and Hardcores (Coroners, Rotzkotz, Abwärts) in a final attempt to reconcile the two groups—what he later called “a pedagogical concept”—and the result was a disaster.⁵²⁰ Again the Markthalle was packed well beyond capacity and the atmosphere was tense.⁵²¹ As many participants remember, there was a feeling of coming confrontation in the air: “The Festival atmospheres were tense with the possibilities of violence; the feeling hung in the air. I cannot remember either before or after ever experiencing somewhere where the mood was so threatening: everywhere were broken bits of glass, noise, and the way people looked. I thought to

⁵¹⁷ Franzen and Penth, *Last Exit*, pp.215, 218.

⁵¹⁸ Hilsberg, “Macher? Macht? Moneten?” p.46.

⁵¹⁹ Italics in original. Hilsberg, “Neue Deutsche Welle,” p.24.

⁵²⁰ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.210.

⁵²¹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.210; and Michele Avantario, “1977-1987: Von Krawall bis Totenschiff. Punk, New Wave und Hardcore,” in *Läden, Schuppen, Kaschemmen: Eine Hamburger Popkulturgeschichte*, ed., Christoph Twickel (Hamburg: Edition Nautilus, 2003), pp.53-54.

myself, all it would take is some stupid little thing to set everything off.”⁵²² Some like Ale Sexfiend were fearful about the potential for violence: “That was the first time I ever thought: shit, everything could go upside down here. Where could you hide best if the shit hit the fan?”⁵²³ Padeluun likened the ambience to the threat of war or the end of the world.⁵²⁴ Singer Mike Hentz from Minus Delta t brawled with audience members to protest the latter’s passive consumption of punk.⁵²⁵ The organizers begged the bands not to incite the crowd. Klaus Maeck remembered specifically pleading with Hentz not to provoke the crowd, telling him that “We don’t have the situation under control. The hall is so full, and the punks are so wild...”⁵²⁶

The breaking point occurred during the set of West Berlin’s Tempo. Throughout the evening, hardcore fans had been upset with the experimental acts and made their displeasure well known. The Salinos were greeted with whistles and cries of “Kotz” (Vomit).⁵²⁷ The singer for Liebesgier had bottles thrown at her, and the saxophonist was bitten.⁵²⁸ Hentz and Minus Delta t—“they played a song, whose sounds can only be compared to that of sawing through a table,” as one audience member memorably described them—were welcomed with a hail of beer glasses and fists.⁵²⁹ As Tempo began to play, opponents threw potato salad and beer at them and stormed the stage. Attacking the musicians, the angered crowd chased the members of the band out into the Hamburg night.⁵³⁰

Despite the ever-widening chasm between the two sides of the debate, Hilsberg’s articles set the tone for the German punk movement going forward. Nor should the influence of “Aus

⁵²² Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton*, p.154.

⁵²³ Avantario, “1977-1987: Von Krawall bis Totenschiff,” p.53.

⁵²⁴ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.214.

⁵²⁵ Groetz, *Kunst-Musik*, p.168.

⁵²⁶ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.211.

⁵²⁷ *Ants*, Nr.3 (Augsburg: 1980), p.4.

⁵²⁸ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.213.

⁵²⁹ *Ants*, Nr.3 (Augsburg: 1980), p.6.

⁵³⁰ Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.80; and Stark and Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel?* pp.96-97, 176.

grauer Städte Mauern” be understated. Andreas Dorau, the Hamburg singer who would reach national fame with his hit single “Fred vom Jupiter” in 1982 at the age of 15, speaks for many when he said that “At the same time came this article series from Alfred Hilsberg in *Sounds*. That gave me courage. Everyone always said: ‘Everyone can do it. Here is a record, just sing ‘dum-dum-dum’ – and that is great.’ I thought: ‘I can do that too!’”⁵³¹ Hilsberg concluded his series with the claim that punk was going to revolutionize daily life in the Federal Republic: “It doesn’t matter what explains the collapse of one band or the founding of a new one, the closing of one club or the planning for a new shop—Punk/New Wave created a rupture in West Germany. The future of this movement will surely not lie in modest Friday-night parties but in everyday actions, in the small daily revolutions.”⁵³² It was precisely these visionary claims that provoked Bettina Köster to tell Frieder Butzmann before playing their set at ‘Geräusche für die 80er’ that, “Tomorrow is the first day of the 1980s. And it will be our decade.”⁵³³ “Aus grauer Städte Mauern” and the subsequent debates over singing in German and musical experimentation that we are going to explore in the next chapter was to decisively influence the direction of punk and popular music in the coming years.

Conclusions

Punk ideology, then, was a host of impulses that, as it coalesced and unified under the direction of Hilsberg, became contradictory and exclusionary. Whereas once the genre had been based in the politics of authentic difference, the punk movement as it emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s became increasingly defined by conformity as subcultural politics worked to marginalize

⁵³¹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.203.

⁵³² Hilsberg, “Macher? Macht? Moneten?” p.48.

⁵³³ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.209.

certain ideas and practices over others. *Anderssein* was a platform for youth trying to achieve independence and reflected an intense fear of conformity. Youths drawn to punk in the mid-to-late 1970s were thus attracted to a subculture that embraced a multitude of voices and practices, one that was ostensibly open to new ideas and emphasized individuality and creativity, and found expression in fashion and aesthetics, networks and spaces, media and music. Importantly, these diverse ideas created two poles around which punk in the Federal Republic would coalesce, a binary that would come to define the scene in the coming decades. At one pole were those youths drawn to more experimental aspects of the genre. These youths were more adventurous musically, playing with sounds and instruments, and trying to deconstruct rock'n'roll and identity with their experiments. For them, punk was an aesthetic revolution, one that allowed individuals to adopt different personas, so to speak, depending on the situation. For these youths, punk was about reworking one's own identity, a journey of self-exploration and discovery. At the other pole were those youths drawn to the social and political program of punk. The genre became a platform for radical leftist politics, as youths embraced the notion that rock'n'roll meant social revolution, and in this manner, punk was representative of many alternative social formations during the 1970s and 1980s. For these youths, punk was about renovating society, of breaking down barriers, reworking social and cultural relations, and rejecting the easy consumer culture of which West German authorities were so proud. How to constitute authenticity became the key question dividing these two understandings of punk. Moreover, as the music industry became interested in German punk in the early 1980s, the two sides of punk were driven further and further apart under the pressure of commercialization and professionalism.

The violent confrontation at 'Geräusche für die 80er' festival was the opening barrage of a schism that tore the West German punk scene asunder. The lines about what constituted punk

hardened after this event and the fissures opening up about what constituted alterity, authenticity, and punk started to become unbridgeable. As Ziggy XY, singer for der Moderne Mann, lamented in the Hanover fanzine *Heute* after the concert, “If one experienced the intolerances of the kind in Hamburg, where groups were being whistled at and new groups were being marginalized, then you can ask the question, on which side are you on. Already this movement has created so many new groups, that experiment and are difficult to understand, but it can’t only have Pogo-groups. Where is the human right to be tolerated for being different, as it is with the individual?????”⁵³⁴ For many, the concert marked the end of the collective feeling of community. For others, that night in Hamburg confirmed that any attempt to reconcile the two factions was doomed to fail. And for some, ‘Geräusche für die 80er’ already signalled the death of punk.

And yet, even as the subculture ripped itself apart, punks were creating a new basis for German popular music—and by extension, the nation. Alfred Hilsberg, through his powerful position as cultural authority tried to shape West German culture in ways he felt were more democratic, innovative, and modern; lines that would give youths an alternative community. Singing in German sought to free popular music from the legacy of Nazism and contemporary dominance of Anglo-American musical forms. As punk began lyrically to thematize the Federal Republic, the genre began to contribute to larger national debates about Germanness and the future of West German society that we will explore in the subsequent chapters. The drive towards sonic experimentation was another effort that placed German popular music on a footing celebrating diversity and plurality as the goals of modern music-making. Thus, to the fundamental question of how did Germany become democratic after a history of tyranny, dictatorship, and genocide, we can point towards efforts like punk that helped democratize the

⁵³⁴ *Heute* (Hanover: c.1980), cited in *Rock Session 4: Magazin der populären Musik*, eds. Klaus Humann and Carl-Ludwig Reichert (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1980), p.215.

nation by postulating an ideology of cultural production that pointed to a diverse political and social future.

Chapter 4: *Geräusche für die 80er*: Germanness, Sound and the Critique of Everyday Life

“Deutschland, deutschland, alles ist vorbei”: Punk and German Identity

Kebab-dreams in the Wall City
 Turkish culture behind barbed wire
 the new-Izmir is in the GDR
 Atatürk the new general

Nationness for the USSR
 A spy in every fast food joint
 in the Central Committee, agents from Turkey
 Germany, Germany, everything is no more

Kebab-dreams... Nationality...

Kebab-dreams... Nationality...

We are the Turks of tomorrow
 We are the Turks of tomorrow...

Fehlfarben, “Militürk,” *Monarchie und Alltag* (EMI 1C 064-46 150, 1980)

At the heart of Hilsberg’s vision was an emphasis on Do-It-Yourself (DIY) activism that could create and then nourish the institutions necessary for alternative music to be successful in the Federal Republic—structures that we will explore in Chapter 5—and the belief that German popular music should be sung in German not English to provide a more realistic engagement with everyday life that delved deeply into the personal and subjective, a conviction that is the subject of this chapter. At the heart of the matter was punk’s ability to communicate directly and honestly—to speak to youths about the problems of daily life—that sought to distinguish the genre from other popular music forms during this period. Whereas popular music since the 1960s sought to transcend Germanness as we saw, punk attempted to consciously mobilize language as a means of rethinking what it meant to be German in a specific time and place. As Hilsberg told

an interviewer in the early 1980s, “I hold these at times very isolated individual expressive forms to be very important. They are the expressive forms of a very real lack of communication and also an attempt to communicate with others.”⁵³⁵ Singing in their native-tongue about contemporary issues was conceptualized as a means of emancipating German musical production from Anglo-American dominance. Whereas older artists had sung in German for commercial purposes, punks endeavored to create a new musical and cultural entity—German rock’n’roll. To this end, Hilsberg pushed youths towards a more subjective engagement with the contemporary Federal Republic that resulted in a repoliticization of the public sphere and reassertion of the private as political. Singing about everyday concerns enabled young Germans to reframe their past, debate the nature of the present, and vocalize their visions for the future of the Federal Republic—endeavors Hilsberg hoped would reconcile youths to the past, an acceptance necessary to move forward with a national popular music genre without fear of historical demons.

The decision to sing in German in order to critique daily life in the Federal Republic is important historically for several reasons. Punk and the NDW created a musical tradition in the FRG that has subsequently become the basis for alternative music in Germany generally and a number of more specialized genres such as techno, hip-hop, and the Hamburger Schule. Prior to punk, German acts almost universally sang and made music that imitated Anglo-American artists although many translated American songs into German. But only after punk and the NDW did German become an acceptable language for rock’n’roll and the basis for new forms of popular music.⁵³⁶ Whereas Krautrock sought sonic inspiration that was explicitly non-national—outer

⁵³⁵ Günter Franzen and Boris Penth, *Last Exist. Punk: Leben im toten Herz der Städte* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1982), p.206.

⁵³⁶ Hollow Skai, *Alles nur geträumt: Fluch und Segen der Neuen Deutschen Welle* (Innsbruck: Hannibal, 2009), p.65.

space—and Kraftwerk made denationalized music inspired by modern life—autobahns, trains, computers—punk was the first postwar West German popular music genre that strove to marry German lyrics with German sounds. Singing in German necessitated a search for new rhythms, instruments and sounds that could complement new lyrical styles that continually pushed the boundaries of Hilsberg’s emphasis on diversity, driving the genre into new—and contentious—musical soundscapes. German lyrics became a means of discussing contemporary conditions and in so doing, helped challenge dominant discourses and hierarchies in the Federal Republic in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Songs about Nazism, reconstruction, the 1960s and terrorism became a means by which youths could question the past, present, and future of the Federal Republic as the lyrics to “Militürk,” Mittagspause’s famous anthem that opened this chapter above suggest. Punks were instant historians who were historically aware of the moment in which they lived, and their attempts to comment and resolve the contradictions and transformations they were experiencing indicates a remarkable level of self-consciousness within the subculture. The gritty depictions of daily life and playful irony by which punks talked frankly about contemporary society gave cultural legitimacy to musical production in the FRG, and at the same time meant that youths were wrestling with the debris of the past and the clogged possibilities for the future, part and parcel of Germans’ coming to terms with their own history in the 1970s and 1980s.

Scholarly literature on what Germans call *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* is now quite immense. Until the 1980s, work on how the postwar German states dealt with the Nazi past mostly revolved around what the Mitscherlichs’ famously called ‘the inability to mourn’—namely, German efforts to avoid dealing with the nation’s role in the Holocaust in the interests of postwar reconstruction.⁵³⁷ Patchy de-nazification efforts by the occupying powers, and the

⁵³⁷ Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich, *The Inability to Mourn: Principles of Collective Behavior* (New York: Grove Press, 1975).

United States' quick rehabilitation of West Germany in the interests of the emerging Cold War confrontation with the communist East only seemed to confirm the belief that silence characterized how Germans evaded their genocidal past.⁵³⁸ Only recently has scholarly literature disabused the notion that Germans avoided the past, as numerous studies now show how Germans dealt with Nazism in various ways during the 1940s and 1950s and how the past came to influence politics, foreign policy, social and gender policy, cultural endeavours, and other concerns.⁵³⁹ The 1960s generational revolt was part of an effort by youths to come to terms with their elders' contribution to Nazism and silence afterwards. Beginning in the 1960s, several high-profile trials against former Nazis in West German courts—the 1963-1965 Auschwitz Trial being especially important for '68ers—were critical in fostering dialogue about the Nazi past as scholars have shown.⁵⁴⁰ In the 1970s and 1980s, several large media events—most notably the American television series *Holocaust* (1978) but also Edgar Reiz's sprawling *Heimat* film

⁵³⁸ See Norbert Frei, *Adenauer's Germany and the Nazi Past: The Politics of Amnesty and Integration*, trans. by Joel Golb (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

⁵³⁹ In the English language alone, this literature grows continuously. See Toby Thacker, *Music after Hitler, 1945-1955* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007); Amy C. Beal, *New Music, New Allies: American Experimental Music in West Germany from the Zero Hour to Reunification* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Elizabeth Janik, *Recomposing German Music: Politics and Musical Tradition in Cold War Berlin* (Boston: Brill, 2005); Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Frank Biess, *Homecomings: Returning POWs and the Legacies of Defeat in Postwar Germany* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006); David Monod, *German Music, Denazification, & the Americans, 1945-1953* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Heide Fehrenbach, *Race after Hitler: Black Occupation Children in Postwar Germany and America* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005); Maria Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins: the German-American encounter in 1950s West Germany* (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Elizabeth Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make? Women and Marital Status in Nazi and Postwar Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1997); Heide Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany: Reconstructing National Identity after Hitler* (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995); and Robert G. Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood: Women and the Family in the Politics of Postwar West Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

⁵⁴⁰ See Hans Kundnani, *Utopia or Auschwitz: Germany's 1968 Generation and the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Devin O. Pendas, *The Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial, 1963-1965: Genocide, History and the Limits of the Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Rebecca Wittmann, *Beyond Justice: The Auschwitz Trial* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

(1984)—likewise prompted more engaged discussion about the Nazi past.⁵⁴¹ Indeed, scholars have argued that in the aftermath of the Third Reich, the national narrative was moribund and some have even go so far as to suggest that ‘Germans,’ especially after the Eastern Treaties in the 1970s, increasingly began to see themselves as ‘Europeans’ rather than as national subjects.⁵⁴²

The history of punk and the NDW challenge these assumptions. Already in the late 1970s we can see the emergence of a distinctly national popular music culture in punk and the NDW, a development suggesting that German youths were beginning to posit a national identity based not in ethnicity or historical traditions, but in diversity and culture that had begun already in the 1970s as a reaction to the New Left and the experience of the 1960s. Usually, the renewed engagement with Germanness in the 1980s is associated with the coming to power of Helmut Kohl and the conservative Christian Democrats in 1982-1983. But in punk we have ostensible progressives engaging in a similar project well before Ernst Nolte asked whether ‘the past, that will not pass’ should pass, suggesting that a re-emerging German national identity in the late 1970s and early 1980s is neither Left nor Right but perhaps post-1960s.⁵⁴³ Whereas conservatives sought to base their patriotic politics in an over-coming of the past while liberals fearfully tried to eradicate any hint of nationalism from citizenship in the Federal Republic, Hilsberg and punks argued that the continued existence of the past in the present was a necessary

⁵⁴¹ See Alon Confino, “Edgar Reitz’s *Heimat* and German Nationhood: Film, Memory, and Understandings of the Past,” in *German History*, Vol.16, Nr.2 (1998), pp.185-208; and Anton Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), esp. chapter 6.

⁵⁴² See Konrad H. Jarausch and Michael Geyer, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003); and Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe’s Name: Germany and the Divided Continent* (New York: Random House, 1993).

⁵⁴³ See Ernst Nolte, “The Past That Will Not Pass: A Speech That Could Be Written but Not Delivered,” in *Forever in the Shadow of Hitler?: Original Documents of the Historikerstreit, the Controversy Concerning the Singularity of the Holocaust*, trans. James Knowlton and Truett Cates (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1993).

precondition for future German national distinctiveness and that popular culture was the means to reconcile the divisive identity politics.

Punk became a vehicle by which young individuals began to envision a new German identity distinct from American hegemony and cultural dependence, influenced by the 1960s but crucially divorced from its dogmatism and utopianism, and rooted in an ironic celebration of individuality and difference. Critically, punks sought to incorporate Nazism, terrorism and other controversial subject matter into their lyrical lexicon as a means of ‘normalizing’ the past and present, an acceptance that would permit a national popular music culture in the future. While conservatives sought to draw a line in the historical sand, punks argued that German history was an essential part of daily life in the Federal Republic in the present, and through these efforts we can perhaps here begin to speak of a post-Auschwitz German identity that recognized the belatedness of birth but also the constant shadowy presence of the past. After the bitter clash between ’68ers and their parents, young Germans were able to begin re-working Germanness without the emotional baggage of their elders, and punk gives us a window into the everyday world of youths engaging in these efforts. Locating this new Germanness in diversity and experimentation, punks tried to help Germans feel comfortable—in often very uncomfortable ways—with the idea of difference. While scholars have begun to explore how the margins have begun to rework the center—especially the political, social, and cultural presence of Turkish migrants to West Germany as Gastarbeiter (guest workers)—much more work is needed.⁵⁴⁴ By introducing new lyrics, instruments, sounds and rhythms to rock’n’roll, punk paved the way towards the acceptance of difference as the basis in popular music and—by extension—German

⁵⁴⁴ Ruth Mandel, *Cosmopolitan Anxieties: Turkish Challenges to Citizenship and Belonging in Germany* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2008); Rita Chin, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); and Neil Gregor, Nils Roemer, and Mark Roseman, eds. *German History from the Margins* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006).

culture and society more generally. And by helping youths create an indigenous popular music, Hilsberg and others helped facilitate young Germans coming to terms with their own nationality. What emerged was a more robust national identity, one that was experimental and diverse, that celebrated different, but was unmistakably German.

“Schwarz, Rot, Gold”: Language and the Critique of Everyday Life

On horseback, the Federal Vulture in his robes
The master riders are in charge again

Black – the skies of our future
Red – the soil of our past
Gold – the teeth of our fathers

Jet pilots suddenly become weak in the hips
Master rider waves his toy gun in the air

Black – the skies of our future
Red – the soil of our past
Gold – the teeth of our fathers

Someone will win with the nation’s favourite TV uncle
Master rider, the butler brings the raincoat in

Black – the skies of our future
Red – the soil of our past
Gold – the teeth of our fathers

Mittagspause, “Herrenreiter,” *Herrenreiter* (Rondo 02, 1979)

The belief that German bands should sing in German to engage more directly and honestly with their audiences about difficult subject matter was revolutionary. Prior to punk, West German popular music genres, emphasized imitation, copying Anglo-American rock’n’roll and even going so far as to translate songs into German or even sing in English. What was different about punk was the single-mindedness of the effort to use German-language lyrics and the rhetoric of

newness that accompanied these efforts. According to Einstürzende Neubauten's percussionist Axel Dill, German as a language of rock'n'roll was unthinkable in the 1970s: "Back then it [German] sounded crazy. The German language was accepted as completely unmusical."⁵⁴⁵ Punks cast themselves as innovators. It was helpful that pathbreakers such as Udo Lindenberg's use of German was so obviously a calculated commercial endeavor or that Krautrock pioneers such as Can and later Kraftwerk de-emphasized lyrics in favor of meandering sonic soundscapes. Thus, we want to be careful about the rhetorical accompanying punk pursuits into the unknown while remaining aware that they themselves understood themselves as such.

But the detailed engagement with contemporary issues of everyday life in the Federal Republic suddenly authorized innumerable new expressionistic vistas. According to D.A.F. and later Fehlfarben bassist Michael Kemner, Peter Hein was more responsible than any for this shift: "[b]ack then, it was understood that you absolutely could not sing in German because it sounded too embarrassing. But Peter simply turned his brain off. He simply spit everything out without thinking. Without stop: 'Did that work?' And it worked."⁵⁴⁶ And the shift towards a more subjective understanding of the realities of daily life had influence well beyond popular music. According to the author Peter Glaser, in his search for a more realistic prose style in the early 1980s that would come to define his later bestsellers such as *Der große Hirnriss*, the first time he heard *Mittagspause*, "my heart started pounding." "I had the need for clarity," he continued, "I wanted to narrate reality. But I also wanted it to be beautiful. I did not want fall back into pessimism."⁵⁴⁷ By emphasizing the personal as political, and the expressive as German, punk opened the door for popular music to become a vehicle for national identity. And critically,

⁵⁴⁵ Jürgen Teipel, *Verschwende Deine Jugend: Ein Doku-Roman über den deutschen Punk und New Wave* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001), p.62.

⁵⁴⁶ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.258.

⁵⁴⁷ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.262. See Richard McCormick, *Politics of the Self: Feminism and the Postmodern in West German Literature and Film* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

by detailing the everyday world of West Germany in the late 1970s—its trials and tribulations, its beauties and ugliness—punk lent its self-proclaimed authenticity and credibility to German as a language of rock’n’roll expression that has never since been questioned.

While influenced by earlier German political acts such as *Ton Steine Scherben* and the folk movement, what separated punk from earlier German popular music genres in the postwar period was its mindful emphasis on German-language lyrics and contents, and—as we will see in the next section—German sounds. These developments had attracted Hilsberg to the genre in the first place, and he immediately felt that they set punk off from the earlier Anglo-American incarnations because German-language lyrics enabled youths to confront the daily tribulations of their lives in a manner that was less alienating, and more personal and authentic. This subjective emphasis linked punk to the other major cultural trends in the 1970s such as the New German Cinema for example that had sought to reinsert the subjective into film as a means of returning the personal to the political.⁵⁴⁸ Critically, the language shift was intended as a means of emancipating German cultural productions from the international hegemony of Anglo-American rock’n’roll. The transition to German-language lyrics would be difficult as it would demand a confrontation with the problematic German past but it had the potential to re-work Germanness from the ground up and thus allow youths to become much more confident with their nation and national belonging.

Hilsberg did not initiate the move towards German-language lyrics and contents, but due to his position of power at *Sounds*, he was able to publicize singing in German as an ideological imperative and was thus central in promoting and supporting the drive towards nationalization. Already in 1978, as we have seen, bands in the Düsseldorf region such as *Mittagspause*, *Male*, and *S.Y.P.H.* had begun to sing in German. At first, the decision to sing in German was banal:

⁵⁴⁸ See McCormick, *Politics of the Self*.

Janie Jones has recounted how he and Monroe were eating lunch when they decided to write some lyrics; the television happened to be on, and so ‘Testbild’ was born.⁵⁴⁹ Male, in an interview for the Hamburg-fanzine *Rock Musik* has likewise claimed that they began singing in German because “in the first place, we were mainly playing in front of Germans. And nobody understood our earlier lyrics.”⁵⁵⁰ Quickly, however, Male, Mittagspause, and others began to recognize that to write lyrics in German was a political act. As S.Y.P.H. and later Fehlfarben guitarist Thomas Schwebel has claimed, “from the very beginning it was clear that it [our music] should be in German. We didn’t think twice about it. It should be genuine and authentic.”⁵⁵¹ For Schwebel and others, to imitate Anglo-American songs was the height of inauthenticity since their lyrics addressed difficult political subject matter that needed to be understood unequivocally by their audiences. Moreover, there was an explicit understanding that these efforts were historic. As Male singer Jürgen Engler put it, “in the winter of ’77/’78 we thought: we have to write German lyrics. And with German lyrics, so came also a new stylistic development.”⁵⁵² As early German punk bands began writing German lyrics and fashioning new rhythms and sounds to accompany their verses, punk became a means by which youths could reconcile themselves to the Federal Republic and to its history.

Many of the bands writing German lyrics felt that singing in their native tongue would help emancipate German popular music from Anglo-American dominance and as such, became a national endeavor. D.A.F., for example, after their move to the UK in 1979 in the search of better recording possibilities, were expressly national in the pursuit of what they called ‘German music.’ As singer Gabi Lopez-Delgado explained to Hilsberg in *Sounds*: “The DAF is a German

⁵⁴⁹ Alfred Hilsberg, “Neue Deutsche Welle. Aus grauer Städte Mauern,” *Sounds*, Nr.10, October 1979, p.23.

⁵⁵⁰ “Das Male-Interview,” in *Rock Session 4: Magazin der populären Musik*, eds., Klaus Humann und Carl-Ludwig Reichert (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1980), p.190.

⁵⁵¹ Teipel, *Verschwenke*, p.90.

⁵⁵² *Rock Musik*, Nr.4 (Hamburg: 1979), p.4.

band. That means that we are consciously standing-up against the English Pop-Imperialism laws that state pop groups should talk in English, sing in English, and only imitate English bands. We're using every musical cliché to negotiate new musical and lyrical contents.”⁵⁵³ Robert Gorl, D.A.F.'s percussionist and programmer, went even further in linking German punk to the overthrow of American dominance with their burgeoning cultural revolution. As he has subsequently stated: “It was important that it was in German—that such progressive music could be made in German. The British and Americans had until then a monopoly on modern music. And German youths had no other choice than to listen to English. We were the crack in the dominance.”⁵⁵⁴ While other punk bands were not as self-consciously German in their orientation as D.A.F., they nonetheless shared in these national impulses.

The renewed sense of awareness of and desire for a new German popular music identity clearly set the subculture off from the '68ers who had explicitly rejected any hint of Germanness in their generational struggle. As Moritz Reichelt from *der Plan* affirms, the 1960s generation would not countenance any German lyrics since they associated these with Nazism: “From the very beginning German was considered embarrassing. Punk was the first time that I began to work with German music.”⁵⁵⁵ Likewise, fellow *der Plan* member Ralf Dorper recalled that at this time, “Of course, DAF had lyrics such as ‘The happy combat boots marched over Poland.’ And with all these things at this time it was important that you did it in German. It was quite consciously a German music movement.”⁵⁵⁶ But was the decision to sing in German nationalistic? In a musical manifesto detailing the history of the West Berlin band *Mekanik Destruktiv Komandöh*, lead singer Volker Hauptvogel asked “What did we have to do with

⁵⁵³ Alfred Hilsberg, “Punk Emigration,” *Sounds*, Nr.11, November 1979, p.7.

⁵⁵⁴ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.177.

⁵⁵⁵ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.85.

⁵⁵⁶ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.177.

those horrifying Nazi-criminals?” He insightfully answered, “In reality NOTHING and yet EVERYTHING! WE were ALL born in POST-war Germany... We, the naked, the BLANK GENERATION, we have NOTHING and yet EVERYTHING to do with fascism! We have enough to do, to free ourselves from this stranglehold. We want to finally find ourselves, TO FIND OURSELVES!”⁵⁵⁷ At stake in the shift to German lyrics was the acceptance of the past, a recognition that would enable the creation of an authentic German cultural community around which Germans could take pride: in essence, punk was about the acceptance of current German culture and identity, complete with its contentious history, and the emancipation that could flow from this reconciliation.

While I do not want to delve too deeply into analyzing the lyrics of German punk—an endeavor requiring far too much space and one that Barbara Hornberger has recently done expertly⁵⁵⁸—the vocal contributions of early German punk path-breakers such as S.Y.P.H., Male, and Mittagspause can helpfully be tied into what scholars have called a ‘new subjectivity’ in the arts that emerged globally during the 1960s and 1970s that called for a renewed emphasis on the personal as political.⁵⁵⁹ Writing lyrics about Germany was part of this growing trend as punks began singing to audiences about the present-day maladies and beauties of the Federal Republic. Whereas singers could earlier ‘hide’ behind English, once bands began singing in German, as Straßenjungs singer Nils Selzer put it, “Somehow, you are standing there naked: and everyone

⁵⁵⁷ Volker Hauptvogel and Dietmar Kirves, *Die Verweigerer. Politik wird Musik. Das Mekanik Destruktiv Komandöh im politischen Taumel Berlins* (Berlin: Karin Kramer Verlag, 1983), pp.49, 51.

⁵⁵⁸ See Barbara Hornberger, *Geschichte wird gemacht. Die Neue Deutsche Welle. Eine Epoche deutscher Popmusik* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2011).

⁵⁵⁹ On Germany, see Andreas Kühn, *Stalins Enkel, Maos Söhne. Die Lebenswelt der K-Gruppen in der Bundesrepublik der 70er Jahre* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2005); Gerd Koenen, *Das rote Jahrzehnt. Unsere kleine deutsche Kulturrevolution 1967-1977* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2001); von Dirke, “All Power to the Imagination!”; McCormick, *Politics of the Self*; and the essays collected in *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte, ‘Die Siebzigerjahre. Gesellschaftliche Entwicklungen in Deutschland,’* Vol. 44 (2004). For a comparison with America, see Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). For a global comparison, see Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958-c.1974* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

understands every word you sing.”⁵⁶⁰ But this nakedness also meant that one could connect with audiences on a level that previously had been lacking, a naturalness that tied listeners much more deeply to the music. Since punk prided itself on its ability to communicate directly with listeners to break down the walls between audiences and musicians that rock’n’roll traditionally erected, the lyrical switch was a further step towards a more authentic German cultural product in the minds of youths. Whereas a band singing in English could only count on a fraction of the audience being able to understand what they were saying, now German-singing acts would guarantee that their meaning would not be lost in translation. And the genre was different from the Agit-Prop music of Leftist bands like Ton Steine Scherben or Floh de Cologne because instead of singing at the audience and proscribing cure-alls for a sick society, punk bands instead rooted their lyrics in personal experiences that tried to express how they were caught in a complicated social world, how they felt about this immersion, and how audiences could reflect upon these dilemmas: fundamentally, punk moved lyrics away from judgement towards comprehension and understanding. Moreover, singing in German meant for punks that the genre was no longer hypocritical or contradictory. As Stefan Schwaab, guitarist from Male, put it, “...it was a paradox, we were singing about our [German] environment but in English.”⁵⁶¹

The thematic content of most early punk songs was drawn almost exclusively from daily life reflecting the concerns and perspectives of the lyricist. At a time when most German popular music was unconcerned with the everyday rhythms of life in West Germany, early punk bands sang very much about what it was like to live in the Federal Republic during the 1970s: Male put it simply, “we are not only singing for Germans but also about Germany” (über Deutschland).⁵⁶²

⁵⁶⁰ Jürgen Stark and Michael Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel? Punk – New Wave – Neue Welle* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Freie Gesellschaft, 1981), p.218.

⁵⁶¹ *Rock Musik*, Nr.4 (Hamburg: 1979), p.4.

⁵⁶² *Rock Musik*, Nr.4 (Hamburg: 1979), p.4.

In the 1970s, other German genres were lyrically as far away from the Federal Republic as could be: either in some mythic and idealized Bavarian mountain range with Schlager; or in outer space with Krautrock. Writing about Male, Hilsberg claimed that they wrote lyrics “about the big city and ‘high politics’,” concerns that “stemmed from their experiential attitude,” while the other early punk bands likewise tried to come to terms politically with their personal lives and life in the Federal Republic.⁵⁶³ Hilsberg felt that punk could become a communicative-vehicle by which the ills affecting daily life exposed by the ’68ers—authoritarian structures, utilitarian relationships, gender inequalities, social disparities, increasing capitalist competition, continuity with the Nazi past, and so on—could be overcome. As Hornberger insightfully suggests, German reliance on English in their popular music for thirty years had rendered the nation “voiceless” in attempts to address national issues.⁵⁶⁴ Singing in German was thus an effort to overcome the loss of voice in German popular music; and the concurrent belief that individuals could communicate more honestly in German became central to punk’s lyrical authenticity.

But what did it mean to sing “über Deutschland”? In the first place, this meant engaging directly with the past—not only Nazi but also 1968—in a way that earlier German music genres had not. Nowhere is this clearer than in Mittagspause’s “Herrenreiter” whose lyrics opened this section. As Hornberger has extensively analyzed, “Herrenreiter” criticized a conservative and smug nation of provincials (*ostfriesennerz*) sitting in front of the television Saturday nights watching their “favourite television uncle” (*Lieblingsfernsehonkel*).⁵⁶⁵ And while this Frankfurt

⁵⁶³ Alfred Hilsberg, “Rodenkirchen is burning – Krautpunk,” *Sounds*, Nr.3, March 1978, p.22.

⁵⁶⁴ Barbara Hornberger, “Die Neue Deutsche Welle. Anfang deutschsprachiger Popmusik,” in *Das Populäre in der Musik der 20. Jahrhunderts. Wesenszüge und Erscheinungsformen*, eds., Claudia Bullerjahn und Hans-Joachim Erwe (Hildesheim, Zürich and New York: Olms, 2001), p.131.

⁵⁶⁵ *Bundesgeier* means literally ‘Federal Vulture’ and is a Leftist term that refers to the official animal symbol of the Federal Republic. *Ostfriesennerz* is the name for a type of raincoat popular in the 1970s and 1980s, but here is a reference to provincial conservative philistines, the enemies of punk. *Lieblingsfernsehonkel* refers to Hans Joachim Kulenkampff, moderator of the television series *Einer wird gewinnen* that was broadcast every Saturday night. For a more detailed analysis of the song see Hornberger, *Geschichte wird gemacht*, pp.108-113.

School / culture-industry / opiate-of the-masses-type argument is crude, the powerful chorus accurately portrayed how many young Germans were looking at their bloody national past (“Red – The soil of the past”), their self-satisfied and materialistic parents in the present, content to soak up the spoils of the Wirtschaftswunder (“Gold – The teeth of our fathers”) without a care for the darkening future of their children (“Black – The skies of our future”). The colors in the chorus—red, gold, black—were those of the German national flag, indicating that Hein and Mittagspause understood the necessity of confronting these demons for the good of the nation. According to Xao Seffcheque, *Sounds* author and musician, “Herrenreiter” was ground-breaking in playing with what it meant to be German, and in its attempt to develop a German sound and German lyrics through its engagement with the past and present: “The first time that music influenced me that much was when I heard “Herrenreiter.” I got goosebumps. There was a quality to this music that I did not get from other rock’n’roll genres. It was fascinating—and without being in some manner Anglo-American. And this simple chorus. At first, it was not consciously understood by them [the band]—and me neither—but they had fundamentally redefined the German flag.”⁵⁶⁶ These songs became part of larger German debates in the late 1970s and early 1980s about the nature of the past to the present, the relationship between the present and the 1960s, and the outlook for the future, as punks worked towards severing the links of the present to the Nazi past by normalizing German history.

The shift to more expressive lyrics was also essential in attracting female performers who felt they could communicate their concerns much more freely in punk. For example, Östro 430, a Düsseldorf group composed of four women, sang in their song “Sexueller Notstand” (‘Sexual Emergency’) about their frustrations concerning intimate relations with men: “With guys today nothing much is going on / every time the same embarrassment / they fuck like little rabbits / but

⁵⁶⁶ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.199.

then immediately falling asleep after orgasm.” Instead of tolerating such a situation, the singer Martina Weith urged women to “pin a couple of pornographic images on the wall” and “use your own hand.” Another example in this regard was “Hau ab du stinkst!” (“Take off, you stink!”) by the Hanover band Hans-a-plast, a mix of three men and three women. In the first verse, vocalist Annette Benjamin sings of her sexual desires: “Walking through the streets / and getting so hot and bothered / because of all the cool guys / that I see.” But later, after taking a gentleman home with her, she receives quite the shock: “Then, when the light is turned on / before me stands a fat ass / with pomade in his hair / and a smug look on his face.” In the chorus, however, Benjamin quickly reasserts her independence by screaming at him, “Take off, you stink!” Crucially, these bands were writing and singing songs in German which connected the bands and their themes more intimately with their audiences. These examples can be extended to numerous others—“Menstruation Blues” by Malaria!, or “Zu oft im Lipstick” (Too often in Lipstick) by das Deutsche Froilleinwunder—and indicate how punk enabled women to introduce themes into the public sphere—especially those related directly to them such as in the cases above, sexual relations—where they could be debated in ways that did not romanticize love, part and parcel of punk’s efforts at painting a more realistic picture of daily life. In so doing, the turn to the subjective helped punks break down barriers between the public and the private.

And this expressiveness was important because punk also became a means of redefining rock’n’roll on explicitly feminine terms. Mania D. from West Berlin is a good example. Bettina Köster, the keyboard player, found that working in an all-female band was a lot “simpler” than with men because they understood one another and what they wanted to do which facilitated making music.⁵⁶⁷ In part this had to do with rock’n’roll culture as a whole. Speaking about the music industry, Köster’s band-mate Gudrun Gut has said, “In many environments, you don’t feel

⁵⁶⁷ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.195.

like a woman. And the music business is very un-feminine. Without question, it was masculine.” But female punk bands sought to change this. “A woman brings a different aspect to the music,” Gut continued, “If there is a woman in the band then the band is different. The sound is different.”⁵⁶⁸ Köster has drawn attention to the fact that Mania D. sought to make music in a wholly different fashion: “We worked in quite a different manner than male punk bands. Unlike them, who said ‘first comes this chord, and then this next one’ we instead said ‘now we have this feeling, and then this feeling needs to come next.’”⁵⁶⁹ And while we perhaps do not want to over-generalize about how other punk bands wrote songs, what is important here is how these women were explicitly conceptualizing their musical production in gendered terms. And Gut again points out how the personal was essential in the creation of Mania D. songs: “We started with: what is for us really important? And it was the big feelings: love, hurt, separation.”⁵⁷⁰

Critically, to sing “über Deutschland” meant grappling with the dangers of a technology-driven environment, and the ennui that stemmed from experiencing life in the modern urban present that links punk with earlier German traditions such as the ‘New Objectivity’ and the coolness of Weimar modernism.⁵⁷¹ The lyrics of Male offer a good example of how the early punk bands sought to describe their surroundings. Male’s ode to the dangers of the modern life in “Risikofaktor 1:X” came about while watching a woman get her hair caught in an escalator: “Escalator Escalator, Iron and Steel / Escalator Escalator, pointlessly brutal / Blast furnace Blast furnace, heat and ash / Blast furnace Blast furnace, sweat and blood / risk factor 1:X.”⁵⁷² As they explained in an early interview, “in the main, we try to write and describe things that bug us, that

⁵⁶⁸ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.197.

⁵⁶⁹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.233.

⁵⁷⁰ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.233.

⁵⁷¹ Helmut Lethen, *Cool Conduct: The Culture of Distance in Weimar Germany*, trans. by Don Reneau (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); and Janet Ward, *Weimar Surfaces: Urban Visual Culture in 1920s Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

⁵⁷² See Hilsberg, “Neue Deutsche Welle,” p.23.

everyday we see or do.”⁵⁷³ In other songs, Male sought to detail both the banality and horrors of the modern world. “Ampelstadt” (traffic light city) sums up the city-street scene succinctly: “radial tyres / roadway stripes / neon light and / wearing seatbelts / green – Go / yellow – Run / red – Stay / green – Go / yellow – Run / red – Dead.” But what separated Male and other punk bands lyrically from the 1960s generation was their refusal to condemn the modern world and in fact to celebrate it. As der Plan was to put it programmatically in their LP *Geri Reig* (1980), “The world is bad, but life is beautiful.” As the S.Y.P.H. song “Zurück zum Beton” explored in the prior chapter suggests, the utopianism of the hippies was being replaced by a more realist outlook that coupled an acceptance of daily life—warts and all—with a desire to sample its diverse fare.

Singing “über Deutschland” meant dealing with the causes of the Tendenzwende: namely, the collapse of the student movement and APO, and the onset of terrorism. Punk lyrics sought to engage with contemporary events by vocalizing a specifically German everyday world of the late 1970s, especially the consequences of the terroristic violence and the ‘German Autumn.’ It is probably no coincidence that punk and the ‘German Autumn’ took hold of West Germany at the exact same time: the fear and paranoia produced by the violence of the RAF and the reaction by the state in its hunt for terrorists was a decisive factor in driving youths towards *Anderssein* as we saw. Some bands were sympathetic to the RAF and their ideals (though not their methods), S.Y.P.H. being the most famous case.⁵⁷⁴ The song “Klammheimlich” (later changed to “Pure Freude”) was an explicit reference to the Buback-Nachruf, a pamphlet in which

⁵⁷³ *Rock Musik*, Nr.4 (Hamburg: 1979), p.7.

⁵⁷⁴ According to Harry Rag, “We only wore those RAF-badges that everyone had because Joe Strummer wore one. And for this reason, they didn’t have anything to do with Baader-Meinhof. Only in the middle of the ‘German Autumn’ did they have a completely different effect. Many pensioners thought because of them that we were terrorists.” Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.51. And further: “[Punk and terrorism] was a parallel development. 1977 was also the high-point of the RAF – the same year that punk broke out here [in West Germany]. And because of this, we all sympathized with the RAF. At least, their ideals. That doesn’t mean that we thought murder was good. But we certainly didn’t find an employer’s president [Arbeitgeberpräsidenten] good either.” Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.74.

the Göttinger Mescalero celebrated his “clandestine pleasure” (klammheimlich freude) in the assassination of Attorney General Siegfried Buback by the RAF in 1977.⁵⁷⁵ Especially provocative were the photos used for the S.Y.P.H. “Viel Liebe, viel Ehr” EP (1979). The front cover featured a picture of the baby carriage used by members of the RAF to kidnap Hans-Martin Schleyer, while the back cover featured an undercover snapshot of Christian Klar, the most sought after RAF terrorist in the late 1970s. According to singer Harry Rag, the provocation was “typical punk.”⁵⁷⁶

The response to the cover and song indicates the national fear of association with the RAF that gripped the Federal Republic at the time. After spending a month trying to find a printer to produce the album sleeve without success (even though the pictures came from *Stern* and had appeared in numerous magazines and newspapers at the time), S.Y.P.H. spent a week photocopying the two sheets and stapling it together themselves.⁵⁷⁷ While originally the album was supposed to read a ‘Christian-na-klar-Produktion,’ the band at the last moment changed it to ‘xxxxxxxx-na-klar-Produktion’ and guitarist Uwe Jahnke got cold feet and had his last name blacked out from the back cover for fear of having his name associated with the terrorist. Harry Rag has stated that the decision to dedicate the album—somewhat in contradiction given the front and back covers—to Rudi Dutschke, the APO leader who was a friend of his parents, was ironic commentary on the panic evident in West Germany especially in the conservative media: “Completely absurd! But back then, everything was thrown into one pot. The general meaning was: Dutschke was the step-father of everything.”⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁵ The Göttinger Mescalero was the pseudonym of a student, and the tract was published in the Göttingen student newspaper the *Göttiner Nachrichten* on 25 April 1977. See also Cyrus Shahan, *Punk Poetics and West German Literature of the Eighties* (Dissertation: University of North Carolina, 2008).

⁵⁷⁶ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.189.

⁵⁷⁷ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.190.

⁵⁷⁸ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.191.

While most punks did not go as far as S.Y.P.H. (even if they did toy with a revolutionary chic aesthetic that was common in punk), throughout the lyrics of Male, Mittagspause, and others, paranoia and suspicion as a constant condition of life in the Federal Republic during the late 1970s and early 1980s are themes that continually crop up in punk songs.⁵⁷⁹ In “Ernstfall” (Emergency) Hein talks about how a state of emergency had become the normal conditions of life in West Germany: “The real thing, it is so far gone / The real thing, normal conditions for a long time.” Like the Düsseldorf bands, die Abwärts from Hamburg, in their run-away hit single “Computerstaat” (1979), depicted a society running off the rails:

Monday there is a knock on the door
 And Arafat stands there beside you
 Tuesday is a test-alarm
 Paranoia in the streetcar
 Wednesday is the war very cold
 Brezhnev’s waiting in a public bathing pool

Thursday, you already know it
 A thousand agents in the sewers
 Friday belongs to the Mafia
 Ravioli comes from Florida
 Saturday evening, lunatic asylum
 The KGB is in German forests
 Sunday, everything is dead
 In the gulf of Mallorca, the world war threatens

Stalingrad, Stalingrad
 Germany, Catastrophic-state

We live in a Computer-state (x3)

As lyricist Frank Z has subsequently stated, “the [social and political] climate was obviously the inspiration behind ‘Computerstaat.’ There was just such a general hysteria. And not only against the RAF. *Bild* stirred up the people against the punks...there was a real pogrom-atmosphere.”⁵⁸⁰

The results, some of the punk bands argued, was a nation on the brink of civil war as Male’s

⁵⁷⁹ See Shahan, *Punk Poetics*.

⁵⁸⁰ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.217

early song “Großeinsatz” (Large-scale Operation) about revolution in the city attests: “Crowd in the pedestrian precinct / Water canon in front of the supermarket / Guerrilla warfare behind the shop counter / large-scale operation after closing time / barricades and mine fields / the war zone lights up the old city-center.”

Like Male, the lyrics of *Mittagspause* indicate the strains that the ‘German Autumn’ was having on daily life in the Federal Republic. In their song “Der lange Weg nach Derendorf” (The long road to Derendorf), the search for terrorists and the psychological toll brought about by a climate of fear and suspicion throughout the citizenry of the Federal Republic is dramatically rendered:

They were hunted throughout the whole Republic
Every hen-pecked husband explains the war to them

It was a long road to Derendorf
And it is not yet at an end even if many hope so

They are only a handful and they know where to go
There even James Bond would have made little sense

It was a long road to Derendorf
And it is not yet at an end even if many hope so

Earlobes increased and Adam’s apples’ stuck out
A step too far and you will be cut down

It was a long road to Derendorf
And it is not yet at an end even if many hope so⁵⁸¹

However, despite his commentary on the consequences of terrorism for the mood of the nation, Peter Hein nonetheless subtly distanced *Mittagspause* from Male’s revolutionary rhetoric as the song “Innenstadtfront” (Inner-city Front) testifies to: “Chaos on the city margins / but not Bilk

⁵⁸¹ The song is a commentary on the death of RAF member Willy-Peter Stoll, who was shot to death while drinking a beer in a Chinese restaurant in the Düsseldorf suburb of Derendorf on 6 September 1978. Butz Peters, *Tödlicher Irrtum. Die Geschichte der RAF* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2004), pp.486-487.

and Derendorf / the situation is calm / in the inner-city front.” As Hein revealed elsewhere, “I have never seen a tank or a barricade in the old city center.”⁵⁸²

More than anything, the lyrics of the early German punk bands pointed to the incredible paranoia, fear, and conservative conformity that *Anderssein* was in part rebelling against in West Germany in the 1970s. In Mittagspause’s anthem “Militürk,” later released as “Kebabtraum” by D.A.F. and one of the most recognizable songs from the period, Peter Hein grotesquely assumes the role of a conspiracy theorist critical of West German immigration policies and the growing Turkish population in West Berlin, a clear reference to *Bild* and criticism of foreigners in the Federal Republic.⁵⁸³ Hein further amplifies these xenophobic thoughts with the suggestion that immigrants were somehow aligned with the communist East, and that their invasion of the FRG was destroying or polluting Germanness: “Kebab-dreams in the Wall City / Turkish culture behind barbed wire / the new-Izmir is in the GDR / Atatürk the new general / grain for the USSR / in every hot dog stand a spy / in the central committee, agents from Turkey.” Fearful that Germans are being inundated by an alliance of collective Right-wing fears—Turks, East German spies—the paranoia of the speaker is palpable, as is the result of such an invasion through Hein’s inventive reworking of the German national anthem: “Deutschland, Deutschland, alles ist vorbei” (“Germany, Germany, everything is no more”).⁵⁸⁴ As the song fades to close, a line is softly repeated—“Wir sind die Türken von Morgen” (We are the Turks of tomorrow)—pointing to perhaps the greatest consequence of conservative hysteria for punks and alternatives that remained at the margins of society, the belief that they might be next victims, especially potent in a nation with a history of genocidal policies. In his review of Mittagspause’s self-titled double

⁵⁸² *Rock Musik*, Nr.4 (Hamburg: 1979), p.11.

⁵⁸³ Chin, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany*, pp.41-52, 58-59, and 61-64.

⁵⁸⁴ On the history of the Deutschlandlied, see Jost Hermand, “On the history of the ‘Deutschlandlied’,” in *Music and German National Identity*, eds., Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp.251-268.

EP from 1979, Hilsberg was overwhelmed by the topicality of the album, and his review captures the yearning felt by Germans for music and lyrics that could vocalize the consequences of the problematic German past, the icy-present, and the difficult future:

The band has written songs about the daily world of the late-1970s. No love songs of the New Left, neither about the environment or the work-place ban are the objects of this icy contemplation. Much more is *Mittagspause* a product of the daily media fascism. They object not with distanced Agit-Prop hymns and trite rock slogans. The processing of the daily terrors that live next door requires not monumental decoration but deftly handled sensuality. Songs like “Ernstfall,” “Innenstadtfront” and “Der lange Weg nach Derendorf” are so near to their own uneasiness that by their very topicality, they demand listening, joy in originality, and fun in spontaneity.

“Militürk” tells us more about Germany in 1979 than pages of analysis.⁵⁸⁵

While “Herrenreiter,” “Computerstaat,” “Militürk” and “Klammheimlich” were all very different, they were all nonetheless radical attempts at addressing the difficult issues of German national identity. “Deutschland, Deutschland, alles ist vorbei” was to become not a lament but a cry of joy by those who called for the end of old Germany and the birth of a new, diverse nation.

“...but also German music”: Instruments, Sounds and the Creation of Form

One made intensive noises and sounds. But one also lived intensively.

Frieder Butzmann⁵⁸⁶

Whereas debates about singing in German and how to best articulate the everyday lyrically in the main revolved around the relationship of the past to the present, the question of sound was very much concerned with the future. German lyrics would necessitate new rhythms, sounds, and tones that would help produce an indigenous German music style. On the surface were issues of musical and tonal experimentation—what instruments and rhythms can be used to create German

⁵⁸⁵ Alfred Hilsberg, “Review: *Mittagspause*,” *Sounds*, Nr.8, August 1979, p.52.

⁵⁸⁶ Teipel, *Verschwenne*, p.157.

rock'n'roll?—but the central concern flowing from these explorations was about individuality and the possibilities of difference and plurality, part and parcel of punk's role in democratizing the Federal Republic. As Hilsberg explained in an interview in the early 1980s, reiterating the long-standing belief that German could not be used textually for rock'n'roll while at the same time suggesting that new rhythms and tones could be invented to work with the new lyrics, “[t]he German language does not really work with traditional rock music and for this reason, the new groups are now choosing musical accompaniment and rhythms that go with them.”⁵⁸⁷ Moritz Reichelt recalled that the new lyrics were directly linked to the discovery of new music: “We wanted to write not only German lyrics but also German music.”⁵⁸⁸ Expanding the range of instruments and noises that could produce rock'n'roll, West German punk pushed the limits of the possible in an effort to fuse German lyrics with German rhythms. These efforts authorized an explosion of experimentation to find new tones and beats to complement the innovative lyrics that together would express new understandings of Germanness.

The question was how? What did it mean to make deutsche Musik? The decision to write German lyrics was difficult but how to relate it to music was perhaps an even harder issue to solve. For a long time, as we have seen, German artists believed that German was not a suitable language for rock'n'roll: the Big Balls spoke for most, when they claimed that “German sounded like shit” when used lyrically, especially because it did not fit with Anglo-American musical rhythms.⁵⁸⁹ Mona Lisa, the pseudonym for the British-born artist Sylvia James, who wrote for Jürgen Kramer's fanzine *Einige Millionen*, her own *Magazin für Verliebte*, and who sang in the experimental Gelsenkirchen-outfit Materialschlacht, tried to explain the difficulties presented to German artists trying to sing and write music in their native tongue in a letter published by

⁵⁸⁷ Stark and Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel?* p.198.

⁵⁸⁸ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.181.

⁵⁸⁹ Stark and Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel?* p.142.

Hilsberg: “It is damn hard to write meaningful German lyrics. We are not content necessarily with our lyrics and their statements—we experiment a good deal with text and music. We have, and have had, lots of lyrics that we could not translate musically.”⁵⁹⁰ The inability to write music that adequately expressed certain lyrical formulations speaks to the difficulties involved in the process. Both music and lyrics were essential to the creation of new musical form, what Mona Lisa called, “a new, different and independent form of music.”⁵⁹¹ The explicitly experimental character of Materialschlacht’s concept moreover—their drive to push the boundaries of rock music and to free themselves from what they called “punk-clichés”—was one such attempt at allowing various members to develop their own individuality musically. In part, the new sounds and rhythms needed to express the subjective and emotional weight of the music. Jürgen Weiß from DIN A Testbild explained that his relationship towards music was physical—“I react to music with my nervous-system”—and that he approached music less as a musician than as a painter: “I want...to paint sound-images with music.” As he explained further, “I want to find my own path through the jungle of musical ignorance. I want to express the sound-image that I carry inside me, and not some pre-determined imitation.”⁵⁹²

The key was to find the right sound or tone to fit with the lyrics or concept of a song. Beate Bartel said it best when she described her goals as a bass player as “all about playing the right sound at the right time.”⁵⁹³ Her bandmate Bettina Köster was likeminded: “Our principle is: ‘We play everything in opposition to what we were taught.’ It is all about breaking the rules of music.”⁵⁹⁴ Here the DIY nature of punk was important, as was the desire to break with tradition and to transgress. As we have seen, effort not proficiency was the key consideration when it

⁵⁹⁰ Hilsberg, “Neue deutsche Welle,” pp.22-23.

⁵⁹¹ Hilsberg, “Neue deutsche Welle,” pp.22-23.

⁵⁹² Franzen and Penth, *Last Exit*, pp.85-90.

⁵⁹³ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.197.

⁵⁹⁴ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.235.

came to playing musical instruments. In this sense, as Harry Rag put it, punk was less about mastery than it was about discovery: “Here is a typical example: We wrote a song, played it live on the stage—and then it was no longer interesting. For us, it was only a worthwhile attempt when we could say: ‘Today we discovered five great new songs.’ We had more interest in inventing new things than in perfecting them. And that was very punk.”⁵⁹⁵ And part of this pushing was the movement away from the original musical foundations of punk—‘This is a chord, this is another, this is a third. Now go form a band’—towards the creation of something entirely new. According to singer Jürgen Engler, Male “wanted to get away from this classic three-chord thing. Punk was invented in order to say: ‘We’re doing something different. Everything old was to be erased. Everything new!’ To remain unchanged for years—that was unthinkable for me.”⁵⁹⁶

A crucial impetus towards musical experimentation for Hilsberg and others was the urge to move beyond a static, imitative conception of rock’n’roll, to place the genre on a platform of continual reinvention. According to Harry Rag, in discussing composition, “That was fantastic: in the middle of the 1970s, all lyrics needed a beginning and an end—and an idea and that they rhymed. And with punk, suddenly everything was possible. So, first, hatch out the lyrics. Then, the attitude. And finally, the music.”⁵⁹⁷ This constant state of flux, evolution, and indeterminacy with song arrangement and music was to define the efforts of the Kunstpunks in contrast to the three-chord repetitions favoured by the Hardcores. D.A.F. singer Gabi Delgado-Lopez was frustrated that despite an ideology of difference, punk songs all sounded the same: “With me, punk was not about the music. Punk was super energy, but the music was not really my thing. What I never understood was: how could such a new, fresh energy in the end, always have the

⁵⁹⁵ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.191.

⁵⁹⁶ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.220.

⁵⁹⁷ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.91.

same sounds?”⁵⁹⁸ In *Sounds*, Mona Lisa expressed theoretically why punks were experimenting with new tones and new instruments, that the goal was a complete rupture with the past, even the punk past: “Here, moreso than in England, people influenced by 1976 punk cannot recognize any obvious and definitive social developments. I find it interesting to contemplate these [changes] rather than slipping back into a kind of nostalgia for the past.”⁵⁹⁹

Record reviews are a good place to observe these evolutions in thought towards increased experimentation, and if we glance through the pages of the Düsseldorf fanzine *Bericht der U.N.-Menschenrechtskommission über Menschenrechtsverletzungen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Report of the UN Human Rights Commission on Human Rights Violations in the Federal Republic of Germany), we can see how these ideas were playing out on the ground. In the second issue, the authors were unsure exactly what to do with Pyrolator’s first solo LP even though they recognized how the album sought to articulate their daily lives musically: “muttering murmurs—music for daily life? good background music for schoolwork and such... a mixture of nice and boring...”⁶⁰⁰ This can be contrasted with the condemnation in the same issue, they heaped on the Razors as derivative of English punk and the inauthenticity that flowed from these charges: “While it doesn’t say anywhere, the Razors claim to be the composers! Until now, no one had stolen so brazenly! There is not trace of honesty here!”⁶⁰¹ Again, in the following issue, is another salvo against the Razors, and by extension, all German bands copying Anglo-Saxon punk: “What else can one say about a group whose greatest misfortune is to be NOT in London

⁵⁹⁸ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.108.

⁵⁹⁹ Alfred Hilsberg, “Dicke Titten und Avantgarde. Aus grauer Städte Mauern (Teil 2),” *Sounds*, Nr.11, November 1979, p.23.

⁶⁰⁰ *Bericht der U.N.-Menschenrechtskommission über Menschenrechtsverletzungen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Nr.2 (Düsseldorf: 1980), n.p.

⁶⁰¹ *Bericht der U.N.-Menschenrechtskommission*, Nr.2, n.p.

in 1976?...totally fixated on England. The album only spreads boredom.”⁶⁰² By issue 4b, the authors had fully embraced the experimental side of punk believing that the Limburg-based band The Wirtschaftswunder had perfectly captured the sounds of growing up in the Ruhr in the Federal Republic: “This [album] is how I have always imagined Industry-rock’n’roll, a collage of differing noises....The best song is ‘metall,’ it drills into your brain and sounds like its called...”⁶⁰³ The question of musical evolution as it related to German punk acts finding their own style was thus directly tied to emancipating German popular music from earlier non-German forms through the expression of sound that could represent living in the Federal Republic.

The desire to write deutsche Musik to accompany the new lyrical formulations was complemented by the emergence of new technologies centered on the reproduction of sound in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In the late 1970s, Korg came out with the relatively affordable MS-20 KORG synthesizer which cost only 1,200 DM, significantly cheaper than the popular Minimoog.⁶⁰⁴ Portable, patchable, and with the ability to oscillate and modulate sound, the MS-20 transformed the music keyboardists could make and their ability to recreate studio sounds live. Thomas Fehlmann, synth-player for Palais Schaumburg, put it succinctly when he said that the MS-20 Korg “changed my life.”⁶⁰⁵ The alternatives facilitated by the MS-20 Korg—even of music playing itself—are well captured by Moritz R in his biography of der Plan: for him, the purchase of the MS-20 was “a revelation. As I elicited the first sounds from the machine, I forgot

⁶⁰² *Bericht der U.N.-Menschenrechtskommission über Menschenrechtsverletzungen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Nr.3 (Düsseldorf: 1980), n.p.

⁶⁰³ *Bericht der U.N.-Menschenrechtskommission über Menschenrechtsverletzungen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Nr.4b (Düsseldorf: 1980), n.p.

⁶⁰⁴ Frank A. Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging: Von Punk zu NDW* (Mainz: Ventil Verlag, 2007), p.154. The Minimoog retailed for \$1,195 in 1970 when the US dollar was almost four-times as expensive as the German Mark. See Trevor Pinch and Frank Trocco, *Analog Days: The Invention and Impact of the Moog Synthesizer* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), p.231.

⁶⁰⁵ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.269.

in an instant all of the piano lessons from my childhood. After you adjusted all of the numerous knobs, the machine no longer sounded like a music instrument, but rather like a splash of water or like a helicopter or an air-raid siren. I was surprised that there were still bands that had not completely accepted synthesiers.”⁶⁰⁶ Perhaps as important was the fact that many of the older Krautrock bands such as Can, Neu! and even Kraftwerk were using older Moog synthesizers and not newer Korgs and later Casios, a distinction further distancing punk from rock.⁶⁰⁷

Likewise, a number of smaller recording devices were just then arriving onto the market by the mid-1970s, especially 4-track home recording equipment, and were quickly appropriated by punks. TEAC and subsidiary TASCAM produced inexpensive machines for recording at home (the TEAC 2340, for example) meaning youths were no longer dependent on expensive recording studios to produce music. As Harry Rag put it, “In your own bedroom you could make your own record. That was liberation.”⁶⁰⁸ The affordability of the new instruments and equipment not only democratized musical production but also inaugurated a spate of home recordings and especially a tremendous amount of play with the new instruments. As Glaser again relates, Xao Seffcheque’s first album was him discovering the possibilities of his 4-track TEAC—“A man discovering his 4-track machine,” as he has subsequently described it.⁶⁰⁹ Into the early 1980s, a succession of affordable and versatile keyboards, synthesizers, and programming machines (especially drum sequencers) increased artists’ sonic range, and as such, tied punk and NDW development to technological advances.⁶¹⁰ As Moritz Reichelt states

⁶⁰⁶ Moritz R., *Der Plan. Glanz und Elend der Neuen Deutschen Welle: Die Geschichte einer deutschen Band* (Kassel: Verlag Martin Schmitz, 1993), p.21.

⁶⁰⁷ Peter Shapiro, ed., *Modulations: A History of Electronic Music* (New York: Caipirinha Productions, Inc., 2000), pp.24-37.

⁶⁰⁸ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.200. See also Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, p.151.

⁶⁰⁹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.264-265.

⁶¹⁰ The switch from analog to digital in the early 1980s was instrumental. For example, the Yamaha DX7 moved 200,000 units in the first three years of its existence in the early 1980s while the Minimoog, by contrast, has 12,000

perceptively, “From that moment on, the entire musical development was also a technical one.”⁶¹¹ And this evolution only increased as punks began entering the studio (see Chapter 5).

The technological revolution was at once embraced by many punks as a means of further democratizing musical production and indeed, the very range of sonic possibilities in rock’n’roll. What had so alienated youths with traditional rock’n’roll in the 1970s was musical virtuosity: unending guitar and drum solos, operatic singing, and cosmic noise. As progressive rock delved into the further reaches of the esoteric, punk sought to return rock to its roots: as Marius del Mestre, guitarist and singer for the West Berlin band Tempo, put it, “We’ve already claimed to make Rock’n’Roll. Dance music. Even if many still associate dance music with dance school.”⁶¹² As we have seen, punks rejected ideologies of musical proficiency, more concerned as they were with the raw emotional impact of getting up on stage regardless of talent. Whereas conventional 1970s rock was only accessible by the most talented, punk opened the door wide for any and all comers to give it their all, and technology was critical in this respect. Matthias Schuster from Geisterfahrer put it thusly: “The biggest mistake is that many people still believe that synth-players must be intellectual! A huge mistake! If I want to play guitar like Jimmy Page I have to practice for 15 years. But with a little practice you can play the same stuff on a synth in a year. That might sound a little perverse but it is true.”⁶¹³

With punk, the use of technology and machinery to enhance sound became a question of progress and musical evolution. D.A.F., for example, at the time they moved to England in 1979,

lifetime sales. Further: Casio sold 15 million instruments between 1980 and 1990. See Pinch and Trocco, *Analog Days*, p.317, and 351n.32.

⁶¹¹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.87-88. See also Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, pp.151-155; Michele Avantario, “1977-1987: Von Krawall bis Totenschiff. Punk, New Wave und Hardcore,” *Läden, Schuppen, Kaschemmen: Eine Hamburger Popkulturgeschichte*, ed., Christoph Twickel (Hamburg: Edition Nautilus, 2003), p.151; and Ulrike Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton: Die Anfänge von Punk und New Wave in Deutschland 1977- '82* (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2002), p.167.

⁶¹² Hilsberg, “Neue deutsche Welle,” p.22.

⁶¹³ Hilsberg, “Dicke Titten und Avantgarde,” p.25.

were a typical five man unit: singer, guitarist, bassist, drummer and programmer. But by the time they returned to tour West Germany in late 1980, the band had been reduced to Gabi Delgado-Lopez (singer), Robert Gorl (drummer/programmer), and Wolfgang Spelmans (guitar), and the latter was quickly ditched: by that time, the guitar was for them, “was like the last remains of the old world.”⁶¹⁴ As Gabi has recently put it in generational terms, they did not understand “why such a modern, impudent, and innovative music revolved around the instruments of the fathers.”⁶¹⁵ As Gorl has similarly explained, the success of D.A.F. lay with its increasing distance to the guitar: “Also we were not so guitar-oriented. From the outset, electronics influenced us greatly. That’s how we differentiated ourselves from other bands.”⁶¹⁶ Their new stripped-down sound fit with their more militant aesthetic. As Gorl has put it, the band was a fusion of men and machines: “DAF was a mixture of sweat and electronics. It was total sweat. Man and machines, sweating together, haha. Man had to be like a machine. Fantastic.”⁶¹⁷ Crucially, as D.A.F. moved into uncharted musical territories, they abandoned the traditional structures of rock’n’roll songs such as verses, choruses, and refrains: “We developed songs that did not have the normal A-Side, B-Side and refrain. After about a minute and a half came a break and then a new song. We did that to create a new form.”⁶¹⁸ As Gabi has said, in its purest form, D.A.F. was less about rock’n’roll than about the destruction of rock’n’roll:

My principal aim with this purist form of DAF was: away with the song. Songs totally irritated me. This whole rock’n’roll harmony thing made me want to vomit. But also the song structures. That you needed verses and refrains. I never wanted a second part in the song. Shit. I was more interested in something like: ‘These are not songs, but rather different traces, that can be switched on and off.’ We made music in such a way that we switched on the sequencer—and then Robert, in some

⁶¹⁴ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.293.

⁶¹⁵ Nike Breyer, “‘das ist alles wirklich plastik, haha.’ Interview mit Gabi Delgado-Lopez und Robert Gorl,” *taz Magazin*, 8/9 November 2003, p.II.

⁶¹⁶ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.134.

⁶¹⁷ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.293.

⁶¹⁸ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.132.

kind of Zen-mediation over the synths and sequencers so long as it could go until it somehow became amazing. It was always so minimal. A kind of dampened energy. The machines were always on the verge of breaking. In contrast to Kraftwerk, by us, the machines had to sweat.⁶¹⁹

As their sound crystallized around a single recorded loop or beat—what Gorl suggests was the “essence” of music, “A unity. A nucleus. A core”—D.A.F. left punk and helped invent techno.⁶²⁰

While not every band would go as far as D.A.F., artists began embracing new instruments and technologies which suddenly put the standard rock’n’roll lineup into question. While guitar, bass, drums and vocals had been the mainstay of the rock’n’roll sound since the 1950s, now this was no longer an unquestioned assumption. While other genres had introduced new instruments to their repertoire—in the late 1960s and 1970s, for example, progressive rock acts were using synthesizers and keyboards—the guitar remained the central instrument driving rock’n’roll sound.⁶²¹ But as Hornberger has cogently argued, the decreasing influence of the guitar in the new music was the crucial difference between earlier rock’n’roll and the German punk and emerging NDW sound.⁶²² Matthias Schuster from *Geisterfahrer*: “I find it important that you are no longer dependent on a particular guitar sound. You can produce them with the synthesizer. You are no longer getting a Gibson-sound solely but many more.”⁶²³ *Mittagspause* did not have a bass player and Franz Bielemeier got rid of all the mids on his amplifier to produce a throbbing tone.⁶²⁴ A plethora of instruments that rarely made appearances in rock’n’roll songs were introduced: *die Abwärts* had a violinist; *der Plan* featured saxophone; and Campino from *ZK* often played the trumpet. Others experimented with all sorts of self-made instruments or common everyday machines (hammers, cake mixers, vibrators, vacuums, etc.) to try and produce

⁶¹⁹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.292.

⁶²⁰ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.293.

⁶²¹ On the centrality of the guitar to rock’n’roll, see Steve Waksman, *Instruments of Desire: The Electric Guitar and the Shaping of Musical Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

⁶²² Hornberger, *Geschichte wird gemacht*, p.136.

⁶²³ Hilsberg, “Dicke Titten und Avantgarde,” p.25.

⁶²⁴ Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.145, 146.

new sounds.⁶²⁵ Klaus Maeck was a member of die Geldschweine (the money-grubbers) and played the cash register to protest the commercialization of punk and comment ironically on his own reputation (see Chapter 5).⁶²⁶ While some of these experiments are playfully ironic, they were nonetheless deadly serious since experimentation and diversity were the keys to the new German sound.

A brief detour into the music of the ‘Geniale Dilletanten’ can illuminate some of the furthest reaches of the drive for sonic experimentation and indicate how far the Kunstpunks were willing to go. The term ‘Geniale Dilletanten’ (Ingenious Dilettantes) describes a cluster of especially West Berlin-based bands and artists—Einstürzende Neubauten, die Tödliche Doris, Mania D., Mekanik Destruktiv Komandöh, and others—that have become some of Germany’s most internationally famous and recognizable musicians. The deliberately misspelled name ‘Geniale Dilletanten’ originally came from a button Blixa Bargeld from Einstürzende Neubauten once wore (‘Genialer Dilletant’) but has stuck since it perfectly describes the diverse bands’ commitment to experimentation mixed with professional unprofessionalism.⁶²⁷ A counter-point to proficiency, ‘dilletantism’ celebrated mistakes as essential aspects of creation and discovery, and as such, songs and concerts were heavily improvised, as were the instruments used. Dilletantism was a radical extension of punk claims that anyone can make music, that it was not necessary to be skilled to play rock’n’roll or to master a musical instrument. As one of the leading ideologues Wolfgang Müller put it, “Geniale Dilletanten do not want or need dominance over their instruments.”⁶²⁸ Through punk, the ‘Geniale Dilletanten’ tried to reclaim the term

⁶²⁵ Thomas Groetz, *Kunst-Musik: Deutscher Punk und New Wave in der Nachbarschaft von Joseph Beuys* (Berlin: Martin Schmitz Verlag, 2002), p.87; Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, pp.154-155; and Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.48, 191-192.

⁶²⁶ Avantario, “1977-1987: Von Krawall bis Totenschiff,” p.64.

⁶²⁷ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.313.

⁶²⁸ Wolfgang Müller, “Die Instrumente stimmen,” in *Geniale Dilletanten*, ed., Wolfgang Müller (Berlin: Merve Verlag, 1982), p.49.

‘dilettante’ for a positive categorization rather than its traditional negative connotations.⁶²⁹ Explicit in these critiques was the belief that ‘Dilletantismus’ could wrest control of musical production from the professional musician and industry by democratizing the making of music: as Müller put it in their manifesto, “anyone can make din and noise, therefore nobody needs digital recording or a 36-track recording studio with a thousand refinements.”⁶³⁰ This in turn would give music a deeper resonance that Müller believed would threaten the establishment: “The representatives of progress see the coming danger, armor-themselves against the threat that terms like din/noise and chaos represent and denounce them as only characteristics of noise production.”⁶³¹ But it was precisely the potential for freedom that made ‘noise’ and ‘din’ so attractive.⁶³² These thoughts link these artists to a long-line of twentieth-century avantgarde art, and we can see the influence of Dada and Surrealism from the 1920s and 1930s, and the Situationist International in the 1950s and 1960s, on their intellectual development.⁶³³

Some scholars have suggested that the West Berlin setting was essential in the development of the sound and ideology of the ‘Geniale Dilletanten.’⁶³⁴ Bettina Köster herself maintained that Malaria! tried to capture “the sounds that are all around us in the city” and turn them into music.⁶³⁵ “My only thought,” Blixa Bargeld has likewise claimed when it came to composition, was, “to what extent my music should do with my environment.”⁶³⁶ Neubauten was the brainchild of Bargeld, a West-Berlin autodidact who took over the Eisengrau record and used

⁶²⁹ Wolfgang Müller, “Die wahren Dilletanten,” in *Geniale Dilletanten*, ed., Wolfgang Müller (Berlin: Merve Verlag, 1982), pp.9-10.

⁶³⁰ Müller, “Die wahren Dilletanten,” p.12.

⁶³¹ Müller, “Die wahren Dilletanten,” p.12.

⁶³² Müller, “Die wahren Dilletanten,” p.12.

⁶³³ On punk’s links to these earlier avantgarde art movements, see especially Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

⁶³⁴ Hilsberg, “Rodenkirchen is burning,” pp.20-24; Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, esp. pp.74-76; and Hornberger, *Geschichte wird gemacht*, esp. pp.209-217.

⁶³⁵ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.235.

⁶³⁶ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.236.

clothing store from Köster and Gut, gradually stopped selling albums and clothing, and spent most of his time making bootlegged cassettes for the Eisengrau tape-label (see Chapter 5).⁶³⁷ People drawn from the West Berlin alternative milieu began stopping by Eisengrau not to shop but in the hopes of “meeting interesting people.”⁶³⁸ In 1980, after being asked if he wanted to perform at the Moon Club, Bargeld put together Einstürzende Neubauten, a band that would help invent industrial music. Featuring Bargeld (guitar and vocals), N.U. Unruh (percussion), Bartel (bass) and Gut (keyboards) at first, the latter two quickly quit, upset with Bargeld’s tyrannical leadership to form Mania D., and were replaced by Mark Chung (bass) and FM Einheit (percussion) from die Abwärts, and 15-year old rising star of the underground Alexander Hacke (or Alexander von Borsig). The band sought to make music that would reflect living in West Berlin, the tensions and paranoia of being surrounded by the East, the fear of imminent nuclear destruction, and the feeling of living in a decaying city only surviving through the assistance of massive subsidies from Bonn. Klaus Maeck (today the band’s manager) says that Neubauten’s sound was Berlin personified: “And if you knew Berlin back then, then you knew that that was real, living history. They captured Berlin precisely.”⁶³⁹

To divorce themselves from conventional rock’n’roll, Neubauten replaced the customary instrumentation of rock with one more reflective of their physical and emotional environment. On the one hand this was a continuation of their engagement with their physical surroundings. But more important was the attempt to rid themselves of any traces of traditional rock’n’roll: as Alex Hacke later put it, “Every normal music instrument had the connotations of stereotype and reactionary rock music.”⁶⁴⁰ Drummer Unruh began scouring the abandoned fields around

⁶³⁷ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.239.

⁶³⁸ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.231.

⁶³⁹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.276.

⁶⁴⁰ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.274.

Potsdamer Platz and the old Anhalter Bahnhof for scrap metal, industrial wastelands facing the Berlin Wall and littered with the debris of earlier eras.⁶⁴¹ From the materials collected, Unruh began using the pieces of metal to produce new tones and rhythms to accompany Bargeld's wailing vocals and guitars that did not follow traditional song structures. By focusing on tone and beats, rhythm was brought to the forefront. In the end, Unruh jettisoned his drum kit completely and rebuilt a sort of steel one instead from the metal he had collected that sought to evoke the sound of industrial life and decay.⁶⁴² Neubauten concerts became legendary for their destructive tendencies as musicians used hammers and power tools to produce screeching sounds on the collected bits of metal, and sometimes the stages were demolished or set on fire while Bargeld moaned the refrain from "Für den Untergang" (For your downfall): "I dance, I dance, I dance ... to your downfall." Concerts were radically rethought. During a show at the Risiko in West Berlin, the band was divided into two, and each group played separately in different corners of the room with the audience in between; the musicians could barely hear one another, but even this was believed to create 'new' songs.⁶⁴³ In an attempt to capture the sound of the industrial city, the band recorded their first single in a small crawlspace under an Autobahn bridge.⁶⁴⁴ Nor was Neubauten alone. Die Krupps in Gelsenkirchen likewise sought to industrialize not only their sound but also their instruments. For their album *Stahlwerksinfonie* (1981), the band constructed a sort of xylophone made of metal pipes they had rescued from an

⁶⁴¹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.239, 240.

⁶⁴² Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.273-274.

⁶⁴³ Klaus Maeck, "Die große Untergangsshow mit Einstürzende Neubauten oder Chaos, Sehnsucht & Energie," in *Rock Sessions 6. Magazin der populären Musik*, eds., Walter Hartmann und Gregor Pott (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1982), pp.114-115.

⁶⁴⁴ Klaus Laufer, "Eingeschlossene Bergleute machen sich zum Beispiel durch Klopfzeichen bemerkbar," in *Geniale Dilletanten*, ed., Wolfgang Müller (Berlin: Merve Verlag, 1982), pp.21-25. See also Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.236-237.

abandoned steel mill and wrote music around this creation that mixed experimentalism with DIY.⁶⁴⁵

Die Tödliche Doris was another member of the ‘Geniale Dilletanten’ that experimented not only with sound but with the entire concept of recording and the very notion of the album medium itself. Composed of art students Wolfgang Müller and Nikolaus Utermöhlen, and later joined by others, ‘Doris’ was what the musicians conceived of as a sound sculpture created by their music and thought. Heavily influenced by French structuralism and postmodern thought as were most of the ‘Dilletanten,’ Müller and Utermöhlen were especially interested in creating albums that defied the normal conventions of musical production. Their first album had no name (but known as *7 tödliche Unfälle im Haushalt* [Seven deadly household accidents] in 1981). Their second LP *Die Tödliche Doris* (1982) contains 13 tracks that have seemingly no relation to one another. Some are pop music while others were serious; the point was to suggest that ‘Doris,’ like humanity, consisted of many different and contradictory characteristics. *Chöre & Soli* (1983) was their third album but instead of a vinyl record, the box contained eight plastic doll-sized records with a miniature record player and batteries: each disc was a song of very poor quality lasting about 20 seconds. The fourth album *Unser Debüt* (1984) was ostensibly a pop record, but in reality was exploring commerciality as the band tried to confront the popularity of the NDW (see Chapter 6). The next album released was entitled *Sechs* (1985), and featured the identical number of tracks and track lengths as *Unser Debüt*, though the songs returned to the ambient and abstract experimentation of earlier releases. However, both fourth and fifth albums were recorded at the same time in Ata Tak Studio in Düsseldorf, and a year after the release of *Sechs*, die Tödliche Doris announced that if listeners played both albums together at the exact same time, they combined to create an entirely new album, the ‘sixth’ Doris album and the

⁶⁴⁵ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.268.

world's first “invisible” record that critiqued the very sale and consumption of music. Neubauten also tried to deconstruct the recording process with their autobahn single (FM Einheit claims that their goal was to make “an unlistenable album”⁶⁴⁶) but die Tödliche Doris—as a concept and as an assault on the conventions of rock'n'roll—probably went the furthest in this direction.

On 4 September 1981, Die große Untergangsshow – Festival Genialer Dilletanten (The great Downfall Show – Festival of Ingenious Dilettantes) took place in front of a 1,400 member audience in the Berlin Tempodrom, and featured the main protagonists of the movement: Einstürzende Neubauten, die Tödliche Doris, Sprung aus den Wolken, Din A Testbild, and various other bands cobbled together for the show including performance artist Frieder Butzmann, and a band including Christiane F. of *Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo* fame.⁶⁴⁷ The concert was the first introduction of the art-music concept beyond the narrow confines of the West Berlin underground and the resonance to the event was positive. At the end of October 1981, Einstürzende Neubauten, Sprung aus den Wolken, and Mekanik Destruktiv Komandöh embarked on the Die Berliner Krankheit (The Berlin Sickness) tour that brought—in the words of *Der Spiegel*—their “apocalyptic big city feeling” to the rest of the Federal Republic.⁶⁴⁸ Stopping in 15 cities along the way, some larger (Munich, Hamburg), some smaller (Hof, Kiel), Die Berliner Krankheit was a success, even if the shows departed from traditional concert experiences: according to Jürgen Engler from die Krupps, “I felt dirty after the concert...we all had a shower...”⁶⁴⁹ But the tour was almost immediately plagued with controversies, as the split between the Hardcores and Kunstpunks widened. The fighting at a Hamburg concert was too

⁶⁴⁶ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.314.

⁶⁴⁷ Christiane F. was the protagonist for the *Stern* bestseller about youth and the West German drug scene. See Robert P. Stephens, *Germans on Drugs: The Complications of Modernization in Hamburg* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2007), pp.281-292.

⁶⁴⁸ “„Berliner Krankheit“ auf Tournee,” *Der Spiegel*, Nr.44, 26 October 1981, p.225.

⁶⁴⁹ Thomas Buttler, “Die Krupps. Schöne Grüße an Bernward,” *Sounds*, Nr.1, January 1982, p.13.

much for Bargeld: “After this show, my whole worldview fell apart. I had a real shock. And it remains with me to this day. I realized that I no longer had anything to do with punk because my understanding of the concept had been taken from me. In Berlin, the tolerance went so far that everything was acceptable: I was a squatter, I played at squatter-festivals. And I play them because I supported the movement and everything was in order.”⁶⁵⁰ For the first time, the ‘Geniale Dilletanten’ bands were exposed to the violent splits between the Kunstpunks and Hardcores, and they were alienated by the experience. As Bargeld continued, he could not wait to return to the divided city: “To return to Berlin meant to return to my secure native land. I was overjoyed to be once again in my encircled Berlin. And we decided then and there not to play in Germany anymore.”⁶⁵¹

The digression into the world of the ‘Geniale Dilletanten’ is provided to show how punk was expanding the boundaries of what was possible with rock’n’roll and how young Germans were trying to create new forms and contents to function as a basis for identity. We can again see the deep links between punk and other artistic and philosophic movements coming of age in the late 1970s and early 1980s. While *Einstürzende Neubauten* and *die Tödliche Doris* are extreme cases, they are nonetheless representative of the impulses driving punk experimentalism and the ways in which traditional contents and forms were being questioned in the name of creation. Not only were German-language lyrics under the microscope, but also new forms of sound, new rhythms, new stage shows, new relationships between the audience and performer; in essence, the boundaries of a new musical culture. Not every band went as far as the ‘Geniale Dilletanten’ in their attempts to use music as a platform in the service of deconstructing rock’n’roll, but the choice of instrumentation was to have tremendous repercussions on the direction of the NDW.

⁶⁵⁰ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.276.

⁶⁵¹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.314.

The waning of the guitar combined with the waxing of the keyboard and drum machine by the more experimental bands was to give the music industry a key instrumental shift in their pursuit for more commercial sounds (see Chapter 6). Whereas the roaring guitars of the 1970s punk bands was more appealing to raw energy and violent expression, the cold, distanced tones and driving beats coming from the early 1980s keyboards and synthesizers were more conducive to commercial pop. The sentiment by Jürgen Engler in 1982, former singer for the Clash-styled band Male who later fronted the more experimental die Krupps, perfectly expressed the shifting understandings in the nature of music making: “The guitar is an old-fashioned instrument.”⁶⁵²

And while difficult, the end result of singing in German and inventing new sounds and rhythms to accompany expressive lyrics was the creation of a new musical form. As we have seen, this was the explicit goal that Alfred Hilsberg and many of the early punk bands quite consciously worked towards inventing a distinctive German musical form. According to Harry Rag, during this time, “I had the feeling that we were defining something entirely new.”⁶⁵³ In 1980 and 1981, as bands such as D.A.F. and Fehlfarben began releasing albums full of subjective German lyrics and music, listeners were ecstatic. For Hilsberg, upon hearing the full-length LPs produced by D.A.F., it was the culmination of his life’s work: “That was a musical dream. Until then, I couldn’t imagine how good a German band could become. I witnessed then, the realisation of a dream that I had pursued for so long.”⁶⁵⁴

“Nein, Nein, Nein”: Reacting to Hilsberg and the *Neue Deutsche Welle*

No, no, no, you old schwine
I will not be your slave

⁶⁵² Michael O.R. Kröher, “Die Krupps: Review,” *Sounds*, Nr.4, April 1982, p.59.

⁶⁵³ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.90.

⁶⁵⁴ Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.225-226.

Away with your Fick Fack, snotty-organization
That produces only slime

No one pays attention anymore
That one is selling-out punk
Fuck Alfred and his bands
Punk Rock is king of the land

Electronic-shit, turn it off
No more with us, punk is still alive

New Wave time – no, no, no
Do you want more – no, no, no
Electronic-shit – no, no, no
Than turn it off!!!

The Buttocks, “Nein, Nein, Nein,” *Vom Derbsten* (Konnekschen SO3, 1980)

It would be wrong to suggest that Hilsberg’s call for difference was met with universal acclaim. Many wanted no part of singing in German or the making of German music, and the Buttocks were responding directly to Hilsberg (“du altes Schwein”), his label (“Fick Fack, Rotzverein”), and his musical tastes (“Elektroscheiß”) with their classic anthem “Nein, Nein, Nein.” The main opponents to Hilsberg’s vision were the Hardcores. For them, as we have seen, punk rock was to be located at the more hard-rock end of the musical spectrum, and they understood the genre as a platform for social protest, even if their musical tastes were considerably more conservative than those of the Kunstpunks (see Chapter 7). There was a belief that many of the Kunstpunks were participating in the same musical arrogance and narcissism that punk sought to destroy: Coroners’ singer Jörn spoke for many when he said that, “In the first place we make music for ourselves but also for others, not like those punk-artists from the Ruhr. Materialschlacht and the other ones. They stand up there and say: ‘Look over here, we’re doing crazy things!’”⁶⁵⁵ Guitarist Gode concurred: “Ja, those with the captain’s hats [Mittagspause]. They can imagine that they write

⁶⁵⁵ Hilsberg, “Neue deutsche Welle,” p.22.

German lyrics and are modern—but it’s idiotic! Groups like Ultravox and Devo, that’s music for modern pensioners. I would rather have a hundred authentic punks as a thousand inauthentic.”⁶⁵⁶ At stake was the relationship between content and form, and thus superficiality and authenticity. Especially in Hamburg, the resistance against the experimental Kunstpunks and the emerging NDW was strong. Surveying the port-city, Hilsberg opined that “Hamburg’s new music seems predominantly leisurely and anarchic punks their life-style is confirmed in hard, fast songs, that English lyrics pass a lot better than German. Everything else is dismissed as ‘corrosive.’ And if someone wants to tell them that there are new sounds coming out of England, then they had better run home quick.”⁶⁵⁷ As the responses to singing in German and experimenting with new tones and sounds became disputed battlegrounds of authenticity, modernity, and the future of German popular music, we can begin to understand why the genre became so contested and the roots for the splits that would tear the subculture apart.

In most cases, it was the new sounds and instruments that offended Hardcores. Again, speaking to Hilsberg in “Aus grauer Städte Mauern,” Gode is representative: “Synthesizers...they are idiotic. Ok, good, as background music, but this clown-music that comes out of these cheap things. You can just go buy one from Karstadt.”⁶⁵⁸ Especially offensive were the costs associated with the new technologies, that again seemed to be backsliding towards a new *Materialschlacht* (war of equipment) that defined rock’n’roll in the 1970s. Gode continued: “A good synthesizer costs 3000 DM. Who has that kind of money?”⁶⁵⁹ Kunstpunks responded that such talk of breaking down the walls between audiences and stars were pure fantasies: Michael Ruff from *Geisterfahrer*, “I play things because I think they sound good. If others think so too, okay. If not,

⁶⁵⁶ Hilsberg, “Neue deutsche Welle,” p.22.

⁶⁵⁷ Alfred Hilsberg, “Macher? Macht? Moneten? Aus grauer Städte Mauern,” *Sounds*, Nr.12, December 1979, p.47.

⁶⁵⁸ Hilsberg, “Dicke Titten und Avantgarde,” p.24.

⁶⁵⁹ Hilsberg, “Dicke Titten und Avantgarde,” p.24.

tough luck for me. At the moment, when I am standing on stage, I am no longer part of the audience. All this talk about tearing down walls in rock'n'roll—that is nonsense!”⁶⁶⁰ Or as Mona Lisa put it, “I could never assert that I make music for the masses. In the first place, I make music for myself. I try, conceive, to mediate. If people understand, that remains with them. But I think that there are people that think similarly.”⁶⁶¹ The use of new technology was therefore less about entertainment and community than about self-exploration and personal discovery for the Kunstpunks, a distinction that Hardcores—who understood punk as a social movement—did not understand.

Some critics pointed to the difficulties of producing these new sounds for a live audience, an argument suggesting an innate artificiality between studio production and concert experience. According to Michael Polten from Hans-a-plast, a band known for its strong stage shows, “For me is the experimentation with noises—not with rock music, they aren’t doing that at all—is not right for live shows. At the Markthalle Festival, they were completely out of place. I do not regard this electronic direction an advancement. It is completely different. A completely different thing. People in jazz, they have a considerable influence on groups like Materialschlacht.”⁶⁶² Some critics charged that synthesizers were fundamentally inauthentic because their sounds were manufactured: the author of *Abfallprodukt* claimed he did not like synths because they “didn’t sound honest.”⁶⁶³ The Buttocks averred that playing a keyboard was inauthentic because the machine was doing all the work: “With synthesizers, you only have to push a button, turn the rhythm machine on, and then you are done.”⁶⁶⁴ Others were skeptical of the type of alternative

⁶⁶⁰ Hilsberg, “Dicke Titten und Avantgarde,” p.25.

⁶⁶¹ Hilsberg, “Neue deutsche Welle,” p.22.

⁶⁶² Hilsberg, “Dicke Titten und Avantgarde,” p.24.

⁶⁶³ *Abfallprodukt*, Nr.1 (Minden: 1980), p.6. On the difference between ‘warm’ and ‘cold,’ see Sven Reichardt, “„Wärme“ als Modus sozialen Verhaltens? Vorüberlegungen zu einer Kulturgeschichte des linksalternativen Milieus vom Ende der sechziger bis Anfang der achtziger Jahre,” in *Vorgänge*, Vol.44, Nr.171/172, 2005, pp.175-187.

⁶⁶⁴ Franzen and Penth, *Last Exit*, p.188.

cultural communities envisioned for punk could flow from the more esoteric experimentalism that some groups were advocating. Eugen Honold, author of the Hamburg fanzine *Pretty Vacant* and Krawall 2000 organizer, was unconvinced that much would come out of such experimenting: “I don’t understand such people and think that not very much will come from this experimentation.”⁶⁶⁵ Even Hilsberg was somewhat unsure of what would come from these experiments: “Will the technologizing of punk with machines, from cassette recorders to synthesizers, create new / old dependences and destroy the original idea of punk that everyone can play – will it create new / old Supergroups?”⁶⁶⁶

A few tried to straddle the fence and worked towards reconciling the competing musical ideologies. Holger Hiller, at the time with *Geisterfahrer*, when asked about whether synthesizers were destroying punk, claimed that, “The things [machines] are simply there. I believe it is a question of consciousness, of intent, how one uses them.”⁶⁶⁷ He continued by pointing out the two sides of the issue: “I find it disconcerting that with a guitar you can produce a tone, but with a synthesizer you can only give an impulse. And on the other side, with all the progressive technology, which offer all sorts of possibilities for creativity, the consciousness process becomes ever more restricted—if you aren’t already privileged.”⁶⁶⁸ Hollow Skai likewise cautiously endorsed the new experimentalism: “I think that it’s good to bring new elements into rock’n’roll. We aren’t punks but avant-gardes ... (pause) in the good sense.”⁶⁶⁹ But he was worried that while experimentation was in itself good, straying too far from rock’n’roll would ultimately destroy the innovative potential that punk could offer by descending too far into intellectualism and self-absorption: “But at the same time, you need to distinguish between ideas

⁶⁶⁵ Hilsberg, “Dicke Titten und Avantgarde,” p.25.

⁶⁶⁶ Hilsberg, “Dicke Titten und Avantgarde,” p.25.

⁶⁶⁷ Hilsberg, “Dicke Titten und Avantgarde,” p.25.

⁶⁶⁸ Hilsberg, “Dicke Titten und Avantgarde,” pp.25-26.

⁶⁶⁹ Hilsberg, “Dicke Titten und Avantgarde,” p.24.

such as those by Mona Lisa that she has internalized in a political theory that she has worked out over the years. And the music, of which she is very unsure. These contradictions must not be resolved. People like Materialschlacht cannot really connect with the kids. For me, this musical development is not worthwhile since it is too theoretical.”⁶⁷⁰ Like Hilsberg, Skai believed that punk and the NDW could become a new popular music that Germans had long desired: “I go to classical concerts, but I like concerts more where I can dance.”⁶⁷¹

Singing in German and experimenting with new sounds immediately split the punk scene, divisions that we have seen emerging in prior chapters. As Frank Schneider insightfully suggests, the German-singing bands such as S.Y.P.H. and Mittagspause instantly made the English-singing ones obsolete.⁶⁷² Many applauded the experimentation and the pages of early fanzines are littered with positive support. Concert reviews of bands singing in German were praised since these acts—summarizing the words of critic Detlef Diedrichsen—were making rock’n’roll dangerous again.⁶⁷³ Even when critics did not particularly enjoy an album—Mittagspause’s double EP in this case—they nonetheless acknowledged that Peter Hein’s lyrics were nonetheless “honest.”⁶⁷⁴ Others, however, were not happy. Gode claimed that “English flow more easily, it is a hard language, but especially if you want to be really aggressive, you can express yourself better [with English]. With German, it is very hard to write lyrics to this music.”⁶⁷⁵ Many musicians however, were shocked by how quickly the newly-minted punk scene began splintering. Matthias Schuster from Geisterfahrer for one was caught off guard that his band was lumped in

⁶⁷⁰ Hilsberg, “Dicke Titten und Avantgarde,” p.24.

⁶⁷¹ Hilsberg, “Dicke Titten und Avantgarde,” p.24.

⁶⁷² Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, p.61.

⁶⁷³ See especially Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton*, pp.112-114.

⁶⁷⁴ *Rock Musik*, Nr.4 (Hamburg: 1979), p.37.

⁶⁷⁵ Hilsberg, “Neue deutsche Welle,” p.23.

with the Kunstpunks: “Ja, but I didn’t start [making music] just so that someone could categorize me as an Avantgarde. I didn’t expect such a divisive split.”⁶⁷⁶

Sounds was inundated with letters condemning the magazine’s promotion of the more experimental aspects of German punk, even if a handful of readers remained supportive. One writer encouraged the work of Hilsberg and others: “Alfred keep going! Average-Germans forget Disco and Genesis, Led Zepplin!! Make music. New music. GABBA GABBA, HEY”⁶⁷⁷ Another praised the service Hilsberg was providing West Germany and his efforts at keeping Germans informed about modern music: “Keep going! Right on! SOUNDS is performing a great (and not thanked enough) service, pulling many groups out of the shadows of anonymity and making them known. Hopefully, it convinces you [*Sounds*] to maintain the same level [of journalism] despite the comments of shit-heads and ignorant. And thanks also go to Alfred Hilsberg, who tried to present and illuminate the domestic scene. A pioneer!”⁶⁷⁸ But the overwhelming majority of letters *Sounds* printed were unimpressed. Many readers complained that the magazine had abandoned rock’n’roll in favor of noise while another did not understand the energy spent describing “such a short-lived musical fad.”⁶⁷⁹ Some were alienated by the new direction (“With the last edition (10/79) I couldn’t connect with any article. Is it perhaps because the ‘elders’ of rock music can give no more?”), while others tendered their resignations: “The time is ripe, for me to say goodbye to you [*Sounds*]. I actually wanted to stay with you until the end of the year, to complete my three-year *Sounds*-collection but I can’t do it.”⁶⁸⁰ Even the very credibility of the magazine was questioned: one writer charged, “Listen up, earlier you represented honest music

⁶⁷⁶ Hilsberg, “Dicke Titten und Avantgarde,” p.25.

⁶⁷⁷ “SOUNDS: Pro und Kontra,” *Sounds*, Nr.12, December 1979, p.4.

⁶⁷⁸ “SOUNDS: Pro und Kontra,” p.4.

⁶⁷⁹ “Schwarzmalerei, Gefassel & stinkender Punk,” *Sounds*, Nr.11, November 1979, p.4.

⁶⁸⁰ “SOUNDS: Pro und Kontra,” p.4.

and did good work. What's left?"⁶⁸¹ These comments were not simply rhetorical either: when *Sounds* was bought and folded into *MusikExpress* after the January issue of 1983, the magazine's circulation figures had dropped more than a quarter from 40,000 in 1979 to 29,000 by 1983.⁶⁸²

Conclusions

The lyrics to "Computerstaat" by die Abwärts, as we saw above, were an attempt to describe the condition of life in the Federal Republic in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Images of paranoia, fear and danger all paint a picture of a society in the grip of hysteria. But there was more to it than that. The word "Stalingrad" had a particular resonance for Germans, a reference to the encirclement battle during the Second World War that many felt at the time and since was the turning point marking the beginning of the end for the Nazi regime.⁶⁸³ But for lyricist Frank Z and by extension punk, the word and its associations were apt metaphors for West Germany in the late 1970s and early 1980s. As he explained to *Sounds*, "above all, Stalingrad stands for being encircled, 'the cauldron of Stalingrad' that is terribly well-known....and I have this feeling still." "For me, Stalingrad," he continued, "I mean, what my parents told me about the war, that you are in a war, in a complicated murderous thing that could cost you your head, in total war and you are totally cold and encircled and get picked off, and this situation is the same now, you

⁶⁸¹ "Südwarts – dorthin wo der Pfeffer wächst," *Sounds*, Nr.9, September 1979, p.4.

⁶⁸² It is difficult to explicitly link the coverage of punk and the NDW to the magazine's decline. In the early 1980s, *Sounds* was suddenly confronted with a number of competitors that had not existed before such as national fanzines and especially *Spex*, in addition to the rise of music television, which likely siphoned away readership. However, it is also probably true that as *Sounds* delved into alternative musical subcultures (punk, New Wave, rap), that the magazine's earlier rock'n'roll constituency in all likelihood declined.

⁶⁸³ On further references to Nazism in West German popular music, see Ole Löding, "*Deutschland Katastrophenstaat*": *derNationalsozialismus im politischen Song der Bundesrepublik* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2010).

don't see it, but the same can happen to you in five minutes because you live in a system that is completely controlled by computers.”⁶⁸⁴

On the one hand, Frank Z is fusing the 1930s and 1940s with the 1970s and 1980s which was to become the paranoid vision of modern life for Hardcores as we will see (Chapter 7). But more importantly, he is explaining what punk sought to break free from and why the efforts of youths such as die Abwärts are so important. In their attempts to vocalize the consequences of the twentieth-century for contemporary youth, punks sought systematic engagement with their surroundings and their relationships. Their critiques were intended to dramatize the everyday in a manner that suggested not despair but tremendous possibilities for alternate identities and ways of being in the world. Such engagement would be difficult but were necessary if young Germans were to renovate their society and culture; necessary to position German rock'n'roll on the popular music map. In so doing, they turned to the subjective and expressive that the remnants of the Sixties generation had fingered as the cause of their failure. But punks were able to mobilize the personal and everyday, and in so doing, brought about their own revolution. Furthermore, by expressing themselves in German, they sought to establish punk as an authentic platform in the construction of Germanness. Other musicians as we have seen had experimented with German-language lyrics. But it was only after punk, that German lyrics with contemporary significance became comprehensively incorporated into the canon of popular music-making, in the form of the NDW that we will see in Chapter 6. But in order for this to occur, punk needed to nationalize and popularize; the subject of the next chapter.

⁶⁸⁴ Dietrich Diedrichsen, “Abwärts. Amok auf dem Abenteuerspielplatz,” *Sounds*, Nr.2, February 1981, p.30.

Chapter 5: “Ich bin ein T-Shirt”: DIY, Consumerism and the Institutions of Alternative Culture

The Nationalization of West German Punk

In every SOUNDS there is at least a small article about Punk, but always only about those assholes from G. Britain. What the fuck? You probably have no idea what is happening in good old fuckin' Germany, you fuckers. But there is us: the Düsseldorf Punk-Group Male. But of course you do not have the slightest idea! Should we blow smoke up your editors' asses or attack a couple of old men with hand towels until you finally notice us? We're the longest existing, the first German Punk-Group and we will risk everything: we're gonna make it.

“Deutsch-Punks,” *Sounds*, Nr.8, August 1977, p.4

The vitriol-laced August 1977 letter to the editors of *Sounds* by the Solingen (near Düsseldorf) punk band Male announced the existence of the German punk scene to the world. The search for origins are central to structuring the history and understanding of popular music since claims of ‘first’ turn precisely on the authenticity that originality bestows upon the inventors, and the West German punk case is no different.⁶⁸⁵ Self-propagated myths speak of Jäki Eldorado and Gudrun Gut in West Berlin as the first German punks.⁶⁸⁶ Letter-writers Male formed in December of 1976, at the same time as the Big Balls in Hamburg, the latter going on (infamously) with the Straßenjungs to become despised industry punk bands (see Chapter 6).⁶⁸⁷ Others point to Franz Bielmeier, Ramon Luis, and later Peter Hein, authors of the fanzine *The Ostrich*, first published

⁶⁸⁵ Compare with the search for the origins of the blues. See Marybeth Hamilton, *In Search of the Blues* (New York: Basic Books, 2008).

⁶⁸⁶ Jürgen Teipel, *Verschwende Deine Jugend: Ein Doku-Roman über den deutschen Punk und New Wave* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001), pp.43, 64. Christian Mevs, guitarist for Slime, learned from the mainstream press that Jäki Eldorado ‘invented’ punk in West Germany. See Michele Avantario, “1977-1987: Von Krawall bis Totenschiff. Punk, New Wave und Hardcore,” in *Läden, Schuppen, Kaschemmen: Eine Hamburger Popkulturgeschichte*, ed., Christoph Twickel (Hamburg: Edition Nautilus, 2003), p.49.

⁶⁸⁷ Jürgen Stark and Michael Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel? Punk – New Wave – Neue Welle* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Freie Gesellschaft, 1981), pp.126, 136, 234; Hollow Skai, *Alles nur geträumt: Fluch und Segen der Neuen Deutschen Welle* (Innsbruck: Hannibal, 2009), p.39; “Das Male-Interview,” in *Rock Session 4: Magazin der populären Musik*, ed., Klaus Humann and Carl-Ludwig Reichert (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1980), p.189.

in March 1977, as the real originators of punk in Germany.⁶⁸⁸ But PVC, the first West Berlin punk band, had already formed in February 1977 immediately after attending a show by UK act The Vibrators at the Kant Kino and would play their first live show within months.⁶⁸⁹

Meanwhile, in the Bavarian capital, bands such as United Balls and later Pack were entertaining Münchenerers in the mid-1970s, though only near the end of the decade did their music evolved recognizably into punk.⁶⁹⁰ As in the US and UK cases, there is no agreed upon founding date for West German punk, a situation lending itself easily to myth as rivals have since jostled for the crown.

While the precise moment when punk captured the imagination of individual German youths remains personal, a strong case can be made for August 1977 as the moment when the German punk scene began to emerge—to borrow Benedict Anderson’s classic terminology—as an imagined community among youths in the Federal Republic.⁶⁹¹ In the same month that Janie Jones and Mary Lou Monroe were riding the rails down to Mont-de-Marsan, the letter published in *Sounds* marked the birth of punk in West Germany. By suggesting that the editors had no idea “what is happening in good old fuckin’ Germany,” Male spoke to networks of shared beliefs, burgeoning institutional structures, and alternative forms of community that by 1980 had spread across the nation. Critically, by asking whether German punks must attack people like their English peers to get any press, Male not only chided the media’s obsessions with UK punk, but crucially marked off the boundaries of a specifically German punk scene; an assemblage then unknown to authorities—so claimed Male—but one bursting with energy, and fundamentally

⁶⁸⁸ Martin Büsser, “The Ostrich – Ein Fanzine Aus Düsseldorf,” *Intro*, Nr.97, August 2002, p.30.

⁶⁸⁹ Alfred Hilsberg, “Rodenkirchen is burning – Krautpunk,” *Sounds*, Nr.3, March 1978, p.24; Stark and Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel?* p.71; and Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.71.

⁶⁹⁰ See “Punk in Munchen – Teil 1” *Kruzefix*, Nr.1 (Munich: 1997), pp.14-27; and *Mia san dageng! Punk in München, der original Kinofilm* (DVD, directors Olli Nauerz, Katz Seger, and Michael Bentele, 2008).

⁶⁹¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London and New York: Verso, 1991).

different from the scandalous—but ultimately juvenile—UK acts that journalists seemed so eager to document. Male's letter signalled the existence of the West German punk scene to the world and an insistent demand that culture-brokers had best pay attention.

Within a year of Male's declaration, punk bands and fans were making their presence felt on German streets in cities all across the Federal Republic. Extending deep into the provinces, hundreds of smaller scenes sprang up in various cities and regions throughout West Germany. While Düsseldorf, Hamburg, and West Berlin remained the main musical centers, innumerable smaller metropolitan capitals such as Hanover, Munich, Frankfurt, Bremen, Cologne, Duisburg, Stuttgart, Münster—even Hagen which, according to *Bravo*, was the “German Liverpool”—were increasingly producing the most innovative and daring music.⁶⁹² Alternative record stores and clubs were opened to meet the growing demand for punk as youths quickly founded bands, wrote songs, and began performing in front of audiences from Kiel to Konstanz. By 1980, German punk albums were hitting turntables, playing on the radio, and even finding resonance across the Channel in the UK and the Atlantic in the America. Ampermoching, a tiny village 30 kilometres outside of Munich but accessible at the outer limits of the streetcar network, hosted numerous concerts at the Gasthaus zur Post restaurant, becoming the go-to center for punk in the Bavarian capital after the Autonomous Milbertshofen Center (the Milb) closed in the Altstadt in 1979.⁶⁹³ Small business operations such as Mike Just's Starving Missile mail-order enterprise that he ran out of the bedroom in his parents' home began supplying punks across the nation with hard-to-find imports and bootlegged records.⁶⁹⁴ Fanzine production ramped up so that by 1983, critics

⁶⁹² Cited in Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.138.

⁶⁹³ “Punk in München – Teil II,” *Kruzeifix*, Nr.2 (Munich: 1997), p.27.

⁶⁹⁴ Kalle Stille, “Mike Just: Die Geschichte von Starving Missile Records,” *Ox-Fanzine*, Nr.73 (Haan: August/September 2007), pp.38-39.

were pointing to over three hundred titles circulating in the Federal Republic.⁶⁹⁵ Big name foreign bands such as the Dead Kennedys and Black Flag began touring across West Germany and indigenous punk rock acts such as Malaria! and D.A.F. were playing packed shows in London and New York City. Record sales boomed: Hanover's Hans-a-plast sold 100,000 copies of their first two independently produced LPs and dozens of bands began entering studios and releasing albums and singles.⁶⁹⁶ By the early 1980s, German punk was so firmly entrenched within the musical and cultural landscape of the Federal Republic that Hilsberg's gleefully crowed claim that had once seemed so outlandish in 1978 now seemed prophetic: "The Revolution is over – and we have won!"⁶⁹⁷

How do we explain the explosion of punk in West Germany in the early 1980s? What is the significance of this expansion? By looking at those institutions, structures, and networks that drove the expansion and popularity of punk in West Germany—fanzines, album production, record stores—we can get a sense of how notions of independence and the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) ethos helped establish and grow the subculture. As punk penetrated the populous cities of the Federal Republic, the new sounds and innovative approaches to life demanded new institutions and associations to fuse likeminded individuals into alternative formations and communities that were national rather than personal. Perhaps the most long-lasting achievement of punk was the genre's ability to found alternative cultural institutions based in DIY and anti-authoritarianism, notions rooted in the social and political ideals of the 1960s.⁶⁹⁸ Paradoxically, many of these nationalizing activities contradicted basic tenets of the subculture, exposing the inconsistencies

⁶⁹⁵ See Paul Ott und Hollow Skai, eds., *Wir waren Helden für einen Tag: Aus deutschsprachigen Punk-Fanzines 1977-1981* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1983).

⁶⁹⁶ Frank A. Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging: Von Punk zu NDW* (Mainz: Ventil Verlag, 2007), p.190.

⁶⁹⁷ Alfred Hilsberg, "Die Revolution ist vorbei – wir haben gesiegt!" *Sounds*, Nr.2, February 1978, pp.32-36.

⁶⁹⁸ Arthur Marwick has pointed to the 'entrepreneurial spirit' as one of the most defining if underlooked aspects of the 1960s generation. Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958-c.1974* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), esp. pp.13-14, 17.

inherent within the genre, which in turn fuelled the growing schism within the German punk scene. As we will see shortly, consumptive activities—taking in concerts, producing and selling music, trading fanzines—were central to the daily rhythms of the genre and played a vital role in the expansion of the subculture. Yet at the same time, these practices were deplored by youths ideologically as bourgeois and conformist, and as such, expansion, while spreading punk throughout West Germany, raised questions about compromise, conformity, and collaboration; the very issues plaguing rock’n’roll that punk authenticity was purporting to rebel against.

In his articles, concerts, and exhibitions, Hilsberg had identified DIY along with German lyrics and rhythms as the central component of alternative music-making necessary to cultivate a distinct national popular music culture. DIY as an ethos began in the 1950s, and was used to describe home improvement projects that individuals could complete independently. A decade later, DIY was reappropriated by the 1960s generation politically as part of their larger critique of contemporary consumer society and a number of initiatives such as food co-ops, drug self-help centers and alternative publications were initiated by student radicals attempting to create a counter-culture in opposition to mainstream society.⁶⁹⁹ The appropriation of DIY by the student movement in the 1960s was to have a singular lasting effect on the concept: after the 1960s, DIY was mobilized almost universally as a critique of consumer capitalism and associated political with the Left. The idea was that DIY projects were more fulfilling because they involved the individual in an experiential exploration rather than the alienation formed by purchasing a good

⁶⁹⁹ While there are plenty of specific studies, there is no comprehensive history of the concept of DIY and its many movements. For an introduction, see George McKay, ed., *DiY Culture: Party & Protest in Nineties Britain* (London: Verso, 1998); and George McKay, *Senseless Acts of Beauty: Cultures of Resistance since the Sixties* (London and New York: Verso, 1996). On DIY and punk, see Teal Triggs, *Fanzines: The DIY Revolution* (San Francisco, Calif.: Chronicle Books, 2010); Alan O’Connor, *Punk Record Labels and the Struggle for Autonomy: The Emergence of DIY* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008); and Amy Spencer, *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture* (London and New York: Marion Boyars, 2005). On West Germany and DIY initiatives, see Robert P. Stephens, *Germans on Drugs: The Complications of Modernization in Hamburg* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007); and Sabine von Dirke, “All Power to the Imagination!”: *The West German Counterculture from the Student Movement to the Greens* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).

or service produced in mass. By building or creating something oneself—so the idea went—the individual could free themselves from the ideologies and structures of power, oppression, and estrangement that were associated with mass consumerism, and thus retain a sense of autonomy and individuality. By the mid-1970s, DIY as a concept and practice was a pillar of alternative culture, one that punks in both America and the United Kingdom gravitated towards.

In prior chapters we have explored how DIY inspired youths to pick up instruments and participate in the punk subculture. In what follows, we can see how DIY activism was able to bring about the structures of punk that enabled the subculture to flourish in the Federal Republic. DIY was especially appealing to Hardcores who understood the genre as a social movement and who worked hard to set up alternative clubs where bands could play, record labels and stores to produce and distribute music, and fanzines to link the local scenes together. By exploring the various institutions and communication networks that punk helped call into being to support the growing national scene, we can see how DIY and grass-roots activism were realized in practice by the subculture. These institutions became the bedrock of the subculture that expanded rapidly in the 1980s, and has remained strong until the present. But success was increasingly contested and debates over the dimensions of the subculture—what constituted acceptable punk practices?—illustrates how notions of authenticity shaped alternative praxis and exposed the often irreconcilable contradictions that coursed throughout the genre.

The Problem of Success: Fanzines in the West German Punk Scene

and now to ENDLÖSUNG nr.12. now it is completely definitive: the ENDLÖSUNG distances itself ever further from what it once was—a fanzine! with a circulation figure of 2000 copies, distributed throughout the entire frg and across its borders, to call it a “magazine” would be closer to the mark. fanzines have always been (and should also remain, for heaven’s sake!) regional. but the EL drifts ever more in the direction of spex...i would prefer to remain with

FEHLVERSUCH/PLATZANGST anonymous (or better: more anonymous than benno and his EL), but nonetheless INDEPENDENT!

Fehlversuch/Platzangst, Nr.5 (Wilhelmshaven: 1982), n.p.

The critical necessity for the emergence of a local punk scene was a space or network that could link like-minded individuals together. These took various forms, structures that often adapted older Sixties models and reworked them along newer punk lines. In Hanover, Hollow Skai, an older student radical, published more than forty editions of the prominent fanzine *No Fun* that reached as far afield as North America.⁷⁰⁰ Later founding one of the first independent record labels in West Germany—No Fun Records—with members of Hans-a-plast, Skai used his authority to promote numerous local endeavours such as the various No Fun Festivals and local bands such as Rotzkotz.⁷⁰¹ In Bremen, ‘Benno Blittersdorf’ published the *Endlösung* which had reached a circulation figure of two thousand copies and was nationally distributed by 1982.⁷⁰² Equally important were punk-friendly concert sites and cities that developed these spaces often witnessed a vibrant local scene. We have already seen the importance of the Ratinger Hof and SO 36 for the Düsseldorf and West Berlin scenes but beginning in 1979, comparable spaces were carved out in cities across the Federal Republic. Some were old alternative or autonomous youth centers such as the Eschhaus in Duisburg or the Worker and Youth Center in Bielefeld that began hosting punk nights several times per month. Others were long-time concert venues such as the Batschkapp in Frankfurt or the Okie Dokie in Neuss outside of Düsseldorf. Similarly, independent record stores carrying import punk singles and LPs from the UK and America—But,

⁷⁰⁰ Stefan Kleiber, “Fanzines. Eine der letzten Alternativen,” in *Fanzines. Wissenschaftliche Betrachtungen zum Thema*, ed., Jens Neumann (Mainz: Ventil Verlag, 1997), p.55.

⁷⁰¹ The first independent record label in West Germany was David’s Volksmund set up by members of Ton Steine Scherben. See Timothy S. Brown, “Music as a Weapon? *Ton Steine Scherben* and the Politics of Rock in Cold War Berlin,” *Germanic Studies Review*, Vol.32, Nr.1 (February 2009), pp.1-22.

⁷⁰² *Endlösung*, Nr.12 (Bremen: 1982), p.2.

Is It Normal? in Bonn, for example, or Plop in Essen—helped to glue together local and regional scenes, and clubs and businesses attracted punks from across the country who often travelled sizeable distances to shop or watch their favourite bands play live: domestic punk tourism thus played a considerable role in spreading the alternative gospel across the country, just as foreign punk tourism had brought punk to West Germany in the first place.⁷⁰³ Generally, a frequent place to play, practice, or gather usually equalled the founding of a number of bands which in turn meant concerts and thus the existence of a thriving local punk scene. While not every city could boast a Hollow Skai or an Okie Dokie to co-ordinate local activities, by the early 1980s, punk scenes were established across the West German hinterland.

Take Wilhelmshaven. A small town located in Lower Saxony on the North Sea coast and a population of approximately 75,000, Wilhelmshaven is an hour drive to Bremen and two-hours to either Hanover or Hamburg. As the third-largest port in Germany, Wilhelmshaven was heavily industrial during the 1970s and 1980s, but not exactly culturally vibrant. Despite these inauspicious beginnings, Wilhelmshaven produced a thriving punk scene during the early 1980s. Central were the efforts of a number of fanzine writers, club owners, and local activists. The collaborative fanzine *Fehlversuch/Platzangst* began in early 1981 and six issues were published over the course of the next couple of years. Others in the region likewise joined in: *Kamikaze* in Varel; *Altenhofer Regelblatt* in Sande; *Der Letzte Dreck*, *Der Ramsch*, and *V.B.* in Oldenburg; and *Kahlschlag*, *Aktinomzkose durch Ultramontanismus*, *Die Anonyme Alkoholiker*, *Stoßgebet*, *Die Form* and *Mosender Abschaum* from Wilhelmshaven proper. Combined, the fanzines kept locals informed about up-coming shows, national trends, and local debates. Two concert halls became critical to the vitality of the scene and numerous German and foreign bands performed in the record store *Schaardreieck* that hosted concerts at night and the *Pumpwerk Youth Center*, one

⁷⁰³ See *Ungewollt*, Nr.17 (Duisburg: 1982), n.p.

of the oldest alternative cultural centers in the FRG. Both concert venues became a staple of the north German touring circuit as bands playing in Bremen or Hamburg would stop on their way down into the Ruhr, especially Hardcore acts such as Slime, die Abwärts, Toxoplasma, EA80, the Buttocks, and others. Even old hands like Hans-a-plast that had toured the entire Federal Republic loved going to Wilhelmshaven because the scene was very active. According to lead singer Annette Benjamin, even though Wilhelmshaven was not large, “...it is actually BIG....We came here and they were looking forward to see us....They were incredibly into the music, they shouted and shrieked; they cared and in general showed a lot of interest.”⁷⁰⁴

These observations on Wilhelmshaven indicate the importance of media networks in disseminating the genre into the provinces and alternative institutional structures in facilitating the consolidation and expansion of the West German punk scene. Following “Aus grauer Städte Mauern,” *Sounds* threw its full support behind punk. In February 1980, Hilsberg’s column “neuestes deutschland” debuted in *Sounds* and, as Frank Schneider observes, was almost single-handedly responsible for stitching together the patchwork West German scene into a national entity.⁷⁰⁵ Running for two years in each issue, “neuestes deutschland” was crucial in linking the diverse city scenes together because Hilsberg would publish various news and notes about the national scene—up-coming concert dates, who was recording, new bands forming—that youths from around the country sent in to him and addresses for punks to get in touch with one another. In the album reviews section, Hilsberg alerted punks to worthwhile new recordings, especially important for youths in provincial towns because they usually needed to order the record unheard directly from mail order enterprises. Hilsberg also wrote a number of articles on related

⁷⁰⁴ Günter Franzen and Boris Penth, *Last Exist. Punk: Leben im toten Herz der Städte* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1982), p.73.

⁷⁰⁵ Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, p.112.

issues to punk—a two-part article on bootlegging, for example, another on independent record production—extolling the DIY aspects of punk.⁷⁰⁶

Nor was Hilsberg alone at *Sounds* but represented a wave of outspoken adherents for the new music. In an effort to bolster flagging sales, the magazine had revamped its editorial line-up in July 1979 that ushered in a number of younger writers such as Diedrich Diedrichsen, Hans Keller and Michael Ruff who were sympathetic to the new music while reducing the influence of older figures such as Jörg Gülden. The album reviews section was especially important in the early years since punk records came in small pressing runs with little advertising. As such, Keller, Ruff, Hilsberg, and others wielded disproportionate influence on the listening habits of *Sounds* readers, and their punk tastes came to define certain aspects of the subculture: a dominance provoking outrage that even a cursory glance at the letters to the editor indicates. Reviews almost universally celebrated German-language lyrics and imaginative sounds while bands singing in English rarely found favor. Hilsberg on the Razors' first LP: "From cover to penultimate song, the local matadors present themselves as a bundle of clichés. Loud and fast rhythms with simple English lyrics."⁷⁰⁷ By contrast, in a review of the Salinos EP (who had been greeted with sarcastic whistling by the Hamburg crowd at 'Geräusche für die 80er'⁷⁰⁸), Keller wrote that what in particular excited him was "the sense of cryptic humor that comes across, a rarity in the otherwise stupid and beer-drenched German Punk Scene. The Salinos of course employ German confidently and in a completely natural manner."⁷⁰⁹ The DIY aspect of punk was another aspect that came in for heavy praise by *Sounds* reviewers. For Diedrichsen, it was

⁷⁰⁶ See, for example, Alfred Hilsberg, "Bootlegging: Kleine Löcker im System," *Sounds*, Nr.7, July 1979, pp.28-33; Alfred Hilsberg, "Bootlegging: Kleine Löcker im System Teil 2," *Sounds*, Nr.8, August 1979, pp.28-31; and Alfred Hilsberg, "Vom unabhängigen Schallplattenproduzieren...," *Sounds*, Nr.7, July 1980, pp.32-33.

⁷⁰⁷ Alfred Hilsberg, "Review: The Razors," *Sounds*, Nr.6, June 1980, p.74.

⁷⁰⁸ *Antz*, Nr.3 (Augsburg: 1980), p.4.

⁷⁰⁹ Hans Keller, "Review: Die Salinos," *Sounds*, Nr. 8, August 1979, p.60.

‘Geräusche für die 80er’ that opened his eyes to the possibilities of punk: “Enlightenment came to me first at ‘Geräusche für die 80er’. This: everyone can do it! Suddenly I experienced it as a mad effect, as if one of my friends stood on the stage. I thought: ‘Exactly! It is much better when one does it oneself than when one buys products.’”⁷¹⁰ The association between punk and *Sounds* was so deep that many of the writers also played in punk bands: Keller and Ruff were in die Geisterfahrer; Diedrichson was in Nachdenkliche Wehrpflicht; and his brother Detlef Diedrichson was in die Zimmermänner. In fact, only Hilsberg remained musically unaffiliated.

While the journalists at *Sounds* were important initially in organizing and disseminating the genre, they were quickly surpassed by the pressure coming from below that drove punk expansion following the initial push given by “Aus grauer Städte Mauren.” Once again dearth—the lack of information about punk—was critical in developing the most important punk communication medium, the fanzine. Linguistically a mixture of ‘fan’ and ‘magazine,’ the fanzine was a means by which individuals could participate in and direct larger cultural formations.⁷¹¹ Hand-made pamphlets or photocopied info-sheets, fanzines ranged anywhere from a dozen to over one hundred pages in length, were filled with dense text and images that were glued haphazardly into collages, a form linking punk to Dada and other avant-garde art movements of the twentieth-century.⁷¹² The result was often a dizzying array of juxtaposed images and texts meant to express the author’s sensibilities that often looked more like a ransom note than a magazine. With their short sentences, spelling mistakes, cross-outs, and hand drawn cartoons, fanzines were breathless in their attempts to capture the moment: as Dick Hebdige once

⁷¹⁰ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.210.

⁷¹¹ On fanzines, see Triggs, *Fanzines*; Spencer, *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture*; Stephen Duncombe, *Notes From Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture* (London and New York: Verso, 1997); Kleiber, “Fanzines. Eine der letzten Alternativen;” and Fredric Wertham, *The World of Fanzines: A Special Form of Communication* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973).

⁷¹² Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

observed, fanzines are marked overwhelmingly by “urgency and immediacy, of a paper produced in indecent haste, of memos from the front line.”⁷¹³ First appearing among science fiction fans in the 1930s, the fanzine became a form by which small interest groups could communicate among one another about subject matter ignored by mainstream media. In the 1960s, the fanzine was appropriated politically by students and members of the New Left who sought to use alternative media to wrest control of the public sphere away from the mainstream press, to create a *Gegenöffentlichkeit*, or alternative public sphere.⁷¹⁴ In the US and the UK, fanzines were heavily responsible for the emergence and establishment of punk. In January 1976, John Holmstrom published the first US punk fanzine entitled—fittingly—*Punk Magazine*.⁷¹⁵ The following July, Mark Perry, a bored bank teller in London wanted to write about the local music scene that was receiving scant attention by the media and started *Sniffin’ Glue* which, by its last issue a year later, had a worldwide circulation figure of twenty thousand.⁷¹⁶ An economical means to convey information, fanzines were the ultimate example of the disposable nature of modern consumer society: printed on cheap paper, the fanzine was meant to be read once and thrown away.

As media not dependent on advertising, fanzines were subjective, autonomous, and part of the linguistic move towards detailing everyday life that we examined lyrically in Chapter 4. Featuring reports on punk bands, interviews with musicians, and rants about life, fanzines were critical in disseminating punk at a time when the mainstream media with few exceptions ignored

⁷¹³ Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style* (New York & London: Routledge, 1979), p.111.

⁷¹⁴ There is considerable debate as to whether the punk fanzine culture likewise created a *Gegenöffentlichkeit*. For those in support, see Bernd Hahn and Holger Schindler, *Punk – die zarteste Versuchung, seit es Schokolade gibt* (Hamburg: Buntbuch Verlag, 1983), p.151; and Hollow Skai, *Punk: Versuch der künstlerischen Realisierung einer neuen Lebenshaltung*, reprint (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen, 2008), p.103. For those against, see Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, p.119. Justin Hoffmann has instead suggests the fanzine is a form of “autonomous media.” See Ulrike Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton: Die Anfänge von Punk und New Wave in Deutschland 1977-’82* (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2002), pp.161-162.

⁷¹⁵ Reprinted issues are collected in John Holmstrom, *The Best of Punk Magazine* (New York: HarperCollins, 2012).

⁷¹⁶ Hilsberg, “Die Revolution ist vorbei,” p.34. See the collected issues of *Sniffin’ Glue* in Mark Perry, *Sniffin’ Glue: The Essential Punk Accessory*, ed., Terry Rawlings (London: Sanctuary House, 2000).

the subculture, and their subjective viewpoint gave fanzines a sense of authenticity lacking in the mainstream press. According to an early study of West German punk fanzines, “The language is very direct, laid-back and simple that is actually really honest, in contrast, for example, to the slimy language used by *Sounds* (which also fondly uses a ‘personal touch’).”⁷¹⁷ Moreover, their very portability (small folded sheets that could fit in a pocket) meant that fanzines could easily pass around a local scene or be sent by mail across the country: authors would even move up and down concert line-ups selling their fanzines in hopes of raising enough money to buy a ticket to attend the evening’s performance.⁷¹⁸ Technologically, the proliferation of more affordable photocopiers in the latter half of the 1970s was critical for producing fanzines relatively quickly and the ability to double-side photocopied sheets and shrink text, developed in 1981, only hastened these developments.⁷¹⁹ Furthermore, the production and distribution of fanzines allowed individuals to collapse time and space because now those far away from the urban centers could begin participating in the same debates and trends that were at times difficult to experience physically, a crucial development in nationalizing the West German punk scene: Kalle-Heinz Stille, author of *Vollstuff* and *Think?* among others, remembers that, “Thanks to the mail and fanzines, one was never completely separated from the action and understood very well the impulses and events from other regions.”⁷²⁰

The fanzine was a revolutionary way to reimagine independence and self-expression.

Taking anywhere from a week to a year, fanzine authors created elaborate personas to reinvent

⁷¹⁷ Mansur Niknam, “Fanzines,” in *Rock Session 4: Magazin der populären Musik*, eds., Klaus Humann and Carl-Ludwig Reichert (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1980), p.198.

⁷¹⁸ See *Out of Step*, Nr.4 (Dortmund: 1985), n.p.

⁷¹⁹ See Bryan Ray Turcotte and Christopher T. Miller, *Fucked Up + Photocopied: Instant Art of the Punk Rock Movement* (Berkeley, CA: Gingko Press, 1999); and Klaus Urbons, *Copy Art. Kunst und Design mit dem Fotokopierer* (Cologne: DuMont, 1991).

⁷²⁰ IG Dreck auf Papier, ed. *Keine Zukunft war Gestern: Punk in Deutschland* (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen, 2008), p.51. See also *Der Aktueller Mülleimer*, Nr.1 (Böblingen: 1980), p.4; and *The Anschlag*, Nr.1 (Hamburg: 1979), p.2.

themselves in the guise of cultural critics: Kid P, Johnny Ego, and Walter Altruck are just a few of the early authors of West German fanzines.⁷²¹ The denial of objectivity authorized a radical subjectivity that gave texts a sense of originality and authenticity that the mainstream press lacked: Janie Jones even claimed that many of the ‘interviews’ appearing in *The Ostrich* were simply made up.⁷²² The point was not factuality but diverse opinion and heated discussion. As fanzine author Hollow Skai argued in an early study of punk, fanzines were “a democratization of the expression of opinion.”⁷²³ By freeing musical criticism from the mainstream press, fanzines sought to break journalist control of cultural criticism such as that exerted by *Sounds* just as punk sought to break musically with rock’n’roll: according to Robert Fischer, creator of Europe’s first popular music fanzine *Minimal Rock* in December 1976, “For me, the typewriter and the mailbox became what the guitar and amplifier are to the new-born rockers.”⁷²⁴ Subjective reports allowed fanzine authors to question traditional divisions such as the relationship between “spectator and participant,” and also, according to Skai, “the social conditions under which both lived.”⁷²⁵ Personal, subjective, a labor of love, the fanzine was a form free from controlling interests and thus understood as a more genuine and autonomous expression of the individual.

The earliest German fanzines from 1977 and 1978 were produced in very small numbers (no more than 100 copies) and almost exclusively written for and distributed within a local city scene. *The Ostrich*—first published in Düsseldorf in March 1977 with 50 copies—claims top-

⁷²¹ Authors of *Preiserhöhung*, *The Anschlag*, and *N.O.E.* respectively.

⁷²² Both Sabine von Dirke and Richard McCormick have likewise pointed to the rise of subjectivity in the 1970s. See von Dirke, “*All Power to the Imagination!*”; and Richard McCormick, *Politics of the Self: Feminism and the Postmodern in West German Literature and Film* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

⁷²³ Skai, *Punk: Versuch der künstlerischen Realisierung*, p.105.

⁷²⁴ Ott und Skai, eds., *Wir waren Helden für einen Tag*, p.76.

⁷²⁵ Skai, *Punk: Versuch der künstlerischen Realisierung*, p.103.

honors as the first West German fanzine.⁷²⁶ Created by Franz Bielmeier and Ramon Luis, *The Ostrich* became a model for the burgeoning German punk scene. At first, *The Ostrich* and other early fanzines were intended to promote a punk band or a local scene that was often more fantasy than reality: *The Ostrich* spent its early issues hyping Charley's Girls, a band that existed almost exclusively in Bielmeier's head. As Bielmeier recalled years later, he wanted to become famous and sought to create a star cult around himself with the fanzine.⁷²⁷ However, very quickly, fanzine authors began envisioning the medium as an alternative to the mainstream press then ignoring the genre: in the days when the only regular German media outlet reporting on punk (*Sounds*) was published once a month, the speed with which fanzines could hit the streets was ground-breaking.⁷²⁸ Fanzine authors began reaching out beyond their specific locales to connect with like-minded youths in other city-scenes: by the third issue when Janie Jones began writing for *The Ostrich*, the orientation began to refocus on the Düsseldorf scene and the West German movement more generally; as with singing, fanzines likewise began to write "über Deutschland." Unhappy with the mainstream's definition of 'good music,' fanzine authors hoped to break the media monopoly by focusing on bands and scenes denied a voice, and thereby diversify German popular music: as one fanzine writer wrote, "Monopoly is monotonous."⁷²⁹ As the West German punk scene nationalized in 1980 and 1981, fanzines were instrumental in this process.

Beginning in 1979 but especially in 1980, fanzine production ramped up. Inspired by early trendsetters—*The Ostrich*, *Heimatblatt*, *No Fun* and others—youths outside Düsseldorf, Hamburg or West Berlin began creating their own fanzines and transformed punk from a diffuse collection of city-scenes into a national movement. Ralph Wonisch in Augsburg created *Ants*

⁷²⁶ Büsser, "The Ostrich – Ein Fanzine Aus Düsseldorf," p.30.

⁷²⁷ Teipel, *Verschwenne*, p.32.

⁷²⁸ See *Der Arsch der Welt*, Nr.23 (Düsseldorf: 1978), p.19; and *Pretty Vacant*, Nr.5 (Hamburg: 1979), p.2.

⁷²⁹ *Deutschlands Ruhmeshalle*, Nr.3 (Düsseldorf: 1980), n.p. See also Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton*, p.161.

(later changed to *Antz* because the ‘s’ in the title resembled an SS-rune according to federal authorities), the ‘First Bayrisch, Schwäbisch Fanzine’ in 1980 and sought to establish a voice for the provinces.⁷³⁰ Thomas Ziegler in Böblingen (near Stuttgart) published 600 copies of the first issue of *Der Aktueller Mülleimer* in 1980 and by its third incarnation, the fanzine was moving over a thousand copies across the country.⁷³¹ Eugen Honold’s *Pretty Vacant* in Hamburg hit 1,500 copies by issue number six and 3,000 by number eight in 1981.⁷³² Across West Germany, fanzine production increased as did the numbers of copies per title. Whereas in 1979 about four dozen fanzines were produced with most circulating no more than 100 copies per title, already by 1980, over one hundred different fanzine titles were being produced annually and many had circulation figures in the thousands. These numbers speak to the increasing demands of the West German punk scene. As fanzines expanded their coverage, no longer content to comment strictly on local happenings, they became regional—then national—and began connecting city-scenes and individuals from diverse locales, and in so doing, increasingly drew author and reader into discussions about the shape of the emerging national community, especially as the tight punk scene began to splinter under the pressure of popularity and expansion.

The shift away from local to regional and later national coverage sparked increasing complaints that fanzines were betraying many of punk’s ideological impulses, and the quote from the authors of *Fehlversuch/Platzangst* about the *Endlösung* that opened this section remind us that many were unhappy with expansion. Accusations of leadership and personality-cults that punks used to hurl at rock stars were now redirected at fanzine authors whom—it was felt—had overstepped their boundaries (though as we saw with Bielmeier, this had been the original intent). The focus of condemnation was that these new fanzines were becoming too professional,

⁷³⁰ *Antz*, Nr.4 (Augsburg: 1980), p.2.

⁷³¹ *Der Aktueller Mülleimer*, Nr.3 (Böblingen: 1980), n.p.

⁷³² *Pretty Vacant*, Nr.6 (Hamburg: 1980), p.3; and *Pretty Vacant*, Nr.8 (Hamburg: 1981), p.3.

that they were no longer expressions of personal authenticity but geared towards a mass audience and profit.⁷³³ Because fanzines were so subjective and personal—often including jokes that only members of the local scene would understand—any move beyond the narrow vicinity of a local scene was greeted with suspicion; the national network was supposed to reflect a wider variety of localities and not one single homogenized mass. In an article in *Sounds*, Hollow Skai claimed that “[f]anzines that have big circulation numbers are boring anyway” because authors start to “write for umpteenth idiots that you don’t know. And then you write in a completely different manner.”⁷³⁴ The belief that massification necessitated homogeneity dominated the discourse on popularity; and since punk prided itself ideologically on individuality and heterogeneity, the expansion of the genre was viewed by some as a suspect endeavor, even a dangerous one.

By 1982 and 1983, as the number of fanzines continued to rise, several big publications hit the market. Not only the number of different titles and issues rose, but especially the numbers of copies per issue. Fanzines such as *No Fun*, *Kabeljau*, and *A&P* all had large circulation figures and high price tags to the consternation of many.⁷³⁵ By issue twelve, the *Endlösung* was publishing scene reports from all across the country and people were ascribing hegemonic designs to ‘Benno Blittersdorf.’⁷³⁶ *Lautt*, a southern fanzine oriented more towards experimental New Wave and Post-punk, was published with a color cover which detractors felt was too slick.⁷³⁷ Critics wondered what distinguished these new publications from the mainstream press, as the original idea behind the fanzine was to offer an alternative: as authors of *Alles Tot!* wrote in reference to the *Endlösung*, “sometimes I wonder if one can still speak of a fanzine?”⁷³⁸

⁷³³ See, for example, the comments on the *Endlösung* in *Schandtat*, Nr.1 (Hamburg: 1982), n.p.

⁷³⁴ Michael O.R. Kröher, “Untergrund und Unternehmer (Teil 1),” *Sounds*, Nr.9, September 1980, p.49.

⁷³⁵ *A&P*, Nr.3 (Wuppertal: 1985), p.3; and *Das Statussymbol*, Nr.2 (Fürth: 1985), n.p.

⁷³⁶ See the letters published in *Endlösung*, Nr.12 (Bremen: 1982), p.2.

⁷³⁷ *Der Ketzer*, Nr.4 (Darmstadt: 1983), p.14. For a consideration of why *Lautt* failed, see *Banzai*, Nr.12 (Wildberg: 1984), p.17.

⁷³⁸ *Alles Tot!*, Nr.6 (Rinteln: 1980), n.p.

These discussions reflected a growing uncertainty among punks about whether expansion of the genre was desirable as participants were suddenly confronted with the consequences of success.

The Means of Cultural Production: Record Labels and West German Punk

The growing nationalization of punk only increased as bands began cutting records. As we will see in Chapter 6, major labels in West Germany had shied away from punk since 1977, and unlike in the British case where punk bands were quickly signed and began releasing singles already in the fall of 1976, in the Federal Republic, the wait was much longer. Without the financial support of major labels, burgeoning punk bands in the late 1970s could rarely afford to record and release albums whose costs in West Germany were prohibitively higher than in England: for example, according to a representative from WEA, the costs to produce a good album in Germany ranged anywhere from 50,000 to 150,000 DM since studio time alone ran as high as 200 DM an hour.⁷³⁹ The scarcity of indigenously produced music explains part of the focus on UK-released music in the first couple of years in the Federal Republic. As such, until 1979, the Federal Republic punk scene was primarily experienced live since going to see bands play was the only way to consume West German punk. Bands had not thought particularly hard about recording either in the early years since studio work had been a major punk critique of 1970s rock culture.⁷⁴⁰ The dearth of German punk music was a powerful impetus towards the creation of independent record labels to rectify this deficiency since demand clearly existed: in the *Heimatblatt* fanzine, the authors complained (in 1979), that until the Male EP that year,

⁷³⁹ *Rock Musik*, Nr.2 (Hamburg: 1979), p.14. The high cost was due, in part, because the recording infrastructure in West Germany was not set up for smaller independent bands to record and release albums, a situation which punk would help change.

⁷⁴⁰ Hilsberg, "Rodenkirchen is burning – Krautpunk," p.22.

German youths were forced to settle for (German) records from “long haired rockers.”⁷⁴¹ Since smaller independent labels such as those in the UK (Rough Trade, Stiff, or Sire, for example) did not exist in West Germany, a number of the Hilsberg’s ‘doers’ began forming their own small independent record labels and started recording German punk. In the creation of a large network of independent record labels, studio recordings and production experiences, we can see vividly the practical application of punk DIY initiatives as well as the continuities to older 1960s ideas about self-organization, artistic autonomy, and independent production.⁷⁴²

Beginning in 1979, a number of independent record labels were formed throughout the Federal Republic to meet the growing demand by producers and consumers of German punk that accompanied expansion into the provinces. Sometimes individual bands (Phosphor, for example, in Hanover) created their own label (Spargel Schallplatten) to release their records, while at other times, record stores (Zensor, in West Berlin) helped local acts with funding to pay for recording and production costs. In West Berlin, Tempo Records and Monogam began releasing a number of singles and EPs from acts such as Mania D and Tempo in 1979 and 1980.⁷⁴³ In Hanover, No Fun Records, formed by Skai and Hans-a-plast, released a number of influential LPs from local bands such as Hans-a-plast, Rotzkotz, 39 Clocks, and der Moderne Mann.⁷⁴⁴ In Hamburg, the record store Konnekschen released the compilations *Into the Future* and *In die Zukunft* (recorded live at the Zick Zack festivals), along with a number of records from Hamburg Hardcore groups like the Buttocks and the Razors.⁷⁴⁵ In Düsseldorf, Franz Bielmeier formed Rondo after inheriting money in 1979, and released albums from a number of local bands such as Aqua

⁷⁴¹ *Heimatblatt*, Nr.5 (Düsseldorf: 1979), p.9.

⁷⁴² See Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, p.120; and Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton*, p.161.

⁷⁴³ “Tempo,” in *Das NDW-Lexicon: Die Neue Deutsche Welle – Bands und Solisten von A bis Z*, ed., Christian Graf (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), p.249.

⁷⁴⁴ *Inferno*, Nr.3 (Hanover: 1984), n.p. See also Hollow Skai, “No Tun Records oder Es gibt viel zu kassieren – packen wir’s ein,” in *Rock Sessions 5: Magazin der populären Musik*, eds., Walter Hartmann, Klaus Humann and Carl-Ludwig Reichert (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1980), pp.30-39.

⁷⁴⁵ *Funzine*, Nr.3 (Hamburg: 1982), p.24.

Velva, Male, Mittagspause, and ZK.⁷⁴⁶ Carmen Knoebbel and S.Y.P.H. singer Harry Rag founded Pure Freude in 1979 to produce Mittagspause's double EP (funded in part by a large sale of artwork in New York by her husband Imi) though later the label began releasing records by S.Y.P.H. and Boss & Beusi.⁷⁴⁷ The Düsseldorf label Ata Tak, founded by members of der Plan, helped produce the first LP by Deutsch-Amerikanische Freundschaft (*Produkt der D.A.F.*) and by Pyrolator (*Inland*) in 1979, before releasing their own influential album *Geri Reig* (1980), and hit records by Andreas Dorau, the "Fred von Jupiter" single and follow-up LP *Blumen und Narzissen* in 1981.⁷⁴⁸ In 1980, the Fehlfarben Maxi *Grosse Liebe* came out on their Welt-Rekord imprint while the Düsseldorf record store Rock On helped Male cut and release their first LP *Zensur & Zensur* the year prior.⁷⁴⁹ Similarly, the record stores Rock-O-Rama (Cologne) and Schallmauer (Stuttgart) began releasing hardcore punk LPs and singles from KFC, the Razors, and others, beginning in 1980.⁷⁵⁰

The founding of independent record labels meant that bands could begin recording and distributing German punk music to meet the demands of the public for the first time. The West Berlin band Tempo (the same act chased offstage at 'Geräusche für die 80er') is considered to be the first independent German punk recording artist with their 7" self-titled single in July 1979 and 10" follow-up *Beat Beat Beat* later that same year.⁷⁵¹ One of the major hurdles for early German punk bands was financing recording and, in several cases, the inability to do so meant that a band's relevance had actually passed by the time their music was released. It is generally

⁷⁴⁶ *Heimatblatt*, Nr.7 (Düsseldorf: 1979), p.10

⁷⁴⁷ Teipel, *Verschwendung*, pp.148, 189; *Rock Musik*, Nr.4 (Hamburg: 1979), p.11; and Thomas Groetz, *Kunst-Musik: Deutscher Punk und New Wave in der Nachbarschaft von Joseph Beuys* (Berlin: Martin Schmitz Verlag, 2002), pp.170-173.

⁷⁴⁸ "Ata Tak Records" in *Das NDW-Lexicon: Die Neue Deutsche Welle – Bands und Solisten von A bis Z*, ed., Christian Graf (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), p.18.

⁷⁴⁹ Alfred Hilsberg, "Macher? Macht? Moneten? Aus grauer Städte Mauern," *Sounds*, Nr.12, December 1979, p.46. See also "Das Male-Interview," *Rock Sessions 4*, pp.193-194.

⁷⁵⁰ See *Der Ex*, Nr.5 (Hamburg: 1987), p.8.

⁷⁵¹ Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.79; and Stark and Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel?* p.78.

acknowledged that this was the case with the relatively late release of *Mittagspause*'s influential double-EP in 1979 (the band had already broken up by then), and the same can certainly be said for PVC—one of the very first West German punk bands—and their belated full-length album releases.⁷⁵² But singles seemed to alleviate this issue since bands could enter a studio for a day or two, lay down tracks for two songs, master the resulting mix, and within a couple of weeks have a stack of vinyl to sell at concerts, in records stores, or out in the street.⁷⁵³ Phosphor, for example, played three shows in August 1979 before entering the Ton-Co-op studio in Hanover in January 1980, where they recorded and mixed 11 songs in 4 hours: by March 1980, the album was out on their own label Spargel Schallplatten.⁷⁵⁴ The speed with which singles could be recorded, pressed and then distributed, meant that the music remained current in contrast to LPs in which months could pass between the writing of songs and their eventual appearance on vinyl. Independent releases also meant that bands could design their own artwork to better reflect their music. Assembling albums became collaborative efforts, and a number of the early releases were put together by hand: Blixa Bargeld from *Einstürzende Neubauten* remembers being part of the crew packaging a thousand copies of the *Waschsalon Berlin* single by *Liebesgeier* that was put out on the Zensor label.⁷⁵⁵

The result of these DIY labors was the release of a flood of German punk vinyl as the decade ended. In 1979, the first batch of West German albums were released by bands such as *Male*, *der Plan*, *D.A.F.*, *Mittagspause*, *Tempo*, *S.Y.P.H.*, the *Razors*, the *Buttocks*, and *ZK*, most of whom had appeared or were to appear at the *Zick Zack* festivals, and mostly originating from

⁷⁵² Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, pp.41-42, 73-74; and Stark and Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel?* p.76.

⁷⁵³ See Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.117; M.O.C. Döpfner und Thomas Garms, *Neue deutsche Welle. Kunst oder Mode? Eine sachliche Polemik für und wider die neudeutsche Popmusik* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1984), p.14.

⁷⁵⁴ *Bericht der U.N.-Menschenrechtskommission über Menschenrechtsverletzungen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Nr.4b (Düsseldorf: 1980), n.p.

⁷⁵⁵ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.209.

the major cities of West German punk: Düsseldorf, Hamburg and West Berlin.⁷⁵⁶ Long-players also began appearing more frequently, a barometer indicating the increasing success of punk bands in securing funding for prolonged studio time and larger demand for their products by the record-buying public. As with fanzines, independent releases allowed punks to experiment with the very medium of recorded sound and record production. We have already observed perhaps the most inventive deconstruction of the medium, the ‘invisible album’ recorded by die Tödliche Doris, but there were plenty of other efforts along these lines by other artists. DIN A Testbild, for example, released a single in a plastic bag filled with garbage.⁷⁵⁷ And padeluun, performance artist and member of Minus Delta t, released on Rondo the 7” single *Keine Platte* (No Record) in 1981: the product was simply an empty record sleeve that nonetheless received a good review by Hilsberg in *Sounds* and became a collector’s item.⁷⁵⁸ In 1981, West German punk bands started selling large quantities of records. Combined, the first two Hans-a-plast LPs sold over 100,000 copies by 1982 while die Abwärts moved over 20,000 copies of their first LP *Amok Koma* (1980), numbers which shocked even members of the band: according to singer Frank Z, suddenly, *Amok Koma* started selling “like hot cakes.”⁷⁵⁹ These numbers tell us that in 1980, punk began to move well beyond the confines of a smaller, elite subculture and into the mainstream. Importantly, expansion into the provinces meant that records were no longer coming

⁷⁵⁶ Hilsberg himself wrote a NDW discography in which he identified the following numbers for punk/NDW releases between 1977 and 1980: 1977 – 2 LPs; 1978 – 3 LPs and 1 single; 1979 – 8 LPs and 19 singles, EPs, and Maxis; and 1980 – 10 LPs and 33 singles (though 1980 is incomplete). See Alfred Hilsberg, “Neue Deutsche Welle. Eine Discographie deutscher New Wave-Platten,” in *Rock Session 4: Magazin der populären Musik*, eds. Klaus Humann and Carl-Ludwig Reichert (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1980), pp.231-243.

⁷⁵⁷ Döpfner und Garms, *Neue deutsche Welle*, p.22.

⁷⁵⁸ Alfred Hilsberg, “Review: padeluun,” *Sounds*, Nr.3, March 1981, p.60. See also Barbara Hornberger, *Geschichte wird gemacht. Die Neue Deutsche Welle. Eine Epoche deutscher Popmusik* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2011), p.219.

⁷⁵⁹ Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, p.190; and Teipel, *Verschwende*, p. 271.

solely from the main three or four cities of West German punk: as Frank Schneider argues, by 1981, albums were being released from all over West Germany.⁷⁶⁰

The emergence of the cassette medium in the late 1970s was to similarly revolutionize recording, production, distribution, and the expansion of the punk subculture.⁷⁶¹ With a potential for recording and then producing albums at speeds much faster than even singles, cassettes, as Schneider argues, “were perhaps the epitome of the emancipation medium and the boiling point of DIY-thought.”⁷⁶² Like independent record labels, cassette recording emancipated artists and musical production from the music industry because they broke the monopoly exercised by studios and vinyl pressing plants.⁷⁶³ Fundamentally, what drew individuals to cassette recording was the liberating feeling of producing product themselves, as one letter writer to *Sounds* put it eloquently: “they [recording cassettes] are ‘absolutely fantastic!’ One sits down before the tape recorder, records his ideas, tapes, and one has a sound carrier that everyone can hear!...The year ’81 has been declared, at least by me, the year of the cassette.”⁷⁶⁴ That cassettes were more easily transportable than vinyl and cheaper only added their appeal for punks, and some even dreamed that tape would replace vinyl further breaking the music industry’s monopoly for good.⁷⁶⁵ That tapes could be made in much smaller batches than the near standard five hundred or one thousand copies that vinyl pressing plants usually required was important: as Xao Seffcheque argued in a *Sounds*-article from 1982 on the political possibilities of cassette-recording, the medium “offers everyone the possibility, over the course of a night of hard work with a couple of

⁷⁶⁰ Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, pp.73-74.

⁷⁶¹ On the West German cassette scene, see especially Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, pp.128-150.

⁷⁶² Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, p.137.

⁷⁶³ As Matias Viegner put it, the cassette “liberated us from music stores and radios in the same way radios and recordings liberated generations earlier from the need to be present at the performance of live music.” See Thurston Moore, ed., *Mix Tape: The Art of Cassette Culture* (New York: Universe Publishing, 2004), p.35.

⁷⁶⁴ “Was will der Leser?” *Sounds*, Nr.4, April 1981, p.4.

⁷⁶⁵ See Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, pp.141-142.

borrowed tape-recorders, of easily producing 50 copies.”⁷⁶⁶ In fact, tape recordings could be produced on-demand meaning that large funds did not have to be invested in a stack of vinyl (that was to have catastrophic consequences for the punk scene as we will see shortly), and many of the early 1980s tape labels operated in this flexible fashion.⁷⁶⁷

Cassette versatility meant that recordings could be made from almost anywhere with a simple tape recorder—in 1979 every household in the BRD had one according to *Sounds*—meaning a tremendous democratization of the medium of recorded popular music.⁷⁶⁸ As we saw in the last chapter, the ‘Geniale Dilletanten’ bands used cassette recordings for much of their albums—especially since neither a reel-to-reel machine nor digital recording equipment could fit into the space under the Autobahn—and several of the early Einstürzende Neubauten albums (including the influential debut *Stahlmusik* in 1980) were cassette only releases on Eisengrau, Blixa Bargeld’s tape label.⁷⁶⁹ Many of the early West German punk albums were recorded on a tape recorder: der Plan’s first album was recorded with a dictaphone placed in the middle of the room.⁷⁷⁰ Emancipating recording from studios was important because often sound engineers had difficulties understanding what punks wanted to do or how to record their new sounds. The recording sessions for Mittagspause’s double-EP were especially frustrating for the band. Guitarist Thomas Schwebel has recalled how, “[t]he recordings were completely chaotic because none of us had ever been in a recording studio before. And the sound engineers were real hippies that couldn’t even begin to understand us.”⁷⁷¹ And while the engineers certainly had difficulties trying to recreate punk’s live rawness, the band’s inexperience—one of punk’s touted ideological

⁷⁶⁶ Xao Seffcheque, “Cassetten,” *Sounds*, Nr.3, March 1982, p.26.

⁷⁶⁷ See the interview with Dagmar Bernardt who ran the Wuppertal and Düsseldorf tape label Heimvorteil between 1982 and 1986 in “„Nur wer die Form beherrscht, darf sie brechen.“ Dagmar Bernhard über ihre Aktivitäten,” in *Bleicheimer und Luftpump*, Vol.1, ed., Günter Sahler (Cologne: Günter Sahler Verlag, 2004), pp.49-52.

⁷⁶⁸ “Tontrader für jede(r) Mann/frau,” *Sounds*, Nr.9, September 1979, p.43.

⁷⁶⁹ See Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.237.

⁷⁷⁰ Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.123-124.

⁷⁷¹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.148.

imperatives—was also to blame: “In the studio we didn’t have the *know-how* in order to assert ourselves against these fiddling long-haired hippies who were turning the dials.”⁷⁷² Recording could also be a sobering experience when it came to hearing the end product of musical amateurism as Campino was to find out tragically: “Above all in the studio, when I heard my voice by itself—that killed me everytime.”⁷⁷³

Cassettes seemed to move recording away from these confrontational scenarios, and also facilitated a corresponding boom in live bootlegs as punks and bands sought to release their music to as large an audience as possible: in fact, because cassettes recorded music at a lower-quality than vinyl-pressed records, the raw sound only seemed to add to punk authenticity according to some.⁷⁷⁴ Major record labels deplored piracy and sought to prosecute bootleggers.⁷⁷⁵ Wolfgang Nick, a representative for the major labels, scolded Hilsberg in *Sounds* for writing a two-part article series on bootlegging that openly endorsed the practice as a means of wresting control from the music industry.⁷⁷⁶ Nonetheless, punks and punk bands welcomed bootlegging which helped circulate punk music even of foreign bands more widely. Mickey de Sadist, legendary frontman for the Hamilton, Canada-based band The Forgotten Rebels, says that when the band toured Germany, “the places were packed, and I thank the Lord for bootleggers for that. I couldn’t care less if we get bootlegged; we’ll never make money off any records, so the fans might as well get it. I’d be happy if I could give away ten million albums.”⁷⁷⁷ A number

⁷⁷² Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.149.

⁷⁷³ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.222.

⁷⁷⁴ Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton*, p.164.

⁷⁷⁵ There is no history of bootlegging in Germany. On the history of bootlegging in North America and Great Britain, see Clinton Heylin, *Bootleg! The Rise & Fall of the Secret Recording Industry* (London and New York: Omnibus Press, 2003).

⁷⁷⁶ See Alfred Hilsberg, “Bootlegging: Kleine Löcher im System (Teil 1),” *Sounds*, Nr.7, July 1979, pp.28-33; Alfred Hilsberg, “Bootlegging: Kleine Löcher im System (Teil 2),” *Sounds*, Nr.8, August 1979, pp.28-31; and “Gegenrede: Betrifft: Den Artikel „Bootlegs” – Kleine Löcher im System,” *Sounds*, Nr.11, November 1979, p.14.

⁷⁷⁷ Liz Worth, *Treat Me Like Dirt: An Oral History of Punk in Toronto and Beyond, 1977-1981* (Montreal: Bongo Beat Books, 2009), p.351.

of cassette labels arose in 1980 and 1981 that began distributing albums only released on tape, the most famous early on being perhaps Klar!80 in Düsseldorf and the Cassettencombinat in West Berlin.⁷⁷⁸ We can get a sense of their political philosophy by looking at a statement issued by the West Berlin tape label Kompakt Produkte published by *Sounds* in late 1980:

We have no interest in bootlegs of famous groups; that is boring and already well-known. Rather, our productions offer perspectives on sound products that have not or will not come out on record....The advantage of cassette production in contrast to record production are perfectly obvious: easier and faster reproduction (at least with a limited number of copies). The decisive factor, however, is that one can produce current, unusual music and productions of short-lived groups that didn't make a record for the reasons mentioned above. The goal of everything is to give wider publicity to new music that is developing in basements, living rooms, and small rooms. Professionalism should not be at the forefront but rather spontaneity and enjoyment.⁷⁷⁹

The major imperatives of cassette recording are all present in this statement: democratization, independence, topicality, low cost and versatility. Like the independent record labels, the tape labels were instrumental in the expansion of punk throughout the FRG and by 1981, tape production enterprises could be found nearly everywhere throughout West Germany.⁷⁸⁰

While the picture so far about independent production seems fairly smooth, there were major difficulties that independent labels and recording continually faced, problems that were never to be resolved and were partly to blame for the collapse of the NDW in 1983 (see Chapter 6). At the heart of the matter, political ideals based in notions of authenticity never quite meshed with the realities of producing and distributing consumer product. The most infamous example of the problems arising from independent record production is none other than Alfred Hilsberg's label Zick Zack that he founded in 1980, and within two years, had produced over one hundred

⁷⁷⁸ See Alfred Hilsberg, "neuestes deutschland," *Sounds*, Nr.3, March 1981, p.18.

⁷⁷⁹ Alfred Hilsberg, "neuestes deutschland," *Sounds*, Nr.12, December 1980, p.20.

⁷⁸⁰ There is no comprehensive history of the West German tape label industry. But see Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, pp.128-150.

records for bands and solo-artists.⁷⁸¹ Zick Zack is representative of the questions raised by the creation of independent record labels and thus serves as a useful entry-point into the issues involved that concerned the West German punk scene. Under the slogan “Better too much than too little,” Hilsberg tried to put into practice what he had championed in “Aus grauer Städte Mauern.” He conceived of his label explicitly in terms of democratizing the music industry and a way to break the monopoly over popular music held by the major record labels. As he later recalled, “[w]e had started the label with no money. But it was never about releasing commercial records anyway. That played but a minor role. To me, it was about [releasing] things which other people said: ‘This is shit’ or that perhaps in a particular moment maybe did not suit me.”⁷⁸²

In 1980, Zick Zack released nearly twenty-five albums from major up-coming artists in the alternative scene such as die Abwärts, Geisterfahrer, Wirtschaftswunder, Palais Schaumburg, and Andreas Dorau, and in 1981, this number nearly doubled. As he has remembered, that first year saw an explosion of releases that points to the West German public’s hunger to both make and consume alternative music: “In the first year there was an explosion of recordings. But at the same time, it didn’t matter what was released....For the first time in years, innovations met with a young, starved and above all, intellectual audience. The concerts were tremendously-well attended. The shops expanded because of the records. They [youths] wanted to have our releases at all costs.”⁷⁸³ Hilsberg became famous for releasing music from anyone who gave him a demo tape: holding court nightly in the Marktstube in the Karolinenviertel in Hamburg, hopefuls would approach him in person or send him a cassette by mail to which he would invariably respond

⁷⁸¹ Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.90.

⁷⁸² Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.269-270.

⁷⁸³ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.270.

with “Ja.” By 1982, Zick Zack was the largest independent record label in West Germany and the year prior had seen sales in the range of 1.5 million DM.⁷⁸⁴

But the economic policies pursued by Hilsberg at Zick Zack were controversial to say the least, and the gap between political commitment and financial interest quickly became irreconcilable. Several of Zick Zack’s bands did very well. Die Abwärts first LP *Amok Koma* (1980) sold an incredible 22,000 copies—huge numbers for an independent—thanks to the hit-single “Computerstaat” and the album spent nearly a year at the tops of the *Sounds*’ alternative charts from late 1980 to the end of 1981.⁷⁸⁵ Similarly, LPs by the Wirtschaftswunder (*Salmobray*, 1980) and Einstürzende Neubauten (*Kollaps*, 1981), and singles by Andreas Dorau (*Der lachende Papst*, 1980), Palais Schaumburg (*Telefon*, 1981), and die Krupps (*Wahre Arbeit, Wahrer Lohn*, 1981) all did extremely well and were even exported to the United States and Japan.⁷⁸⁶ But the income generated by these sellers was never given to the artists. Instead, Hilsberg immediately reinvested the money into new projects. Hilsberg’s slogan “Better too much than too little” was intended literally: the idea was to flood the market with new German music to inspire more youths to begin making music and experiment, rather than pay the musicians that had made the best-selling music in the first place. As Hilsberg has said, “[t]here were simply so many incredibly interesting things. I could not just say: ‘That one is important—that other is not.’ I preferred to leave such judgement for the public. And because of that, every day I released another record.”⁷⁸⁷ The idea was that Zick Zack artists were politically motivated

⁷⁸⁴ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.301; and Hornberger, *Geschichte wird gemacht*, p.332 n.14.

⁷⁸⁵ Albrecht Koch, *Angriff auf’s Schlaraffenland. 20 Jahre deutschsprachige Popmusik* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1987), p.136; Hornberger, *Geschichte wird gemacht*, pp.114, 324.

⁷⁸⁶ Thomas Buttler, “Die Krupps. Schöne Grüße an Bernward,” *Sounds*, Nr.1, January 1982, p.13; and Kid P, “Die Wahrheit über Hamburg!” *Sounds*, Nr.5, May 1982, pp.26-27.

⁷⁸⁷ Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.270-271.

along Hilsberg's lines, and thus would accept using their economic gain for the greater good of punk—and not for themselves.

While Zick Zack stayed true to its slogan by releasing an astonishing number of records, the label quickly became known for its questionable releases. Zick Zack began releasing records from many of the most extreme experimental outfits such as Minus Delta t, die Tödliche Doris, Saal 2, or Sprung aus den Wolken, albums that—commercially—were basically unsellable: as Frank Z from die Abwärts was to later say, Hilsberg ended up releasing vinyl after vinyl filled with nothing but “cat-meowing.”⁷⁸⁸ And since these records not only lost money for the label but far outnumbered the successful albums, Hilsberg used his bread-winners to pay off his mounting debts, with the result being that Zick Zack was nearly always in the red. The successful bands signed to Zick Zack were thus continually unsatisfied because they were never compensated satisfactorily for their hard work. Die Abwärts, for example, could see their records at the top of the independent charts but were not receiving anything tangible as a result.⁷⁸⁹ The financial sleight-of-hand at Zick Zack led to countless embarrassing incidents of artists accosting Hilsberg for money. Ralf Hertwig from Front and later Palais Schaumburg remembers guitarist Gode crashing into the Zick Zack office—Hilsberg's two-room basement apartment stacked from floor to ceiling with (unsellable) records—because the band needed money; Hilsberg searched under his bed and gave the band four-hundred DM which seemed to satisfy them for the time being.⁷⁹⁰

While the Zick Zack example is the most famous and extreme case, the questions raised about the relationship between political ideology and economic interests are important because they highlight the difficulties in trying to create alternative structures based around notions of

⁷⁸⁸ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.302.

⁷⁸⁹ See the testimony from Jürgen Engler (die Krupps), Margita Haberland and Frank Z (Abwärts), and Ralf Hertwig, Thomas Fehlmann, and Timo Blunck (Front, Palais Schaumburg) in Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.301-304.

⁷⁹⁰ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.302.

authenticity. Were independent music labels part of the music industry? Independent labels claimed to be alternative and yet were forced to operate under the same economic conditions as the major labels. Did political ideals distinguish them? And if so, could artists expect the same financial rewards from the independents as they could from the majors? These are just some of the questions that plagued the independent labels and show how certain notions of authenticity based around anti-commercialism were dividing the subculture as it expanded and became more popular. In late 1980, many of the independent record labels and record stores met to try and hammer out some sort of agreement about how to operate. The goal was to try and overcome competition among the independent labels, and to universalize sales prices, or divvy-up West Germany into regions for sales purposes in an effort to strengthen the collective independent network against the major labels. However no agreement was ever reached.⁷⁹¹

Selling Punk: Record Stores and the Business of Alternative Culture

Despite these issues which were never reconciled, the extensive founding of independent labels and subsequent spate of recordings clearly indicates that the demand for West German punk was rising as the 1980s dawned, and demand necessitated institutions to help cater to the alternative record buying public. But as with recording and distribution, the selling of punk was similarly complicated by ideological imperatives and economic priorities. Unlike in West Germany, UK punk bands had entered the studio and almost immediately begun cutting records. A number of alternative record stores such as Rough Trade most famously were able to move the product. But in the late 1970s in West Germany, mainstream departments stores such as Hertie or Karstadt

⁷⁹¹ See Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.324; Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, pp.192-193; and Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, pp.124-127.

generally did not carry punk, nor were retailers particularly knowledgeable about the genre, especially far away from the specialized record stores in cities such as Düsseldorf, Hamburg, or West Berlin. Klaus Frick, long-time commentator on punk, remembered trying to acquire a Ramones album from a record store after reading about the band in *Bravo* in 1978, and ended up going home with a Black Sabbath LP instead.⁷⁹² More pressing for cash-strapped youths, UK and US punk records were imported albums to the FRG and thus they carried a heftier price tag. Domestic albums from Kraftwerk, Can, and Amon Düll, for example, only cost 9,80 DM, while the new Stranglers album *Black and White* cost 14,90 DM at Flash Records in Unterlüß (near Münster) in the summer of 1978.⁷⁹³ Early fanzines offered advice on where to find record stores that sold punk albums but unless one lived in Düsseldorf, Hamburg or West Berlin, it was difficult to purchase punk with ease in the late 1970s.⁷⁹⁴ To rectify the situation—and in classic DIY-style—a number of enterprising individuals such as Klaus Maeck, Burkhard Seiler, and others began travelling to London and back with suitcases full of singles, LPs, and badges for resale in the Federal Republic at concerts or flea markets as we saw in previous chapters.⁷⁹⁵ As such, the commodification of alternative tastes and then the circulation of these tastes throughout the Federal Republic by intermediaries became crucial in nationalizing West German punk.

West German demand for punk was the major impetus behind the founding of alternative record shops and mail-order enterprises in the late 1970s such as Maeck's Rip Off store in Hamburg and Seiler's Zensor shop in West-Berlin. Opened in 1979, Rip Off sold punk albums

⁷⁹² IG Dreck auf Papier, ed., *Keine Zukunft war gestern*, p.19; and Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, p.123. Sun Records in West-Berlin, for example, was one of the few record stores that carried punk in West Germany in 1978. See Hilsberg, "Rodenkirchen is burning – Krautpunk," p.24; and Hilsberg, "Vom unabhängigen Schallplattenproduzieren..." p.32.

⁷⁹³ See the advertisement in *Sounds*, Nr.6, June 1978, pp.19-21.

⁷⁹⁴ *New Order*, Nr.1 (West Berlin: 1977), n.p.; *The Ostrich*, Nr.4 (Düsseldorf: 1977), p.23; *The Ostrich*, Nr.5 (Düsseldorf: 1977), p.35; *Heimatblatt*, Nr.6 (Düsseldorf: 1979), p.5; and *Heimatblatt*, Nr.8 (Düsseldorf: 1980), pp.5, 8.

⁷⁹⁵ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.118; and *Der Aktueller Mülleimer*, Nr.3 (Böblingen: 1980), n.p.

from the US and UK and by 1980, punks regularly traveled specifically to the port-city to visit the record shop.⁷⁹⁶ As Maeck himself has stated, the original idea behind the shop was to provide a service: “There were hardly any records. But already in my mind I had developed the idea that I would sell independently produced records. Because there was nothing like this in the regular record stores.”⁷⁹⁷ Zensor has a similar story. Opening in the back of the Blue Moon clothing store on Belzigerstraße in West Berlin in 1979, Seiler originally started solely as a mail-order service, especially for individuals in the provinces who could not easily travel to West Berlin or Hamburg to purchase records, but quickly expanded to take over the whole store with the dream of starting an independent label: “I also had a label in mind. Above all what interested me were notions of independence.”⁷⁹⁸ Both Rip Off and Zensor functioned as a communication network where youths could gather, “more of a meeting place than a record store” in the words of Maeck.⁷⁹⁹ Hamburg punks often spent whole days hanging inside and outside of Rip Off, listening to music, planning up-coming shows or musical collaborations, and most consequentially for punk in Hamburg, disturbing the public in the Karolienviertel as we will return to in Chapter 7. Rip Off gave Hamburg punks an institutional core around which the scene could develop, and it is no coincidence that the hardcore punk scene in the early 1980s became embedded in the Karo in no small part thanks to Rip Off. As punk caught on by the early 1980s, Rip Off and Zensor inspired others so that by 1982, metropolitan areas across the Federal Republic—Essen (Plop), Duisburg (Rock On), Neuss (Schallmauer), Cologne (Rock-O-Rama), Bonn (But Is It Normal?), and countless others—had alternative record stores carrying foreign, and increasingly, West German punk.

⁷⁹⁶ Kröher, “Untergrund und Unternehmer (Teil 1),” p.49.

⁷⁹⁷ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.138.

⁷⁹⁸ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.156; and Diedrich Diedrichsen, “Untergrund und Unternehmer (Teil 2),” *Sounds*, Nr. 10, October 1980, pp.54-55.

⁷⁹⁹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.138, 157, here 138.

Maeck and Seiler used their tastes and businesses to shape listening and thus helped define punk in West Germany. The Zensor (as Seiler was known) became famous for refusing to carry music he deemed unfaithful to his own ideas about what constituted punk (his name was ‘The Censor’ after all). As Seiler explained to Diedrich Diedrichson in 1980, “[i]n principle I take everything in the shop that is produced independently, apart from a few exceptions but I only support what I think is good.”⁸⁰⁰ Early on, the Zensor refused to carry the Big Balls LPs because they were signed to a major label, and more controversially, he refused to carry KFC’s album *Letzte Hoffnung* because he considered some of the lyrics to be sexist (‘Elli, I’m feeling lively / please go down on me’ [Elli, ich bin munter / hol mir bitte einen runter]), a policy that did not endear him to lead singer Tommi Stumpf who—when asked about the ban—exploded: “Idiots! I simply abhor ‘sex’ in the completely uncontrolled form, against sex as a necessity like shitting or pissing. If I sing: ‘Elli, I’m feeling lively, please go down on me...’ I don’t want to degrade women, only to express how dull and unconscious mechanisms, and to attack the typical variations of turning-on, these excessive chain reactions and material fights, just to fuck...”⁸⁰¹ As Seiler has recently intimated, while the policy of censorship made little sense from a business perspective, it was nonetheless “very punk,” and thus crucial to his understanding of the genre’s ideology: “I always found it great not to sell certain records. To say: ‘Ha! No, we’re not going to sell that!’ And that also explains the name Censor. We did not think about it in a businesslike manner. We were proud to be independent and to refuse any association with commercialism. This is of course an extreme black and white outlook. But it was a proud attitude.”⁸⁰²

⁸⁰⁰ Diedrichsen, “Untergrund und Unternehmer (Teil 2),” p.55.

⁸⁰¹ Xao Seffcheque, “KFC. Fußball – Hitler – Krieg und Frieden,” *Sounds*, Nr.2, February 1981, p.43. See also Stark and Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel?* pp.144, 238.

⁸⁰² Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.281.

The main issue involved in the selling of punk however was not censorship but how to mesh political ideals with business acumen and successful expansion, the same problem we saw with recording and fanzine production. As Seiler admitted to Diedrichson in 1980, “a shop is a petit-bourgeois affair; that is of course absolutely clear to me.”⁸⁰³ The ideological contradiction was obvious since punk had positioned itself against Western commercial culture, even as the daily rhythms of the punk subculture—making and listening to records, performing and attending concerts, creating and buying clothes—were all deeply involved in consumer practices. Punk sought to skirt this paradox by elevating DIY and active involvement rather than passive consumption as a way around charges of commercialism. Linked to the notion that capitalism, in its various forms, was responsible for reinforcing structural conventions constricting independence, alternative record stores were supposed to base their economic decisions on political ethos. But rent was due every month, and this dilemma continually put individuals like Maeck and the Zensor in a difficult position vis-à-vis their customers. These issues remained relatively dormant during the early years since product consumption was small, but by 1980 and after, as West German punk albums started hitting the market and demand for German punk took off, these issues exploded into accusations of profiteering and exploitation.

Rip Off became a magnet for charges of swindle, and Maeck—and to a lesser extent the Zensor—was continually forced to justify his business practices, and we can explore these issues in detail by examining a debate that flared up in 1979 over album prices at Rip Off. Rotzkotz was a Hanover band that recorded their album *Vorsicht Paranoia* in England in 1979 with the help of the Pop Rivets and Hollow Skai at No Fun Records. The album was given a poor review in *Sounds* by Hilsberg, mainly because of their English lyrics, but what really irked Skai, was that Rip Off was charging 16 DM for the album, even though Maeck had agreed to sell the LP

⁸⁰³ Diedrichsen, “Untergrund und Unternehmer (Teil 2),” p.55.

for less when he bought them wholesale at the bargain price of 8 DM (10 DM was the normal price), thus turning a 100% profit.⁸⁰⁴ Maeck responded by writing to Skai (who published the response in his *No Fun* fanzine) and defended the price, first by saying that the listed price in the Rip Off catalogue was a mistake, and then by hinting that another employee was responsible for the mix-up.⁸⁰⁵ But charges about commercial aspirations dogged Maeck and he was often forced to defend himself publicly in fanzines and interviews. As die Abwärts frontman Frank Z recalled (he also worked part time at Rip Off), Maeck was “always considered a ‘filthy capitalist’ (das Geldschweine) by the punks....They always said: ‘Why does this cost money?’ And for these reasons an unbelievable amount [of merchandise] was stolen from us in Rip Off. What we did was not politically correct for the punks. Because we sold things. That was capitalism.”⁸⁰⁶ The accusations of dishonest motives were so prevalent that Maeck half-jokingly, half-seriously, began playing in a band called die Geldschweine and his instrument was a cash register.⁸⁰⁷ As with recording, the question of commercialism and profit lay at the heart of punk critiques of any hint of capitalist impulses.

Conclusions

By the early 1980s, the punk scene had carved out a substantial subcultural niche in the everyday world of West German society. Concerts were drawing hundreds of patrons regularly across the country on weekends and larger festivals had audiences in the thousands. Fanzines were being

⁸⁰⁴ There is some disagreement about the figures. In *Neuez No Fun*, Skai says Maeck was selling the records for 16,00 DM though he promised to charge 12,90 DM. But in *No Fun*, Skai says the agreed upon price was 12,00 DM. See *Neuez No Fun*, Nr.1 (Hanover: 1979), p.26; and *No Fun*, Nr.31 (Hanover: 1979), p.11. For the poor review, see Alfred Hilsberg, “Review: Rotzkotz,” *Sounds*, Nr.9, September 1979, p.64.

⁸⁰⁵ *No Fun*, Nr.31 (Hanover: 1979), p.13.

⁸⁰⁶ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.271.

⁸⁰⁷ Avantario, “1977-1987: Von Krawall bis Totenschiff,” p.64.

produced and sold in every city in the Federal Republic as a compliment to the mainstream music press, and independent record labels were filling record bins in alternative record stores nationwide and even overseas. Smaller cities such as Wilhelmshaven or Hagen were boasting innovative scenes while large metropolitan centers continued to act as the engine driving the punk locomotive. In fact, punk was becoming so deeply ingrained in West German life that by 1979, even Wrangler and Lufthansa were using advertising featuring punks to try and sell jeans and cheap student flight fares.⁸⁰⁸ What had begun as a handful of kids in Düsseldorf, Hamburg and West Berlin a few years prior had transformed into a national movement. By the early 1980s, as record sales, institutional structures, and communication networks indicate, we can talk about a national punk scene with perhaps ten thousand adherents and many times more sympathizers—a figure corresponding to numbers that contemporary observers were throwing around.⁸⁰⁹

But the schism tearing the subculture apart over what constituted authentic punk did not solely play out in the pages of *Sounds*. As the genre gained in popularity, there was deep unease within the scene about expansion. Success increasingly seemed to be pushing youths further and further away from the original ideological imperatives of the genre, success that increasingly blurred the hard moral line that punk had taken against the mainstream. Nationalization, while pushing the genre into every corner of the Federal Republic, nonetheless seemed to be diluting the subjective thrust that punk prided itself on, as a means of connecting with individuals more directly and more honestly, and as record and fanzine production moved closer and closer towards mass manufacturing, the question of independence and autonomy became harder to answer. As with the origins and expansion of nearly all popular musical genres in the past century, the move from independence and autonomy to mass marketed commodity raised a host

⁸⁰⁸ See *Magazin für Verliebte*, Nr.1 (Gelsenkirchen: 1979), p.19; and *Preiserhöhung*, Nr.1 (Hamburg: 1979), p.11.

⁸⁰⁹ *Preiserhöhung*, Nr. 1 (Hamburg: 1979), p.8; and *Hackfleisch*, Nr.3 (Hanover: 1985), n.p.

of insoluble dilemmas since punk ideology was rooted in the former.⁸¹⁰ And while popularity ensured the survival and growth of the genre, in many ways, success began to tear the punk subculture apart.

However, in the early 1980s, the splits produced by issues of production and commercialism were to be compounded exponentially by a new pressure threatening punk in 1981 and 1982: the *Neue Deutsche Welle* (NDW). For the first time, as we saw last chapter, German-language pop and rock'n'roll began finding popular legitimacy in West Germany thanks to punk. Sensing the potential for profit, the success of punk drew the attention of the music industry that quickly flooded the market with a lighter, more commercial punk known as the *Neue Deutsche Welle* that borrowed the name but was very different from Hilsberg's vision. By 1982, the NDW was the most popular genre in the Federal Republic and German acts and singers such as Markus and Nena had hit singles not only at home but internationally in America and Great Britain as well, an unprecedented success for German-language musical acts. What had once been a very tight and elite grouping was flooded with new adherents and popularization meant that a number of tenets central to punk authenticity such as independence and *Anderssein* were put into question. As the NDW became the mainstream, youths were faced with an existential choice that is the subject of our next chapter: popularity and success, or marginality and authenticity.

⁸¹⁰ The comparison and similarities with the genre of country is—interestingly—perhaps most relevant here. See Diane Pecknold, *The Selling Sound: The Rise of the Country Music Industry* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2007); and Richard A Peterson, *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997).

Chapter 6: “Da da da”: *Neue Deutsche Welle* and the Crisis of Authenticity in West German Punk

“Ich will Spaß”: Punk and the Challenge of Commercialization

My Masserati hits 210
 Bang! The police haven't seen me
 This is fun, I step on the gas, on the gas
 I will not save, I don't want to be reasonable
 I only use premium
 I'm having fun, I step on the gas, on the gas

I want to have fun, I want to have fun, I want to have fun, I want to have fun
 I step on the gas, on the gas, I want to have fun, I want to have fun

Markus, “Ich will Spaß,” *Kugelblitze und Raketen* (CBS 85 732, 1982)

There were a number of signs suggesting to acute observers that punk and the NDW were about to explode in Germany over the course of 1980 and into 1981. After the success of his 1977 documentary *Punk in London*, Wolfgang Büld shot the commercial film *Brennende Langeweile* (1979) featuring a young German couple helping members of the UK punk band the Adverts tour West Germany. Aired 11 January 1979 on ZDF's “Das kleine Fernsehspiel,” the film received the highest ratings share in the history of the film series and many punk veterans remember watching the film.⁸¹¹ That same year, Hans-a-plast, the Hanover pogo-truppe fronted by Annette Benjamin (according to the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, “with Peter Hein, the most impressive stage personality of the new German wave”), released their self-titled debut LP.⁸¹² Moving a more than respectable 10,000 units by hand after shows, the success experienced by Hans-a-plast and other

⁸¹¹ Hollow Skai, *Alles nur geträumt: Fluch und Segen der Neuen Deutschen Welle* (Innsbruck: Hannibal, 2009), pp.24-26; IG Dreck auf Papier, ed., *Keine Zukunft war Gestern: Punk in Deutschland* (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen, 2008), p.42.

⁸¹² Cited in Günter Ehnert and Detlef Kinsler, eds., *Rock in Deutschland: Lexicon deutscher Rockgruppen und Interpreten* (Hamburg: Taurus Press, 1984), p.156. See also M.O.C. Döpfner and Thomas Garms, *Neue deutsche Welle. Kunst oder Mode? Eine sachliche Polemik für und wider die neudeutsche Popmusik* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1984), p.219.

early bands with self-made releases pointed towards the financial viability of punk in the Federal Republic: by 1982, Hans-a-plast is estimated to have sold well over 100,000 copies of their first two independently produced LPs, and bands such as Fehlfarben, die Abwärts and others were also selling tens of thousands of records.⁸¹³ As we saw, West German punk bands began entering the studio *en masse* in 1979 and 1980, and by 1981, punk and the NDW were everywhere—in the record stores and on the radio. The growing economic potential of punk was aided by the increased prominence of the genre in the mainstream press and television in 1981.⁸¹⁴ By the early years of the decade, punk and NDW were omnipresent in *Sounds* and *Bravo*, and a number of television shows—documentaries and live performances—only raised punk’s media profile.⁸¹⁵ As the punk movement began building mainstream momentum in West Germany, UK trendsetter *Melody Maker* even speculated that Berlin might become the New York of the 1980s.⁸¹⁶

But the sudden popularity of the NDW which came to dominate the social, cultural, and musical consciousness among the youth of the Federal Republic in the early 1980s created a crisis of authenticity for West German punk. As we have explored in detail, punk ideology and

⁸¹³ Frank A. Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging: Von Punk zu NDW* (Mainz: Ventil Verlag, 2007), pp.84, 190; Jürgen Stark and Michael Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel? Punk – New Wave – Neue Welle* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Freie Gesellschaft, 1981), p.231; Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.113; Ehnert and Kinsler, eds., *Rock in Deutschland*, pp.156-158; and Döpfner and Garms, *Kunst oder Mode?* p.219.

⁸¹⁴ MTV (Music Television) began airing in the U.S. in 1981, and media analysts the world-over quickly recognized the economic potential of similar music-based television programming. The literature on MTV and its global spread is vast, but see R. Serge Denisoff, *Inside MTV* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 2002); Jack Banks, *Monopoly Television: MTV’s Quest to Control the Music* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996); Tom McGrath, *MTV: The Making of a Revolution* (Philadelphia, PA: Running Press, 1996); and Andrew Goodwin, *Dancing in the Distraction Factory: Music Television and Popular Culture* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1992). On music television in West Germany, see Ulrich Adelt, “‘Ich bin der Rock’n’Roll-Übermensch’: Globalization and Localization in German Music Television,” in *Popular Music and Society*, Vol.28, Nr.3 (July 2005), pp.279-295; and Klaus Neumann-Braun, ed., *Viva MTV! Popmusik im Fernsehen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1999).

⁸¹⁵ In May 1981, Bayerischen Fernsehen broadcast the 1. Münchner Rocktagen, a two-day event featuring Hans-a-plast and other punk bands; that same month, the West German punk scene was profiled in an ARD documentary on Ruhr-based punks entitled *No Future—Kein Bock auf Illusionen*. See *Mia san dageng! Punk in München, der original Kinofilm* (DVD, directors Olli Nauerz, Katz Seger, and Michael Bentele, 2008); “Interview: Pöbels & Gesocks,” *Ox-Fanzine*, Nr.90 (Haan: June/July 2010); Ehnert and Kinsler, eds., *Rock in Deutschland*, p.157; and Thomas Lau, *Die heiligen Narren: Punk 1976-1986* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1992), p.69.

⁸¹⁶ Rudolf O. Wagner, “Berlin: Neues aus der Frontstadt,” *Sounds*, Nr.7, July 1980, p.8.

practice was geared towards the creation of an alternative subculture independent from the mainstream, and rooted in a promised *Anderssein* that supposedly guaranteed more authentic living. But as major record labels with vested interests in the West German music market—Ariola, WEA, Polydor, Phonogram, CBS and EMI—became attentive to the emerging trend and its possibilities for economic exploitation, punk’s founding principles were increasingly put in jeopardy. Bands signing with a major record label meant that punk music could be spread more widely, artists had the financial means to experiment more imaginatively, and musicians could enjoy the fruits of their success more lavishly. But it also meant betraying several core tenets informing punk authenticity—*Anderssein*, DIY, anti-authoritarianism—and the genre’s original critiques of traditional rock’n’roll culture and West German society more broadly. Significantly, the predicament of remaining authentic within a perceived inauthentic structure or institution was larger than punk and speaks to similar issues experienced by other alternative groups in West Germany since the late 1970s, a predicament emphasizing the impossibilities of integrating alternativeness into the mainstream. Could or should environmentalists participate in a state destroying the environment in an effort to reform the system?⁸¹⁷ Could or should feminist groups dedicated to the overthrow of gender hierarchies include male members?⁸¹⁸ Already reeling from the splits produced by the Kunstpunk-Hardcore split, the challenge of commercialization during this period produced an existential crisis within the West German punk scene, and debates about the nature of authenticity accompanying the successes of the NDW give us a sense of how and

⁸¹⁷ For an introduction to this historical complex issue and debate, see Andrei S. Markovits and Philip S. Gorski, *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1993).

⁸¹⁸ See Ilse Lenz, “Das Privat ist politisch!? Zum Verhältnis von Frauenbewegung und alternative Milieu,” in *Das Alternative Milieu. Antibürgerlicher Lebensstil und linke Politik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Europa 1968-1983*, eds., Sven Reichardt and Detlef Siegfried (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010), pp.375-404; Solveig Bergman, *The Politics of Feminism: Autonomous Feminist Movements in Finland and West Germany from the 1960s to the 1980s* (Åbo: Åbo akademis Förlag, 2002); and Eva Maleck-Lewy and Bernhard Maleck, “Women’s Movement in East and West Germany,” in *1968: The World Transformed*, eds., Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert and Detlef Junker (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp.373-396.

why these notions are central to the integrative function of subcultures; and how and why under different circumstances they can tear them apart.

In order to explore these issues, it is important to elucidate why the NDW became so fashionable when it did. At first, the music industry avoided punk after experiencing several early disappointments with the genre. But in the early 1980s, after the massive expansion of the genre throughout the country, the music industry believed the changed situation could now support punk. By 1982, the NDW had taken the Federal Republic by storm and punk had moved from the margins to the mainstream. NDW success produced varied responses among punks who especially focused on how the commercialism of the NDW betrayed punk authenticity. In the end, we can see how the ‘sell-out’ of punk credibility for NDW success (itself a self-conscious narrative of punk authenticity that we will explore in the Epilogue), closed off the experimental and pop wing of the punk scene as an embodiment of ‘real’ punk for good, and in turn elevated the Hardcore variant of the genre as the only expression of ‘true’ punk. Critically, the fracturing of the punk scene over questions of collaboration, conformity, and compromise reflect debates within the various alternative groups throughout the 1970s and 1980s: while punks were debating the cultural ramifications of participating in the mainstream music industry, politically, Fundamentalists were debating Realists within the Green Party about whether the party should enter government coalitions with the SPD. The split between authenticity and commercialization within the punk subculture is therefore important because it speaks to larger issues alternative groups continually faced during the 1970s and 1980s as they gained more mainstream legitimacy and were suddenly forced to balance popularity with their hardline moral positions.

“Hurra, hurra, die Schule brennt”: The Emergence of the *Neue Deutsche Welle*

The little girls from the suburbs
 Are wearing nose rings made out of phosphorous today
 Their lips are blue, their hair is green
 Match box labels in their ears
 From jacket pockets
 Stick out brown bottles
 So no one sees them pull them out in the streets
 Everywhere they pass
 The smell of gasoline hangs in the air

This is new, this is new
 Hurrah, hurrah, the school is on fire
 Hurrah, hurrah, the school is on fire

The little girls from the suburbs
 Are wearing nose rings made out of phosphorous today
 Battery-powered radios
 And New Wave music in their ears
 They stand together
 And write poetry near the flames
 Til the sun goes down
 The Fire Department
 Have it doubly difficult
 Because the wind has shifted

And they sing: this is cool, this is cool
 Hurrah, hurrah, the school is on fire
 Hurrah, hurrah, the school is on fire

Extrabreit, "Hurra, hurra, die Schule brennt," *Ihre Grössten Erfolge*
 (Reflektor Z 0060.348, 1980)

It was the success of the band Ideal that finally convinced the music industry that the time was ripe to promote the NDW. In early 1980, several punk veterans—Annette Humpe from the Neonbabies and Frank Jürgen ('Eff Jott') Krüger from X-Pectors—formed the West Berlin band Ideal. In May, the group released their first single "Wir stehn auf Berlin" on their own record label Eitel-Imperial that they put together by hand and sold after shows.⁸¹⁹ That same month, Ideal played their first live shows, including the Berliner Rock Circus concert in the Tempodrom

⁸¹⁹ Ehnert and Kinsler, eds., *Rock in Deutschland*, p.165.

with other West Berlin punk bands PVC, Tempo, and Bel Ami that was broadcast by ARD as “Sie verlassen den amerikanischen Sektor” (You are leaving the American Sector).⁸²⁰ On the strength of that show, on 30 August 1980, the UK rock band Barclay James Harvest performed a free open air concert in front of the vacant Reichstag building with Ideal opening for them. The 150,000 concert-goers and hundreds of thousands more watching the live-broadcast at home were captivated—not by the headlining act—but by Ideal’s German lyrics, pop sounds, and danceable rhythms: both *Tagesschau* and *Heute*—West Germany’s daily news programs—concentrated solely on Ideal’s performance.⁸²¹ Quickly re-entering the studio, Ideal released their self-titled LP on former Tangerine Dream member Klaus Schulze’s IC-Label in November. Powered by the hit-single “Blaue Augen,” the album rocketed to number 3 on the German charts and became the first independently produced LP to be certified gold for moving more than 250,000 copies.⁸²² These figures were too large organizationally for the independent label—in drummer Hans Behrendt’s words, IC could not “handle this winner”—and in the summer of 1981, IC sold Ideal to WEA for 300,000 DM where the band would eventually sell half a million copies of their first LP, and 1.5 million copies from all three albums produced on the major.⁸²³ By the summer of 1981, the Ideal example had convinced the German record industry that punk was the commercial future of German popular music and the NDW took off.

⁸²⁰ This slogan appeared on signs posted around West Berlin indicating when you were leaving the American sector. Ehnert and Kinsler, eds., *Rock in Deutschland*, p.165; Döpfner und Garms, *Kunst oder Mode?* p.223; and Stark and Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel?* p.96.

⁸²¹ Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging*, pp.116-117; Ehnert and Kinsler, eds., *Rock in Deutschland*, p.165; and Döpfner and Garms, *Kunst oder Mode?* pg.223.

⁸²² Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.134; Ehnert and Kinsler, eds., *Rock in Deutschland*, p.165; and Döpfner and Garms, *Kunst oder Mode?* p.223. See also “Ideal,” in *Das NDW-Lexicon: Die Neue Deutsche Welle – Bands und Solisten von A bis Z*, ed., Christian Graf (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), p.131.

⁸²³ Döpfner and Garms, *Kunst oder Mode?* p.223; and Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, pp.134-135. See also “Humpe, Annette,” in *Das NDW-Lexicon: Die Neue Deutsche Welle – Bands und Solisten von A bis Z*, ed., Christian Graf (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), p.126.

What followed was a musical free-for-all as major record labels snapped up bands from the punk and the early NDW scene, and then flooded the market with singles, hoping for the next big hit. Polydor signed The Wirtschaftswunder. WEA signed die Krupps, Foyer des Arts, and later Nichts. Metronome signed Extrabreit. Phonogram scooped up Palais Schaumburg, Trio, Geisterfahrer, and lured away die Abwärts from Zick Zack. Likewise Ariola enticed D.A.F. away from Virgin. And Fehlfarben sold their independent label Welt-Rekord (and themselves) to EMI for a paltry 3,000 DM.⁸²⁴ Bands singing in German had the potential to be stars, and record agents scoured the clubs and pages of *Sounds* in their search for the ‘next-big-thing.’ As Tom Dokoupil, guitarist from The Wirtschaftswunder, has recently intimated, “[t]he big record companies...had zero connection to our stuff. Polydor never understood us. They didn’t know whether it [their music] was good or bad. They bought us because somebody said to them, that this was the trend.”⁸²⁵ By the end of 1981, popular music magazines such as *Bravo*, *Musik Express*, and the newly-founded *Spex*, were filled with features on the up-coming stars of the NDW. Punk bands which had previously been excluded from the traditional bastions of West German rock’n’roll—radio and television—soon began to dominate the mediums: Ideal’s appearance on the venerable Cologne music show *Rockpalast* was the highest ratings share the program had ever seen.⁸²⁶ NDW stars such as Markus began appearing on ARD’s *Musikladen*, a show previously confined to Schlager.⁸²⁷ Artists were rushed into studios and whereas 1981 saw a total of 67 NDW albums released, the number skyrocketed to 300 by the end of 1982.⁸²⁸ The numbers involved were staggering and almost overnight unknown singers were catapulted into

⁸²⁴ See “Fehlfarben,” in *Das NDW-Lexicon: Die Neue Deutsche Welle – Bands und Solisten von A bis Z*, ed., Christian Graf (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), p.94.

⁸²⁵ Jürgen Teipel, *Verschwende Deine Jugend: Ein Doku-Roman über den deutschen Punk und New Wave* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001), p.304.

⁸²⁶ See “Ideal,” in *Das NDW-Lexicon*, p.131.

⁸²⁷ See “Markus,” in *Das NDW-Lexicon: Die Neue Deutsche Welle – Bands und Solisten von A bis Z*, ed., Christian Graf (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), p.179.

⁸²⁸ Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.190.

stardom. Andreas Dorau, a 15-year old teenager from Hamburg, recorded the single “Fred vom Jupiter” about a visiting alien who seduces Earth’s women as a high-school project in 1980.

Released the following year on Ata Tak, with backing vocals supplied by a chorus of teenage girls named ‘die Marinas,’ the single was a hit and sold 100,000 copies by May 1982 and placed in both the German and UK-charts—all before Dorau had reached the age of majority.⁸²⁹ But the stakes were high for the subculture: could punk enter the market while maintaining its sense of authenticity based around independence and creativity?

Why, in the early 1980s, did the NDW become the biggest indigenous popular musical culture that West Germany had ever produced? For the first time in the history of German punk, the major labels threw their full support behind the genre. The decisive impetus prompting this support was mass appeal, the result of punk’s penetration into the provinces of the Federal Republic. Suddenly, record labels believed they could turn a profit from the genre, a situation that had previously not been the case. What had separated West German punk from the Anglo-American scenes, as Hilsberg had pointed out in “Aus grauer Städte Mauern,” was the support of the music industry—both independents and majors. In Britain, early punk pioneers such as the Sex Pistols, the Damned, and the Clash, had all quickly signed to major labels and received huge cash advances to facilitate recording and touring. As punk spread like wildfire across Britain, the industry snapped up dozens of punk bands in the hopes of capturing ‘the next big thing.’ The first British releases came out in the autumn of 1976, and already by 1977, the British music charts were awash with singles and LPs by the various punk bands.⁸³⁰

⁸²⁹ Döpfner and Garms, *Kunst oder Mode?* p.198

⁸³⁰ See Clinton Heylin, *Babylon’s Burning: From Punk to Grunge* (London: Viking, 2007); and Jon Savage, *England’s Dreaming: Anarchy, Sex Pistols, Punk Rock and Beyond*, rev. ed. (New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 2002).

But in West Germany, the music industry had remained uninterested.⁸³¹ Early on, several of the major German labels had attempted to mimic what had happened in the UK but with disappointing results. In 1977, CBS put together Frankfurt am Main's die Straßenjungs around long-time professional singer and bassist Nils Selzer, while in Hamburg, Teldec signed another old school rock formation Big Balls & The Great White Idiot with the hopes of capitalizing on the punk phenomenon.⁸³² Die Straßenjungs were the brainchild of producer Axel Klopprogge ("a frustrated Deutsch-rocker" in the words of Detlef Kinsler) and lyricist Eckard Ziedrich.⁸³³ In 1977, the Straßenjungs released *Dauerlutscher*, an album heavily influenced by early UK punk and full of pornographic lyrics ("Don't tell me about your life, I don't want to talk anymore,...I just want what's between your legs / I don't make love, I'm more about urges") and odes to alcohol excess ("I need my alcohol like the petty-bourgeoisie needs their smoke"). But dismal sales in the first three months (3,000 copies sold) and bad press convinced CBS to drop the contrived act, especially after the band opened for their label mates the Clash during the latter's explosive 1978 tour of West Germany. One fanzine claimed guitarist Mick Jones thought the Straßenjungs were "dumb" while lead singer Joe Strummer declared, when asked about them, that "they've not only to change their hairstyle, they've got to change their brains."⁸³⁴ The Big Balls experienced a nearly identical fate. Formed around the three Grund brothers in late 1976, the Balls entered Rüssel-Tonstudio in Hamburg in August 1977 and quickly released their self-

⁸³¹ A comprehensive history of the West German music industry remains to be written. But see Tim Renner and Sarah Wächter, *Wir hatten Sex in den Trümmern und träumten: Die Wahrheit über die Popindustrie* (Berlin: Berlin Verlag, 2013); Michel Clement, Oliver Schusser and Dominik Papies, eds., *Ökonomie der Musikindustrie* (Wiesbaden: Gabler Verlag, 2008); and Tim Renner, *Kinder, der Tod ist gar nicht so schlimm! Über die Zukunft der Musik- und Medienindustrie* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2004).

⁸³² Döpfner and Garms, *Kunst oder Mode?* pp.274-275.

⁸³³ Detlef Kinsler, "Die Straßenjungs," in *Rock Session 4: Magazin der populären Musik*, eds., Klaus Humann and Carl-Ludwig Reichert (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1980), p.164. In more ways than one: the Straßenjungs were to be Klopprogge's Sex Pistols to his Malcolm McLaren. See also his comments on the role of a manager during in Döpfner and Garms, *Kunst oder Mode?* pp.73-96. See "Straßenjungs," in *Punk-Lexicon: God Save Rock'n'Roll!—30 Jahre Punk und die Folgen*, ed., Christian Graf (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2000), p.343.

⁸³⁴ *Total Control*, Nr.1 (Düsseldorf: 1977), pp.14, 17. See also Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.30; and Albrecht Koch, *Angriff auf's Schlaraffenland. 20 Jahre deutschsprachige Popmusik* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1987), p.107.

titled debut, the first ever recorded West German punk LP.⁸³⁵ And while they were helpful in promoting the younger Hamburg punk bands as we saw, again, bad press and bad sales (7,000 copies of the first album) convinced Teldec that the effort was not worth the reward and after a second disappointing album in 1978, the band was let go.⁸³⁶

As creations of the music industry whose express purpose was to capitalize on the commercial potential of the genre, both die Straßenjungs and to a lesser extent the Big Balls were ostracized by the punk community.⁸³⁷ Time and again critics condemned the bands as “fakes” or “imitation-punks.”⁸³⁸ Long-time rock critic Jörg Gülden bluntly called the first LP by the Big Balls “shit.”⁸³⁹ *Musik Express* called the Big Balls “a bunch of industry puppets” while *Popfoto* wrote, “[i]f one listens closely, then one notices that there is not much originality. In the end, it is only about the money stolen from the pockets of fans.”⁸⁴⁰ *Fachblatt* urged buyers to boycott die Straßenjungs because “for once the pure inhumanity and commercialism of punk rock is revealed explicitly.”⁸⁴¹ Charges of fascism dogged the Big Balls whose singer was known variously as the ‘Baron Adolf Kaiser’ or ‘The Great White Idiot’ and whose Hitler-esque mustache and armband joked with the Nazi past—nor did it help that label mate Udo Lindenberg charged the group with fascist tendencies in leftist journal *Konkret*—an accusation the group was never to shake and one of the key sources in the moral panic that arose with punk that we will

⁸³⁵ Thomas Junggebauer, *Punkwax: German Punk & Hardcore 1977-85 Vinyl Navigator* (Berlin: J&H, 2007), p.29; and Döpfner and Garms, *Kunst oder Mode?* p.184.

⁸³⁶ Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.31.

⁸³⁷ The Big Balls were still respected in Hamburg because they had been crucial in nurturing some of the earliest punk bands there as we saw in Chapter 2.

⁸³⁸ See *Total Control*, Nr.1 (Düsseldorf: 1977), pp.7-8; *White Riot*, Nr.0 (Kamen-Heeren: 1978), p.4; *Heimatblatt*, Nr.4 (Düsseldorf: 1979), p.4; *Heimatblatt*, Nr.6 (Düsseldorf: 1979), p.8; *Plastik*, Nr.3 (Hamburg: 1979), pp.2, 11; *Preiserhöhung*, Nr.2 (Hamburg: 1979), p.18; *Preiserhöhung*, Nr.3 (Hamburg: 1979), p.14; and Alfred Hilsberg, “Rodenkirchen is burning – Krautpunk,” *Sounds*, Nr.3, March 1978, p.22.

⁸³⁹ Jörg Gülden, “Aus dem Tagebuch eines langweiligen altes Furzes,” in *Rock Sessions 2: Magazin der populären Musik*, eds., Jörg Gülden and Klaus Humann (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch, 1978), p.75.

⁸⁴⁰ Junggebauer, *Punkwax*, p.29; and Kinsler, “Die Straßenjungs,” p.167. See also Hans Keller, “Review: Straßenjungs & Big Balls and The Great White Idiot,” *Sounds*, Nr.12, December 1977, pp.68, 70.

⁸⁴¹ Cited in Stark and Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel?* p.211.

explore further in Chapter 7.⁸⁴² Because of lyrical content, radio stations refused to play songs from the first *Straßenjungs* album, a disappointment to CBS who had given the act a 30,000 DM advance, again following the UK lead.⁸⁴³ Despite speaking the language of punk—in an interview with Peter Grund, the Big Balls drummer claimed, “[f]or us, punk is a feeling of being alive and a way to react to people. It is a form of protest, and not only against the older generation, but also against conventional Poppers, Rock Bands, and Heavy Rock Bands”—their long hair and long careers as rock musicians prior to 1977 betrayed both bands’ convictions to the genre.⁸⁴⁴ And while their music was adequate if run-of-the-mill—columnist Barry Graves at *Tagesspiegel* wrote “[t]here was just bla-bla to be heard” about a Big Balls concert—the unnaturalness of their provocations and forced attempts at shocking the public only contributed to their stage-managed image.⁸⁴⁵ While CBS tried to sell *die Straßenjungs* as the real deal—“While many things that are only suggested in ‘German Schlager,’ here it comes in plain language – honest and direct” ran the promotional junket for their first album—their poor record sales and exclusion from the West German punk scene were a result of their perceived inauthenticity.⁸⁴⁶ The disappointing outcome of *die Straßenjungs* and Big Balls experience left a bad taste in the collective mouths of the German music industry for years to come. And despite later attempts to regain their credibility—both bands, after being dropped by their labels, formed their own independent labels and began releasing self-produced albums—the Big Balls and

⁸⁴² Döpfner and Garms, *Kunst oder Mode?* p.184; Stark and Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel?* pp.134, 139-141; and “Punk,” *Szene Hamburg*, Nr.11, November 1977, p.18.

⁸⁴³ Heinz Holtgreffe, “Punk – und was dahinter steckt,” *BZ*, 25 November 1977; Döpfner and Garms, *Kunst oder Mode?* p.274; and Kinsler, “Die Straßenjungs,” p.167.

⁸⁴⁴ “Punk,” *Szene Hamburg*, Nr.11, November 1977, p.18.

⁸⁴⁵ Barry Graves, “Punk-Rock mal so, mal so,” *Tagesspiegel*, 9 December 1977. According to Hilsberg, despite producing acceptable punk music, “because of their past history, the Big Balls have thrown away their image as punks of the first hour.” Hilsberg, “Rodenkirchen is burning – Krautpunk,” p.23.

⁸⁴⁶ Cited in Kinsler, “Die Straßenjungs,” p.167.

especially die Straßensongs were never able to shake the belief in their inauthentic origins: to this day, punks roundly condemn them as “real poseurs.”⁸⁴⁷

By 1981, however, the situation had changed dramatically. Whereas in 1977, less than 100,000 punk albums were sold in all of West Germany—a figure representing about 0.4% of total German record sales—by the early 1980s, independent bands on shoestring budgets were selling records with totals in the five and six digits; figures that—with a little marketing and guidance from the music industry, so it was assumed—had the potential to rise to the magical seven-figure mark in the twenty-five million annual German music market.⁸⁴⁸ What had not existed in 1977 was now established: institutional structures that could handle expansion; distribution and communication networks to move and broadcast alternative consumer goods; a punk-buying public; and the credibility of German-language rock’n’roll provided by the early punk bands. However, the sounds then being produced by the majority of the independent punk record labels such as Aggressive Rockproduktionen in West Berlin or Schallmauer Rekords in Stuttgart were not necessarily conducive to the kind of radio-airplay and chart-topping success that major labels were interested in: as we will see in the next chapter, bands such as Hass, Daily Terror or Slime represented the Hardcore wing of punk whose music was harder, louder, and geared towards a niche audience. Nor were the experimental soundscapes being produced by the more venturesome labels such as Zick Zack or Ata Tak any more appealing. But bands such as Ideal offered major labels music that was imminently more marketable and commercial because the compositions were more pop than rock, emphasized the keyboard rather than the guitar, featured

⁸⁴⁷ IG Dreck auf Papier, ed., *Keine Zukunft war Gestern*, pp.20-22, here 22. See also Michele Avantario, “1977-1987: Von Krawall bis Totenschiff. Punk, New Wave und Hardcore,” in *Läden, Schuppen, Kaschemmen: Eine Hamburger Popkulturgeschichte*, ed., Christoph Twickel (Hamburg: Edition Nautilus, 2003), p.53; and Nils Selzer, “Trottelige Parolen sind etwas für Trottel,” *Jungle World*, Nr.38, 20 September 2006, p.18.

⁸⁴⁸ *Rundy*, Nr.5, 31 January 1978, p.5, cited in Rolf Lindner, *Punk Rock oder: Der vermarktete Aufruhr* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Freie Gesellschaft, 1978), p.45.

gentler and often female vocals, and crucially, were backed by danceable beats. Promising to marry punk with danceable rhythms in the same way that New Wave in the Anglo-American countries were successfully mixing elements to create post-punk sound, the NDW in the early 1980s in West Germany was able to capitalize on international trends and domestic traditions, especially lyrically.⁸⁴⁹

As observed in earlier chapters, the only indigenous, German-language popular music genre was Schlager. Stars in the postwar years such as Freddy Quinn were extraordinarily successful, selling millions of albums that provided a more sedate-sound to the hotter rhythms of rock'n'roll then coming to the Federal Republic from overseas. Lyrically, Schlager is conservative with its emphasis on unchanging landscapes and gender relations, sentimental and eternal love, and nostalgia for uncomplicated times gone by.⁸⁵⁰ More escapist than concrete, Schlager lies at the opposite end of the expressive spectrum than punk in that it generalized and flattened its subjects rather than sharpening them through subjective specificity. The major labels had a long-tradition of success with Schlager and felt that if the faster, danceable tempos of punk could be combined with the more escapist Schlager-style lyrics that were less confrontational, then the industry would be well served. Whereas Hilsberg had rooted what he called the *Neue Deutsche Welle* in an experimental punk sound, the record industry appropriated the term from him and transformed it into a catch-all to signify German-language lyrics, easy pop sounds, and commercial beats. Thus in the early 1980s, the major labels combined the more danceable punk music to the lyrical escapism of Schlager and redefined what has become known as the NDW.

⁸⁴⁹ On postpunk, see especially Simon Reynolds, *Rip It Up and Start Again: Post-punk, 1978-84* (London: Faber & Faber, 2005).

⁸⁵⁰ See Edward Larkey, "Just for Fun? Language Choice in German Popular Music," in *Global Pop, Local Language*, eds., Harris M. Berger and Michael Thomas Carroll (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2003), pp.131-132; and Edward Larkey, "Postwar German Popular Music: Americanization, the Cold War, and Post-Nazi *Heimat*," in *Music and German National Identity*, eds., Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp.235-236.

The majors set to work and as 1981 rolled into 1982, NDW was in full swing throughout the Federal Republic of Germany. Television shows, marketing campaigns, mainstream press and newspapers—all exhibit the penetration of NDW into West Germany’s cultural, social, and even political landscape; even Edmund Stoiber, then leader of the CSU, upon hearing that the Spider Murphy Gang was from Munich, demanded that the conservative party somehow try to capitalize on the band’s new-found fame.⁸⁵¹ Bands produced on smaller independent labels were swallowed up by the majors who then re-released their albums. Record sales boomed. The amount of fame and money dwarfed the numbers that the independents could offer. Rumours spoke of 50,000 DM advances on bands signing with major labels.⁸⁵² Inga Humpe from the Neonbabies remembers that Gabi Delgado-Lopez and Robert Gorl from D.A.F. had so much money but because they did not have bank accounts (that was too bourgeois) they walked around with plastic bags filled with cash.⁸⁵³ Even in foreign countries the NDW found success. In the UK, D.A.F. was an overnight sensation and in 1981 was the first German act to ever grace the cover of the venerable *New Musical Express*.⁸⁵⁴ Ralf Dorper’s single “Eraserhead” (a musical tribute to the David Lynch film) was single of the week in *NME*.⁸⁵⁵ In America, Liebesgeier’s single “Waschsalon” was Single of the Year in Andy Warhol’s *Interview*.⁸⁵⁶ Artists such as Nina Hagen began playing clubs like the Ritz in New York City and Malaria! toured the east coast in the fall of 1980 including well-received shows at the iconic Studio 54.⁸⁵⁷

⁸⁵¹ On 15 April 2004, the Spider Murphy Gang filmed the concert ‘Unplugged in Maximilianeum’ in the meeting room of the Bavarian Parliament, presided over by then Bavarian Minister-President Edmund Stoiber.

⁸⁵² Kid P, “Die Wahrheit über Hamburg!,” *Sounds*, Nr.5, May 1982, p.26.

⁸⁵³ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.306.

⁸⁵⁴ “Deutsch Amerikanische Freundschaft (D.A.F.),” in *Das NDW-Lexicon: Die Neue Deutsche Welle – Bands und Solisten von A bis Z*, ed., Christian Graf (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), p.54.

⁸⁵⁵ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.266.

⁸⁵⁶ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.210.

⁸⁵⁷ See *Village Voice*, 5-11 November 1980, p.94. See also “Mania D./Malaria,” in *Das NDW-Lexicon: Die Neue Deutsche Welle – Bands und Solisten von A bis Z*, ed., Christian Graf (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), p.176.

1982 also marked the year in which the NDW split from punk definitively and became a parody of what Hilsberg had once called upon punk to become. Whereas in prior years, bands that came to be categorized as NDW had deep roots in the alternative punk scene that we have tracked the emergence and expansion of, by 1982, this was not the case, and we can see this by examining some of the bands producing hit albums and singles in the years 1981 and 1982. Named after the fictitious gangster in Elvis Presley's "Jailhouse Rock," the aforementioned Spider Murphy Gang was a conventional Munich rockband featuring Bavarian lyrics. Formed in 1977, the band found success as a regional variant with their 1981 long-player *Dolce Vita* that spent an astounding 91 weeks on the German charts including stints at number 1 with the hit single "Skandal im Sperrbezirk" reaching number 1.⁸⁵⁸ The Hagen-based rockband Extrabreit watched their 1980 debut album *Ihre größten Erfolge* spend 38 weeks on the German charts and finally reached number 7 in January 1982 at the highpoint of the NDW.⁸⁵⁹ The year prior, their second album *Welch ein Land: Was für Männer!* spent 34 weeks on the charts, reached number 5 near the end of 1981, and produced two hit singles ("Polizisten" and "Hurra, hurra, die Schule brennt") that both spent more than 20 weeks on the charts in 1982.⁸⁶⁰ Likewise Trio, whose 1981 self-titled debut on Phonogram and 1983 follow-up *Bye Bye* both spent 25 weeks on the German charts as NDW albums even though all three members—Stephan Remmler (singer), Kralle Krawinkel (guitar), and Peter Behrens (drums)—had been playing in various rock'n'roll bands since the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁸⁶¹ Releasing a run of hit singles in 1982 and 1983—"Da da

⁸⁵⁷ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.266.

⁸⁵⁸ "Spider Murphy Gang," in *Das NDW-Lexicon: Die Neue Deutsche Welle – Bands und Solisten von A bis Z*, ed., Christian Graf (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), p.239.

⁸⁵⁹ See "Extrabreit," in *Das NDW-Lexicon: Die Neue Deutsche Welle – Bands und Solisten von A bis Z*, ed., Christian Graf (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), 78-79.

⁸⁶⁰ See "Extrabreit," in *Das NDW-Lexicon*, pp.78-79.

⁸⁶¹ See "Behrens, Peter," in *Das NDW-Lexicon: Die Neue Deutsche Welle – Bands und Solisten von A bis Z*, ed., Christian Graf (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), pp23-24; "Remmler, Stephan," in *Das NDW-Lexicon:*

da” (1982), “Anna – lassmichrein lassmichraus” (1982), “Bum bum” (1983), “Herz ist Trumpf” (1983), and “Turaluraluralu – Ich mach BuBu was machst du” (1983)—Trio has become the face of the NDW: probably the most famous song of the genre, the international hit single “Da da da ich lieb dich nicht du liebst mich nicht aha aha aha” (usually shortened to ‘Da da da’ and featuring Remmler on a mini-Casio keyboard) spent 27 weeks on the singles charts, climbed as high as number 2 in both the German charts and (as an English-version) in the UK charts, and has sold an estimated 13 million copies worldwide to date.⁸⁶²

Musicians who did have roots in punk sought to reinvent themselves as NDW acts to share in the spoils. Nichts, featuring two members of the Hardcore act KFC—drummer Tobias Brink and guitarist Meikel Claus—one of the violent instigators at the Zick Zack festivals, “got some woman from the old part of town” (Claus) to sing for them, practiced for three weeks, recorded their first album *Made in Eile* (1981) that included the hit song “Radio,” and released it on Schallmauer.⁸⁶³ Between appearances on the music television show Bananas on 8 September 1981 and the end of the year, Nichts sold 10,000 singles and 40,000 albums, and in early 1982, jumped to WEA.⁸⁶⁴ Releasing *Tango 2000* in January 1982, their follow-up album spent 15 weeks in the German charts and climbed to number 22.⁸⁶⁵ Spliff, whose hit song “Carbonara” spent 23 weeks in the German charts and placed as high as 5 in May 1982 was composed of former members of Nina Hagen’s Band which had imploded during her abbreviated “Babylon Will Fall” tour in 1980—which in turn was composed of members of the old West Berlin

Die Neue Deutsche Welle – Bands und Solisten von A bis Z, ed., Christian Graf (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), pp.226-227.

⁸⁶² “Behrens, Peter,” in *Das NDW-Lexicon*, p.23; “Trio,” in *Das NDW-Lexicon: Die Neue Deutsche Welle – Bands und Solisten von A bis Z*, ed., Christian Graf (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), p.251. See also *Chart File: Volume 2, 1983* (London: Virgin Books, 1983), p.42.

⁸⁶³ “Nichts,” in *Das NDW-Lexicon: Die Neue Deutsche Welle – Bands und Solisten von A bis Z*, ed., Christian Graf (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), p.206.

⁸⁶⁴ See Kid P, “Neues und Böses über Düsseldorf. Nichts. KFC. Monotones,” *Sounds*, Nr.1, January 1982, p.14; and Teipel, *Verschwennde*, p.308.

⁸⁶⁵ “Nichts,” in *Das NDW-Lexicon*, p.206.

political rock band Lokomotive Kreuzberg who had formed in 1972.⁸⁶⁶ Re-branded as NDW in 1980 under the guidance of star-NDW producer Axel Klopprogge, the album 85555, from which “Carbonara” was the lead single, hit number 1 in West Germany in 1982 and sold half a million copies.⁸⁶⁷ United Balls, a Munich-area band in existence since 1973 under various names, repackaged themselves as NDW in the early 1980s, and achieved success with their 1981 single “Pogo in Togo” off the album of the same name.⁸⁶⁸ As artists and bands with deep pedigree in punk were replaced with late-comers such as Geier Sturzflug, Grauzone, Rheingold, UKW, and a host of others, whose political outlook bore little resemblance to the earlier punks, the original (contested) unity of the scene began to break down, as the genre rapidly lost its ideological underpinnings of *Anderssein* as it moved inexorably towards mainstream pop music.

We can further see the separation between punk and the NDW not only by the success of bands that previously had no connection to the West German punk scene, but through a more detailed look at some of the lyrics to the NDW songs gracing the charts. Ideal’s lyrics provide good examples to see how the specificity of singing “über Deutschland” waned in favor of clichés and generalities drawn from conventional rock and pop themes, and the romantic escapism that defines Schlager, as the band moved away from punk towards a more commercial sensibility.⁸⁶⁹ Nor was this unexpected as band members were quite conscious of this move: according to Ideal bassist Ulrich Deuker, “we’re cultivating the good traditions from 1950s hits

⁸⁶⁶ “Spliff,” in *Das NDW-Lexicon: Die Neue Deutsche Welle – Bands und Solisten von A bis Z*, ed., Christian Graf (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), pp.241-242.

⁸⁶⁷ Döpfner and Garms, *Kunst oder Mode?* p.142; Didi Zill, *Neue Deutsche Welle: Fotografien aus den Achtziger Jahren* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), p.64; and “Spliff,” in *Das NDW-Lexicon*, pp.242-243.

⁸⁶⁸ “United Balls,” in *Das NDW-Lexicon: Die Neue Deutsche Welle – Bands und Solisten von A bis Z*, ed., Christian Graf (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), pp.256-257.

⁸⁶⁹ See Hans-Peter Rodenberg, “Der entrückte Musikfan oder auch: Was hat Jim Morrison mit der Neuen Deutschen Welle zu tun?” in *Künstliche Paradiese der Jugend: Zur Geschichte und Gegenwart ästhetischer Subkultur*, ed., Peter Ulrich Hein (Münster: LIT-Verlag, 1984), pp.147-150.

but from the perspective of the 1980s.”⁸⁷⁰ Ideal first gave notice with their single “Ich steh auf Berlin” (“I stand for Berlin,” later shortened to “Berlin”) that was typical of punk productions since it glorified the diversity and excitement of living in West Berlin in a realistic manner (“Bahnhof Zoo, my train arrives / I get out, it’s good to be here again / Down to the subway, passing alcohol / direction Kreuzberg, the fare is free / Cottbusser Tor, I jump out / two inspectors are anticipating a scam / at breakneck speed, up the escalator / two Turks hinder the officials / Oranienstrasse, home of the Koran / further down begins the Wall / Mariannenplatz, notoriously red / I’m feeling good, I’m into Berlin”). Other songs on their self-titled debut album that spent 23 weeks on the German charts and climbed as high as number 3, however, show the Schlager influences that began permeating the NDW.⁸⁷¹ In “Blaue Augen,” for example, singer Annette Humpe describes how life experiences have left her cold (“da bleib ich kuhl kein Gefühl” [“I remain cold with no feelings”]) until she came across a pair of beautiful blue eyes: “your blue eyes make me so sentimental, such blue eyes / when you look at me so, everything else doesn’t matter / its unbelievable how phenomenal your blue eyes are / what I then feel is no longer normal.” In their follow-up album, *Der Ernst des Lebens* (1981), that reached number 4 on the charts and sold more than half a million copies, the lyrics to singles “Eiszeit” [“Ice-Age”] and “Monotonie” (which both spent weeks in the German charts), showed an even greater drift into fantasy.⁸⁷² In the former, Humpe is again ice cold (“The telephone has been still for years / there is no one I want to speak to ... Ice Age / within me begins / the Ice Age / in the labyrinth of the Ice Age / minue ninty degrees”), but in the chorus is able to escape into fantasy: “In my film, I am the star / I’m only clear when I’m alone.” In the latter, Humpe describes a certain tedium with life manifesting itself in the routine of vacationing (“Monotony in the South Seas /

⁸⁷⁰ “Ideal,” in *Das NDW-Lexicon*, p.131.

⁸⁷¹ See Günter Ehnert, *Hit Bilanz. Deutsche Chart Singles, 1981-1990* (Norderstadt: Taurus Press, 2000).

⁸⁷² “Ideal,” in *Das NDW-Lexicon*, p.131.

melancholy at 30 degrees / monotony under palm trees / Campari on Tahiti / bitter lemon on Hawaii”). Another song, “Sex in der Wüste,” (“Sex in the Desert”) details the discrepancy between desire for sex and disappointment, as Humpe again mixes fantasy with ennui: “The horizon moves closer but what no one knows / everything thinks of one thing / but it’s too hot for that / sex – sex in the desert.”⁸⁷³

While Ideal still had one foot in punk subjectivity and everyday life, most of the bands that found success in the early 1980s soon lost their critical edge (if they had any to begin with). “Radio,” the lead single from Nichts’ first album, spoke about their (in hindsight, prophetic) desire to hear their voices over the ether and the potential rewards of celebrity: “Dear God, I wish / to hear my voice on the radio / To be number 4 in the charts / then everyone would be so nice to me.” Extrabreit’s most famous song “Hurra, hurra, die Schule brennt” that opened this section can be read on multiple levels. Superficially, the song tells a tale of juvenile revolt in the verses before returning to a universal adolescent fantasy in the chorus. But the song’s reference to commodified punk fashion implicitly mocks the now massified subculture while the metaphor of the school burning can perhaps also be seen as an ironic commentary on the death of punk itself rather than simply the destruction of old knowledge.⁸⁷⁴ Trio’s “Da da da” is modeled as a one-sided telephone conversation with only singer Remmler’s responses serving to flesh out the call. As Remmler asks his “Schatz” (darling) if there is anything that can save the relationship, the chorus and refrain repeatedly responds, “I don’t love you, you don’t love me (x4) / Da da da (x4) / da da da / I don’t love you, you don’t love me / da da da.” In all these examples, conventional rock and pop themes of celebrity, rebellion, sex, and unrequited love were replacing the biting social critique of punk. To say this does not mean to suggest that all NDW

⁸⁷³ See Larkey, “Just for Fun? Language Choice in German Popular Music,” p. 144.

⁸⁷⁴ I would like to thank Kathy Pence for this insight.

bands lost their edge but the mix with Schlager meant that ironic commentary was being overwhelmingly replaced with sentimentality. Occasional numbers continued the tradition of critical commentary. Nichts' song "Ein deutsches Lied" (A German Song) whose verses and chorus spoke poignantly to the difficulties of German identity after Auschwitz ("No one admits to being German / Only fear of being asked, shame in my country / I am forbidden to be proud, even though I was born here / I am not to blame / I sing a German song / I sing a German song / And want no one to hear it") produced much discussion.⁸⁷⁵ But these songs were increasingly exceptions—nor tellingly were they released as singles for the charts—as bands escaped into the romanticism of what some began calling the *Neue Deutsche Fröhlichkeit* (New German Silliness) or what Hilsberg was calling, the *Neue Deutsche Naivität* (New German Nativity).⁸⁷⁶

Earlier, irony was identified as one of the key lyrical modes by which punk critiqued existing society. Both humourous and biting, irony was a means by which punk artists tried to engage with society, to spark discussion and consideration with their confrontational lyrics. With the introduction of lyrical themes drawn from German Schlager, the precision and expressive subjectivity became diluted. We can see these trends by quickly looking at several of the most successful songs of the NDW. A single from his debut album *Kugelblitze und Raketen* (1982), "Ich will Spaß" (I want fun) by Markus details a young man enamoured by his love for speed and the joys that come from driving fast. As the lyrics that opened this chapter indicate, "Ich will Spaß" offers very little to the listener beyond a superficial ode to speed even though it went to number 1 and spent 24 weeks in the German charts.⁸⁷⁷ Written by his producer Axel Klopprogge (of Straßenjungs infamy) while driving around Frankfurt, the lyrics for "Ich will Spaß" are so general that they could have been penned by any number of artists in any number of countries

⁸⁷⁵ *Bravo*, Nr.13, 25 March 1982, pp.42-43, 50.

⁸⁷⁶ "Trio: So minimal, daß es eine Art ist," *Sounds*, Nr.1, January 1982, p.12.

⁸⁷⁷ "Markus," in *Das NDW-Lexicon*, p.179.

over the past half-century (and indeed have been).⁸⁷⁸ The continuities between “Ich will Spaß” and classic rock’n’roll from the 1950s and early 1960s is more than apparant, and shows how the themes of the Wirtschaftswunder were becoming incorporated into songs from the 1980s, as they were politically with the electoral victory of the CDU in 1982 and 1983. The automobile was the dominant symbol of freedom during the 1950s in popular song and film across the Western world, although instead of a Ford, this time it was a Masserati.⁸⁷⁹ Other hit songs likewise sought distraction in fun. The hit song “Hohe Berge” (High Mountains) by Frl. Menke personified the union between Schlager and punk. With lyrics romanticizing leisure (“I sit in the chairlift and am glad / just a short stretch before I reach the summit station”) and idyllic nature (“I need the wood grouse, the chamois, the deer / mountain idyll and perpetual snow / pure nature and closeness to the sky”), “Hohe Berge” received added infusion by the appearance of Frl. Menke on the ZDF-Hitparade (the first NDW artist to do so) in a dirndl.⁸⁸⁰ After cracking the top ten and spending 18 weeks in the German charts, the single has sold approximately 2.5 million copies to date.⁸⁸¹ As Markus has recently revealed, he wanted to add a little fun to popular music (“At the time, song lyrics were rather negative and emotionally cold”), and Klopprogge believed that “the time is ripe for short, lively German pop songs, witty and with a positive attitude.”⁸⁸² By 1982, as “Ich will Spaß” and “Hohe Berge” suggest, the NDW had lost punk’s ironic edge.

Probably the best example of the widening abyss between punk and the NDW is the case of Nena. Born Gabriele Susanne Kerner (b.1960), Nena and her band sold millions of albums

⁸⁷⁸ As Markus has intimated, the song was originally to be called “Ich will Tanz” (I want to dance), but was changed to ‘fun’ when they were passed by an Opel-driver while out and about. The interchangeability of the word suggests a certain lack of commitment towards the lyrical content. See Markus Mörl, “Wie ich den Spaß erfand,” *einestages*, September 2008, p.27.

⁸⁷⁹ See Rudy Koshar, ed., *Histories of Leisure* (Oxford: Berg, 2002), esp. part II; and Rudy Koshar, *German Travel Cultures* (Oxford: Berg, 2000).

⁸⁸⁰ “Frl. Menke,” in *Das NDW-Lexicon: Die Neue Deutsche Welle – Bands und Solisten von A bis Z*, ed., Christian Graf (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), p.104.

⁸⁸¹ “Frl. Menke,” in *Das NDW-Lexicon*, p.104.

⁸⁸² Mörl, “Wie ich den Spaß erfand,” p.27.

and singles as a marketed NDW band between 1983 and 1985, and she has become in many ways the (problematic) face of the NDW.⁸⁸³ Between 1979 and 1981, Nena sang for the band Stripes who released a number of English-language singles on CBS and for *Musik Express*, represented a potent example of German misunderstanding of Anglo-American New Wave then sweeping the US and UK rock world.⁸⁸⁴ In 1981, Nena struck out on her own as a solo artist though she experienced minimal success into the following year. But on 21 August 1982, Nena appeared on ARD's Musikladen and the next day, her single "Nur geträumt" sold 40,000 copies after selling only 4,000 in the previous four months, and by December, had sold half a million copies.⁸⁸⁵ In January 1983, her first LP *Nena* and single "99 Luftballons" were released, spent 42 weeks in the German charts reaching number 1, hit platinum in sales, and from that point onwards, Nena became West Germany's biggest pop star.⁸⁸⁶ In Autumn 1983, while on tour in the United States promoting the film *Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo* (1981) based on her experiences in the West Berlin drug scene, Christiane F. handed KROQ disc jockey Rodney Bingenheimer a copy of "99 Luftballons" that she happened to have on her. Within a few months, Nena's ode to post-apocalyptic love was in heavy rotation on MTV, had sold a million copies of the single and stormed up both the US and UK charts to number 2 and 1 respectively, a feat never before (or since) matched by a German artist.⁸⁸⁷ In 1983 alone, the Hagen singer sold 1.2 million singles and 500,000 albums, and appeared alongside Markus in Wolfgang Büld's *Gib*

⁸⁸³ Her picture, for instance, graces the cover of NDW books such as Döpfner and Garms, *Kunst oder Mode?* even though, as we will see, she emerged *after* the heyday of the NDW.

⁸⁸⁴ *MusikExpress* called The Stripes, "victims of a marketed trend-program." See Gabriele Meierding, "Stripes. Neue Welle aus dritter Hand," *MusikExpress*, Nr.6, June 1980, pp.22-23.

⁸⁸⁵ Ehnert and Kinsler, eds., *Rock in Deutschland*, p.266; Barbara Hornberger, *Geschichte wird gemacht. Die Neue Deutsche Welle. Eine Epoche deutscher Popmusik* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2011), p.305; and "Nena," in *Das NDW-Lexicon: Die Neue Deutsche Welle – Bands und Solisten von A bis Z*, ed., Christian Graf (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), p.193.

⁸⁸⁶ Hornberger, *Geschichte wird gemacht*, pp.309-310; and "Nena," in *Das NDW-Lexicon*, p.194.

⁸⁸⁷ "99 Luftballons und das Chaos der Gefühle," *Der Spiegel*, Nr.13, 25 March 1984, pp.218-226; and Hornberger, *Geschichte wird gemacht*, p.310.

Gas, ich will Spaß, the most successful German film of the year.⁸⁸⁸ But as Barbara Hornberger has comprehensively analyzed, despite Nena's association with the NDW, her music and lyrics bear little resemblance to the musical qualities which define the NDW at its most influential, let alone punk, and that Nena should be considered a mainstream rock or pop singer; that she often appeared in a Rolling Stones T-shirt should point us towards her musical orientation and influences.⁸⁸⁹ It is symbolic of the distance between punk and the NDW that during an early interview for *Musik Express* in 1980 before achieving international fame, when asked about her musical relationship to *Mittagspause*, Nena answered brusquely (and now infamously), "what's all of this about your lunch-break?" without irony or knowledge of the punk pioneers.⁸⁹⁰ And while Nena wrote good rock songs, they were not NDW, let alone punk.

As the NDW moved further and further afield from what Hilsberg originally conceived, and came into being as its own genre separate from punk, it ceased to be defined by the original ideologies and impulses. As Timo Blunck from Palais Schaumberg remembers, the shows and clubs suddenly became peopled with strangers.⁸⁹¹ Whereas previously bands had performed in small rooms that fostered the kind of intimate connection between artists and audiences that punk had extolled as crucial to revitalizing rock'n'roll and breaking down the walls that rock culture in the 1970s had erected, NDW artists were now playing solely in cavernous concert halls. Large tour buses were once again necessary as bands needed a number of roadies to help with the large equipment required for larger concerts and stage shows. The divisions between audiences and musicians that punk had sought to destroy were forcefully returning, as was the arrogance that punk had sought to overcome through DIY emancipation. In 1983, Stefan 'Kleinkrieg' Klein,

⁸⁸⁸ Döpfner and Garms, *Kunst oder Mode?* p.249.

⁸⁸⁹ See Hornberger, *Geschichte wird gemacht*, pp.304-316.

⁸⁹⁰ Meierding, "Stripes. Neue Welle aus dritter Hand," p.23. See also Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.62; and Hornberger, *Geschichte wird gemacht*, pp.306-307.

⁸⁹¹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.332.

guitarist for Extrabreit, took out a two page advertisement in *Spex* in which he boasted that “I’ve earned so much money with Extrabreit that I can afford this advertisement to say that this magazine is full of shit,” the bill for which, per Hollow Skai, to this day has still not been paid.⁸⁹² By 1983, whether one calls the genre New Wave, post-punk, pop, or rock’n’roll, the NDW had ceased to have any relationship to punk as it became everything that punk had rebelled against in the first place. And the consequences of the NDW on punk have continued to be felt to this day.

„Vorsicht Neue Welle!”: Punk responses to Commercialization and the NDW

The varied responses by punks to the sudden and extensive commercialization of the NDW illustrate how authenticity was used to define the genre and can help us better understand the difficulties alternative culture confronted as it became more popular. We have already seen how authenticity inflected by notions about autonomy, difference, experimentation, musical production, and distribution have all helped shape the contours of the punk subculture. But it was under the economic pressure of the music industry in 1980, 1981, and 1982, that posed the greatest challenge to punk authenticity because it cut straight to the heart of punk ideology, and notions of independence and *Anderssein*. If the NDW became the mainstream, then how could punk be a basis for difference? The decision to sign with a major label and join the mainstream music market thus represented an existential choice for punks whose cultural politics were wrapped up in offering an alternative. The response to the sudden fame and achievements of the NDW tells us much about the difficulties of punk in dealing with expansion, but also points to the problems that alternative culture has more generally with popularity and success, and the production of cultural products inflected by political ideals within a capitalist economic system.

⁸⁹² Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.132.

The ramifications were immense for the punk scene because the perceived ‘sell-out’ was associated above all by the more experimental wing of punk—the so-called Kunstpunks—which in turn, elevated Hardcore as ‘real’ and ‘authentic’ punk, thus ending the conflict within the genre between social praxis or aesthetic revolt decisively in favour of Hardcore. While we will explore the consequences of this triumph more extensively in the next chapter, the very success of the NDW produced a crisis of authenticity within the West German punk scene. The question of signing with a major label tortured German punks as it meant a betrayal of the genre’s ideology and practices, and the question of how to balance popularity and success on the one hand with individuality and authenticity on the other hand quickly rent the punk scene. While central to the formation of the punk subculture, authenticity also became the critical fault line around which the collective broke apart. Punks responded in a number of ways to the rise of NDW. Some tried to remain faithful to their ideals while expanding their audiences and trying to maintain creative control. Others refused to sign with majors and continued their work on the margins. A few even abandoned the punk subculture completely and retreated into isolation. Regardless of the response, 1983 was a decisive year in the history of the West German punk scene and the implications of the crisis of authenticity continue to be felt to this day.

Independence, autonomy, artistic control, authenticity— notions such as these course throughout musical genres and define popular musical understanding.⁸⁹³ In West German punk, these beliefs defined the genre. Thus to release albums independently became one of the key mantras of West German punk musical authenticity, and a central constituent of the genre’s cultural politics. Bands releasing albums on independents continually reinforced this belief. On the accompanying lyrics booklet that was distributed with Hans-a-plast’s self-titled debut (1979),

⁸⁹³ See Hugh Barker and Yuval Taylor, *Faking It: The Quest for Authenticity in Popular Music* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007).

the band proudly broadcast their independence: “This high-quality product has been planned, composed, financed, registered, written, and recorded by ourselves. We also sell it by ourselves.”⁸⁹⁴ Part of the ideological imperative of punk was to be selective about musical output, to base production not on economics but on political beliefs and taste. Frieder Butzmann has astutely argued that as West German punk bands began recording and releasing albums, and as the scene began expanding, these notions became wrapped up in political fantasies about decisively wresting control from the music industry and putting musical production on a much-more varied, autonomous and experimental footing: “That was the actual political dimension, when it became clear to me that one could make and sell records themselves. That above everything else you could make them quickly. Record today, release tomorrow. And the fact that you could sell them yourself and then reinvest the money. The fact was that really anyone could do it.”⁸⁹⁵ As we saw with Hilsberg and others, such independence was the stated goal that they were working towards. Political and aesthetic independence was thus transposed onto economic autonomy. To sign with an industry label meant a longing for fame and fortune which presupposed abandoning one’s credibility and thus the basis for musical authenticity.

In the late 1970s, the idea of signing with a major label and thus entering the mainstream music market was rejected wholesale by West German punks. If one peruses fanzine interviews and magazine articles, the reader can locate statement after statement by bands scoffing at the idea of signing with a major record label. For example, FM Einheit, percussionist for die Abwärts and later Einstürzende Neubauten, in an interview with Hilsberg in early 1981, told the *Sounds* journalist when asked whether the former band had received any offers from a major label, “no, not directly, but we could always have some. But to us it is absolutely clear that we

⁸⁹⁴ Beiheft, Hans-a-plast, *Hans-a-plast* (Hanover: Lava Records TCH 79 449, 1979), p.10.

⁸⁹⁵ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.157.

would never do it, and therefore is out of the question.”⁸⁹⁶ Einheit explained in more detail that their decision for not signing with a major was taken “not for ideological reasons. We simply built the thing. We knew how it was going to go and we still know it....The way it is nowadays, in which we sell the records ourselves (F[rank] Z and FM work in the sales at Rip Off), and then we know where the records go. You simply must have control over your records because you then have much more love for your music.”⁸⁹⁷ Jens Meyer, guitarist for Hans-a-plast, explained that while the band had listened to offers from major labels, political ideals had kept them independent: “Of course we first listened to all of the offers. We would have been pretty stupid if we hadn’t even listened to what they had to offer us. On the other hand, we knew almost for sure what we can’t or won’t allow ourselves to be offered. After a reasonably short period of reflection, it was clear to us that we would always need to be standing directly behind a commercial company to make sure that everything ran the way we wanted it to. And that is the point. A record must be presented and released how the musicians’ imagine it—provided that they stand behind it.”⁸⁹⁸ Fundamentally, attempts by the major label to restrict the band, added singer Annette Benjamin, had decisively confirmed to them that remaining autonomous was a key part of their musical independence and thus credibility: “A conventional contract runs for at least three years. How do I know what I would like to do or can do in three years? The interested parties also insisted on a [record] producer for the second LP. Naturally, we don’t get ourselves mixed up in something like this under any circumstances.”⁸⁹⁹ The quotes above are not included to point out hypocrisy since these bands would in time sign with major labels but to show that independence was the key frame of reference for these artists when it came to producing music.

⁸⁹⁶ That same year the Abwärts left Zick Zack for Phonogram. Diederich Diederichsen, “Abwärts. Amok auf dem Abenteuerplatz,” *Sounds*, Nr.2, February 1981, p.29.

⁸⁹⁷ Diederichsen, “Abwärts. Amok auf dem Abenteuerplatz,” p.29.

⁸⁹⁸ Michael O.R. Kröher, “Hans-a-plast. Wir sind Musiker und keine Müllwerker!,” *Sounds*, Nr.5, May 1981, p.28.

⁸⁹⁹ Kröher, “Hans-a-plast. Wir sind Musiker und keine Müllwerker!,” p.28.

But as musical experimentation became standardized as a necessary component of punk sound, and as tours and stage-shows became more elaborate, the success and technologizing of the genre demanded more expensive equipment, more studio time for experimentation, and more money; capital that independents simply did not have since they operated with limited budgets. As the Zick Zack example from the previous chapter shows, bands and artists were tired of scrounging for money—especially when conventional and derivative bands such as Ideal, Markus, or Nichts, started profiting from the hard work made by punk in the late 1970s. When Hilsberg relayed to the West German punk world that Fehlfarben was going to EMI in 1980, he explained that one of the reasons was “[a]fter years of work, to finally see some money.”⁹⁰⁰ Fehlfarben guitarist Thomas Schwebel explained that as soon as Hilsberg heard that Fehlfarben was going to a major label, “Alfred implored us on the telephone: ‘Don’t do it! Don’t sell out to the industry! But to keep on building up this parallel universe of independents would have only made sense to us if it had been actually better than the existing universe. But I had never even seen a cent.’”⁹⁰¹ Some argued that going to a major label would help them revolutionize the industry from within, a kind of musical ‘long march through the institutions.’ Thomas Fehlmann, drummer for Palais Schaumburg claimed that “in order to get studio time, we needed a partner with deep pockets. There was no other way. Because of this situation, the music industry generally has a big influence on music. Now, Phonogram wanted to have us at all costs. But in order to have us, at the same time, they had to open their door. That was our rebellion: ‘You want to dictate to us who should produce our record? Ha ha! We will do that ourselves on our

⁹⁰⁰ Alfred Hilsberg, “Fehlfarben. Im Untergrund geht’s rund,” *Sounds*, Nr.8, August 1980, p.18.

⁹⁰¹ Teipel, *Verschwennde*, p.257.

own! And hand in the finished tape.’ And as we pushed and received our advance, we were of course in a good mood. The dough that we got—it was sensational.”⁹⁰²

After Fehlfarben sold Welt-Rekord to EMI and the flood gates opened in 1981, justifying the move to a major label suddenly became necessary. Whereas prior to 1980 or 1981, punk bands had been an alternative to the music industry, now they were the music industry. Some began conflating major labels and independents in an attempt to rationalize their decisions. Ralf Dörper, member of the first West German punk band Male but later part of the industry-band die Krupps, when asked about whether it was acceptable to record albums on a major responded, “It is always about the same thing, namely a product to sell. Both independents and major labels want to make money on the product.”⁹⁰³ In the same interview, lead singer Jürgen Engler claimed (sarcastically?) that the band would break-up if their album only sold 20,000 copies.⁹⁰⁴ Others suggested that the music industry was merely a means to an end. Annette Humpe, Ideal’s lead singer, in an interview with *Sounds*, claimed that the financial security she received from success gave “us space to do something else, to experiment with something that perhaps these people, who liked the first two LPs won’t like or understand, even when it is something that I’m into.”⁹⁰⁵ A few even suggested that the decision to sign with a major would have no impact on the independent scene. Abdicating responsibility towards the alternative scene, Schwebel claimed at the time that, “[t]he independents are strong enough...they’ll make it even without us.”⁹⁰⁶

⁹⁰² Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.282-283.

⁹⁰³ Thomas Buttler, “Die Krupps. Schöne Grüße an Bernward,” *Sounds*, Nr.1, January 1982, p.13.

⁹⁰⁴ Buttler, “Die Krupps. Schöne Grüße an Bernward,” p.13.

⁹⁰⁵ Xao Seffcheque and Thomas Schwebel O.R.A.V., “Ideal. Der Traum meiner Eltern,” *Sounds*, Nr.4, April 1982, p.28.

⁹⁰⁶ Hilsberg, “Fehlfarben. Im Untergrund geht’s rund,” p.18.

This is not to say that all punk bands jumped on the NDW bandwagon. Many were content to remain on the margins with all the supposed credibility that such a distinction entails, a choice even reflecting some economic priorities in some cases that Tommi Stumpf from KFC illuminates: “EMI was anyway out of the question for us. Why should somebody make a disproportionate amount of money on our work? I’d rather sell 3,000 copies of our record and get the portion that we consider justified from it, but that isn’t at all about revolutionary ideas but rather its pure selfishness!”⁹⁰⁷ Others tried to walk a thin line between punk and the NDW such as der Plan. One of the bands at the forefront of the technological revolution in punk, der Plan was on the outer edges of the NDW since their music was so avant-garde. But to circumvent any charges of profiteering or selling-out, der Plan went completely independent in 1980, even going so far as to sell their own records only via Ata Tak mail-order rather than through stores such as Rip Off. Though Moritz Reichelt indicated in an interview that such moral standards were taxing (“I’m glad that today I didn’t have to run to the post office with large parcels,” says Moritz clearly irritated”), it was nonetheless an important part of punk ethos.⁹⁰⁸

For some, the decision to sign with a major label meant a painful break with the independent scene that had nurtured them. The Neonbabies, for example, a West Berlin band fronted by Inga Humpe (Annette’s sister), released two independent 7” singles in 1980, “I Don’t Want To Lose You” and “Nervös.” Assembling the albums by hand with photocopied covers, the band came into Zensor to see if Seiler would sell their singles and he loved the product: as he has since declared, “One just does it—you photocopy the cover—and make sure that the world hears about it.”⁹⁰⁹ After the subsequent success of their debut self-titled album (1981), the Neonbabies moved to Ariola. But their decision to release their second album *Harmlos* (1982) on a major

⁹⁰⁷ Xao Seffcheque o.R.a.V., “KFC. Fußball – Hitler – Krieg und Frieden,” *Sounds*, Nr.2, February 1981, p.43.

⁹⁰⁸ Ludwig Sigurt Dankwart, “...und was der Plan dazu sagt,” *Sounds*, Nr.7, July 1980, p.35.

⁹⁰⁹ Teipel, *Verschwennde*, pp.156-157, here 157.

label meant an immediate end to their relationship with the alternative scene: “And we were promptly kicked out of this indie scene. Suddenly, people like the Censor didn’t want to sell our records anymore.”⁹¹⁰ Critics similarly joked that Fehlfarben’s new label would be called “Geldrekord” (Money-Records) after they sold Welt-Rekord to EMI, and while this playful sarcasm is par for the punk course, it does reflect the bitter betrayal felt by many.⁹¹¹

The question of profit was central to these responses and as the punk scene expanded, it came to increasingly define the fissures that split the genre. We have already seen how charges of profit-making affected individuals such as the Zensor and Klaus Maeck at Rip Off. But again, the case of *Sounds* journalist Alfred Hilsberg and his label Zick Zack is exemplary. In early 1980, *Sounds* initiated a public debate in the magazine, the so-called “*Sounds*-diskurs” (*Sounds*-discussion). Writers and columnists wrote essays defending or rejecting the new music in an attempt to give the magazine more direction going forward. Diedrich Diederichson began by asking whether Hilsberg’s original claim was true (“Is the revolution over and have we won?”) and suggested that what was at stake with the new music was cultural and political identity.⁹¹² Older writers such as Manfred Gillig and Jörg Gülden tried to understand where ‘antiquated rock’n’rollers’ belonged and why the new music was supposedly so good.⁹¹³ Hollow Skai wrote about alternative communication structures such as the fanzine network while Michael Ruff talked about how punk revolutionized German-language lyrics.⁹¹⁴ The essays tried to draw in

⁹¹⁰ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.281.

⁹¹¹ *Bericht der U.N.-Menschenrechtskommission über Menschenrechtsverletzungen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Nr.3 (Düsseldorf: 1980), n.p.

⁹¹² Diedrich Diederichsen, “SOUNDS-Diskurs. Ideologien, Identitäten, Irrwege?,” *Sounds*, Nr.1, January 1980, pp.18-19.

⁹¹³ Manfred Gillig, “Rock Around The Electron. Zwischen Avantgarde und Amusement,” *Sounds*, Nr.4, April 1980, pp.22-24; and Jörg Gülden, “Ein neues Jahr voll neu-modischer Neu-erscheinungen –und fast alle neu-wertig!,” *Sounds*, Nr.5, May 1980, pp.46-47.

⁹¹⁴ Hollow Skai, “SOUNDS – (K)ein Fanzine. Spontaneität, Ungebundenheit, Freiräume,” *Sounds*, Nr.6, June 1980, pp.46-48; and Michael Ruff, “Poetry in Motion. Analogien, Abstimmungen und Atmosphäre,” *Sounds*, Nr.7, July 1980, pp.42-43.

readers who were not convinced about the revolutionary properties of punk which even a cursory glance at the letters to the editor at the beginning of each issue hammered home, but they were also important in helping to elaborate the political ideals such as independence, DIY and *Anderssein* that underwrote the genre.

At the heart of the essays (but remaining mostly unmentioned) was the issue of money. As we have seen, Zick Zack and those associated with the label became targets for accusations of impropriety. Even his own bands were upset because he was diverting all of the profits back into new projects. In the September 1980 issue, Michael O.R. Kröher (and to a lesser extent Diedrichsen) attacked Hilsberg for continually writing about bands signed to Zick Zack in *Sounds* which they felt was using the magazine to promote his own products.⁹¹⁵ The question of profit was central to the charges since Hilsberg was also partnered with Klaus Maeck at Rip Off (though he claimed he did not earn a penny from Rip Off) where the Zick Zack albums were sold. What followed was an angry exchange that touched on the core issues of political idealism, artistic independence, journalistic credibility, and financial interests:

MK: This relates to the fact that you write in SOUNDS about your own label 'Zick Zack,' in a manner that our readers frequently don't understand your 'irony' anymore.

AH: There is still too little about it in SOUNDS already.

MK: That's not the issue right now. It just seems to me as if you are only talking about your interests [in Sounds] as a label director.

AH: Sure, from certain perspectives yes.

MK: But you also have other perspectives. For example, is your electricity bill one such perspective?

AH: When I write for SOUNDS, then no, because I pay my bill with this job [as a journalist], not because I sell a lot of records.

MK: But you earn money from it!

AH: As we already clarified a little while ago, I earn no money from 'Rip-Off'!

⁹¹⁵ Michael O.R. Kröher, "Untergrund und Unternehmer (Teil 1)," *Sounds*, Nr.9, September 1980, pg.50.

MK: But your partner Klaus Maeck does as far as I'm concerned! And if Rip-Off earns enough thanks to your promotion in SOUNDS—as we have already clarified a little while ago—then there is something for you too!⁹¹⁶

As Diedrichsen clarified, it was the mixture between economics, cultural politics and idealism that was upsetting people: “On the one hand, ‘Rip-Off’ earns money from the sale of records, and on the other side, you [Hilsberg] write about those very records that ‘Rip-Off’ earns its money from, regardless of how little this may be. Your idealistic pretensions to popularize new German music, and also your political-cultural concerns, are all mixed up with economic interests.”⁹¹⁷

After this exchange Hilsberg began to pull back his ubiquity at the magazine—even joking in the September 1980 “neuestes deutschland” column that, “this time there were no advertisements for Rip Off”—but the damage to his reputation was done.⁹¹⁸

The reaction against the NDW had begun to ripple throughout the West German punk scene already in 1980. The most important rejection of the NDW came from the Hardcore faction of punk as we saw in the previous chapter and will see further in the coming chapter. But even in *Sounds*, the bastion and promoter of the new genre, warning signs were already being signalled following the Kröher-Hilsberg exchange. In November 1980, in his contribution to the “*Sounds*-diskurs,” Joachim Stender warned ominously that increasing success for punk would in turn attract the attention of the record industry—with potentially disastrous consequences for the authenticity of the genre: “The danger is obvious that through such production behavior—the emergence of trends, promotion humor, the desperate attempts to shape particularly ‘funny’ and ‘amusing’ productions—the terrain is being prepared for the record industry that has long watched German groups.”⁹¹⁹ What this would mean, according to Stender, was that the music

⁹¹⁶ Kröher, “Untergrund und Unternehmer (Teil 1),” p.50.

⁹¹⁷ Kröher, “Untergrund und Unternehmer (Teil 1),” p.50.

⁹¹⁸ Alfred Hilsberg, “neuestes deutschland,” *Sounds*, Nr.9, September 1980, p.9.

⁹¹⁹ Joachim Stender, “Musik zwischen Anpassung und Überwindung,” *Sounds*, Nr.11, November 1980, p.44.

industry would move to package and commodify the NDW, and in so doing, would destroy difference in its effort to streamline the profitability of the product; that already in 1980, the ‘newness’ of the NDW was fading, and with it would disappear alterity. In February 1981, in another contribution to the “*Sounds*-diskurs,” critic René Mauchel put it more forcefully when he argued that fundamentally, what the music industry does, is it commodifies authentic expression and then sells it back to the people who produce it: “The forms of expression that come from below are co-opted from above and then, modified, filtered, and softened, sold as goods back to the bottom. The result is a grave difference between peoples’ music and music for the people.”⁹²⁰

The only way to break this cycle and keep “radical musical innovations and economic self-control” was to remain independent from the music industry.⁹²¹ One year later in May 1982, an anonymous author sounded the death knell:

Commercialism spreads more and more, new music is no longer a matter of hearts and conviction anymore, for many it is rather a method to amass a lot of money quickly....Also in Germany, the cancer of commercialization is spreading more and more throughout the new music....All of this leaves us very pessimistic about the future. In 1977, it looked as if for the first time in the history of popular music that a style of pop music without profit or careers-in-mind was being formed. By the end of the year 1981, the fallacy was finally proven....The dream of a non-commercial new music was over.⁹²²

Hilsberg wrote furiously to try and combat the growing drift towards the mainstream. In his ‘neuestes deutschland’ column in late 1980, he warned that the fashionable argument that only expensive studios funded by major labels could produce excellent music was based on false premises: “Hans-a-plast as well as S.Y.P.H. and now too die Abwärts and the Teldec marketed Big Balls & The Great White Idiot have all offered practical alternatives with their self-produced LPs. The argument, that it is only possible to produce acceptable products in big studios and with

⁹²⁰ René Mauchel, “Musik und Wirtschaft. Über das Verhältnis zwischen Ästhetik und Vermarktung,” *Sounds*, Nr.2, February 1981, p.26.

⁹²¹ Mauchel, “Musik und Wirtschaft,” p.26.

⁹²² “Gibt es noch unabhängige Neue Musik?,” *Sounds*, Nr.5, May 1982, p.22.

the money of major labels, is simply not true.”⁹²³ Then in September 1981—on the two-year anniversary of “Aus grauer Städte Mauern”—written under pseudonym (Gröfaz und Goldmann) that was actually him and Jäki Eldorado, Hilsberg unleashed a blistering condemnation of the NDW. Under the title “Falsche Freunde gibt es überall” (False friends are everywhere) Hilsberg and Eldorado sounded alarm bells about the destructive consequences of the invasion of punk by the music industry. Criticizing the passive and reactionary nature of West German punk (“Punk, in its originally creative attitude is only accepted and realized by a small minority. Punk in Germany is conservative.”), Hilsberg and Eldorado lamented that the NDW was falling back into many of the very same tendencies that punk had originally rebelled against.⁹²⁴

Nearly six months later in February 1982, Hilsberg and Eldorado again condemned the alternative music scene for poor quality control and the chaotic nature of the independents that left the system vulnerable to the more organized major labels:

Many years ago, independent productions were innumerable, could anticipate reactions and be sold, and now the market is flooded with Singles, Maxis and LPs. The consumer has an agony of choice, the collector can no longer afford everything; the critic must determine an – objective/subjective – criteria, labels and distros compete with each other objectively, the automation of a guaranteed sellable initial pressing run no longer exists anymore with Singles; it is calculable, discussed and produced with an eye towards marketability. ‘Anyone can make a record’ or ‘better too much than too little’ was the motto. Still correct. With reservations though: the independent labels and small producers have underestimated the blind eagerness to buy that the the music industry would develop. Still, the methods of the independents are nevertheless not superfluous: discovery of talent, promotion, niche marketing, trendmaker, assisting the music industry. Up until now, the independents have overestimated, 1. how much importance the buyer attributes to the label ‘independent’ and 2. that the independent enterprises could not cope with mass production. There are multiple reasons for this: for some there exists no desire to professionalize/get totally involve in market laws. For others, there exists no interest in working with other enterprises. For most of them there is a chronic deficiency in capital – there are no investments, no regular-punctual payments from the stores, no groups who are involved want to contribute by stabilizing and expanding the

⁹²³ Alfred Hilsberg, “neuestes deutschland,” *Sounds*, Nr.11, November 1980, p.18.

⁹²⁴ Gröfaz und Goldmann, “Falsche Freunde gibt es überall. Diskurs über Kriegsschauplätze 81,” *Sounds*, Nr.9, September 1981, pp.24-25.

independents through their own success. The independent labels need to adapt themselves to these realities/contradictions if they want to remain independent. Trying hard to reach the industrial dimensions is futile and redundant. For they always have ‘the nose in front’ and the eyes and ears closed tight.⁹²⁵

Finally, in July 1982—well past any hopes for stopping the NDW—Hilsberg and Eldorado called for a “General Strike” against the NDW: “This surely isn’t the last attempt by Gröfaz and Goldmann to make a decisive contribution to the containment and long-term eradication of the ugliest of all monstrous inventions given birth in recent years by the record industry: the Neue Deutsche Welle.”⁹²⁶ Arguing that “[g]etting rid of the NDW won’t be a walk in the park,” Hilsberg and Eldorado called on adherents to begin sabotaging NDW shows and labels, and urged consumers to take even more drastic measures: “Boycott record stores in which NDW products are sold, e.g. by blocking the entrances (stand around in front in groups, with mopeds, bicycles)! Obstruct all headphones! Talk very loud if NDW is playing! At night, graffiti contaminated stores with ‘Caution New Wave!’! Proceed likewise against discotheques, youth centers, bars, etc. in which NDW is to be heard! Make subversive stickers with slogans like ‘Ideal – Illegal – Scheißegal [‘Who gives a shit’]!’ Cleanse your record collection of NDW records! Convince your boyfriend / girlfriend to do the same good work! Throw all of those buttons away! Prevent hearing NDW – by putting your hands over your ears, wearing earmuffs, or listening to a Walkman.”

Yet at the same time, Hilsberg could be inconsistent in his condemnation of the NDW, contradictions which reflected his mixed identity as promoter, journalist, fan, and businessman. When he heard about Fehlfarben leaving for the music industry, Hilsberg immediately phoned the band and begged them not to go. But when he reported the move to EMI in *Sounds*, Hilsberg

⁹²⁵ Gröfaz und Goldmann, “Diskurs. Falsche Freunde gibt es überall (2. Teil) oder Aufbruch zu den Sternen,” *Sounds*, Nr.2, February 1982, p.17.

⁹²⁶ “Pamphlet: Gröfaz und Goldmann, bekannt von Funk und Fernsehen, rufen zum Generalstreik gegen die „Neue Deutsche Welle“ (auch NDW genannt) auf!,” *Sounds*, Nr.7, July 1982, pp.44-45.

claimed that the band “should not worry about the calls of ‘traitorous swine,’” since, if they wanted to make a little money after years of work, then that was their prerogative.⁹²⁷ Moreover, in a 1981 interview, Hilsberg explained that the fundamental dichotomy between independents and major labels was not quite as sharp as punks (or he) wished since both entities were nonetheless bound by the same economic rules, even if he failed to listen to his own advice with regards to Zick Zack production: “Certainly there is something in all the accusations, but we are independent from the music industry. But we can’t alter market laws either.”⁹²⁸ Other authors at *Sounds* also made vague statements that could be construed as positive in a backhanded way, only further muddying the water. Diedrich Diederichsen, for example, in reviewing Extrabreit’s second album for *Sounds*, found them slightly less embarrassing than some of their NDW brethren: “Extrabreit are at least clever...I find them disgusting but they are not so embarrassing and no so militantly boring like their Johnny-come-lately colleagues.”⁹²⁹ And writing about Markus, Diederichsen claimed that “Ich will Spaß,” “in spite of considerable weaknesses, is the best German production since Drafi Deutscher’s “Marmor, Stein und Eisen bricht” crowned the German charts in November 1965.”⁹³⁰ These ambiguous statements reflected critics’ inability to wash their hands of the NDW in the faint hope that something could be salvageable from the detritus that was being continuously produced by the major labels.

Because the major record labels had little inkling about what constituted ‘good’ NDW (only that they sang in German), bands became caught up in the trend whether they wanted to or not. *Liaisons Dangereuses*, a collaborative project between Beate Bartel (former Mania D. and Malaria! member), Chrislo Haas (former Minus Delta t, D.A.F., and der Plan member) and later

⁹²⁷ Hilsberg, “Fehlfarben. Im Untergrund geht’s rund,” p.18.

⁹²⁸ Stark and Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel?* p.201.

⁹²⁹ Diedrich Diederichsen, “Review: Extrabreit,” *Sounds*, Nr.11, November 1981, p.74.

⁹³⁰ Diedrich Diederichsen, “Neue Deutsche Welle, Folge xyz,” *Sounds*, Nr.9, September 1982, p.65.

vocalist Krishna Goineau, featuring minimal synthesizer work that anticipated techno, were aggressively pursued by the industry. As Bartel has recently related, the whole experience was distressing:

Our record was totally indie. We were the record company. Then Richard Branson from Virgin called us very quickly. Personally. Non-stop. He wanted to have us immediately. We then met him in London. He said that he found us unbelievably amazing and that he would turn us into the new superstars. He said: ‘You will be on all the newspapers!’ We listened to that. But then at one point both of us said: ‘Stop. We don’t want that!’ All of that didn’t impress us at all. I did not want to be in every newspaper. I did not want to constantly give concerts. I didn’t want to give interviews. We didn’t like journalists. We had no interest in things like promotion. And he could not understand any of this at all. We were on our own trip. We had no interest in selling ourselves. No personality cult – nothing at all.⁹³¹

The very category of NDW became suspect. In countless interviews from the early 1980s, one can find artists strenuously denying any links to the NDW.⁹³² Groups such as Palais Schaumberg tried to divorce themselves from the category because they did not want to be lumped in with overtly commercial groups such as Ideal or Extrabreit.⁹³³ Spliff, also managed by Klopprogge and one of the more prominent bands associated with the NDW, went through rhetorical gymnastics to try and explain how they were not NDW. At first they refused to answer the question (“Oh dear, about that I have absolutely no interest...I don’t see the point of discussing such a thing.”), but after some further prodding, finally rambled on at length about various characteristic of the genre, without ever hinting that they in fact might be one of its more well-known incarnations:

It is very important that one does not treat German lyrics as an equivalent to the Neue Deutsche Welle. There have been bands that have been singing for years in German. ‘Floh de Cologne’ for example or ‘Lokomotiv Kreuzberg’ and the ‘Nina Hagen Band.’ Of course: compared with today, they were very few bands, but that was above all because one had complexes with regards to the Americans. In the case

⁹³¹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.307-308.

⁹³² Hinterberger’s *Wut* was emphatic that they were not New Wave as early as 1979. See *Rock Musik*, Nr.2 (Hamburg: 1979), p.23.

⁹³³ Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, pp.148-149.

of pop music that was exactly what was said. Now all of a sudden it has become fashionable to express yourself like crazy in German with the littlest amount of music possible. Perversely, the image of the individual groups has become ever more important while the music or the musicians are quite unimportant. In this respect, 'Ideal' carries much of the blame because of their 'Golden-Fifties' style and affectations that a lot of groups took as an example and they spawned a whole crowd of unbearably boring imitators. Through this Fifties-fashion, a whole new life feeling was created. That was the real 'new' from the NDW. People could once again sing songs that were about blue eyes. And this widespread life feeling expressed exactly the German Economic Miracle from the Fifties and Sixties.⁹³⁴

And while it is a truism that as soon as you accept a classification you can be attacked for such a designation, it is also indicative of the increasingly perceived inauthenticity of the genre that many artists were strenuous in their efforts to distance themselves from the NDW.

The most extreme response to the NDW was the abandonment of punk. Some bands, rather than be associated with the NDW (whether by choice or not), decided to dissolve. Mona Lisa, lead singer from *Materialschlacht*, explained in a letter published in the Swiss fanzine *Jamming* (and re-published in German fanzines as an exemplary case) that the decision to break-up was a direct response to the commercialization of the NDW:

We're disbanding at a moment here in Germany when the major firms and media are beginning to show interest. We actually only had the alternative of participating in the industry or disbanding. At least dissolution was a consistent action regarding the commercial interests in us. One can do this as one does, as honest as one wants, but as soon as an interest develops in the commerciality of the music or art which allegedly shows new approaches, contents, and tendencies, the original contents get lost in favor of commercialism. The whole thing will then give rise to a new trend that only far too many people are willing to follow and give themselves up in doing so. For this reason, many people of the German scene are thankful for 'SOUNDS' that helps them achieve fame. And they do not see that they surrender themselves submissively to the 'system.' Probably, the *Neue Welle* is only really as harmless and empty as it allows itself to be represented in the media though.⁹³⁵

⁹³⁴ Döpfner and Garms, *Kunst oder Mode?* pp.144-145.

⁹³⁵ Cited in *Bericht der U.N.-Menschenrechtskommission über Menschenrechtsverletzungen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Nr.2 (Düsseldorf: 1980), n.p.; and *Bericht der U.N.-Menschenrechtskommission über Menschenrechtsverletzungen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Nr.3 (Düsseldorf: 1980), n.p.

That Materialschlacht felt their art and independence so threatened by the music industry, indicates the extent to which the belief that commercialism corrupts authenticity had penetrated the punk subculture. Committed to *Anderssein* and the margins, Materialschlacht felt it was their responsibility to disband rather than participate in mainstream culture.

But perhaps the most important casualty in the success of the NDW was Peter Hein. While Hein's decision to leave punk is multi-layered, full of acrimony and to this day the subject of heavy conjecture, his abandonment of the scene is a microcosm of how authenticity cut apart the subculture. In early 1980, Fehlfarben were the darlings of the alternative music scene, partly due to historical tradition since the band was composed of legendary figures from punk's blutzeit in the late-1970s (Hein and Marcus Oehlen from *Mittagspause*; Michael Kemner from D.A.F.; Schwebel from S.Y.P.H.; Uwe Bauer from Materialschlacht; and Frank Fenstermacher from *der Plan*). And partly due to the incredible music that they played, and especially Hein's penetrating lyrics and singing-style that were so instrumental in legitimizing German-language lyrics. Hein viewed the growing commercialization of the genre with deep suspicion. After the Fehlfarben album *Monarchie und Alltag* (1980) was released—the album was declared a “special record” that over time would garner enormous acclaim—the band went on tour, an experience that Hein did not enjoy and only confirmed his decision to quit the band which he did in the summer.⁹³⁶ Fehlfarben continued without Hein (Schwebel sang vocals), continued to release music, and found success when EMI (against the band's wishes) re-released the single “Ein Jahr (Es geht voran)” (1982) to capitalize on the NDW: the song, with its renowned opening stanza—“Keine Atempause, Geschichte wird gemacht, es geht voran!” (“No time for breathe, history is being made, we're moving on!”)—subsequently became the anthem of the squatting movement and

⁹³⁶ See “Fehlfarben,” in *Das NDW-Lexicon: Die Neue Deutsche Welle – Bands und Solisten von A bis Z*, ed., Christian Graf (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), p.94.

has ever since become a mainstay of German political demonstrations.⁹³⁷ Fundamentally, Hein did not want to be a part of what the NDW was beginning to transform into and choose to work as an employee at Rank Xerox rather than compromise himself and become a rock'n'roll star on someone else's terms. For someone who had rooted their own personal authenticity so deeply in the concept of *Anderssein*, to become a mainstream pop singer was a betrayal that he could not countenance. Hein did not quit making music as he quickly re-emerged with a new band called Family Five and in fact, continued to record with Fehlfarben sporadically over the next twenty-five years, storylines we will pick up again in the Epilogue. But in the summer of 1980, Peter Hein's alter ego Janie Jones died and along with him, in some sense, so did West German punk.

Conclusions

As 1983 dawned, it seemed the NDW was ready to conquer the world. But just as quickly as it had inflated, the NDW bubble burst. In the early months of 1983, a disastrous Extrabreit tour foreshadowed things to come. Embarking on a 33 date tour throughout the Federal Republic in which the band hoped to see two thousand people per show, through the first 28 shows, only around 26,000 total fans had attended.⁹³⁸ While in 1982, 48% of songs that placed in the German charts featured German lyrics, by 1983, the number dropped to 28% as listeners began reacting negatively to the NDW oversaturation.⁹³⁹ In January 1983, *Sounds* merged with the more superficial *Musik Express* and many of the critics who had championed punk such as Xiao Seffcheque and Diedrich Diedrichsen jumped ship to *Spex*. As Barbara Hornberger astutely

⁹³⁷ See "Fehlfarben," in *Das NDW-Lexicon*, p.94. Hein has stated that the squatting and peace movements completely misunderstood the original lyrical intent and purpose of the song. He is, however, fine with them using the anthem. See Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.291; and "Sieh nie nach vorn," *Junge Welt*, 26/27 October 2002, p.12.

⁹³⁸ Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, pp.199-200.

⁹³⁹ Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.201.

notes, DÖF's song "Codo" in September 1983 was the last NDW song to reach number 1 on the German charts and by October 1983, there were no NDW titles in the top 20 for the first time in two years.⁹⁴⁰ As demand schriveled up, suddenly, Zick Zack and alternative record stores like Rip Off found themselves sitting on tens of thousands of (unsellable) records. In August 1982, as Hilsberg was drowning in red ink, Zick Zack collapsed, as did several important independent distribution firms such as Eigelstein and Boots. In 1983, Maeck closed Rip Off's doors in the Karolinenviertel for good.⁹⁴¹ And while the NDW limped on for a few more years—mostly in name only—the creativity that punk had supplied was gone as the genre became a parody of what it had once been.

The incredible popularity of the NDW created a crisis in West German punk. The meteoric rise of the NDW, its association with the media, fashion and trend, and dramatic fall, all seemed to point to its innate artificiality. That longtime rockers BAP, Lokomotiv Kreuzberg (Spliff) and others quickly rebranded themselves as NDW invalidated the genre as a musical tradition. Suddenly, artists began fearing to be associated with NDW and countless interviews had them denying any relationship with the genre. Suddenly, values and institutions needed re-definition as the borders of subcultural legitimacy needed protection. That the media had played a large role in the rise of the NDW was another black mark against the genre since television and star-culture was seen as artificial, a means to sell copy and viewership rather than genuine interest in music. Success became a problem as popularity linked practice to the NDW. More than anything, the success of the NDW worked to ghettoize West German punk due to issues of authenticity, and ensure that the more conservative and narrow vision of Hardcore punk was to define the genre. At some point between 1981 and 1982, punk and the NDW ceased their

⁹⁴⁰ Hornberger, *Geschichte wird gemacht*, p.305.

⁹⁴¹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.218.

symbiotic relationship as the latter became its own genre of popular music and the ties that had held them together were broken asunder.

The most important consequence of the *Neue Deutsche Welle* was the belief that the more experimental musical innovators—the Kunstpunks—were responsible for the ‘sell-out’ of punk to the music industry. Contemporaries and subsequent students of punk—myself to some extent—have universally laid the blame for the ‘demise’ of the genre at the feet of the music industry, and the association of money-making with superficiality is well-established in the histories of authenticity and rock’n’roll. Barbara Hornberger’s recent study of the NDW is itself an effort at recuperating the genre from the snide remarks about its innate trivialness that have been propagated in the main by historians of punk.⁹⁴² But we need to be careful about the accepted assumptions that the music industry taints music, that commercialism invalidates the depth of artistic offering, because these conjectures uncritically reproduce prelapsarian claims about authenticity that are all too common to rock’n’roll.⁹⁴³ The claim that punk was at first authentic only to be corrupted by the music industry conveniently removes individual choice from the equation, but most importantly for our standpoint, suggests the existence of a ‘once’ experienced ‘authenticity’ now ‘gone’ but whose memory continues to include and exclude in alternative and mainstream culture. Blaming major labels for the demise of punk authenticity preserves the oppositional character of the genre, but also suggests that something ‘real’ was experienced even if now it is ‘gone,’ a situation that indicates to us that ‘death’ and ‘loss’ are instrumental in constituting and deploying authenticity; and that in many ways, authenticity in

⁹⁴² Hornberger, *Geschichte wird gemacht*, esp. pp.32-53.

⁹⁴³ See Fred Goodman, *The Mansion on the Hill: Dylan, Young, Geffen, Springsteen, and the Head-On Collision of Rock and Commerce* (New York: Random House, 1997).

fact only exists after it has ‘died.’⁹⁴⁴ We will pick up the debates about the ‘death of punk’ in the Epilogue since they are intimately linked to the demise of East German punk and West German memory culture, but these preliminary remarks should help give us a sense of how authenticity was subsequently used to define, regulate, and discipline the punk subculture in the Federal Republic. In this sense, the NDW was essential because its obvious ‘inauthenticity’ gave punk the authentic credibility that the genre had claimed from the very beginning. Crucially, the association of NDW and ‘selling-out’ speaks not to any innate artificiality of the NDW, but to the power of Hardcore in defining its musical rival, the subject of our next chapter.

⁹⁴⁴ A recent collection, for example, points to the “productive” rather than “pathological” nature of loss. See David L. Eng and David Kazanjian, eds., *Loss: The Politics of Meaning* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), p.ix.

Chapter 7: “Aufstand im Ghetto”: Hardcore, Moral Panic and the ‘Logic of Violence’

“Wir sind die Ratten”: The Triumph and Tragedy of Hardcore

Locked up tight and strictly watched
 A part of the city is turned into a ghetto
 Concentrated in the smallest area
 Day and night observed

Rebellion in the Ghetto, we’re organizing resistance
 Fight the oppressors
 Against the brown army
 Stones are flying again, they’re flying more and more
 Rebellion in the Ghetto, we’re organizing resistance

Behind fence and barbed wire
 A thousand men flock together
 Until it cracks and is shredded
 Ghetto-children resist now

Rebellion in the Ghetto, we’re organizing resistance
 Fight the oppressors
 Against the brown army
 Stones are flying again, they’re flying more and more
 Rebellion in the Ghetto, we’re organizing resistance

“Aufstand im Ghetto,” Vorkriegsjugend, *Vorkriegsjugend* (Zorro 001, 1984)

The consequences of the enormous success and sudden collapse of the NDW were many and have had lasting reverberations for both punk and German society more generally. By far the most important was that Hardcore became the dominant form of authentic punk, a consequence of the perceived ‘sell-out’ by the more commercial groups associated with the NDW. The very term ‘sell-out’ suggests how authenticity was used discursively in subsequent years by hard-line youths to regulate the subculture that had become too porous in their minds. In Prasenjit Duara’s apt term, regime “custodians,” panicked by the easy commercialism that youths had succumbed

to during the peak of the NDW, sought to reassert punk authenticity by driving the genre into an increasingly inaccessible subculture marked off by rigidity and marginality.⁹⁴⁵ Certain instruments such as synthesizers, keyboards, and drum machines were ostracized, as were the use of lighter pop rhythms. Fashion veered towards a much ‘harder’ look—leather jackets, spikes, and combat boots—while hair-cuts such as Mohawks or half-shaved heads signalled a total rejection of the mainstream and a renewed commitment to nonconformity. Lyrically, the expressive critique of everyday life fell by the wayside, as well as the more introverted and subjective lyrics that had characterized the early phase of West German punk. Instead, bands sang about police repression, government hypocrisy, and the general oppressiveness of Western capitalism. That many of the most successful NDW bands had been fronted by women (Ideal, Nichts, and Nena) resulted in an exclusionary assertion of masculinity in punk from appearances to dancing to singing that—for all intents and purposes—drove women from the scene. These disciplining measures were already active during the Zick Zack festivals as we saw, but increased exponentially during the early eighties: by 1983—at the latest—Hardcore had become the hegemonic representation of authentic punk in West Germany and has remained so ever since.

The rise and dominance of Hardcore was to have significant ramifications for the genre and subculture vis-à-vis the state and other youth groups over the course of the 1980s. In an attempt to reassert punk authenticity, Hardcores gravitated towards aggression and hostility to any forms of authority, and when confrontations between the subculture and the state or society occurred, the mainstream press used these occasions to de-cry the subculture and lament national decadence. As Stanley Cohen and others have argued, ‘moral panics’ have evolved historically

⁹⁴⁵ While Duara is speaking of post-World War I Manchukuo and efforts to create an ‘authentic’ nation-state, his remarks on the processes of authenticity and identity are more than applicable. See Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), pp.29-33.

when a minority social group or ‘folk devil’ appears and becomes “defined as a threat to societal values and interests.” Incidents involving these new social groups become elevated into national debates as the mainstream media plays on, “the normative concerns of the public,” and by “thrusting certain moral directives into the universe of discourse, can create social problems suddenly and dramatically.”⁹⁴⁶ In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the mainstream media was instrumental in fostering the moral panic over punk. From the beginning, the mainstream media had focused on punk’s flirtations with fascism and especially the violence surrounding the genre. Amplified by reports of violent behavior at concerts or during daily interactions between youths and citizens, social panic exploded nationally in the summer of 1980 when a group of punks travelled to the wealthy Hamburg neighborhood of Pöseldorf to vandalize cars in reaction to an earlier assault by police. State pressure on punk increased dramatically in the wake of public outcry especially in the Karolinenviertel in Hamburg, and the creation of a secret police file on Hanover punks known as the ‘Punker-Kartei’ (Punk Index).

The moral panic over punk allows an exploration into the acceptable state responses to violence within West German democracy since the confrontations between subculture, state and society are representative of larger concerns about domestic terrorism, the militant behavior of environmental and housing activists, and rising youth violence during this period. Extremism and violence—especially from groups ostensibly on the Left politically—came to define not only the genre, but how German society came to understand the larger issue of Left-wing militancy that

⁹⁴⁶ Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*, 3rd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp.1, 8. Cohen’s theory on ‘moral panics’—developed in the early 1970s—with slight revisions, has stood the test of time. In a recent reassessment of the concept, the authors argue that ‘moral panics’ emerge when four inter-related issues—deviance [morality], social problems [public concern], collective behavior [volatility], and social movements [organization and mobilization]—intersect, and have defined a ‘moral panic’ as a moment when “a substantial number of the members of a given society harbor and express the feeling that evildoers pose a threat to the society and to the moral order as a consequence of their behavior and, therefore, ‘something should be done’ about them and their behavior.” See Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance*, 2nd ed. (Chichester, UK, and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp.35, 48; and more generally, Chas Critcher, *Moral Panics and the Media* (Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 2003).

became an increasingly prominent feature of the political and social landscape of the Federal Republic during the 1980s. For punk, the moral panic and confrontations with authorities helped radicalize the genre even further. While Hardcore ideology worked to radicalize punk internally, state pressure and public conflicts with police and society amplified these trends externally. The consequences of these processes for punk were significant: pushed from within and pulled from without, paranoia and fear forced the genre to the fringes of Leftist extremism. In so doing, punk ceased to be a spring from which difference and alternatives gushed, and instead became a narrow and conservative trickle defined by an overriding concern with unity and conformity. As a result, punk became locked into a cycle of increasing violence and convention with the politics of authenticity being used to reassert punk discipline in the wake of weakness caused by the NDW. Critically, these efforts worked to destroy the original basis of West German punk: individuality, alternativeness and *Anderssein*. Thus while many scholars of punk and especially contemporaries, when considering the ‘death of punk,’ usually end their narratives at the end of the 1970s or early 1980s by pointing their fingers at the music industry for commodifying the genre and thus destroying its legitimacy, the rise of Hardcore and the disciplining nature of authenticity should be held equally responsible.⁹⁴⁷

Punks protested their treatment and denial of public space through a series of events known as the Chaos-Tage (Chaos-Days), large youth gatherings that tell us much about the boundaries of public space for alternative culture and indeed, the dimensions of democracy in the Federal Republic during the 1980s. Held sporadically since 1982, especially in Hanover, the

⁹⁴⁷ See, for example, John Robb, *Punk Rock: An Oral History* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2012); DK Publishing *Punk: The Whole Story* (London: DK Publishing, 2008); Legs McNeil and Gillian McCain, *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk* (New York: Grove Press, 2006); Stephen Colegrave and Chris Sullivan, *Punk: The Definitive Record of a Revolution* (Boston, MA: Da Capo Press, 2005); Jon Savage, *England's Dreaming: Anarchy, Sex Pistols, Punk Rock, and Beyond*, revised edition (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2002); Marc Spitz and Brendan Mullen, *We Got the Neutron Bomb: The Untold Story of L.A. Punk* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2001).

Chaos-Tage were weekend get-togethers uniting youths from across West Germany and Europe. Featuring drinking and live music, these gatherings frequently spiralled into running street battles with police trying to control the large crowds of confrontational youths. As the moral panic and police pressure over punk mounted, youths increasingly saw these events as opportunities to fight back physically against authorities and the violence escalated accordingly. The 1983 Chaos-Tage witnessed the first of several spectacular clashes between punks and Neo-Nazi Skinheads with the police caught in-between trying to stop the violence coming from both sides: the result was massive destruction to the city of Hanover and countless arrests. These events further fuelled the moral panic over punk that created a climate of fear about the genre and an expectation of violence increasingly surrounded the subculture. Significantly, over the course of the 1980s, a number of punks increasingly came to accept that being Hardcore necessitated a commitment to violence, a circular logic that fed paranoia within the subculture.

State action against the subculture fuelled panic among punks who increasingly equated the early 1980s with the last years of Weimar. As the song “Aufstand im Ghetto” (Uprising in the Ghetto) suggests, Hardcores believed themselves to be locked in a life or death struggle against the state and saw punk as means of resistance. Reading the events of the 1980s through the historical lens of the early 1930s, punks saw themselves as the last defence ‘saving’ German democracy against a perceived rising tide of fascism, a sentiment seemingly ‘confirmed’ with the Machtwechsel (power transfer) at the federal-level when the SPD government under Helmut Schmidt was replaced by the conservative CDU under Helmut Kohl in 1982. While early punk had flirted with fascist symbolism as a means of shocking the mainstream, by the late 1970s, the genre had abandoned such provocations as Hardcore and its extreme Left political militancy grew to dominate the subculture. The rise in Neo-Nazi activity, the contemporary police actions

against the genre during the 1980s, the return to power by the conservative CDU, moral panic, and the political ideology of Hardcore—with its anti-state emphasis and commitment to violent activism—all helped to feed punk fear. Thus, while intellectuals were debating the merits and consequences of whether ‘the past that will not pass’ should pass in the West German press, on the streets, punks were engaged in violent street-battles with police and Neo-Nazi Skinheads in ‘defence’ of the Bonn Republic. But as youths became increasingly locked into defending the nation against perceived fascist encroachments, ‘protecting’ Germany trapped punk into a never-ending cycle of what Pamela Swett has called the ‘logic of violence’ in which violence became understood as a “legitimate strategy for creating change.”⁹⁴⁸ In so doing, the genre ceased to focus on the creation of alternatives on the margins, and instead spent its time obsessively fearing a Nazi take-over of the mainstream.

1983 was the most critical year in the history of German punk—on both sides of the Berlin Wall as we will see in Part II—because it was then that punk lost sight of its commitment to *Anderssein* and alternativeness. The necessity of uncompromising political action and hard-line subcultural disciplining to ward off internal defections to the mainstream via the NDW—not to mention external attacks from Neo-Nazis—only further secured the hegemony of Hardcore, which, as we will see, stifled the genre both musically and ideologically. As Hardcore became increasingly committed to anti-state, anti-capitalist, and anti-fascist ideological imperatives, punk lost sight of its original impetus that was rooted in difference, diversity and alternativeness. At the same time, in response to the militancy of Hardcore, an almost completely commodified form of the genre called Fun Punk celebrating good times, drunkenness and de-politicization, emerged with bands such as die Toten Hosen and die Ärzte leading the way that wholly integrated punk

⁹⁴⁸ Pamela E. Swett, *Neighbors and Enemies: the Culture of Radicalism in Berlin, 1929-1933* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), esp. Chapter 5, and pp.294-300, here 298.

into the mainstream. By the mid-to-late 1980s, punk had abandoned any semblance of its earlier openness and had retreated into a marginal, conservative, and tightly regulated scene. Indeed, for many citizens of the Federal Republic, the subculture was nearly indistinguishable from the Neo-Nazi thugs with whom punks were having violent confrontations throughout the urban centers of West Germany. In many ways, the triumph of Hardcore was also the tragedy of German punk.

“Deutschland muß sterben, damit wir leben können”: Hardcore, Politicization and Panic

Where fascists and corporations govern the country
 When no one is interested in life and the environment
 When all people lose their rights
 Then only one thing can happen

Germany must die, so we can live

Black is the heaven, red is the earth
 Gold are the hands of the bosses
 Still, the federal eagle will soon come crashing down
 Then Germany will go to its grave

Germany must die, so we can live
 Germany must die, so we can live

Germany must die, so we can live
 Germany arise, so we can survive
 Germany!

“Deutschland,” Slime, *Slime* (Raubbau/Rip Off Vertrieb, 1981)

As we have seen, Hardcore had existed since the beginning. As early as 1978, a number of bands such as KFC and the Buttocks hewed along a more hard rock style and had been critical of the more adventurous Avant-garde punks as the spectacular confrontations at the Zick Zack festivals confirmed. Nor was the Hardcore-Kunstpunk division exclusively German as analogous splits

existed in both the UK and the US.⁹⁴⁹ And while Hardcore did not coalesce solely in reaction to the NDW, the success and popularity of the latter had a decided impact on radicalizing the political and musical trends of the former. Sonically, lyrically, and sartorially, Hardcore sought to reaffirm the boundaries of the subculture that—in the minds of adherents—had become too permeable thanks to the experimental efforts of the Kunstpunks and the commercial inclinations of the NDW. Hardcore is especially associated with Hamburg-based punks and especially the city’s early punk bands such as the Coroners, Blender, the Razors, the Buttocks, and others. But by 1980 and 1981, the genre spread throughout West Germany and was particularly dominant in smaller cities. By approaching punk as a platform for social change that rejected much of what youths imagined the Federal Republic had become—as the lyrics to Slime’s anti-state anthem “Deutschland” well illustrates—Hardcores understood the purposes and possibilities of the genre much differently than Kunstpunks, distinctions that we can explore by examining the music, lyrics, and political activities of Hardcore punks and bands during the early 1980s.

Musically, Hardcore traces its lineage through 1950s rock’n’roll, and the harder, faster, and stripped down sounds of 1960s and 1970s garage-punk bands such as the Stooges, MC5s or the Ramones in the US, and especially the second generation of UK punk acts such as Discharge, the Varukers, Charged GBH, and the Exploited. These bands rejected mainstream pop rhythms, and instead looked to hard rock or heavy metal sounds from acts such as Motörhead and Black Sabbath for inspiration. Eschewing the sonic variety that characterized Kunstpunks, Hardcore bands were universally singer-guitar-bass-and-drums outfits. The guitar returned as the central instrument of musical production. The rhythms were straight-forward 4/4 time, the tempo high,

⁹⁴⁹ See Ian Gaspar, *Trapped in a Scene: UK Hardcore 1985-1989: Frontline Reports from the Hardcore Punk Underground* (London: Cherry Red Books, 2010); Steven Blush, *American Hardcore: A Tribal History*, 2nd edition (Port Townsend, WA: Feral House, 2010); and Ian Gaspar, *Burning Britain: The History of UK Punk, 1980-1984* (London: Cherry Red Books, 2004).

and the distortion blaring. Whereas Kunstpunks had emphasized silences as much as tones, Hardcore was a wall of sound that sought to physically shatter the listener with extreme decibel levels. The singing was loud, fast, and usually screamed without a hint of melody. Lyrics were more overtly political than those found in Kunstpunk songs though the subject matter was more generalized in their critiques as we will examine shortly. Police oppression, state tyranny, capitalist exploitation, or political corruption were all standard themes on innumerable Hardcore albums and formed a kind of checklist for critics to mark off in their reviews. Songs were generally constructed in the traditional verse-chorus-verse basis that Kunstpunks had sought to move away from, a compositional arrangement that provided significant audience participation because they usually featured repeatable sing-along choruses as Slime's song "Deutschland" indicates. Aesthetically, Hardcore sought to accompany the stripped down sound with a minimal fashion-style that built upon an imagined working-class uniform that called to mind earlier rebel-looks such as those developed by Rockers and the Halbstark from the 1950s and 1960s.⁹⁵⁰ Leather jackets studded with spikes, jeans or army pants, combat-boots and T-shirts were all considered appropriate dress, and by the early 1980s, Mohawks and other dramatically stylized hair-cuts dyed in bright colors were preferred. Musically, lyrically, and aesthetically, the goal was to remove any hint of mainstream appeal from the genre, and return punk to a minority subculture as sacrifice and self-marginalization became key tenets of Hardcore authenticity.

Beyond musical dissimilarities, the defining difference between Hardcore and Kunstpunk was the commitment to radical leftist politics by the former. Whereas Kunstpunks had used the genre to explore individual renovation, Hardcores understood punk as a platform for social revolution. As in the UK and US, German Hardcore punks were especially active in anti-state

⁹⁵⁰ On Rockers and the *Halbstark* in West Germany, see Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); and Thomas Grotum, *Die Halbstarken: zur Geschichte einer Jugendkultur der 50er Jahre* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1994).

and anti-capitalist activities, along with the continued commitment to alternative culture that stemmed from these positions. In the main, Hardcore political concerns flowed from a hatred and suspicion of the state that can be traced back historically to the anti-authoritarianism of the early student movement, and to the 1960s and 1970s political rock of bands such as Ton Steine Scherben—origins that tie Hardcore punk much more firmly to the 1960s generation than the Kunstpunks who had sought rupture with their elders rather than continuity.⁹⁵¹ To understand the differences to Kunstpunk and the political concerns of Hardcore that in part account for the state reaction to the genre, we can use the lyrics and activities of arguably the most famous German punk act, Slime. While a number of acts emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s—Razzia, Normahl, Canalterror, Daily Terror, Vorkriegsjugend, Toxoplasma, Chaos Z, Blut + Eisen, Inferno and countless others—Slime is considered the foremost German Hardcore band whose popularity and influence remains to this day. A poll in a recent collection on German punk, for example, found that Slime was (still) considered the most important German punk band by an overwhelming majority (56.9%), and that their debut was the most important German punk album in history (26.4%), even besting Fehlfarben's *Monarchie und Alltag* by a fair margin (15.3%); a victory telling us much about the dominance of Hardcore music tastes within the German punk scene since the early 1980s.⁹⁵²

Formed in 1979, Slime was very much a product of the Hamburg social context, one of the more leftist alternative scenes historically in West Germany. The hunt for terrorists in the port-city and conflicts over squatting led to frequent altercations between police and alternatives

⁹⁵¹ See Timothy S. Brown, "Music as a Weapon? *Ton Steine Scherben* and the Politics of Rock in Cold War Berlin," *German Studies Review*, Vol.32, Nr.1 (February 2009), pp.1-22. Slime, for example, have covered a number of Ton Steine Scherben songs over the years (even releasing a cover version of "Ich will nicht werden" on their second album *Alle gegen Alle*), and often play their songs live.

⁹⁵² IG Dreck auf Papier, ed., *Keine Zukunft war Gestern: Punk in Deutschland* (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen, 2008), p.346. The second most important band is Toxoplasma with 22.2%. The first three most important albums all feature Slime: their self-titled debut and second release *Alle gegen Alle* are first (26.4%) and third (16.7%), while the second spot is the compilation album *Soundtracks zum Untergang* (20.8%) featuring four-tracks by Slime.

that often ended in violence during the 1970s and 1980s.⁹⁵³ Slime members grew up in this radical tradition, and their music and activities reflect the political concerns of the more militant members of the leftist milieu.⁹⁵⁴ Early on a four-man unit—Dirk ‘Dicken’ Jora on vocals, Michael ‘Elf’ Mayer on guitar, Eddi Räther on bass, and Peter ‘Ball’ Wodok on drums—Slime added Christian Mevs as second guitar and Stephan Mahler replaced Ball on drums in 1981. In 1980, the band released their independent 4-song EP *Wir wollen keine Bullenschweine* (No more pigs [police]) featuring the iconic cover photograph of the four band members lined-up against a wall with arms raised in preparation to being frisked by the police (and one member wearing a shirt with ‘PIG’ emblazoned on the back).⁹⁵⁵ The next few years saw the band move to the preeminent West German Hardcore record label Aggressive Rockproduktionen (AGR) and release a number of hit records: the self-titled debut in 1981 (called “The most important punk release....The blueprint” by a recent discographer), *Yankees raus* (Yankees out) the following year, and *Alle gegen Alle* (all against all) in 1983.⁹⁵⁶ Under pressure from state authorities and amid accusations of selling-out—issues explored below—the band broke up in early 1984. While reforming briefly first in the early 1990s in response to re-unification and recently for occasional shows, Slime’s music and politics are representative of Hardcore punk in the early 1980s.⁹⁵⁷

We can trace the political concerns of Hardcore historically to the anti-authoritarianism phase of the 1960s student movement and this continuity is manifested in Slime’s explicit anti-

⁹⁵³ On the Hafensstraße conflict, see Carl-Heinz Mallet, *Die Leute von der Hafensstraße. Über eine andere Art zu leben* (Hamburg: Edition Nautilus, 2000); and Michael Hermann, et al., *Hafensstraße: Chronik und Analysen eines Konfliktes* (Hamburg: Verlag am Galgenberg, 1987).

⁹⁵⁴ Singer Dirk Jora, for example, has talked about how he came to punk from the Anti-Nuclear Power Movement (Anti-AKW) in West Germany. See Sherlock Preiswert, “Image verpflichtet! Das letzte Interview mit Slime,” *tageszeitung*, 8 February 1984, p.10.

⁹⁵⁵ The cover echoes the iconic single by The Clash, *White Riot* (1977), featuring the UK band with raised hands and lined up against a wall.

⁹⁵⁶ Thomas Junggebauer, *Punkwax: German Punk & Hardcore 1977-87 Vinyl Navigator* (Berlin: J&H, 2007), p.220.

⁹⁵⁷ Members of Slime have since gone on record to explain that they would not write these same songs now, that they were part of a very specific historical context. See Preiswert, “Image verpflichtet! p.10; and the video interview accompanying the Rubberslime album *Rock’n’Roll Genossen* (Dröönland Production 0014, 2005).

state lyrical themes. A quick perusal of only the titles of various tracks from their albums—“We don’t need the army,” “A.C.A.B. (All Cops Are Bastards),” “Polizei/SA/SS,” “Bullenschweine,” “Robot Age,” “Yankees raus,” “Gerechtigkeit,” “Demokratie,” and a dozen others—all point towards the lyrical content of most Slime songs. Hatred of the police, of the army, of modern technology, of American hegemony, of capitalist imperialism, of fascist continuities, and other anti-state subjects populate Slime and German Hardcore songs. The common theme running throughout these various songs was an utter hatred of the state and particularly its institutional instruments—army, police, bureaucracy, judiciary—that, in the eyes of Hardcores, all worked to oppress everyday people by maintaining the current structure of power relations to the detriment of all. No better example encapsulates Hardcore opposition to the state than the lyrics to Slime’s song “Deutschland” that opened this section. The chorus “Deutschland muß sterben, damit wir leben können” (Germany must die, so we can live) was an allusion to the inscription on the controversial First World War monument on the Dammtordamm from the poem “Soldatenlied” by Heinrich Lersch that was unveiled by the Nazis in 1936.⁹⁵⁸ While the original verse reads “Deutschland muß leben, auch wenn wir sterben müssen” (Germany must live, even if we must die), Slime’s subversion was clearly intended to signal the opposite; that state power, as constituted in the Federal Republic in the early 1980s, was an obstacle to the pursuit of authentic living that needed to be resisted, violently if necessary.

While violence was an extreme response, if we look closer at some specific examples drawn from Slime lyrics, we can see how and why Hardcore punks thought in this manner, and what this tells us about militant leftists and their increasingly radical political goals and actions during the early 1980s. State hatred stemmed from the belief among Hardcore punks that fascists

⁹⁵⁸ Preiswert, “Image verpflichtet! p.10. On the debate over the war memorial, see Matthew Jefferies, *Hamburg: A Cultural History* (Northampton, MA: Interlink Books, 2011), pp.50-52.

and capitalists ruled the Federal Republic, as the opening stanza of “Deutschland” (“Where fascists and corporations govern the country”) indicates. These claims were long-standing truisms on the Left, part of the generational reckoning over the continuity between the Third Reich and the Federal Republic, beliefs that underwrote much of the violence by the radical elements gravitating to terrorism and violent action in the 1970s and 1980s.⁹⁵⁹ Since the 1960s, these claims had received theoretical support by Frankfurt School members Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer in their analyses of the culture industries and the authoritarian personality, along with the influential writings on hegemony and ideological apparatuses of Continental Marxists such as Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser.⁹⁶⁰ The link between capitalism and fascism was seemingly bolstered by the experience of the NDW which had—in the minds of Hardcores—sought to de-politicize punk by mainstreaming the critical subculture and reducing the genre to a consumer product with profit not politics as the main concern. The response among Hardcores was a drastic politicization of the genre leftwards towards anarchism and associated political positions. Henceforth, radical Leftist politics became the dominant ideological line among Hardcores and deviations from these postures became a breach in the boundaries of acceptable punk authenticity.

Part of the drive towards radicalization was the utter disillusionment with parliamentary politics and the democratic process among alternatives such as punks in the Federal Republic since the late 1970s. As we saw, the Schmidt-led SPD government was increasingly forced to tack rightwards in its foreign policy under the demands of the Cold War that was again heating up after a period of détente in the early 1970s. The double-track decision to position NATO

⁹⁵⁹ See Wilfried Mausbach, “‘Burn, ware-house, burn!’ Modernity, Counterculture, and the Vietnam War in West Germany,” in *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980*, eds., Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), pp.175-202.

⁹⁶⁰ For a scathing condemnation of Althusser, see Tony Judt, *Reappraisals: Reflections on the Forgotten Twentieth Century* (New York: Penguin Books, 2008), chapter 6.

missiles on West German soil in the early 1980s was a major betrayal for leftists and the peace movement.⁹⁶¹ Domestically, government responses to terrorism, the squatting movement, and ecological protests had all provoked condemnation on the political Left.⁹⁶² For many Hardcore punks, using riot police and water-cannons to clear squatters from derelict buildings confirmed their beliefs in the fascist nature of the SPD-led government under the control of capitalists and suggested the fundamental inter-changeability of the established political parties that offered no real opportunity for change. In Slime's song "Demokratie," for example, the first verse hammers home the belief that all political parties were alike and that government was solely a means of control regardless of policy ("right-wing, left-wing / it's all just the same / government remains government / and government means coercion"), while the second verse claimed that politics were governed by an elite that ruled tyrannically ("no possibility for change / the political sphere is closed / only a small fraction have a say / I call that a dictatorship").⁹⁶³ In 1983, when the CDU returned to power in Bonn, most punks met the election result with apathy and unconcern, an attitude especially apparent if one peruses fanzine commentary about the appointment; in fact, what is noticeable is how little punks commented on the change in government in 1983.⁹⁶⁴ While Hardcore claims were extremely overdrawn, what is important is the belief among youths that democracy had failed in West Germany, a conviction explaining their near-total distrust in organized government and actions since the late 1970s.

⁹⁶¹ See Geoff Eley, *Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe, 1850-2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.417-422; and Andrei S. Markovits and Philip S. Gorski, *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1993), p.99.

⁹⁶² See Markovits and Gorski, *The German Left*, esp. chapters 3 and 4.

⁹⁶³ Punk fanzine writers expressed similar views. See *Der Knilch*, Nr.1 (Varel: 1981), p.13; *Die Endlösung*, Nr.12 (Bremen: 1982), pp.17-18; and *Der große Aufschwung*, Nr.1 (Rinteln: 1984), p.16.

⁹⁶⁴ Out of more than one hundred fanzines published in 1983, only 6 had articles relating to the election. See *Porree*, Nr.3 (Rinteln: 1983), p.17; *Die Falschmelder*, Nr.1 (Düsseldorf: 1983), p.9; *Lebenswende*, Nr.1 (Altenhof: 1983), n.p.; *Rückstand*, Nr.6 (Gelsenkirchen: 1983), pp.10-11; *Katastrophen Provinz*, Nr.3 (Emtinghausen: 1983), p.35; and *Der Ketzer*, Nr.4 (Darmstadt: 1983), p.18.

While West German democracy was criticized as a sham, it was the supposed instruments of state oppression that came in for the heaviest critiques by Hardcores as the mechanisms aiding and abetting the so-called dictatorship. The police were frequent targets in Hardcore songs, in part stemming from the nearly daily confrontations that punks experienced with West German law enforcement. “A.C.A.B.,” one of Slime’s most famous songs whose title can be found scrawled on buildings throughout Germany to this day, links the police, fascism, and the climate of fear that they produced in the first verse and chorus: “see them walking down the streets all day A.C.A.B. / see them walking down the streets all night A.C.A.B. / never heard of human dignity A.C.A.B. / working for a fascist machinery A.C.A.B. / they say it’s law and order, but we live in fear / FUCK OFF COPS, GET OUT OF HERE! / ALL COPS ARE BASTERDS!!!” Other songs such as “Polizei/SA/SS” equated contemporary police with the mass organizations instrumental in the reign of terror under the Nazis, while “Bullenschweine,” a song we will revisit in more depth below, justified violent assaults on police (“This is a call to revolt / this is call to violence / build bombs, steal weapons / smash the cops in the face ... Molotov cocktails and rocks against the pigs”) with historic leftist traditions stemming from the student movement (“1/3 oil, 2/3 gasoline / like ’68 in West Berlin”).

Likewise the West German army—an especially potent reality to young men who needed to fulfill their 6-month military service—came in for censure. Songs by punks against militarism represented a critique of the Cold War and the arms race, and how those in power, would not be the ones that would bear the brunt of any future confrontation. In “Alptraum” (Nightmare), Slime presented nations armed to the teeth that could plunge the world into destruction at any moment (“in every country, on every border / soldiers stand ready / rifles, tanks and missiles / day and night at all times”). Other songs such as “Bundeswehr” (Armed Forces) condemned militarism

which taught soldiers not to think but to simply follow orders (“you don’t have your own opinion / you do your duty best of all / brain full of shit, hand on the rifle / that’s how it is in the armed forces”), an especially dangerous situation in their eyes with the supposed continuity to the Third Reich (“you let yourself be bossed around / by an aging NAZI-officer / anyway, what do you care about morals / do your duty, everything else doesn’t matter”). Crucially, in “Alptraum,” Slime highlighted the disjuncture between the leaders of society (“and those up in their palaces / playing poker with the world / because they have bunkers / if the bombs start falling”) and those who would have to suffer the consequences from these policies (“as tensions grow, the war nears / and for you, there is no chance / you can only wait, until the bombs falls / that bring only death and ash”). These anti-militaristic themes were linked with complaints about modernity and dependence on computers and modern machinery that was supposedly negating authentic living. In “Deutschland,” Slime urged the necessity of resisting such a state of affairs: “When tanks and missiles ‘secure peace’ / nuclear power and computers ‘improve life’ / armed robots everywhere / GERMANY, WE’LL BRING YOU DOWN.” West German Hardcore lyrically expressed what the peace movement and anti-war activists in the Federal Republic were protesting in their demonstrations that were attracting millions of participants by the early 1980s.⁹⁶⁵

Other branches of government that had become essential institutions of democracy in the Federal Republic were singled out for alleged criminality. For example, the judiciary, courts and prisons—institutions that had come under considerable scrutiny for how they had handled the hunt, prosecution and jailing of terrorists during the 1970s and 1980s—and their methods were equated to the terrorism they were purporting to combat. In “Gerechtigkeit” (Justice), Slime condemned the inequality of jail time for state violence when compared to violence committed

⁹⁶⁵ See Ruud Koopmans, *Democracy from Below: New Social Movements and the Political System in West Germany* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995).

by protesters (“cops enthusiastically club people down / almost weekly they send someone to their grave / they nabbed you for spraying graffiti / the prosecution calls for a two-year sentence / then a cop stands before the court / but what threatens them is laughable / two months probation is far too long / and you have a chance at a life sentence”). The methods used by authorities against jailed terrorists were satirically condemned (“there is no torture / only forcible-feeding / there is no torture / only solitary / police kill / only by mistake”) while the chorus (“I BELIEVE MORE IN THE VIRGINITY OF A WHORE THAN IN THE JUSTICE OF THE GERMAN COURTS”) speaks to a near-total loss of faith in the West German justice system which was a foundation of the modern democratic Rechtsstaat.

While Hardcore punk was quick to point out the flaws in existing society, the solutions offered usually consisted of anarchic dreams of radical independence that seemed more based in fantasy than reality. “Störtebecker” from Slime’s *Alle gegen Alle* album, for example, was based loosely on the historical figure Klaus Störtebeker, a privateer that raided shipping vessels of the Hanseatic League in the fourteenth-century. Slime called Störtebecker “a second Robin Hood” and claimed “he robbed from the rich and gave to the poor,” activities which enraged the rich and powerful Hanseatic lords who finally managed to capture the pirate and lop off his head. Historically, these claims are unsubstantiated.⁹⁶⁶ However, it is not historical accuracy that is important but rather that radical-leftists mythologized the pirate as a medieval hero struggling against capitalist tyranny which tells us much more about the political uses of Störtebeker in the twentieth-century rather than life in the fourteenth. Störtebeker represented a romanticized ideal of freedom and independence that punks sought in their break with the state, similar to other mythologized figures such as Native Americans that alternatives have often historically idealized

⁹⁶⁶ On Störtebeker, see Matthias Puhle, *Die Vitalienbrüder: Klaus Störtebeker und die Seerauber der Hansezeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1992).

and mobilized.⁹⁶⁷ The political ideology invested in the figure of Störtebeker points to the deep hatred of capitalism within the Hardcore scene which linked capital, the state and fascism, and points to the consequences of NDW commercialism on youth understandings of authentic punk. On the *Wir wollen keine Bullenschweine* album cover, for example, at the bottom of the photograph of the band standing against the wall is the front hood of a car (the police cruiser presumably). However, all that is visible of the car in the photograph is a Mercedes star, visually linking capitalism, state power and tyranny.

The anti-state and anti-capitalist rhetoric were joined by a virulent strain of anti-Americanism and anti-imperialism that has historically found favor among Continental leftists in the postwar period.⁹⁶⁸ “Yankees raus,” the lead track from Slime’s second album of the same name, is the clearest condemnation of American imperial policy abroad (“thousands of people / men, women, and children / torn to pieces by napalm / in Vietnam”) and racial tyranny at home (“thousands of people / reds and blacks / hunted and killed / by the Ku Klux Klan”). As we saw, anti-Americanism on the Left and especially among the student movement in the 1960s was part of the generational revolt, pointing to the continuity between Hardcore and the 1960s. In “They don’t give a fuck” from their first album, Slime conflated several Cold War confrontations with Western global imperialism: “korea and vietnam, chile and iran / united kingdom and germany, and the goddam’ fuckin’ USA.” Even the cover photograph for *Yankees raus* was a visual commentary on the imbrication of American imperialism, capitalist hegemony, and consumer culture by depicting a young McDonald’s employee being force-fed (choked on?) a hamburger

⁹⁶⁷ See H. Glenn Penny, “Elusive Authenticity” *The Quest for the Authentic Indian in German Public Culture*,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.48, Nr.4 (October 2006), pp.798-819.

⁹⁶⁸ On European anti-Americanism, see Andrei S. Markovits, *Uncouth Nation: Why Europe dislikes America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Russell A. Berman, *Anti-Americanism in Europe: A Cultural Problem* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2004); and Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans have loved, hated, and transformed American culture since World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997). On West German anti-Americanism, see Christoph Hendrix Müller, *West Germans Against the West: Anti-Americanism in Media and Public Opinion in the Federal Republic of Germany, 1949-68* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

by an out-stretched punk arm. Whereas Kunstpunks sought to emancipate Germany from American cultural dominance in the development of a new German musical culture, Slime and Hardcores urged active assaults against an America they condemned as no better than Germany under the Nazis (“Ghettos in San Fransisco, slums in LA / this is the American way / in the land of the free everyone are the same / just like back in the Third Reich”).

While Hardcore musically sought to distance any hint of experimentalism in its return to guitar-based rock, crucially, it did not reject German language-lyrics, thus continuing the process of transforming punk into a German language-based popular music form. Some of the earlier Hardcore bands such as the Razors and the Buttocks sang (and continued to sing) in English, but almost universally, the newer Hardcore acts that formed around the turn of the decade sang in German. The first Slime LP, for example, contained English songs on Side A and German songs on Side B, but by *Yankees raus*—after much political discussion during the recording sessions—the songs were exclusively in German.⁹⁶⁹ Like the Kunstpunks before them, Hardcores came to see German-language lyrics as a political position symbolizing their freedom from American hegemony and hatred of Western imperialism. The commitment to German-language lyrics even earned the genre the title of ‘Deutschpunk,’ though this seems to be more of an American characterization rather than a self-applied appellation.⁹⁷⁰ But whereas the lyrical language of Kunstpunk and Hardcore were in agreement, the thematic contents had shifted decisively. As with the NDW, Hardcore lyrics lost the specificity and contemporaneousness that had marked the early German punk phase and slipped into broad characterizations condemning various aspects of modern life as we have just observed with Slime. The standardization of lyrical content meant that songs addressing these themes were easy to spot, adjudicated favorably and

⁹⁶⁹ Alf Burchardt, “Hardcore ’82,” *Sounds*, Nr.10 (October 1982), p.42.

⁹⁷⁰ Often used to distinguish German Hardcore punk albums in the record reviews section in the influential and globally-distributed US fanzine *Maximum RockNRoll*.

categorized as authentic punk. But generalized lyrics also meant a complete abandonment of the subjective as political. As Slime sketched a hostile world to be girded against with thick lines, the tiny brushstrokes that had invigorated early punk as an alternative means of expression were brusquely painted over. Even Karl-Ulrich Walterbach, label boss at AGR and producer of Slime's most famous albums, complained about the frequency and repetitiveness of the band's political themes to *Sounds*: "I talked with Slime often about this, on the first album, why did there have to be three identical cop-songs."⁹⁷¹

The exasperation felt by Walterbach that accompanied the 'retreat' into politicization by Hardcore was felt by many, especially those professional critics who had celebrated the earlier diversity of West German punk. Alfred Hilsberg, for example, often condemned Hardcore music in his album reviews in *Sounds*.⁹⁷² About the compilation album *Soundtracks zum Untergang* (1981) featuring Slime and other Hardcore acts, Hilsberg wrote to his Kunstpunk readership that the record was "surely not for the self-styled avant-garde elite."⁹⁷³ Others felt that Hardcore politics were simply too earnest, that the genre had lost the humor, satire and irony that had been an essential part of punk's subversive critique.⁹⁷⁴ Still, at the grass-roots, a majority of young punks clamoured for more Hardcore. Three months after releasing their second album, Slime had sold 8,000 copies and over 10,000 copies of their first album.⁹⁷⁵ Even lesser known Hardcore acts such as Daily Terror and compilation records had sales figures in the multiple thousands.⁹⁷⁶ After *Sounds* finally ran a feature on Hardcore in late 1982, a number of letters to the editor in

⁹⁷¹ Burchardt, "Hardcore '82," p.42.

⁹⁷² See, for example, Alfred Hilsberg, "Review: Razors," *Sounds*, Nr.6 (July 1980), p.74.

⁹⁷³ Alfred Hilsberg, "Review: Soundtracks zum Untergang," *Sounds*, Nr.8 (August 1981), p.67.

⁹⁷⁴ Moritz Reichelt, for example, explained that "This whole ironic moment of punk was no longer understood by the second generation of punks. They took it so seriously." Jürgen Teipel, *Verschwende Deine Jugend: Ein Doku-Roman über den deutschen Punk und New Wave* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001), p.175. See also the comments in Nils Selzer, "Trottelige Parolen sind etwas für Trottel," *Jungle World*, Nr.38 (20 Sept 2006), p.18.

⁹⁷⁵ Burchardt, "Hardcore '82," p.42.

⁹⁷⁶ "Review: Soundtracks zum Untergang 2," p.50; and Burchardt, "Hardcore '82," p.41. See also *Irre*, Nr.8 (Ramstein: 1983), p.24; and *Der Letzte Wille*, Nr.3 (Wuppertal: 1984), n.p.

the coming months demanded more coverage: “Hardcore 82. Hopefully, that article was perhaps only the beginning? A mere listing [of the various bands] is quite informative, but how about letting the bands get a chance to speak (maybe a series or something)? The only real-existing independent music with grass-roots contact has been ignored by you for too long to be done with after just 4 pages! Optimistic-about-the-future!”⁹⁷⁷

Hardcore ideology demanded an incredible level of political commitment that divided the subculture between those committed to radical change and those who found the constant politics off-putting. The genre had long been associated with the Left politically though with the Kunstpunks, as we have seen, this manifested itself more in the pursuit of individual freedom than from social emancipation. But as Hardcore rose to dominance, punks were increasingly expected to participate actively in the wide array of political causes and concerns emerging from the 1960s counter-culture and alternative scene. The late 1970s and early 1980s was a period of tremendous grass-roots political activism as the fight over squatting rights, anti-nuclear protests, international peace, and conflict at Startbahn West all saw their peak during this time.⁹⁷⁸ Punk bands and youths became a constant presence in these protests, filling out the demonstration crowds and supporting the causes through benefit-concerts or penning radical songs. Fanzine writers called on punks to protest against public transport fare increases in Bonn or the push in 1984 for a new national identification card.⁹⁷⁹ Concerts were staged to support hunger-striking RAF members or squatting rights.⁹⁸⁰ Other ethical stances such as vegetarianism, animal rights

⁹⁷⁷ “Leserbriefe,” *Sounds*, Nr.11 (November 1982), p.4.

⁹⁷⁸ See, for example, Koopmans, *Democracy from Below*, pp.111-155.

⁹⁷⁹ On the tariff increases, see *Tiefschlag*, Nr.5 (Siegburg: 1981), pp.9-10, 19. On the new German identification card, see *Die Aufklärung*, Nr.5 (Neumünster: 1983), pp.13-14; *Der Chaot*, Nr.3 (Dänischenhagen: 1983), p.7; *Das M.O.B.*, Nr.13 (Mönchengladbach: 1984), n.p.; and *Die Falschmelder*, Nr.4 (Düsseldorf: 1984), n.p.

⁹⁸⁰ “Punk für Hungerstreik,” *Sounds*, Nr.4 (April 1981), p.8; and “Berlin 1981,” *Sounds*, Nr.6 (June 1981), p.10.

and environmentalism were encouraged—indeed, expected—by hardcore punks.⁹⁸¹ Anarchist thought flourished within the scene as an antidote to an overbearing state.⁹⁸² Slime, for example, participated in numerous socially active festivals such as the 12 September 1981 ‘Rock gegen Junk’ anti-heroin concert in the Tempodrom in West-Berlin, almost always stayed in squats during their many tours, and lent their influential voices and sounds to demonstrations for prison reform.⁹⁸³ The key imperative driving these diverse concerns and activities was the elevation of political activism and corresponding politicization of punk.

As the expectation of activism and politicization intensified, punk authenticity was quickly grafted onto political participation and the more passive consumers of the genre were lambasted as traitors.⁹⁸⁴ The hardening lines of authenticity were decisively influenced by a reading of history that equated the early 1980s with the early 1930s, an analysis not confined to West Germany but considering the Nazi past, was an especially potent interpretation in the Federal Republic.⁹⁸⁵ Hardcores argued that what had doomed the Weimar Republic was a lack of political commitment by those on the Left. In song lyrics such as Slime’s above and within the scene more generally, Hardcores insisted repeatedly that all necessary measures—including violence—must be taken to ensure liberty, an interpretation that elevated ends over means, a

⁹⁸¹ On vegetarianism, see *Hamburger Mottenpost*, Nr.1 (Hamburg: 1985), pp.32-34. On animal rights, see *Die Aufklärung*, Nr.5 (Neumünster: 1983), p.3; *Die Falschmelder*, Nr.3 (Düsseldorf: 1983), n.p.; *Seelenqual*, Nr.7 (Indersdorf: 1984), n.p.; *Inferno*, Nr.3 (Hanover: 1984), p.4; *Die Falschmelder*, Nr.4 (Düsseldorf: 1984), n.p.; and *Erbrechet!*, Nr.4 (Salzgitter: 1986). On the environment, see *Tiefschlag*, Nr.5 (Siegburg: 1981), p.3; *A&P*, Nr.3 (Wuppertal: 1985), p.16; *Hamburger Mottenpost*, Nr.1 (Hamburg: 1985), pp.13-14; and *Herz der Sau*, Nr.2 (Kreuztal: 1984), p.11.

⁹⁸² See *A&P*, Nr.1 (Wuppertal: 1984), n.p.; *A&P*, Nr.2 (Wuppertal: 1985), n.p.; and *A&P*, Nr.3 (Wuppertal: 1985), p.38.

⁹⁸³ Preiswert, “Image verpflichtet!” p.10.

⁹⁸⁴ Hollow Skai was the first to point out how punk created ‘active’ and ‘passive’ categories. See Hollow Skai, *Punk: Versuch der künstlerischen Realisierung einer neuen Lebenshaltung* (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen, 2008), p.67.

⁹⁸⁵ See James J. Ward, “‘This is Germany! It’s 1933!’ Appropriations and Constructions of ‘Fascism’ in New York Punk/Hardcore in the 1980s,” *Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol.30, Nr.3 (Winter 1996), pp.155-184.

common debate on the Left during this period.⁹⁸⁶ Thus the Bielefeld fanzine *Decontrol*—beside a picture of a crossed-out Neo-Nazi—urged punks to “keep their eyes open!” for fascists before equating passivity with perpetrators: “They’re coming back! Actively as Neo-Nazis or passively as bystanders or supporters! Fight Back! Pogo Against 33!”⁹⁸⁷ As such, political activism within the punk scene was seen as an essential prerequisite in combating the ‘foes of democracy’ such as the authoritarian state or Neo-Nazi Skinheads while passive consumption and political apathy were akin to betrayal.

The political positions of Hardcore hardened quickly, underwritten as they were with a moral righteousness demanding seriousness, political commitment and marginality. It was felt that these harsh boundaries were necessary after the disasters that had befallen punk during the early 1980s. The NDW experience established one of the major precedents guiding punk authenticity going forward: that mainstream success and popularity were sure signs of ‘selling-out’ and were to be avoided at all costs if authenticity was to be retained. We saw previously how this unspoken commandment worked to regulate the conduct of fanzines, independent record labels and stores. In the early 1980s, these ‘laws’ were extended to most aspects of the genre. As Hardcore emerged as the dominant variant of punk, the pursuit of *Anderssein* was lost. In its place stood a conservative, uniform, and toothless musical and subcultural form instead. Marginality, rather than a site by which to comment and offer alternative perspectives in an effort to rework or adjust the mainstream became the necessary condition for the continued authenticity of punk. And in this sense, punks became trapped by the genre’s own politics of authenticity and youths found themselves unable to escape from their own self-imposed straight-

⁹⁸⁶ On the question of violence within the Left, see Markovits and Gorski, *The German Left*, esp. chapters 3 and 4.

⁹⁸⁷ *Decontrol*, Nr.1 (Bielefeld: 1983), n.p.

jackets except into even further inflexibility and irrelevance—restraints especially apparent when moral panic over punk violence exploded in the Federal Republic in the early 1980s.

“Wir wollen keine Bullenschweine”: Moral Panic and the ‘Logic of Violence’

Fascism in this land
Is gradually getting our of control
We must do something about it
Otherwise the cops won’t leave us in peace

I see cops carrying truncheons and hammers
Everytime we’re the dumb ones
They arrest us and put us in jail
But this only increases our hatred

1/3 oil, 2/3 gasoline
Like ’68 in West Berlin
This mixture is effective
This mixture explodes like hell
No more pigs!

This is a call to revolt
This is a call for violence
Build bombs, steal weapons
Smash the cops in the face

Hit the cops flat like a pancake
Beat the cops to a pulp
Smash the pigs in the face
Only a dead pig is a good one

Molotov cocktails and stones
against pigs

“Bullenschweine,” Slime, *Wir wollen keine Bullenschweine* (Moderne Musik 2002-3, 1980)

The radical politicization of Hardcore and corresponding conflicts that such hard-line postures engendered with the citizenry and state of the Federal Republic resulted in an explosion of violent confrontations within the punk scene and without. While violence had often been a

constituent of the subculture, it was more stylized and aesthetic than physical, especially in the early years.⁹⁸⁸ But as Hardcore and its aggressive ideology rose to dominance, youths became constantly involved in street-fights, concerts became increasingly violent, and soon conflicts between punks and police had escalated and turned cities such as Hamburg and Hanover into veritable war-zones. In part this was a consequence of media's use of punk to explore the degeneration of the nation's youth that created a moral panic around the genre. But crucially, it was also the work of youths themselves who gladly embraced violence as a romanticized measurement of Hardcore authenticity and a fundamental—if understandable—misreading of German history: in viewing the events of the early 1980s through the lens of the early 1930s, punks saw in their fight against a fascist state an opportunity to reverse the historic defeat of the Weimar Republic by the Nazis.

Importantly, punk violence illuminates debates about how violence should be a part of alternative politics in general in West Germany during the 1980s. Punk was representative of how alternative movements in the 1970s and 1980s radicalized—and often violently so—as they were spurred onwards by militant activists who, frustrated with the roadblocks their morality-informed politics were encountering, increasingly turned to 'violent means' to achieve 'peaceful ends.' Eco-terrorists, animal rights activists, squatters, and—in the German context—the Autonomomen, a group of radical anarchists who reject all state and capitalist authority, are all extreme examples of Leftist social movements that embraced violence as a means of effecting social change.⁹⁸⁹ The Red Army Faction (RAF), the clandestine terrorist cell formed in the late 1960s in West Germany that, frustrated with failure of the student movement to achieve its goals

⁹⁸⁸ See Olaf Leitner, "Punk-Rock oder: der Protest als Illusion," *Blickpunkt*, Nr.263 (1 November 1977), p.20; and Micheline Gierke, "Die Ketten-Reaktion aus der Gosse," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 19 August 1977, p.3. Alfred Hilsberg described the violence as "only play." Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.28.

⁹⁸⁹ Punks became involved in all of these movements and it is important to keep in mind that there was much overlap among these groups and one could belong to all of them at once.

peacefully, resorted to violence in an attempt to ‘expose’ the fascist nature of the state, is another example which we saw earlier had deeply affected punk. Scholars have written extensively on these more spectacular examples but even the less radical reform initiatives characterizing the New Social Movements such as anti-nuclear protestors at Gorleben and Wyhl or the militant demonstrators at Startbahn West in Frankfurt became involved in violent confrontations with state authorities in the 1980s, conflicts pointing to a more broad-based acceptance of using force to achieve reform among progressives.⁹⁹⁰ The Greens were bitterly divided over the question of violence during the 1980s and never formulated a firm statement rejecting violent means until the 1990s.⁹⁹¹ Thus, debates surrounding punk violence are representative of how radical groups tested the dominant conventions of mainstream society in a violent manner during the 1970s and 1980s. These efforts were met by state authorities of the Federal Republic with panic and force—responses that in turn amplified and radicalized Hardcores even further in a never-ending cycle of provocation and reaction. But unlike in the East which we will begin exploring shortly, West German citizens condemned state responses in a way that shows how alternative culture in West German society and politics, the question of violence and legitimacy in alternative formations, and an internalization of democratic principles became so important to the daily rhythms of everyday life during the 1980s.

As the chorus to Slime’s song “Bullenschweine” readily indicates, the aggressiveness of Hardcore was more than simply a stylistic reaction against the lighter pop-sounds of the NDW. The historic reference to 1968 suggests continuity with the earlier student movement but also a commitment to the more extreme ideas and actions that emerged from this milieu. From the outset, Hardcore aggression was intended as a musical correspondent to the anger, hatred and

⁹⁹⁰ For an overview, see Roger Karapin, *Protest Politics in Germany: Movements on the Left and Right since the 1960s* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007).

⁹⁹¹ See Markovits and Gorski, *The German Left*, esp. chapter 4.

violence punks believed to be inherent in and felt towards mainstream German society. To Beton Combo, one of the early West Berlin Hardcore acts, the goal was to express their hate musically: “In it [the music] is also the hatred I have. And I make music to release my hatred. We make aggressive music; something else would be out of the question. No la-la-la music, with that I cannot identify myself at all.”⁹⁹² Likewise, Meikel Clauss from KFC and later Nichts, tried to marry his inner aggression with his music which he believed gave his life meaning: “I tried to integrate this meanness with the guitar. I found this idea good; that one could play up negative or even anarchic character traits in punk. This was the feeling of life.”⁹⁹³ The belief was that anger, aggression, and violence were appropriate responses to society of the time and especially to the state. Moreover, as an expressive emotion, aggression was a fitting sentiment against resignation, an equally legitimate subjective response; as one of slogans of the time put it succinctly, “Better aggressive than depressive.”⁹⁹⁴

As observed with the Zick Zack festivals, violence increasingly became a fixture of many punk concerts, an element accompanying the nationalization of punk as local organizers began holding punk festivals with greater frequency in cities across the Federal Republic. For example, an Ungewollt festival in August 1980, organized by Willi Wucher in Duisburg’s Eschhaus ended in chaos as punks fought with police during the concert and Wucher was forced to pay for damages to both the city and youth center.⁹⁹⁵ During a KFC set in Osnabrück, at the Hyde Park concert hall in November 1980, a fire was started in the basement, and the fire department and police were soon on the scene. In the bedlam that followed as punks fled the fire panicking,

⁹⁹² Günter Franzen and Boris Penth, *Last Exist. Punk: Leben im toten Herz der Städte* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1982), p.136.

⁹⁹³ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.172.

⁹⁹⁴ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.284.

⁹⁹⁵ *Endlösung*, Nr.8 (Bremen: 1980), pp.18-20.

numerous store windows were smashed.⁹⁹⁶ In Bonn, the 3rd Wischi-Waschi festival in September 1981 ended when rockers stormed the Nam Nam club and attacked punks with baseball bats.⁹⁹⁷ Destruction to property occurring during concerts often resulted in tens of thousands of Deutschmarks in damages and a number of influential concert halls—the Markthalle in Hamburg, for example, or the Ampermoching Post outside Munich—closed their doors to future punk shows in the early 1980s as a result.⁹⁹⁸

As concerts increased in frequency, so too did large scale violent confrontations between punks, citizens and the police. A combination of incitement from the performers and copious amounts of alcohol was often the spark but for some bands, violence became an essential aspect of their music and stage-show.⁹⁹⁹ Bands such as KFC became legendary for provoking their audience by spitting on them or throwing beer at them and the resulting fist-fights would be incorporated into the performance. According to bassist Nuss, “while Tommi and Meikel were using their guitars like hammers, for the most part, Tobias and I simply kept on playing. We made the soundtrack, to which they fought.”¹⁰⁰⁰ Many punks were not enthused that the scene was becoming more and more violent. ZK and later die Toten Hosen singer Campino remembers that playing live became increasingly dangerous: “Sometimes we played at festivals where the atmospheres were really aggressive. And then I went on stage, made some jokes, and nobody

⁹⁹⁶ *Endlösung*, Nr.9 (Bremen: 1981), p.14.

⁹⁹⁷ *Endlösung*, Nr.11 (Bremen: 1981), p.24; *Tiefschlag*, Nr.6 (Siegburg: 1981), pp.33-34; and *Bonner Perspektiven*, Nr.1 (Bonn: 1982), p.17.

⁹⁹⁸ See *Funzine*, Nr.1 (Hamburg: 1981), p.5; and *Breakout!*, Nr.2 (Starnberg: 1983), n.p. More generally, see Jürgen Stark and Michael Kurzawa, *Der große Schwindel? Punk – New Wave – Neue Welle* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Freie Gesellschaft, 1981), pp.150-151, 226.

⁹⁹⁹ In this, German bands were following earlier US and UK punk bands such as the Sex Pistols and especially Iggy Pop and the Stooges whose destructive stage-shows were by then legendary. See Clinton Heylin, *From the Velvets to the Voidoids: The Birth of American Punk Rock*, Updated Edition (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2005); and Jon Savage, *England's Dreaming: Anarchy, Sex Pistols, Punk Rock, and Beyond*, revised edition (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2002).

¹⁰⁰⁰ Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.248-249.

laughed. Instead, beer cans were thrown at you from out of the darkness.”¹⁰⁰¹ Thomas Schwebel likewise remembered audience members at a D.A.F. concert in Düsseldorf storming the stage: “We were really physically attacked on stage. One went after my neck and started to strangle me.”¹⁰⁰² According to Timo, drummer from Palais Schaumburg, the bands tried to escape (“Then we got out. Immediately, the audience started to throw burning rolls of toilet paper—which unrolled in the air”) just before the police entered the hall and restored order with their batons.¹⁰⁰³

These violent attacks and confrontations can be extended almost indefinitely during the early 1980s. In part, the elevation of violence from performative to actual was an attempt by bands such as KFC to separate themselves from the Kunstpunks. As Trini Trimpop has since suggested, “[f]rom zero to one hundred. This was the real beginning of punk in Germany. The first real hard punk band, us: KFC.”¹⁰⁰⁴ But the turn to violence was equally the result of the mainstream media that had demonized punk from the beginning. At first, media outlets had played up the dangerousness of punk, part of the hype that accompanied the genre’s cultural ‘invasion’ of West Germany in the first place. *Bravo*, for example, had early on called the Sex Pistols “wild back-courtyard [Hinterhof] boys,” a characterization suggesting danger, roughness, and even criminality.¹⁰⁰⁵ But when punk ceased playing at being dangerous and started to actually become dangerous, many backed off. As the violence increased, critics tried to make sense of what they were seeing. Some began to link the violence in the genre with the distressed social situation which is where the link between the 1970s, ‘No Future’ and punk emerge from originally. Youth unemployment, environmental devastation, the potential of nuclear war; all

¹⁰⁰¹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.313.

¹⁰⁰² Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.295.

¹⁰⁰³ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.295.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.142.

¹⁰⁰⁵ “Punk Rock. Sex Pistols,” *Bravo*, Nr.41 (30 September 1976), p.4.

were considered ‘culprits’ in the emergence of punk and the genre’s penchant for violence.¹⁰⁰⁶

But many also suggested that a certain moral bankruptcy among the youth of West Germany was likewise at play. One author wondered, for example, whether punk represented the “intellectual impoverishment of a lost generation.”¹⁰⁰⁷ These interpretations point to a society struggling to find direction following the disorientation of the 1960s and the economic crisis from the 1970s, a situation that the CDU and Helmut Kohl capitalized on in winning the federal elections under the banner of a ‘geistig-moralische Wende’ (spiritual and moral shift) in 1983.

Other media, however, were less interested in understanding than they were in escalating the criticism, an activity which increased the violence rather than dampening it. With sensational headlines, especially the boulevard press such as *Bild* frequently attacked punks as ‘rowdies’ and ‘Chaoten,’ much as it had the student movement and alternatives for the previous two decades.¹⁰⁰⁸ Headlines such as “Safety-pin in the cheek: the business with punks is getting wilder” or “Punk-Scene in Hagen acquires a menacing form” used scandal to sell copies but also amplified social concerns.¹⁰⁰⁹ Journalists criticized the genre and some of the prominent figures in the punk scene such as Sid Vicious, whom the *Neue Revue* called “a devil” and could not understand why such music would appeal to youths (“It must surely be the power and the appeal of being evil that plays a role here” concluded the author).¹⁰¹⁰ Letters to editors complained that journalists—even sympathetic ones such as those at *Sounds*—were contributing to the moral

¹⁰⁰⁶ See Paula Almquist, “Punk-Rock,” *Stern*, Nr.43 (October 1977), pp.74-82.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Gerd Schumann, “Die geistige Verarmung einer verlorenen Generation. Punk Rock,” *die andere Zeitung*, Nr.24 (February 1978), pp.28-29 cited in Rolf Lindner, *Punk Rock oder: Der vermarktete Aufruhr* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Freie Gesellschaft, 1978), pp.90-91.

¹⁰⁰⁸ According to Andreas Dorau, there was articles everyday in *Bild* against punks. Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.217-218.

¹⁰⁰⁹ “Nadel in der Backe: Die Sache mit den Punk-Menschen wird immer wilder,” *Bild-Zeitung*, 7 April 1978; and “„Haben keinen Bock auf nichts:“ Punker-Szene in Hagen nimmt bedrohliche Formen an – Jugendamt aktiv,” *Westfalenpost*, 7 December 1981, p.1.

¹⁰¹⁰ “Ein Totschläger als Jugendidol?” *Neue Revue*, cited in *Antzeige 08/15* (Augsburg: 1980), p.26.

panic and should be more careful with what they were writing.¹⁰¹¹ Punks in Kiel, for example, released a statement to the public asking for understanding and an end to discrimination from the media and the public.¹⁰¹² Yet at the same time, as Hardcore rose to dominance and youths increasingly sought to provoke mainstream society as we shall shortly see, punks in a certain sense welcomed the demonization and embraced society's hatred since—in a circular fashion—it confirmed marginal status and thus authenticity. As Hilsberg wrote perceptively, “If there weren't negative reactions from the population or the press, then some punks wouldn't know what to do.”¹⁰¹³

The moral panic was especially driven by events taking place in Hamburg and later in Hanover which became flashpoints for debates about punk violence. On 19 May 1979, the Clash performed in the Markthalle in Hamburg, a concert ending in a riot. High ticket prices (20 DM) had alienated younger punks who could not afford to attend and after a large group gathered outside the concert, they stormed the Markthalle.¹⁰¹⁴ During the ensuing ruckus inside, lead singer Joe Strummer brought his guitar down on the head of young German fan that sparked a melee. The UK punk was arrested after the concert for battery though he was later released.¹⁰¹⁵ At the same time, another subculture from Britain—the Teds—had made its way to West Germany. As throw-back rock'n'rollers from the 1950s, Teds had greaser hair and leather jackets, listened to old-time rock'n'roll and expressed a kind of Fifties male chauvinism and

¹⁰¹¹ “Unsere Verantwortung,” *Sounds*, Nr.8 (August 1980), p.4. See also the diatribe in *Mosender Abschaum*, Nr.1 (Wilhelmshaven: 1984), p.7.

¹⁰¹² Alfred Hilsberg, “neuestes Deutschland,” *Sounds*, Nr.3 (March 1981), p.18.

¹⁰¹³ Gröfaz und Goldmann, “Falsche Freunde gibt es überall. Diskurs über Kriegsschauplätze 81,” *Sounds*, Nr.9 (September 1981), p.24.

¹⁰¹⁴ See IG Dreck auf Papier, ed., *Keine Zukunft war Gestern: Punk in Deutschland* (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen, 2008), pp.65-66; and Michele Avantario, “1977-1987: Von Krawall bis Totenschiff. Punk, New Wave und Hardcore,” *Läden, Schuppen, Kaschemmen: Eine Hamburger Popkulturgeschichte*, ed., Christoph Twickel (Hamburg: Edition Nautilus, 2003), pp.51-52.

¹⁰¹⁵ Diedrich Diederichsen, “Clash! Hamburg brennt nicht, aber es ruft,” *Sounds*, Nr.7 (July 1980), pp.40-41. See also *Bericht der U.N. Menschenrechtskommission über Menschenrechtsverletzungen in der BRD*, Nr.2 (Hanover: 1980), p.2.

conservative outlook that caused friction with punks; in Britain, Teds were bitter enemies of punks and this antipathy was adopted wholesale by the German Teds.¹⁰¹⁶ Throughout 1979, the streets and bars of Hamburg became a subcultural war-zone between the competing youth groups that culminated at a concert featuring the UK punk band the Stranglers in the Markthalle on 27 November 1979.¹⁰¹⁷ A rumor started that the two youth groups would end the strife once and for all at the concert but a line of Hamburg police waited outside the Markthalle after the concert instead of the Teds, and in the ensuing skirmish, 64 punks were arrested.¹⁰¹⁸

The confrontation with police sparked a wave of violence by Hardcores that spiralled out of control in 1980. With its seedy but vibrant night-life, the St. Pauli district and especially the Karolinenviertel was the traditional Hochburg of Hamburg punk, and Rip Off and the scene bars Krawall 2000 and the Marktstube all found their home there. On Saturday night, 3 May 1980, punks shattered the front-window of the ‘T-Markt’ grocery store and hid in the Marktstube. When police entered to arrest the perpetrators, patrons assaulted the officers and showered them with beer bottles, injuring several. Returning later in force, the police arrested almost twenty youths.¹⁰¹⁹ In response to the brazen attack on their ‘home turf,’ punks responded by taking the fight to ‘enemy territory.’ The following day, punks congregated at the Mönckebergbrunnen, the traditional day-time gathering place in the center of the city, before heading to Pöseldorf, a rich neighborhood filled with trendy bars and shops. Once arriving, the punk mob—contemporary reports said the numbers ranged between one hundred and two hundred youths—rampaged through the streets, destroying parked cars, telephone booths, a bus, and the front-windows of

¹⁰¹⁶ “Zoff nach Noten,” *Der Spiegel*, Nr.52 (24 December 1979), p.84; and *Ants*, Nr.3 (Augsburg: 1980), pp.12-14.

¹⁰¹⁷ Joachim Lottmann, “Konzert für Fäuste, Ordner und Rocker,” *Die Welt*, 29 November 1979, p.21. See also IG Dreck auf Papier, ed., *Keine Zukunft war Gestern: Punk in Deutschland* (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen, 2008), p.56.

¹⁰¹⁸ “Punker schlugen zu – 61 gefaßt!,” *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 28 November 1979, p.8. See also the report by Ludwig Karnickel in *Shit-Bolzen* cited in Paul Ott und Hollow Skai, eds., *Wir waren Helden für einen Tag: Aus deutschsprachigen Punk-Fanzines 1977-1981* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1983), pp.167-170.

¹⁰¹⁹ Horst Dalchow, “Krawall der Punker in Pöseldorf,” *Die Welt*, 5 May 1980, p.19.

numerous stores and cafes.¹⁰²⁰ One hundred officers were called to the scene and began beating youths indiscriminately with batons, even innocent bystanders who happened to be caught in the middle.¹⁰²¹ After several hours, order was restored. Approximately eighty youths were arrested and a number sent to the hospital with injuries.¹⁰²² The next day, punks at the Mönckebergbrunnen attacked passers-by in protest and another fifteen punks were arrested bringing the three-day outburst of violence totals to well-over one hundred youths arrested and countless injured.¹⁰²³

The Pöseldorf action, the Clash concert, and the street-battles with the Teds were the first salvos in a running battle between punks and authorities that waxed and waned throughout the early 1980s. Authorities were puzzled to understand why youths from good homes would do such a thing: in the words of one official, the punks arrested at Pöseldorf all came from “intact family homes.”¹⁰²⁴ Authorities called on parents to take firmer care of their children.¹⁰²⁵ But Pöseldorf was only the beginning. In June, punks destroyed Krawall 2000 after a number of conflicts with punks in St. Pauli.¹⁰²⁶ Parents and teachers met to try and formulate a policy that would protect their children from getting caught in the middle.¹⁰²⁷ As the summer progressed, numerous assaults, robberies, damage to properties, and vandalism were reported with increasing

¹⁰²⁰ “200 Punker wüteten in Hamburg-Pöseldorf,” *Hamburger Morgenpost*, 5 May 1980, pp.1, 4; “Fight with punks at Krawall 2000,” *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 5 May 1980; and “Die Prolos kommen oder ein Mercedes, der immer flacher wurde,” *tageszeitung*, 6 May 1980, p.5.

¹⁰²¹ “Grundlose Schläge von Polizeibeamten,” *Hamburger Morgenpost*, 6 May 1980, p.3.

¹⁰²² “Die Grosse Schlacht der Punker,” *Bild-Zeitung* (Hamburg), 5 May 1980, p.5.

¹⁰²³ Thomas Vinsor Wolgast, “Jugendliche „Punker“ werden in Hamburg gewalttätig,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 7 May 1980, p.7; and “Wieder 14 Punk-Rocker von der Polizei gefasst,” *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 6 May 1980, p.3.

¹⁰²⁴ Jürgen Bungert, “Punker. Bürgerschreck aus gute Hause,” *Bild am Sonntag*, 8 June 1980, pp.26-27.

¹⁰²⁵ Thomas Vinsor Wolgast, “Jugendliche „Punker“ werden in Hamburg gewalttätig,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 7 May 1980, p.7; and “Die Eltern müssen mithelfen,” *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 10 May 1980, p.7.

¹⁰²⁶ Norbert Schubert, “Die grosse Schlacht im Punker Lokal: Fünf im Krankenhaus,” *Bild-Zeitung* (Hamburg), 24 June 1980, p.5; and Horst Dalchow, “Die „Herren von St. Pauli“ verteidigen ihr Milieu,” *Die Welt*, 26 June 1980, p.22. See also IG Dreck auf Papier, ed., *Keine Zukunft war Gestern: Punk in Deutschland* (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen, 2008), p.57.

¹⁰²⁷ “Punk-Rocker wurden auch in Lohbrügge-Nord gewalttätig,” *Bergdorfer Nachrichten*, 9 May 1980, p.1.

frequency in the Karolinenviertel.¹⁰²⁸ In late August, an anti-Strauß demonstration got out of hand and a youth was killed accidentally which many blamed on overzealous police.¹⁰²⁹ When on 6 September, after punks stormed a party rally of the conservative DKP and 20 were arrested, the situation had reached a crisis-point with Hamburg's youths.¹⁰³⁰ Residents in the Karolinenviertel expressed fear about venturing outside at night, afraid of encountering punks on the street.¹⁰³¹ The conservative CDU, the opposition party in Hamburg's city hall, politicized the subculture by clamoured for the Social Democrats to 'solve' the 'problem' with the "Punk Un-beings" (Punker Unwesen).¹⁰³² *Bild* stoked the flames with leading editorials: "What the police are doing is not much. Not enough. It must be possible to calm people's fear in such a small neighborhood, no?"¹⁰³³ With elections up-coming, the SPD did not want to appear to be 'soft on crime' and responded by increasing the police presence in the Karolinenviertel dramatically.¹⁰³⁴

¹⁰²⁸ "Punk-Rocker wurden auch in Lohbrügge-Nord gewalttätig," *Bergdorfer Nachrichten*, 9 May 1980, p.1; Norbert Schubert, "PUNKER JAGEN POPPER," *Bild-Zeitung* (Hamburg), 12 May 1980, p.3; Thomas Wiczorek, "Die rohen Punker: Nadel im Ohr, Hass auf die Welt," *Bild-Zeitung* (Hamburg), 14 May 1980, p.2; Wolf Achim Wiegand, "Sie irren durch leere Wänden," *Rheinische Post*, 13 June 1980; Ingrid Baas and Ulrike Scherwinski, "Kleinkrieg der Halbwelt ums Schanzenviertel," *Die Welt*, 2 September 1980, p.20; "Punker randalierten: 15 Autos zertrümmert—Mann in Lebensgefahr," *Bild-Zeitung* (Hamburg) 8 Sept 1980, p.5; Michael Pentzin, "Punker-Terror!" *Bild-Zeitung* (Hamburg), 10 September 1980, p.3; and "Punker überfielen „Klick“-Kino," *Bild-Zeitung* (Hamburg), 12 September 1980, pp.1, 3.

¹⁰²⁹ "Demonstration mit Steinen, Farbbeuteln und Punkern," *Bild-Zeitung* (Hamburg), 28 August 1980, p.3; and "Krawalle bleiben dismal aus," *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 8 September 1980, p.4.

¹⁰³⁰ "70 Jugendliche demolierten Autos," *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 8 September 1980, p.5.; "Hamburger „Punker“ schlagen zu: 6 verletzt, 15 Autos kaputt!" *Hamburger Morgenpost*, 8 September 1980, pp.1, 3; and Volker Uhl, "Punker – „ausgeflipt“ oder kriminell? Zoff aus Angst vor der Zukunft," *Hamburger Morgenpost*, 11 September 1980, p.4.

¹⁰³¹ Michael Pentzin, "Punker-Terror!" *Bild-Zeitung* (Hamburg), 10 September 1980, p.3.

¹⁰³² "Polizei soll gegen die Punker durchgreifen," *Die Welt*, 22 September 1980, p.17; "„Zu milde mit den Punkern,“" *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 22 September 1980, p.3; "CDU fordert Durchgreifen gegen Punker," *Bergdorfer Zeitung*, 22 September 1980, p.3; and Knut Teske, "Die „Punker“ werden zum öffentlichen Ärgernis," *Die Welt*, 26 September 1980, p.19.

¹⁰³³ Michael Pentzin, "Punker-Terror!" *Bild-Zeitung* (Hamburg), 10 September 1980, p.3.

¹⁰³⁴ "Punker – Polizei schafft Ruhe," *Die Welt*, 23 September 1980, p.19; Peter Hildebrandt, "Milde Welle bei der Polizei: Gespräche statt Gummiknüppel," *Hamburger Morgenpost*, 23 September 1980, p.4; Michael Pentzin, "Ein Pärchen in Jeans räumt nachts bei Punkern auf," *Bild-Zeitung* (Hamburg), 24 September 1980, p.4; Horst Dalchow, "Polizeipräsenz sorgt für Ruhe im Karolinenviertel," *Die Welt*, 3 October 1980, p.21; "Erfolgreicher Polizeieinsatz gegen Punker," *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 9 October 1980, p.4; and "„Bei Razzien ist hier Bürgerkrieg“" *Karolinenviertel von Punks gesäubert?" tageszeitung*, 11 November 1980, p.4.

Over the course of 1980 and 1981, the ‘Karo,’ as it was called, became a site of constant conflict between youths and police who worked to drive punks from the neighborhood.

The events in Hamburg were repeated across the Federal Republic in a number of cities over the coming years. In the summer of 1980, for example, punks in Dortmund attacked police to the cries of “No police arrests for Dortmund Punk-Rockers!” as officers asked youths for their identifications when gathered on the Reinoldiplatz.¹⁰³⁵ Nor was it simply confrontations between punks and police. In West Berlin, business owners had formed the Bürgerinitiative ‘Bürgerwehr’ (Citizen Initiative ‘Citizen Task Force’) to get rid of a local punk bar Chaos which, they claimed, was disturbing their clientele, and over 1980, had even attacked the bar and its owners physically since the state was not doing anything about it.¹⁰³⁶ State officials came under increasing pressure from the public to deal with youth violence and punk. At the heart of the issue was the public gathering of punks and the confrontations these assemblies provoked, especially as Hardcore radicalized and youths sought deliberate conflicts with police. In an effort to stop the violence, authorities tried to restrict punk’s public presence as best it could whether physically in the form of arrests following criminality and intimidation, or through censorship of punk music and surveillance. While archival material on state intent and action against punk remains under lock and key since it is still protected under federal laws regulating privacy and thus the full story must unfortunately remain untold, nonetheless, much information does appear in the mainstream media that allows us to reconstruct the ramifications of these events. What is important here is not whether state responses constituted repression which was how punks framed the issue but rather how state actions worked to radicalize Hardcore and push the subculture towards the ever

¹⁰³⁵ See *Antz*, Nr.6 (Augsburg: 1980), p.22.

¹⁰³⁶ Frank Urban, “„Soll ich mich standig umziehen?“ Punk: eine Bewegung ohne Ideologie,” *Der Tagesspiegel*, 14 December 1980, p.44.

more extreme end of radical politics. In the paranoid mind of punks, state actions seemed to confirm the worst fears of youths who increasingly ‘read’ the early 1980s as the early 1930s.

The violent lyrics in songs by Slime and others did not remain unnoticed by the public or state prosecutors. In early 1982, authorities raided independent record shops and labels in search of the first album by Slime which contained the songs “Bullenschweine” and “Deutschland.”¹⁰³⁷ Complaints by citizens had drawn the attention of authorities who condemned the lyrics as an affront to the police. According to the charges, “The suspicion of incitement to hate or violence is because a proportion of the population, the police to be exact, are being encouraged to hate and initiate acts of violence against them and maliciously run them down and slander them and because of this, the public peace and human dignity of the members of the police are being disturbed.”¹⁰³⁸ Later, authorities charged other bands and songs with slandering the state and its symbols, such as “Polizei/SA/SS” by Slime, “Helden” by Middle Class Fantasies on the first *Soundtracks zum Untergang* compilation, and “Amis” by Notdurft from the second *Soundtracks zum Untergang* anthology.¹⁰³⁹ After a long court case in which Slime and label boss Walterbach argued for the protection of artistic freedom, in March 1983, the court sided with the state, ruling that despite artistic qualities, nonetheless, the songs damaged the rights of individuals which superseded the freedom of expression guaranteed in Article 5 of the Basic Law.¹⁰⁴⁰ Whereas in the United States, a similar court case against the Dead Kennedys was decided in favour of punk, in West Germany, these songs and others were placed on the List of Writings Harmful to Young People (known colloquially as ‘the Index’), and banned from sale or public play.¹⁰⁴¹ Regulated

¹⁰³⁷ Alf Burchardt, “Review: Slime,” *Sounds*, Nr.6 (June 1982), pp.64-65.

¹⁰³⁸ “Wie westliche Rock-Zensur funktioniert,” *Der Spiegel*, Nr.27 (1992), p.72.

¹⁰³⁹ “Wie westliche Rock-Zensur funktioniert,” *Der Spiegel*, Nr.27 (1992), p.72.

¹⁰⁴⁰ “Wie westliche Rock-Zensur funktioniert,” *Der Spiegel*, Nr.27 (1992), p.72.

¹⁰⁴¹ Alf Burchardt, “Review: Slime,” *Sounds*, Nr.6 (June 1982), p.64. AGR recorded ‘beeping’ sounds over the lyrics in question which allowed them to continue selling the albums. On the Dead Kennedys case, see David

by the Bundesprüfstelle für jugendgefährdende Schriften (Federal Department for Writings Harmful to Young Persons or BPjS) whose mandate was to regulate media harmful to minors giving the institution wide latitude, censorship became a tool by which the state could ban punk that encouraged violence.¹⁰⁴² Over the years, innumerable Hardcore bands have run afoul with the censor, but also Fun Punk band such as die Ärzte, who ran into trouble several times for lyrics to satirical songs such as “Claudia hat ’nen Schäferhund” about bestiality and “Geschwisterliebe” about incest.¹⁰⁴³ Individual radio stations could likewise implement bans. The Straßenjungs, for example, early on found almost no radio play because of their offensive lyrics, but even NDW jokesters Extrabreit had their song “Polizisten” banned from Bayerische Rundfunk.¹⁰⁴⁴

Punks often ran the risks of criminalization for their actions and as the moral panic over violence increased in the early 1980s, authorities became less and less reticent about indicting youths. Swastikas appearing in fanzines or on clothing had long caused problems for punks since these images were banned under West German law, and a number of youths ran into trouble with authorities.¹⁰⁴⁵ Fanzine writers likewise ran afoul with authorities over content. Willi Wucher had several issues of his legendary Duisburg fanzine *Ungewollt* banned for the pornographic images he used to make collages.¹⁰⁴⁶ More serious was the case of Klaus Abelmann and his

Kennedy, “Frankenchrist versus the State: The New Right, Rock Music and the Case of Jello Biafra,” *Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol.24, Nr.1 (1990), pp.131-148.

¹⁰⁴² In March 2003, the BPjS changed its name to the Bundesprüfstelle für jugendgefährdende Medien (Federal Department for Media Harmful to Young Persons, or BPjM). On the BPjS, see Michael Custodis, “Tadel verpflichtet. Indizierung von Musik und ihre Wirkung,” *No Time for Losers. Charts, Listen und andere Kanonisierungen in der Populären Musik* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2008), pp.161-172.

¹⁰⁴³ Frank A. Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging: Von Punk zu NDW* (Mainz: Ventil Verlag, 2007), p.45.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Heinz Holtgreffe, “Punk – und was dahinter steckt,” *BZ*, 25 November 1977; Detlef Kinsler, “Die Straßenjungs,” in *Rock Session 4: Magazin der populären Musik*, , eds., Klaus Humann and Carl-Ludwig Reichert (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1980), p.167; M.O.C. Döpfner and Thomas Garms, *Neue deutsche Welle. Kunst oder Mode? Eine sachliche Polemik für und wider die neudeutsche Popmusik* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1984), p.94; and Hollow Skai, *Alles nur geträumt: Fluch und Segen der Neuen Deutschen Welle* (Innsbruck: Hannibal, 2009), p.130.

¹⁰⁴⁵ See, for example, *Antz*, Nr.4 (Augsburg: 1980), p.2; and *Der Stürmer*, Nr.8 (Bremen: 1984), p.1.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Issues 23 and 25 were confiscated by the police. See *Ungewollt*, Nr.28 (Duisburg: 1988), n.p.

Hanover fanzine *Gegendarstellung*. As a member of the band P38 with song lyrics considered defamatory to conservative Bavarian politician Franz-Joseph Strauss, charges were laid against the youth and he was fined 16,000 DM for “inciting violence” with his fanzine.¹⁰⁴⁷ A Munich fanzine writer was similarly threatened by Strauss’ attorney for defaming the politician’s daughter in one of his issues, all the more disturbing since the author had not printed his address in the fanzine.¹⁰⁴⁸ The fact that punk fanzines, with most having print-runs in the three-figure mark and distributed individually within the scene, were being watched by state authorities was deeply disconcerting to those within the subculture. Klaus Maeck distinctly remembers that Rip Off was watched by the Verfassungsschutz, the domestic intelligence agency, and record labels and stores were under constant threat of raids by authorities looking for illegal material, especially after punk records started getting banned.¹⁰⁴⁹ The consequence among youths was an increased feeling of paranoia and persecution as punks believed they were being repressed unlawfully. As Hollow Skai wrote at the time in *Sounds*, “[t]he fears of check points are therefore not at all so far-fetched since also rock musicians are starting to meticulously inspect their lyrics and no longer trust themselves to intervene unambiguously and critically in the events of the day. But of course, officially, there isn’t a censor.”¹⁰⁵⁰

But it was events in Hanover that pushed punk over the edge towards an unending cycle of violence. In autumn 1982, the *tageszeitung* uncovered that the police in Hanover had created a list of local punks whom they considered a threat to public order, the so-called ‘Punker-

¹⁰⁴⁷ Hollow Skai, “Polizeiliche Ermittlungen gegen Punk,” *Sounds*, Nr.4 (April 1980), pp.16-17; and Hollow Skai, “Daily Terror,” *Sounds*, Nr.2 (February 1981), p.8.

¹⁰⁴⁸ The author later found out it was a friend who had given authorities his information. See *W.ü.r.g.!*, Nr.8 (West Berlin: 1982), p.15.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.215. Because of the raids by authorities looking for banned Slime albums, record stores became wary about sitting on large quantities of LPs. See Burchardt, “Hardcore ’82,” p.42.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Hollow Skai, “Daily Terror,” *Sounds*, Nr.2 (February 1981), p.8.

Kartei.’¹⁰⁵¹ Controversially, youths who had not even committed a crime were included on the index, as a punk haircut was seemingly enough to warrant state observation. The impetus behind the decision to create the ‘Punker-Kartei’ had begun after events in Wuppertal where, over the summer of 1982, youths began gathering around the center-square fountain in protest against municipal efforts to ban punks from public space. These gatherings generated constant conflict as punks from other cities began travelling to Wuppertal on weekends, and confrontations and arrests made authorities elsewhere leery of similar problems on their own home turfs.¹⁰⁵²

Hanover sought to avoid these difficulties by identifying potential trouble-makers beforehand and putting them under surveillance. Soon, there were reports about lists of punks in other cities such as Hamburg and West Berlin that were subsequently confirmed.¹⁰⁵³ Punks responded to this breach in civil liberties by calling for a national demonstration against the ‘Punker-Kartei.’ On Saturday 18 December 1982, the last day for Christmas shopping sales (what one punk called “the Consumer Fest Nr. 1”), around 600 brightly-colored youths and alternatives gathered at Kröpcke, the central square in the city.¹⁰⁵⁴ After a peaceful morning, around noon a demonstration was organized to march on city hall. Authorities, who had been watching the gathering from a distance immediately called on organizers to disperse the unauthorized protest and, when the punks refused to do so, charged the crowd.¹⁰⁵⁵ After several hours of fighting, around 60 youths were arrested, a number were injured including one youth who was thrown

¹⁰⁵¹ See “Ungezügelter Leidenschaft,” *Der Spiegel*, Nr.50 (1982), pp.51-52.

¹⁰⁵² On the events in Wuppertal during the summer of 1982, see *Die Falschmelder*, Nr.1 (Düsseldorf: 1983).

¹⁰⁵³ “Mit zwei hannoverschen Punx, die sich für nächsten Samstag eine bunte City wünschen,” *tageszeitung*, 14 December 1982; and “Auch in HH Punxkartei,” *tageszeitung* (Hamburg), 13 April 1983, pp.15-16.

¹⁰⁵⁴ *Mosender Abschaum*, Nr.1 (Wilhelmshaven: 1984), p.7. See also “Punker verwundert,” *tageszeitung*, 21 December 1982; and “Punker wüteten mit Stein und Flaschen,” *Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20 December 1982.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Klaus Gembolis, “250 Randalierer warfen mit Steinen und Bierflaschen,” *Neue Presse*, 20 December 1982; and “Untergang Hannovers fand nicht statt,” *tageszeitung*, 20 December 1982.

through a department store window by police, and damages were estimated at between 60,000 and 100,000 DM.¹⁰⁵⁶

These events would repeat themselves dramatically in 1983 and 1984. Following the winter riot, city officials were unapologetic about the ‘Punker-Kartei’ despite extensive criticism. The Greens and Alternative Liste called for a complete investigation into the list which they felt severely infringed on civil rights while critics called the police response an “over-reaction.”¹⁰⁵⁷ But according to the Lower Saxony Interior Minister Egbert Möcklinghoff, criticism of the ‘Punker-Kartei’ was “irresponsible” since the list was necessary to curtail criminality.¹⁰⁵⁸ Youths called for a repeat demonstration to be held in the summer.¹⁰⁵⁹ On the first weekend of July 1983, 500 youths gathered in Hanover in what quickly degenerated into three days of drunkenness and rampaging violence: by 5 July, 180 youths had been arrested on 235 criminal charges.¹⁰⁶⁰ The following year was no different except that instead of fighting with police, as many as two thousand punks and Neo-Nazi Skinheads from all across Europe spent three days

¹⁰⁵⁶ “Krawalle bei Punkertreffen,” *Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20 December 1982; “Punker wüteten mit Stein und Flaschen,” *Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20 December 1982; Joachim Grübler, “So wüteten die Punks in der Innenstadt,” *Bild-Zeitung* (Hanover), 20 December 1982; Klaus Gembolis, “Hannover: Strassen-Schlacht am Steintor,” *Neue Presse*, 20 December 1982; and Goetz Buchholz, “Keine Freiheit für den Osterhasen. Demonstration gegen Punk-Kartei,” *NaNa*, 23 December 1982, p.5.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Karl-Richard Würger, “Punks—mehr Mode als sozialer Protest,” *Neue Presse*, 21 December 1982, p.4.

¹⁰⁵⁸ “Möcklinghoff weist Kritik an der Punker-Kartei zurück,” *Neue Presse*, 17 December 1982; and Inge Strothenke, “Innenminister: Ja zur „Punker-Kartei“,” *Neue Presse*, 22 December 1982.

¹⁰⁵⁹ “Die Wende,” *StadtMagazin Schädelspalter*, (June 1983), p.13; “Die Wende – ein reines Fun-Treffen,” *tageszeitung*, 30 June 1983; “Angst! 5000 Punker sind da,” *Bild-Zeitung* (Hanover), 2 July 1983; and “Zum Auftakt des großen Treffens flogen Bierdosen und Flaschen,” *Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2 July 1983.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Klaus Gembolis, “Punker-Krawalle,” *Neue Presse*, 2 July 1983, pp.1, 4; “Punker prügeln sich mit Polizisten und Passanten,” *Braunschweiger Zeitung*, 4 July 1983; “Polizei stürmte Barrikade von Punker-Gruppe: 180 Festnahmen,” *Westfälische Rundschau*, 4 July 1983; Klaus Gembolis, “Punker schlugen 100 Schaufenster ein,” *Neue Presse*, 4 July 1983; “Komplettes Chaos,” *tageszeitung*, 4 July 1983, p.1, 4; “Punker-Terror in der City,” *Bild-Zeitung* (Hanover), 4 July 1983, p.1, 4; Jutta Oerding, “Das Treffen von Punks und Skins endete in einer Straßenschlacht,” *Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 4 July 1983; 235 Strafanzeigen gegen Punker und Skinheads,” *General-Lokal Anzeiger*, 5 July 1983; Klaus Gembolis, “Ruiniere Krawalle den Ruf Hannovers als Einkaufsstadt?” *Neue Presse*, 5 July 1983; and Peter Seewald, “„Meine Ratte ist riesig“,” *Der Spiegel*, Nr.28 (11 July 1983), pp.65-71.

fighting each other in August 1984.¹⁰⁶¹ Cornered by police in an autonomous youth centre where punks often gathered and organized concerts, in the ensuing attack, the 300 to 400 trapped youths destroyed the UJZ Glocksee.¹⁰⁶² Known as the Chaos-Tage, what began as demonstrations against state abuses were quickly reduced to mindless violence as youths used these gatherings to fight with police and each other, resulting in massive damages to the city of Hanover and even more outcry over youth violence.¹⁰⁶³

Censorship, arrests and the campaigns to restrict punks from public space came under vociferous criticism from youths as well as the public at large. These spectacular explosions of violence became central to debates about the use of violence by the Left and the democratic legitimacy of the Federal Republic. But what is crucial for our purposes here is to note how these events forced punk to become ever more rigid in terms of defining acceptable behavior and norms. State oppression and mass arrests provoked paranoid punks to close ranks. What was required to defend the scene against a fascist state and violent Neo-Nazis was not individuality but unity. Many were upset by these turn of events since what had begun as a protest against the infringement of civil liberties degenerated into an exercise in criminality as punks transformed themselves into the caricatures that they criticised Bild for propagating. One punk fanzine author wrote, "Okay. Punks want anarchy. But why must they draw attention to themselves through street riots and complete opposition to everything and everyone? One can support one's ideology

¹⁰⁶¹"Pogo statt Volkstanz," *tageszeitung*, 2 August 1984, p.3; "Größtes Punk-Treffen in der City," *Bild-Zeitung* (Hanover), 3 August 1984; "40 Festnahmen vor dem Treffen von Punks und Skinheads," *Neue Presse*, 4 August 1984; "Vom Bahnhof bis zur Oper – Die Spur des Schreckens," *Bild-Zeitung* (Hanover), 4 August 1984; "Punks: Es war wie im Bürgerkrieg," *Bild-Zeitung* (Hanover), 6 August 1984; Ver König and Klaus Gembolis, "Punker und Skins wüteten in Hannover/Die Chaos-Bilanz: 125 Verletzte, 33 Autos kaputt," *Neue Presse*, 6 August 1984; and "„Recht und Gesetz gelten...“" *Kieler Rundschau*, 9 August 1984, p.2.

¹⁰⁶²"Bruchstücke. Bilder vom letzten Punker-Treffen, dem „Chaos-Tag“ in Hannover," *tageszeitung*, 8 August 1984, p.8; and Goetz Buchholz, "Irgendeine Rechtsgrundlage findet sich immer...," *Hamburger Rundschau*, Nr. 35, 23 August 1984, p.17.

¹⁰⁶³Damages from the 1984 Chaos-Tage were estimated in the millions. See Harry Assenmacher, "Rasierte Schädel und kräftige Prügel – die Punker trafen sich zum Chaos-Tag," *Berliner Morgenpost*, 6 August 1984, p.3.

in different ways (even if it is actually justifiable).”¹⁰⁶⁴ Another felt that punks were becoming exactly the same as those narrow-minded citizens whom they criticised: “Many punks shout themselves hoarse against petit-bourgeois-philistines who don’t accept that they [punks] are different. But not every person that wears a tie is a philistine. Just like not every person who runs around in ripped clothes and a Mohawk isn’t a real punk.” Continuing this thought to its logical extension, the writer concluded that, “Everyone...who wants to destroy difference” was in fact a fascist, warning ominously that “[a]lso Adolf Hitler wanted to get rid of everybody who was in his way. Where is the difference between anarchy and dictatorship?”¹⁰⁶⁵ ‘No Future’ which had once so inventively been deployed metaphorically as a denial of straightjackets and had opened wide avenues of possibilities was now, to radicalized Hardcores, understood literally.

“Jürgen Engler gibt ’ne Party”: Exclusion, Fun Punk and the Death of *Anderssein*

We stand before the door but we can’t come in
 Inside there is caviar by candlelight
 Holger Hiller arrives with bodyguards
 As people fight for an autograph

Jürgen Engler is having a party
 But we can’t come in
 Jürgen Engler is having a party
 But the doorman sends us home!

He sends us home, home, home!

We wait behind the cordon
 Plain-clothes guard the house
 Am I seeing clearly or is this a dream?
 On the balcony stands Andreas Dorau!

Jürgen Engler is having a party
 But we can’t come in

¹⁰⁶⁴ *Katastrophen Provinz*, Nr.2 (Eminghausen, 1982), p.2.

¹⁰⁶⁵ *City Indian*, Nr.6 (Kempten, 1984), n.p.

Jürgen Engler is having a party
But the doorman sends us home!

He sends us home, home, home!

“Jürgen Engler gibt ’ne Party,” die Toten Hosen, *Punk Rock* (Totenkopf 002, 1982)

The consequences of internal radicalism (Hardcore) and external force (state pressure) resulted in a legion of exclusions as the subculture sought to fortify the boundaries of authenticity, efforts that fundamentally shut down punk as a producer of alternatives. And it is here where we can locate the cessation of punk as a dynamic actor in West German history. As the sarcastic song by die Toten Hosen above suggests, the boundaries of punk community were shattered by the success of the NDW and political radicalization. Jürgen Engler, Holger Hiller, Andreas Dorau and the Düsseldorf punks around die Toten Hosen had once all been part of the same scene but now the latter were denied entrance to Engler’s party. Once united, punks were increasingly divided as fissures opened up that became impossible to close. While division is often a quality of popular music and the politics of authenticity that give these movements their shape, in the West German punk scene, these splits became chasms. On the one side were radical Hardcores who increasingly merged into the extremist politics of groups such as the Autonomen whose violence has been a feature of West German politics for the past several decades.¹⁰⁶⁶ On the other side were punks disillusioned by the politicking and fed up with the militancy who retreated into the apolitical genre of Fun Punk that accepted mainstream popularity and easy commercialism. As these two extremes came to dominate the scene, exclusions operated throughout as youths

¹⁰⁶⁶ On the Autonomen movement, see Jan Schwarzmeier, *Die Autonomen zwischen Subkultur und sozialer Bewegung* (Göttingen: Books on Demand, 2001); Thomas Schultze and Almut Gross, *Die Autonomen. Ursprünge, Entwicklung und Profil der Autonomen Bewegung* (Hamburg: Konkret Literatur Verlag, 1997); and Geronimo, *Feuer und Flamme: Zur Geschichte und Gegenwart der Autonomen* (Berlin: Edition ID-Archiv, 1990).

were forced to choose. But regardless which side was chosen, the lines were thickly drawn, and in so making a choice, punks shut down the possibilities of *Anderssein*.

The assertion of conformity, the emphasis on radical politics, and the ‘logic of violence’ brought with it the death of punk as a vehicle for alternative identity to the mainstream since there were significant casualties accompanying the triumph of Hardcore. As punks worked to reassert the boundaries of a scene that had become too permeable in their minds, politicization that became rooted in radical anti-state and anti-capitalist ideology—along with the explosion of violence within the scene—led to significant exclusions among those not measured authentic enough, the most important being women. It is here where the impact of the NDW was felt most acutely in the West German punk scene. We have seen how women were crucial components of the punk scene, especially in driving the subjective content of lyrics and innovative sounds that had revolutionized German popular music through greater emancipation of musical production. While women had traditionally been singers fronting male backing bands but rarely composed or produced their own music, punk had changed that by democratizing the means of musical production, and was felt by many women to be liberating who, for the first time, participated in rock’n’roll as equals. But the NDW, in merging commercial pop sounds with Schlager influenced lyrics and singing-style that drew its inspirations from the 1950s and early 1960s, had repositioned women once-again back to the role of vocalists. Whereas punk had urged women to make music, the NDW reasserted the tradition of female vocalists backed by male musicians and producers who wrote and recorded the music, thus removing women from musical control which had been one of the main emancipating principles of punk in the first place.

Many of the top NDW acts (Ideal, Nichts, Frl. Menke, and Nena) featured female singers which crucially contributed to the Hardcore backlash against women. On the one hand, these

artists suggested to budding female performers that the only way to succeed in West German popular music was to become a singer. But more important to the story of West German punk, to Hardcores, they—women—became symbols of NDW commercialization and selling-out and thus punk hate towards the music industry that had broken the subculture was foisted upon female musicians. Nor did the musical genre itself help. Hardcore, with its aesthetic and sonic emphasis on conformity—leather jackets, driving guitars—was musically and stylistically hostile to any attempts at diversity; thus, for women to partake in Hardcore, they needed to abandon any traces of difference which set them apart as women. This did not mean that women did not belong to the Hardcore scene. But women belonged less as punks than as girlfriends. Those that did play in bands—Yvonne Ducksworth, for example, a transplant Canadian who sang in the West Berlin bands *Combat Not Conform*, *Manson Youth*, and more famously *Jingo de Lunch* during the 1980s—sang and wrote lyrics in a manner that made her indistinguishable from male vocalists. But the imbrications between anti-state and anti-capitalist politics, and the commercialization of the NDW merged to create a situation in which women were almost completely excluded from the West German Hardcore scene by the early 1980s.

Dancing is another barometer of how Hardcore authenticity worked to exclude. The traditional punk dance was called ‘the pogo,’ a dance in which youths sprang erratically up and down in imitation of the child’s toy of the same name. Pogo was an attempt by punk to deconstruct rock’n’roll by dissociating dancing from any sense of rhythm or timing as one simply jumped up and down regardless of the beat.¹⁰⁶⁷ Pogo-dancing was part and parcel of punk’s revolutionary musical rupture with earlier forms of popular music dancing that scholars have also argued was a means of destroying gender since there were no leads that divided

¹⁰⁶⁷ On the history of social dancing, see Elijah Wald, *How the Beatles Destroyed Rock’n’Roll: An Alternative History of American Popular Music* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); and Barbara Ehrenreich, *Dancing in the Streets: A History of Collective Joy* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006).

dancers between male and female.¹⁰⁶⁸ At early punk concerts, audiences had stood up and crowded forwards towards the stage (or onto the stage) as the genre sought to tear down the barriers between performers and publics that rock'n'roll had erected in the 1970s. As many punks remember, the result was a “Gruppenerlebnis” (group experience) since the crowded dance-floor meant “physical contact and fun. When the dance floor was full, there was only one way out: up.”¹⁰⁶⁹ Dancing was seen as a means of releasing pent-up aggression, and the union between the band and the audience was especially important in this regard. In describing a Ruts show, one fanzine author described how “[t]he feeling between band and audience was great. The shit from the whole month was immediately forgotten.”¹⁰⁷⁰ Pogo was considered communal not solitary, a reversal that placed punk dancing in opposition to the introverted psychedelic experience that punks criticized in earlier rock'n'roll genres. One woman described pogo-dancing in rapturous terms pointing to the feelings of community that group dancing provoked in some punks: “When we dance pogo together, you jostle, fall down, and get hurt. You dance with others and are swept away. You have the feeling of moving within a closed circle. The feeling that you receive while dancing is the feeling of everyone. And this is a feeling of love beyond anything else.”¹⁰⁷¹ At the same time, for many, pogo-dancing was interpreted as political, another means by which youths sought to expose the inner ugliness of society, the competitive drives of modern society and cramped inter-personal relationships. Describing die Abwärts' set at ‘In die Zukunft,’ one punk has remembered that, “[p]eople seemed different, they danced pogo which at first I found totally disturbing. This jumping up and down; this jostling and getting

¹⁰⁶⁸ Hollow Skai, *Punk: Versuch der künstlerischen Realisierung einer neuen Lebenshaltung* (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen, 2008), pp.151-153.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Ulrike Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton: Die Anfänge von Punk und New Wave in Deutschland 1977- '82* (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2002), pp.154-155.

¹⁰⁷⁰ *Antz*, Nr.4 (Augsburg: 1980), p.5.

¹⁰⁷¹ Franzen and Penth, *Last Exist*, p.184.

knocked down.”¹⁰⁷² What was important about pogo-dancing was that it required no skill or talent since everyone could jump up and down, thereby democratizing the dance floor and pushing the concert experience towards greater inclusion.

In contrast to the democratically inclusive pogo-dancing of the early punk years, with harder beats, faster tempos, and driving guitars, the communal jumble of jumping youths on the dance floor transformed into an atomized theatre of war as individual punks began crashing into one another violently, as ‘pogo’ evolved into ‘slamming.’ As Robert Görl has recently intimated, “[p]ogo was sometimes incredibly aggressive. This jumping was frequently carried on until it turned into a fight. We couldn’t jump to this level or who wouldn’t jump—suddenly, while pogo-dancing you got one right in the face.”¹⁰⁷³ The ‘pit’—as the space in front of the stage came to be called—became an aggressive testing ground of strength, as pogo-dancing became harder and harder, and was soon dominated by violent youths who were simply looking for an excuse to hurt people.¹⁰⁷⁴ As another punk has remembered, “there were some who thought that pogo was harder than rock. Then on the dance floor, only one issue emerged...hard shoes...combat boots.”¹⁰⁷⁵ Nor did the fashion accessories of Hardcore help pacify the pit— heavy boots, spikes, chains—and injuries began to rise at punk concerts.¹⁰⁷⁶ At the same time, the increased danger in the pit solidified the space as a marker of authenticity. To survive the pit meant to prove one’s worth as an authentic punk with the result being that, “dance hierarchies were created.”¹⁰⁷⁷

¹⁰⁷² Avantario, “1977-1987: Von Krawall bis Totenschiff,” p.54.

¹⁰⁷³ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.102.

¹⁰⁷⁴ See *Scheißhaus*, Nr.2 (Oberhausen, 1986), n.p.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton*, p.155.

¹⁰⁷⁶ See, for example, *A&P*, Nr.2 (Wuppertal: 1985), p.20. At a Chelsea show in Hamburg in 1984, ambulances were called because the dancing had become so violent. See *Kabeljau*, Nr.2 (Norderstedt: 1984), p.4.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton*, p.155.

Many youths were appalled by the violence of slamming which hindered the inclusionary aspects of the genre. A number of fanzine writers and artists tried to dissuade German Hardcores from slamming.¹⁰⁷⁸ Bands began to stop playing and even cancelled concerts if a pit began to form while attempts at control frequently led to bitter conflicts during performances between artists and their audiences.¹⁰⁷⁹ But for women, the pit was incredibly dangerous as there was a very real possibility of bodily injury and sexual assault.¹⁰⁸⁰ Punks recognized that the violence was off-putting to women even as they acknowledged that such thinking was implicitly gendered: as one punk fanzine writer speculated near the end of the 1980s, “[p]erhaps this sounds sexist but why don’t women dance much anymore? I understand completely! Women are (in my opinion) not so violent and don’t stand for it either.”¹⁰⁸¹ Still, there was some truth here, as women punks on the whole responded to the move towards slamming with unreserved hatred. The pit and slamming, as they became institutionalized components of Hardcore concerts, were seen as dangerous, exclusionary, or, in the minds of some, simply far too fast for dancing.¹⁰⁸² Thus, in the early 1980s, dancing had evolved, in the words of one punk, from “Pogo-Community into aggressive Pogo-Darwinism...”¹⁰⁸³

For many, the violence, the militancy, the conflicts with police, the earnestness; it was all simply too much. As Hardcore reached its pinnacle in 1983, many youths became disillusioned by the constant politicization and social marginalization. Burnt out, these youths sought escape and out of the shadow of Hardcore emerged an alternative, Fun Punk. Featuring light songs, danceable rhythms, humorous lyrics, sing-along choruses and general merriment, Fun Punk

¹⁰⁷⁸ See *Das Letzte S.A.L.V.E.*, Nr.4 (Munich: 1985), p.26; and *Kabeljau*, Nr.9 (Norderstedt: 1988), p.51.

¹⁰⁷⁹ See *Ossessione*, Nr.3 (Frankfurt am Main: 1988), p.29.

¹⁰⁸⁰ At a concert in 1983, for example, a woman had her clothes torn off while dancing in the pit. See *A&P*, Nr.3 (Wuppertal: 1985), p.17.

¹⁰⁸¹ *Eat Yourself*, Nr.3 (West Berlin: 1989), n.p.

¹⁰⁸² See *Der Ketzer*, Nr.5 (Darmstadt: 1984), p.15.

¹⁰⁸³ Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton*, p.155.

merged the satirical irony and rock'n'roll sounds of early punk with the commercial sensibility of the NDW. Getting its start in 1982 and then especially gaining in popularity in 1983 and 1984 under the momentum of bands such as die Toten Hosen, die Mimmi's, and die Ärzte, Fun Punk quickly abandoned all pretences of remaining on the margins and sought to enter the mainstream. Appearances on television, constant radio play, chart success, and regular features in magazines such as *Bravo* and *Musik Express*, all transformed Fun Punk into one of the dominant rock genres in West Germany.¹⁰⁸⁴ As scholars have observed, Fun Punk is the antithesis of Hardcore, and its stress on good times and entertainment, drinking and singing, meant it could flourish, even after the collapse of the NDW.¹⁰⁸⁵ Year after year, as the Eighties came to an end, die Ärzte and die Toten Hosen appeared at the top of music magazines national readers' polls.¹⁰⁸⁶ Indeed, by the time the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, Fun Punk had ceased to be punk at all and more accurately could be simply described as mainstream rock'n'roll.

The decision to play Fun Punk was a conscious move away from the politicization of Hardcore and its constant violence and rigidity. According to ZK, one of the first Düsseldorf punk bands who, along with members from KFC, formed die Toten Hosen—probably the most successful international German rock band in history—earlier “also wrote all of these songs about cops and nuclear power. Now we specialize in more stupid subject matter because no one is interested in this.”¹⁰⁸⁷ As Campino put it, Hardcore was simply no longer enjoyable (“leather

¹⁰⁸⁴ Beginning in 1984, die Ärzte, die Toten Hosen, and die Goldenen Zitronen became mainstays in the German charts. See, for example, *Musik Express*, Nr.7 (July 1984), p.101; *Musik Express*, Nr.9 (September 1984), p.93; *Musik Express*, Nr.11 (November 1984), pp.79-80, 117; *Musik Express*, Nr.12 (December 1984), p.101; *Musik Express*, Nr.1 (January 1985), pp.48-50, 77; *Musik Express*, Nr.2 (February 1985), p.77; *Musik Express*, Nr.5 (May 1987), p.136; *Musik Express*, Nr.8 (August 1987), p.82; *Musik Express*, Nr.1 (January 1989), p.106; *Musik Express*, Nr.4 (April 1989), p.114; and *Musik Express*, Nr.5 (May 1989), p.152.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Skai, *Alles nur geträumt*, p.221; Albrecht Koch, *Angriff auf's Schlaraffenland. 20 Jahre deutschsprachige Popmusik* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1987), pp.127-133, 197-200.

¹⁰⁸⁶ See *Musik Express*, Nr.2 (February 1986), p.42; *Musik Express*, Nr.2 (February 1987), p.46; *Musik Express*, Nr.2 (February 1988), p.50; and *Musik Express*, Nr.2 (February 1989), p.50.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Alfred Hilsberg, “ZK-Punkabilly: zu Klug, um Klug zu sein,” *Sounds*, Nr.3 (March 1981), p.20.

jackets, never laughing, and copying the Sex Pistols one to one”) and hoped with “complete nonsense” they could re-energize punk.¹⁰⁸⁸ As Trini Trimpop, formerly of the KFC, put it, the Fun Punk bands tried to achieve a musical and ideological synthesis: “When we started with the Toten Hosen in 1982, the novelty of punk had already worn off. We tried to find a synthesis. Not more singing jokes – like with ZK. But also no more of this uncompromising attitude that we had with KFC either. We wanted to take everything a little easier.”¹⁰⁸⁹ The belief was that Hardcore was a dead end both musically and spiritually. Meikel Clauss, for example, has observed that the destructiveness and confrontational attitude of bands such as KFC could not be maintained for long but “[o]ne can live with something funny as a concept. One can survive for twenty years with that.”¹⁰⁹⁰ In the end, Fun Punk hoped to restore to punk the dilettantism and encouragement to make music. As Trini Trimpop put it: “We wanted to give people the feeling: ‘What we’re doing, you don’t need a special talent—you can also do this on your own.’ This was of course the original idea of punk rock.”¹⁰⁹¹

But the success experienced by Fun Punk made these bands lightning rods for criticism. Many accused Fun Punk bands of being traitors, especially die Toten Hosen. To this day, the sense of betrayal is still felt strongly. Markus Oehlen accused the band of being a bunch of fakes: “When I hear the Toten Hosen on the radio, I have to switch it off. I just cannot believe what they are doing. They propagate such a plastic version of punk. ‘We’re both committing suicide’ etc. This plays so much with clichés about punk and wild life and anti-attitude.”¹⁰⁹² Another commentator, Jaki Eldorado, said that their success was because they allowed themselves to

¹⁰⁸⁸ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.160.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.337.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.251.

¹⁰⁹¹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.338.

¹⁰⁹² Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.351. Oehlen is referring to the song “Alles aus Liebe” (All for Love) from the album *Kauf MICH!* (TOT 41, 1993), in which a man and woman prove their love for one another by killing themselves at the end of the song.

become completely compromised: “But die Toten Hosen have become so big because they let themselves get mixed up in so a moustache-mediocrity. With punk, it was never about these male organizations and stammtisch regulars. Actually, the genial, witty beginnings were much more important. And with bands like the Toten Hosen, it was suddenly about morals.”¹⁰⁹³

Especially upsetting was how many felt that Campino copied the vocal style of Peter Hein wholesale, and while the latter ended up quitting punk, the former became a millionaire. Moritz Reichelt: “Peter Hein and Campino—this is exactly a case where the real innovator perishes and the follow-up claims the success; simply by continuing. Die Toten Hosen are just leftovers. Like the Rolling Stones. They have built their livelihoods themselves. But with cultural development, they have nothing to do with it.”¹⁰⁹⁴

Fun Punks defend their choices, even turning the charges of betrayal back towards their accusers. Campino suggests that part of the acrimony lay behind punk elitism that divided the older generation from the newer “kids.”¹⁰⁹⁵ And part of it was the experience of the NDW which alienated those who turned to Fun Punk. Again, Campino: “I just couldn’t understand why so many people just broke with the punk movement. Jürgen Engler simply said, for example: ‘This is over. Now we’re doing Krupps.’ Suddenly, he was wearing better clothes. His hair was combed. For us, this was a betrayal.”¹⁰⁹⁶ The subculture became bitterly divided. Many accused Fun Punks of betraying key ideological principles such as DIY or marginality.¹⁰⁹⁷ The apolitical nature of Fun Punk was hotly contested by Hardcores who saw this stance as a conservative retreat or escape from reality (“Is the world so in order that we can shut our traps, so that we

¹⁰⁹³ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.351.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Teipel, *Verschwende*, pp.351-352.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.244.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.338.

¹⁰⁹⁷ See also *Kahlschlag*, Nr.1 (Wilhelmshaven: 1983), p.3; and *Der Stürmer*, Nr.8 (Bremen: 1984), p.16.

don't need to report on all the shit that is going on here anymore...???)".¹⁰⁹⁸ Punks were furious at the rampant publicity of bands such as die Toten Hosen ("It is unbelievable when these creatures talk about independence, against commercialism and so on, and then allow themselves to be marketed on television") while others charged them with cultivating star-cults; some simply did not think their music was punk.¹⁰⁹⁹ Others, however, defended them by pointing out how members of die Toten Hosen would sell their albums out of their cars at concerts or how they put on some of the best concert performances experienced by punks in ages.¹¹⁰⁰ Nor did Fun Punk bands pretend to be anything other than entertainers. As Campino said just as ZK was disbanding and die Toten Hosen was forming, "We are simply too clever not to think that we are clever. We are not political because we lack a larger frame of reference."¹¹⁰¹

Fun Punk likewise sought to restore satire and irony to the subculture. Many resented the politicization of Hardcore and went out of their way to try and provoke the hardliners, a time-honoured punk tradition. Several fanzine writers argued, for example, against animal rights.¹¹⁰² Many felt that benefit-concerts were not a particularly effective means of raising consciousness since punk bands usually played to individuals who already agreed with them. According to guitarist Michael Polten from Hans-a-plast, "usually one only creates these concerts to prove to yourself that you are active."¹¹⁰³ But these figures and thoughts were attacked by Hardcores who argued that political activism was the gauge by which to measure punk authenticity. Fanzines

¹⁰⁹⁸ *Die Berliner Ghettoratte*, Nr.2 (West Berlin: 1986), p.5; and *Der große Aufschwung*, Nr.1 (Rinteln: 1984), p.3.

¹⁰⁹⁹ *A.D.S.W.*, Nr.5 (Darmstadt: 1983), p.24; *Porree*, Nr.3 (Rinteln: 1983), p.9; and *Die Falschmelder*, Nr.3 (Düsseldorf: 1983), p.13. See also, *Funzine*, Nr.3 (Hamburg: 1982), p.6; *Der Heilige Krieg*, Nr.5 (Hamburg: 1983), p.24; *Der Ketzer*, Nr.5 (Darmstadt: 1984), pp.3-4; and *Die Falschmelder*, Nr.7 (Düsseldorf: 1985), pp.41-42.

¹¹⁰⁰ *The Staatsfeind*, Nr.1 (Düsseldorf: 1984), pp.14-19; and *Computer-Eignungstest*, Nr.6 (Neuenkirchen: 1983), pp.3-6. See also, *Der Ketzer*, Nr.4 (Darmstadt: 1983), p.12; *Decontrol*, Nr.1 (Bielefeld: 1983), p.8; *Set for action!*, Nr.1 (Nuremberg: 1984), pp.6-7; *Rude Boys' Late Final*, Nr.1 (Telgte: 1985), p.21; and *Sie trägt rote Pyjamas*, Nr.1 (Babenhausen: 1985), p.42.

¹¹⁰¹ Alfred Hilsberg, "ZK-Punkabilly: zu Klug, um Klug zu sein," *Sounds*, Nr.3 (March 1981), p.20.

¹¹⁰² See *A Case of Insanity*, Nr.1 (Münster: 1985), p.4; and *Der Trümmerhaufen*, Nr.1 (Elsheim: 1986), n.p.

¹¹⁰³ *Bericht der UN Menschenrechtskommission über Menschenrechtsverletzungen in der BRD*, Nr.2 (Hanover: 1980), p.6.

such as Hamburg's *Funzine* were attacked for not having enough politics inside.¹¹⁰⁴ Fun Punk was even denied the status of punk music at all ("This is not punk music but more Beat [so with real undistorted guitar]").¹¹⁰⁵ Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle, an artistically-minded collective based in Munich that has produced some of the most subversive punk music to this day, "we have, for example, the image of a totally unpolitical group because we don't take part actively; we stay out of it all. People accuse us directly of avoiding politics. Probably because we don't have a firm ideology, but rather position ourselves cybernetically, here, or there."¹¹⁰⁶

Especially frustrating to some was the expectation that punk bands would support Leftist political causes which increasingly came to be seen as a duty and not a choice. Hans-a-plast, for example, was a regular performer at causes supporting the squatting movement or the creation of autonomous youth centers. But even they tired of the continuous expectations that political radicals demanded of them which they gave vent to in an early 1980s interview: "They [concert organizers] fancy that we should act as a magnet for their cause and slogans that they build up. We don't want to do this—provide a service like this for someone....The problem with such events is that many on the left believe that we are supporters, a political group; that we are together for political reasons."¹¹⁰⁷ And for this reason, even though they supported the various political causes, they nonetheless were a musical act that lived off album sales—which gave them constant trouble from the radical Left: "At leftist festivals we always get in trouble with people who do not understand that we are also a commercial band because we also perform in regular discos. But this is Hans-a-plast music. We don't make music solely for the Left but also

¹¹⁰⁴ *City Indian*, Nr.4 (Kempten: 1984), p.4.

¹¹⁰⁵ *Der Ketzer*, Nr.5 (Darmstadt: 1984), p.22.

¹¹⁰⁶ Diedrich Diederichsen, "Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle," *Sounds*, Nr.5 (May 1982), p.16.

¹¹⁰⁷ Franzen and Penth, *Last Exist*, pp.61, 64-65.

for 13- to-18-year-old pups...”¹¹⁰⁸ Even Slime, when asked about fan expectations, pleaded that not every song they played was political: “There are people who have said: ‘You sing ‘Keine Führer,’ and then ‘Hier regiert der HSV.’ This is a contradiction. They haven’t understood at all that there is also fun in this [punk]. ‘HSV’ is a fun song like ‘1.7’ or ‘Karlsquell.’ They haven’t understood. This also determines a group. We are not an Agitprop band!”¹¹⁰⁹

These conflicts point to a fundamental division within the subculture, the result of the politicization of punk by Hardcore: does one make music to make politics? Or does one make politics to make music? Annette Benjamin from Hans-a-plast was clear that her band “doesn’t make music in order to make politics... In any case, one can say that we haven’t started Hans-a-plast because we are against nuclear power stations!”¹¹¹⁰ But others sided with the opposite. The radical anarchists and squatters in the West Berlin band Katapult, for example, were supposed to play at ‘Into the Future’ but after extensive discussions beforehand decided that the event was “becoming a total commercial festival” and instead concentrated on concerts where they could speak to “the right audience.”¹¹¹¹ Slime, when asked their opinion about a number of apolitical Fun Punk bands, replied “Fun! Actually pretty cool, but it lacks something to me. If your sole demand is that the alcohol prices remain the same then that is too little.”¹¹¹² But did one need to be political to be punk? Many youths had flocked to punk in the late 1970s precisely because the genre had de-emphasized the leftist political orthodoxies of the 1960s, as Jaki Eldorado put so succinctly: “Punk rock was just so interesting because there was no more ideological burden any more. You could freak out. You could party. You didn’t need to show any consideration whether

¹¹⁰⁸ Franzen and Penth, *Last Exist*, p.64.

¹¹⁰⁹ Preiswert, “Image verpflichtet!” p.10. HSV (Hamburger Sport-Verein) is the Hamburg football club, 1.7% is a high blood alcohol content level, and Karlsquell was a cheap beer sold in cans at Aldi supermarkets.

¹¹¹⁰ Michael O.R. Kröher, “Hans-a-plast. Wir sind Musiker und keine Müllwerker!,” *Sounds*, Nr.5 (May 1981), p.28.

¹¹¹¹ “Das Katapult-Interview,” in *Rock Session 4: Magazin der populären Musik*, eds., Klaus Humann and Carl-Ludwig Reichert (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1980), pp.222-223.

¹¹¹² Preiswert, “Image verpflichtet!” p.10.

someone was running around with a swastika or found the RAF good—it was all the same.”¹¹¹³

Now, less than a decade later, Hardcore had reinstated political orthodoxy as the *raison d'être* of punk authenticity.

Conclusions

The continuous violence, the uncompromising moral lines, the militant politicization, the bitter accusations; all point to the stalled nature of punk in the mid-1980s. To say this does not mean that punk as a genre and subcultural form ceased to exist. Punk and its many splinter subgenres have continued to produce music and a thriving subculture that exists to this day. But at some point around 1983, West German punk ceased to function as a platform for difference or *Anderssein* as the politics of authenticity worked to shut down the production of alternatives.

One can finger the music industry and its commodification of the NDW, or the violent and rigid inflexibility of Hardcores, or even the abandonment of punk by influential figures such as Peter Hein but the net result is the same: by the mid-1980s, West German punk—in all its myriad forms—had ceased to function as a basis for alternativeness. In an ironic parallel, punk had repeated almost exactly the experience of their detested elders, the '68ers, by moving from colourful pluralism to rigid orthodoxy.

The victory of Hardcore over Kunstpunk was a signal moment in this historical echo. The radical politicization necessitated by the rejection of the NDW integrated the genre deeply into the various political causes of the day. Punks became common figures in the Leftist protest scene of the 1980s, and songs such as “Bullenschweine” or “Deutschland” became protest anthems against fascism or nuclear power or for squatting rights. But as violence engulfed large segments

¹¹¹³ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.66.

of the genre, the conflicts between punks and the state or punks and Neo-Nazi Skinheads came to dominate youth activity, and these confrontations stifled the push towards alternative living. As the clashes and politicization demanded increased commitment, punks moved into more radical subcultures such as the Autonomen or the Antifa, extremist groups straddling the borders of legality that accepted the necessity of violence in combating the ‘enemies of democracy.’ Hounded by the police, locked into bitter street fights with Neo-Nazis, punk no longer produced alternatives but was simply background noise. Five years earlier, youths had worn swastikas to provoke the mainstream and urged listeners to “Tanz den Mussolini” in order to rework national culture from the margins but by the mid-1980s, such acts were considered treason by militants within the punk scene.

Some histories of German punk end with the emergence of Fun Punk, an explicit condemnation of the subgenre as ‘not real punk.’ Jürgen Teipel’s bestselling oral history *Verschwende Deine Jugend* is perhaps the most famous example and in some ways so too does this study. What is important about the emergence and tremendous success of Fun Punk is not whether bands such as die Toten Hosen or die Ärzte ‘betrayed’ the genre but that these debates signalled an end to the dynamic nature of punk alternatives. With NDW, Hardcore and Fun Punk, authenticity was no longer rooted in difference but rather in conformity, one of the principle beliefs that punk had rejected in the first place. The mutual accusations point to how the politics of authenticity was essential in dividing the subculture as much as unifying it. Hard-line exclusions that forced women to the sidelines or condemned youths whose political commitments were not quite as strong as others worked to ghettoize the subculture; increasingly turning inwards upon itself, in the famous reference to another historic rebellion, the revolution devoured its children. However betrayal also implies that something original once existed to be

corrupted or ruined, and that nostalgia for past purity and once-experienced genuineness suggests how authenticity was crucial for shaping the subculture and similar communities rooted in moral politics. West German punk continues to this day but as an historical entity through which one can read the times, by 1983 the genre had ceased to function dynamically and instead turned into a series of caricatured dead ends. But the death of West German punk did not mean that the genre in Germany had run its course; for that ongoing story, we must look to the East.

Chapter 8: “Stirb nicht im Warteraum der Zukunft”: Institutions and Ideology of the East German Punk Scene

Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K

To remain punk is the expression of a particular self-conception that is not a trend, nor defiance, but something durable, profound, important—a conviction. They experience the value of their character, even if it is negative, that is, in the manifold attacks from without, in the discriminations, in the mocking remarks, in the danger of being beat up, to have their symbols taken away. Punk is a form in which they feel themselves to be something unique, to be a source of resistance against the outside world, a world that only has constraints, rules, norms, uniformities, and quotas in store for them but no acknowledgement that they are something special, individual.

Gilbert Furian to Günther Thate, 28 December 1984¹¹¹⁴

In 1982, Gilbert Furian, an amateur sociologist, began compiling information about the East German punk scene. Visiting the Pfingstkirche in Friedrichshain in East Berlin where punks were gathering, Furian gained the trust of several local youths and arranged a series of interviews with members of the in-house band Planlos and half a dozen others.¹¹¹⁵ After transcribing their conversations and grouping them under thematic headings (origins, community, politics, love), Furian produced a twenty-page booklet titled *Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K* (Memory of a Youth Movement: P U N K), complete with pictures and interspersed with slogans such as ‘Stirb nicht im Warteraum der Zukunft’ (Don’t die in the waiting room of the future) taken from graffiti appearing on the apartment walls. After searching for a publisher and finding none, Furian decided to independently produce one hundred copies with the help of his co-workers at the VEB Wärmeanlagenbau between November and December 1984. In January

¹¹¹⁴ Gilbert Furian and Nikolaus Becker, “*Auch im Osten trägt man Westen*”: *Punks in der DDR – Und was aus Ihnen geworden ist* (Berlin: Verlag Thomas Tilsner, 2000), p.6.

¹¹¹⁵ Furian wanted to capture a cross-section of youths to be representative of the movement. Writing to his former schoolteacher, Furian explained that he had “questioned three groups: an average one, an honorary one, and one that produced music.” In an interview looking back on the events, several of the punks who participated in the interview sessions said they did not really trust Furian. See Furian and Becker, “*Auch im Osten trägt man Westen*,” pp.6, 69.

1985, Furian's mother was arrested attempting to cross into the Federal Republic in possession of eight copies of Furian's pamphlet addressed to friends in the West. Sentenced to two years and two months in prison, Furian was charged with 'illegal association with Westerners' (§ 219 Ungesetzliche Verbindungsaufnahme) and 'slandering the state' (§ 220 Öffentliche Herabwürdigung) for publishing statements, according to his case file, "that damage[d] the interests of the GDR."¹¹¹⁶

The Furian booklet is significant on several levels. As a document, *Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung* is one of the very few documents that records East German punks speaking for themselves. In distinct contrast to the West, in the East, punks rarely spoke for themselves but were in the main spoken for by others. Whether in Stasi files, church reports or newspaper articles, punks are described not describing, their actions interpreted and documented at one remove. Even East German punk records—with the exception of a half-dozen albums—were recorded after the end of the state. While I will delve into the historical consequences of this East German distinctiveness in greater detail in the Epilogue, it is important to mention this textual peculiarity at the outset. And it is precisely the paucity of contemporaneous sources that makes Furian's collection so unique. Recording the existence of an alternative space in the GDR, the Furian document details the cracks available for individuals to fashion authentic lives in the workers' and peasants' state that challenges our conception of the second German dictatorship. Looking back on their interview sessions, one punk suggests that the pamphlet is a "document of a GDR generation."¹¹¹⁷ Holding forth on a variety of subjects, the punks in *Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung* dismantle popular images of the GDR as a dictatorial regime marked by

¹¹¹⁶ BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr. 6221, Teil 1 von 2, Operativinformation zum Stand der Bearbeitung des UV "Schreiber," 15 April 1985, pp.6-8. See also Furian and Becker, "*Auch im Osten trägt man Westen*," pp.44-55.

¹¹¹⁷ Furian and Becker, "*Auch im Osten trägt man Westen*," p.71.

greyness, conformity, and passivity, and instead, replace them with a vivid palette of color, spontaneity, anger and abrasive guitar-chords.

In the immediate post-Wende period, scholars began to re-examine East Germany. Two questions dominated the early scholarly agenda: How to explain the rapid dissolution of the East German state in 1989/1990? How to explain GDR longevity and stability over the previous four decades in light of its rapid collapse?¹¹¹⁸ Over the course of the 1990s, a totalitarian paradigm emphasizing coercion dominated discussions of the GDR as the principal force sustaining the East German regime. Aided by the sensational revelations concerning the activities of the secret police and the treasure trove of government documents available for research, scholars focused on the mechanisms of power and repression to explain why the SED was able to maintain rule for so long.¹¹¹⁹ While studies of the GDR's dictatorial nature have elaborated in detail the functioning of the SED and its attempts to administer every aspect of society, as a number of scholars now argue, these studies are limited because they conflate intention with reality and as such, the totalitarian thesis is quite a static model for interpreting East German society.¹¹²⁰

Despite attempts to modify totalitarian theory, such as Alf Lüdtke's 'overruled society' or Jürgen

¹¹¹⁸ Andrew I. Port, *Conflict and Stability in the German Democratic Republic* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Steven Pfaff, *Exit-Voice Dynamics and the Collapse of East Germany: The Crisis of Leninism and the Revolution of 1989* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006); Gareth Dale, *The East German Revolution of 1989* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2006); Gareth Dale, *Popular Protest in East Germany, 1945-1989* (London: Routledge, 2005); Jonathan Grix, *The Role of the Masses in the Collapse of the GDR* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); and Charles S. Maier, *Dissolution: The Crisis of Communism and the End of East Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

¹¹¹⁹ The preeminent scholar emphasizing the totalitarian paradigm is Klaus Schroeder, *Der SED-Staat. Partei, Staat und Gesellschaft 1949-1990* (Munich: Bayerische Landeszentrale für politische Bildungsarbeit, 1998).

¹¹²⁰ See generally, Corey Ross, *The East German Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of the GDR* (London: Arnold, 2002), pp.32-36; Mary Fulbrook, "Rethorising 'state' and 'society' in the German Democratic Republic," in *The Workers' and Peasants' State: Communism and Society in East Germany under Ulbricht, 1945-1971*, eds., Patrick Major and Jonathan Osmond (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp.280-298; and Mary Fulbrook, "The Limits of Totalitarianism: God, State and Society in the GDR," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, series 6:7 (1997), pp.25-52.

Kocka's 'modern dictatorship' thesis, a number of important collections have shown that the limits of dictatorship are as important in determining how life was actually lived in the GDR.¹¹²¹

Thus, as the new millennium dawned, historiography on the GDR underwent a gradual shift. No longer emphasizing 'Party' and 'People' or 'State' and 'Society,' scholars instead have begun focusing on how individuals negotiated power on a daily basis. Numerous historians have begun investigating how everyday life for East Germans was constituted, focusing on how individuals contested tyranny in daily encounters, thereby blurring the lines between 'state' and 'society' that an earlier generation of scholars had erected in an attempt to explain SED dominance and longevity.¹¹²² Studies of socialism in the provinces, youth politics and many

¹¹²¹ See Jürgen Kocka "The GDR: A Special Kind of Modern Dictatorship," in *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, ed., Konrad H. Jarausch, trans. by Eve Duffy (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), pp.17-26; Alf Lüdtke, "„Helden der Arbeit“—Mühen beim Arbeiten. Zur mißmutigen Loyalität von Industriearbeitern in der DDR," in *Sozialgeschichte der DDR*, eds., Hartmut Kaeble, Jürgen Kocka, and Hartmut Zwahr (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1994), pp.188-213; and Jürgen Kocka, "Eine durchherrschte Gesellschaft," in *Sozialgeschichte der DDR*, eds., Hartmut Kaeble, Jürgen Kocka, and Hartmut Zwahr (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1994), pp.547-553. On the limits of dictatorship in the GDR, see Konrad H. Jarausch, ed., *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, trans. by Eve Duffy (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006); Thomas Lindenberger, ed., *Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn in der Diktatur. Studien zur Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1999); Alf Lüdtke and Peter Becker, eds., *Akten. Eingaben. Schaufenster. Die DDR und ihre Texte. Erkundungen zu Herrschaft und Alltag* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997); Richard Bessel and Ralf Jessen, eds., *Die Grenzen der Diktatur. Staat und Gesellschaft in der DDR* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996); Hartmut Kaeble, Jürgen Kocka, and Hartmut Zwahr, eds., *Sozialgeschichte der DDR* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1994); Jürgen Kocka and Martin Sabrow, eds., *Die DDR als Geschichte. Fragen, Hypothesen, Perspektiven* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1994); and Jürgen Kocka, ed., *Historische DDR-Forschung. Aufsätze und Studien* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1993).

¹¹²² Josie McLellan, *Love in a Time of Communism: Intimacy and Sexuality in the GDR* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Jennifer Evans, *Life among the Ruins: Cityscape and Sexuality in Cold War Berlin* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Mary Fulbrook, ed., *Power and Society in the GDR, 1961-1979: The 'Normalisation of Rule'?* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009); Jan Palmowski, *Inventing a Socialist Nation: Heimat and the Politics of Everyday Life in the GDR, 1945-1990* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Eli Rubin, *Synthetic Socialism: Plastics and Dictatorship in the German Democratic Republic* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Donna Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic: Women, the Family and Communism in the German Democratic Republic* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007); Mark Fenimore, *Sex, Thugs and Rock'n'Roll: Teenage Rebels in Cold War East Germany* (Oxford and New York: Berghahn, 2007); Anna Saunders, *Honecker's Children: Youth and Patriotism in East(ern) Germany, 1979-2002* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007); Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005); Alan McDougall, *Youth Politics in East Germany: The Free German Youth Movement 1946-1968* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004); Thomas Lindenberger, *Volkspolizei. Herrschaftspraxis und öffentliche Ordnung im SED-Staat 1952-1968* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2003); Jeannette Z. Madarasz, *Conflict and Compromise in East Germany, 1971-1989: A Precarious Stability* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Joshua Feinstein, *The Triumph of the Ordinary: Depictions of Daily Life in the East German Cinema, 1949-1989* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Uta

others, have all begun to show the gap between intention and reality, and the spaces individuals constructed to create ‘normal’ lives. The SED under Honecker demanded that citizens give tacit public conformity while surrendering the administration of every detail of daily life, but recent scholarly works have now begun to show the limits of dictatorship in the GDR. Positing a much more nuanced vision of attempts by the state to control everyday life, and the efforts by citizens to carve out their own autonomous spaces, scholars now suggest that the GDR was a much more negotiated and contested society. Drawing insights from cultural studies and *Alltagsgeschichte*, scholars have now begun to deemphasize top-down coercion and instead focus on the daily strategies involved in living in the German Democratic Republic. Punk is an excellent case study for continuing to explore these themes in the 1970s and 1980s.

By investigating the origins, institutions and ideology of Ostpunk, I elaborate some of the limits of dictatorship in the GDR and how youths challenged the SED and the official vision of socialist society. By highlighting how efforts at constructing alternative spaces and communities challenged socialist norms, we can use punk to track how the SED was suffering from a crisis of political legitimacy that was much more widespread than has been previously acknowledged. While many scholars have focused on the decisive events in the autumn of 1989 and especially the role dissidents played in bringing about this crisis situation, they do not satisfactorily explain why a couple thousand oppositionalists transformed into crowds in the millions.¹¹²³ Punk allows us to detail dissatisfaction at the grass-roots and how everyday activities contributed to

Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Corey Ross, *Constructing Socialism at the Grass-Roots: The Transformation of East Germany* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000); Mark Allinson, *Politics and Popular Opinion in East Germany, 1945-1968* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Alan Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth: Historical Mythology and Youth Propaganda in the German Democratic Republic, 1945-1989* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999); and Mary Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship: Inside the GDR 1949-1989* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

¹¹²³ The scholarship on the role of dissidents and oppositionalists in the events of 1989 is enormous but see Ehrhart Neubert, *Geschichte der Opposition in der DDR 1949-1989* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2000).

eroding support for the SED over the course of the 1970s and 1980s that, in the end, made the autumn of 1989 possible.

As in the West, GDR punk was an oppositional soundtrack that became a basis for youths to reimagine their daily lives along more authentic lines. Writing to a former schoolteacher in 1984, Furian explained that the Eastern punk scene, “is about lifestyles and ways of life that consciously reject the dominant ones as they attempt to try out and find their own ones; life possibilities beyond the norms that are handed down and demanded by elders and also in contrast to those ordered by the state.”¹¹²⁴ Punk in the GDR was an alternative outlook bent on nuancing the everyday in an effort to construct more authentic space, room that individuals felt free to create, move, and live, but which accepted—even reveled in, as we will see—state intervention and attempts at repression. Youths were able to construct functioning alternative spaces to act out their dreams of independence and freedom. Instead of conceptualizing the ‘state’ as distinct from ‘society,’ I probe those spaces where these concepts connect: indeed, conflicts over these spaces are precisely the fissure points that link ‘state’ and ‘society’ and help explain why youths were so receptive to punk in the 1970s and 1980s.¹¹²⁵ In sketching out *Ostpunk* ideology and the social dimensions of the scene, Eastern punk helps illuminate the contours of conformity and rejection in the SED state as young people attempted to circumvent the limited room allowed by the state. Dissatisfied with life offered to them, youths were able to constitute structured realms of experimentation and living, ones that sought to produce what Eastern youths felt were denied to them by the SED regime. That punk was public is important: the late 1970s and early 1980s marked a tremendous shift in the GDR as individuals began to reclaim public space back from

¹¹²⁴ Furian and Becker, “*Auch im Osten trägt man Westen*,” p.6.

¹¹²⁵ Mary Fulbrook has been especially critical of attempting to distinguish between state and society. Instead she argues that East Germany should be understood as a ‘participatory dictatorship.’ See Fulbrook, *The People’s State*, esp. pp.12-14, and chapter 11.

the SED. These new authentic structures, spaces and ideas tell us what youths found lacking in the GDR, and help explain why the state disintegrated so rapidly in 1989.

“Norm, Norm, Norm”: Independence and Ostpunk Ideology

Norm, norm, norm, you are born to fulfill norms
 If you don't meet your norms, then you are lost
 It starts in the school, you must do your duty

Norm, norm, norm, you are born to fulfill norms
 Norm, norm, norm, you are dead from fulfilling norms
 Blessed be the norm

Then you go to work, and you think you are free
 You need to manage your minutes, tap-tap-tapping
 Because you need to fulfill within your minutes

Norm, norm, norm, you are born to fulfill norms
 Norm, norm, norm, you are dead from fulfilling norms
 Blessed be the norm

And then you can go home, to your wife who takes off her clothes
 You don't quite feel in shape, but you must fulfill your norms

Norm, norm, norm, you are born to fulfill norms
 Norm, norm, norm, you are dead from fulfilling norms
 Blessed be the norm

Schleim-Keim, “Scheiß Norm,” *Abfallprodukte der Gesellschaft* (Nasty Vinyl 006, 2002)

The origin of punk in the GDR begs a fundamental question: why did youths in the GDR turn to punk? What attracted them to a Western cultural product as a means of moving past the limits of the East German state? How was Eastern punk distinct from Western punk? By using documents such as Furian's to analyze *Ostpunk* ideology, I want to reconstruct what punk meant to Eastern youths and how they charted new paths of authenticity—and the tensions these efforts produced. Travelling over the Berlin Wall through radio waves broadcast by West German radio stations,

punk quickly found its way into the hearts and minds of East German youths.¹¹²⁶ As the Schleim-Keim lyrics to “Scheiß Norm” suggest, Eastern punks rebelled against the norms of a society organized around labor and ruled by a party apparatus, and sought in the genre a liminal space offering them more authenticity than could be found in the mainstream. As in the West, *Ostpunk* ideology drew on the same themes of *Anderssein*, anti-authoritarianism and DIY that we have encountered in the preceding chapters. But there were a number of particularities that marked Eastern punk off from the West. Both the working-class culture of the GDR and the moral righteousness of the ‘anti-fascist myth’ came in for heavy criticism by Eastern punks which points to a very specific Ostpunk identity. Individuality was inflected less as the desire for creativity than it functioned as an assault against the conformity of socialist society and the authoritarianism of the SED party. So while much linked the musical subculture across the Cold War divide, there were important nuances pointing to the development of a specific Osis punk identity, a difference which was in time to have significant ramifications and explains why Eastern punks had such difficulties assimilating into German society following the Wende.

The arrival of punk in the East was explosive. Uta Poiger is persuasive in arguing that when the ‘anti-fascist barrier’ was first constructed in 1961, the intent was as much to keep Western cultural products out as it was to keep East German citizens in; but by the late 1970s and early 1980s, concrete was no longer an effective obstacle if it ever truly was.¹¹²⁷ In most parts of the country, East Germans were able to listen to Western radio or watch Western television (the exception being around Dresden, known as the Tal der Ahnungslosen, or Valley

¹¹²⁶ Harald Heusner, “Jörg Löffler—ein Punk-pionier aus der DDR,” *Trust*, Nr.77 (Bremen: 1999), n.p.; “No Reissbrett: Punk in der DDR,” *Ox-Fanzine*, Nr.72 (Haan, June/July 2007), p.115.

¹¹²⁷ Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*, pp.206-228. The Leipzig Central Institute for Youth Research conducted numerous studies tracking youth listening habits and found that an overwhelming majority of Eastern youths were listening to Western radio. See BArch, DC 4/717, Holm Felber and Hans-Körg Stiehler, “Das Verhältnis Jugendlicher zur populären Musik,” December 1987, pp.1-94.

of the Clueless, since reception did not extend that far), and in so doing, many learned of punk. Already by 1977 and 1978, a number of youths in Halle, Erfurt, and East Berlin had heard of punk through foreign radio stations such as RIAS and Radio Luxembourg, or from John Peel's program on BFBS.¹¹²⁸ Soon West German stations began playing punk as well and youths such as Dieter 'Otze' Ehrlich and his brother Klaus from Schleim-Keim remember hearing punk on Bayern 2 and 3.¹¹²⁹ These broadcasts introduced the major international punk protagonists to Eastern punks—the Sex Pistols, the Clash, the Ramones—though these transfers were often not without difficulties: the Ramones' hit "Sheena is a Punk Rocker" became "China is a Punk Rock Land" since 'Sheena' phonetically sounds like 'China' in German; the misunderstanding was so deep that Angela 'China' Kowalczyk bears the confusion to this day.¹¹³⁰ Punks also tuned into West German television programs such as a special program devoted to the genre hosted by Thomas Gottschalk on ARD that aired on 21 October 1977 and again on 24 March 1978.¹¹³¹ These first few punk sounds were eye-opening. Listening to punk for the first time, Bernd Michael Lade, drummer for Planlos, has recalled that, "in 1977, we [with Daniel Kaiser, guitar-

¹¹²⁸ Stadtmuseum Dresden, ed., *Renitenz in Elbflorenz. Punk in Dresden 1980-89* (Dresden: Stadtmuseum Dresden, 2007), p.5, 33; Bernd Lindner and Mark M. Westhusen, *Von Müllstation zu Größenwahn: Punk in der Halleschen Provinz* (Halle: Hasen Verlag, 2007), pp.19, 61; Mark M. Westhusen, *Zonenpunkprovinz: Punk in Halle (Saale) in den 80er Jahren* (Halle: Zeit-Geschichte(n), 2005), p.15; Ronald Galenza and Heinz Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...: Punk, New Wave, HipHop und Independent-Szene in der DDR 1980-1990* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2005), pp.30, 211, 334; "Wir standen mit einem Bein im Knast," *Der Tagesspiegel*, 26 August 2005, p.23; and Rebecca Hillauer, "Aufgepasst, du wirst bewacht...!" *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 21 February 2003, p.2. John Peel is especially beloved by East German punks and was even invited to a reunion of former East German punks in the 1990s, filmed for the documentary *Störung Ost:Punks in Ostberlin, 1981-1983* (DVD, directors Mechthild Katzorke and Cornelia Schneider, 1996).

¹¹²⁹ See Anne Hahn and Frank Willmann, *Satan, kannst du mir noch mal verzeihen: Otze Ehrlich, Schleimkeim und der ganze Rest* (Mainz: Ventil Verlag, 2008), p.9; Lindner and Westhusen, *Von Müllstation zu Größenwahn*, p.66; "No Reissbrett: Punk in der DDR," pp.114-115; Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.30, 120-125; Furian and Becker, "*Auch im Osten trägt man Westen*," pp.11-12; and Heusner, "Jörg Löffler," n.p.

¹¹³⁰ Hahn and Willmann, *Satan, kannst du mir noch mal verzeihen*, p.9; Michael Boehlke and Henryk Gericke, eds., *too much future – Punk in der DDR* (Berlin: Verbrecher Verlag, 2007), p.48; Lindner and Westhusen, *Von Müllstation zu Größenwahn*, p.66; and Angela 'China' Kowalczyk, *Punk in Pankow. Stasi- "Sieg": 16jährige Pazifistin verhaftet!* (Berlin: Anita Tykve Verlag, 1996).

¹¹³¹ Westhusen, *Zonenpunkprovinz*, p.17; and Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.264-266.

player for Planlos] were together in the school when the Sex Pistols single came out and thought: man, there is not a single slow song!”¹¹³²

But similar to their Western cousins, Eastern youths could often not at first hear punk and therefore often relied on articles filled with images to learn about the genre. While East German youths could not follow punk in the British music press, they could discover punk through West German newspapers and magazines, especially through smuggled copies of youth periodicals such as Bravo.¹¹³³ Some youths were able to obtain posters of their favorite bands such as Michael Kobs, from the East Berlin band Planlos, who remembers somehow coming into possession of a Clash poster.¹¹³⁴ In Leipzig, youths could buy reproductions of photos from Bravo at the black market outside the football stadium.¹¹³⁵ Others travelled to Warsaw or Budapest where restrictions on foreign publications were not as stringent as in the GDR.¹¹³⁶ By the early 1980s, youths in East Germany could even get smuggled copies of West German books on punk such as the Rock Session series or Null Bock aus DDR.¹¹³⁷ Through various strategies, youths took advantages of gaps in state control to get their hands on images of punk.

The consequences of these fleeting images were electric. One East Berlin punk remembers how she could not begin to understand what she was seeing: “Even in my dreams I couldn’t imagine myself walking around like that.”¹¹³⁸ Another remembers acquiring the latest Bravo and being introduced to the Sex Pistols for the first time. His response was immediate:

¹¹³² “Wir standen mit einem Bein im Knast,” *Tagesspiegel*, 26 August 2005, p.23.

¹¹³³ Boehlke and Gericke, eds., *too much future*, pp.13-15, 33; and Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.30, 334.

¹¹³⁴ Boehlke and Gericke, eds., *too much future*, p.48; and “Wir standen mit einem Bein im Knast,” *Der Tagesspiegel*, 26 August 2005, p.23.

¹¹³⁵ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, p.211.

¹¹³⁶ See Stadtmuseum Dresden, ed., *Renitenz in Elbflorenz*, p.21, 33; “No Reissbrett: Punk in der DDR,” pp.120-121; and *Seelenqual*, Nr.3 (Inderdorf, 1984), pp.15-16.

¹¹³⁷ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, p.211

¹¹³⁸ Angela ‘China’ Kowalczyk, *Negativ und Dekadent. Ostberliner Punk-Erinnerungne* (Berlin: CPL Verlag, 2003), p.12.

“Redemption at last. My mental state embodied by Johnny Rotten – irreverent, snotty, defiant.” Michael Boehlke, singer for Planlos, had not heard the Sex Pistols, but upon seeing the band, he and his friend immediately went to a local park where they “ritually tore our clothes apart.”¹¹³⁹ Even those who could not hear or see punk nonetheless learned of the genre. Christian ‘Flake’ Lorenz, keyboardist for Feeling B and later more famously Rammstein, has recalled that “[w]e knew the name of the band long before we heard the music—the Sex Pistols were somehow in the air.”¹¹⁴⁰ The origins of punk in the GDR thus gesture towards the immense influence that the West exerted on the East. Whereas punk in the West had arisen partially in protest against the self-absorption of musical genres such as progressive rock and the increasing commercialization of rock’n’roll, young East Germans embraced the genre even though these conditions were not present in the GDR, a process captured in a photograph of the Madmans [sic] that includes a member sporting a t-shirt emblazoned with the Sex Pistols’ famous slogan, “I hate Pink Floyd.”

Nor was it solely Western media that introduced Eastern youths to punk. Very quickly, the East German media began reporting on punk and used the genre to condemn its capitalist rival. While we will explore in detail what these articles were saying about punk in the next chapter, what was important for Eastern youths were the images which attracted rather than repelled. Henryk Gericke, vocalist for The Leistungsleichen, has spoken eloquently about the pull these images exerted:

In 1978 a short article in one of the GDR magazines electrified me. In a typical mix of paranoia and propaganda it reported about misguided juveniles in London who were adorning themselves with symbols from the dump of history, killing each other at shows, discarding the bodies in the sewer – and calling themselves punks. ... This was the best way to animate a teenager. I immediately knew something dangerous and enormous was going on. ... The article was illustrated with a widely used photo of two punks on London’s Kings Road. I had never seen people more

¹¹³⁹ Boehlke and Gericke, eds., *too much future*, pp.33, 48.

¹¹⁴⁰ Christian ‘Flake’ Lorenz, “Mir fehlt die DDR,” *einestages*, 13 June 2008, n.p.

beautiful than these fantastic figures. And thus danger and beauty collided – it was love at first sight.¹¹⁴¹

Numerous Easterners came to punk through GDR articles and echo Gericke's fascination.¹¹⁴²

Thus, the SED's use of punk to condemn the West ended up fueling the subculture, as fleeting images and rare sounds were instrumental in securing the genre's foothold in the socialist East.

At first, small scenes sprang up in numerous cities across the GDR. Youths congregated in restaurants, parks, or clubs, and in apartments, attics or squatted buildings.¹¹⁴³ In East Berlin, for example, as many as one hundred punks gathered on Alexanderplatz at 'Tute' (Café Posthorn), or under the television tower at 'SB' (Selbstbedingung Restaurant). At night they headed to discos, youth clubs, or the movies (the Babylon Kino in Prenzlauer Berg, for example) and on weekends, met in the Plänterwald at the Kulturpark amusement park, including punks from other cities that had travelled to East Berlin.¹¹⁴⁴ Other cities had similar meeting points: 'Güldene Bock' on the Marktplatz in Karl-Marx-Stadt; 'Café Lilliput' in Magdeburg; 'Café Angereck' in Erfurt.¹¹⁴⁵ By 1981, a number of bands such as Ahnungslose, Rosa Extra, Namenlos, Planlos (East Berlin), Wutanfall (Leipzig), Paranoia, Rotzjungen (Dresden), Madmans, Creepers (Weimar), Schleim-Keim (Erfurt), and Müllstation (Halle) had all formed.¹¹⁴⁶ 1980 and 1981 saw the first punk concerts take place. On 25 November 1980, the Madmans played their first show in the Käthe Kollwitz School but got into trouble for their lyrics.¹¹⁴⁷ In 1981, Wutanfall played the first concert in Leipzig in front of fifty people until the

¹¹⁴¹ Boehlke and Gericke, eds., *too much future*, pp.13-15.

¹¹⁴² See Stadtmuseum Dresden, ed., *Renitenz in Elbflorenz*, p.5; Westhusen, *Zonenpunkprovinz*, p.17; and Kowalczyk, *Negativ und Dekadent*, p.12.

¹¹⁴³ See Boehlke and Gericke, eds., *too much future*, p.35; and Kowalczyk, *Negativ und Dekadent*.

¹¹⁴⁴ Boehlke and Gericke, eds., *too much future*, p.35; Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.30, 39, 194-205, 215-216, 498.

¹¹⁴⁵ Hahn and Willmann, *Satan, kannst du mir noch mal verzeihen*, p.10-12; and Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, p.286, 326

¹¹⁴⁶ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, p.39, 266, 313, 314, 336

¹¹⁴⁷ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, p.314.

equipment broke down.¹¹⁴⁸ In Erfurt, the first big punk festival took place in the Johannes-Lang-House in December 1981, featuring Schleim-Keim, Creepers and Madmans.¹¹⁴⁹ Instruments were often self-built, with strings coming from bicycle wires and amplifiers salvaged from reconstructed old radios.¹¹⁵⁰ By 1980 and 1981, a small but thriving scene had been established across East Germany.

Ideologically, these new scenes were conceived in terms of freedom, a striving towards independence, and a rebellion against the music industry and the political order that underwrote it. But anti-consumerism, unlike in the West, was of secondary concern, especially for the first punk generation. Even though consumer oriented “refridgerator socialism” became a major element in Honecker’s drive for political legitimacy upon assuming power in 1971, especially with the declaration of the ‘Unity of Economic and Social Policy’ and its promise of increased consumerism, the authoritarian political system and corresponding societal conservatism drew youths to punk rather than anti-consumerism.¹¹⁵¹ In the East, the entire political regime and state system was based on a series of elaborate falsehoods: the SED ruled in the name of the people; it was the anti-fascist state while the West was the continuation of Nazism; the GDR would surpass the West economically, socially and morally; dissent was the work of wreckers and Western agitators—the list was continually extended ad nauseum. Youths believed that punk could divorce them from the lies propagated by the SED by actively reimagining a community that rejected oppression as a means of social and state organization. Punk music, lyrics, behavior, dress and ideas became a means of dramatizing dissatisfaction with the SED dominated state and society.

¹¹⁴⁸ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, p.213.

¹¹⁴⁹ Hahn and Willmann, *Satan, kannst du mir noch mal verzeihen*, p.10; and Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, p.315

¹¹⁵⁰ Hahn and Willmann, *Satan, kannst du mir noch mal verzeihen*, p.9; and Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, p.120-125, 213, 264-266.

¹¹⁵¹ See Jonathan R. Zatlin, *The Currency of Socialism: Money and Political Culture in East Germany* (Washington, DC: German Historical Institute, 2007).

By engineering an alternative space to live life authentically, individuals sought in punk cultural, social and ideological emancipation from the levers of oppression and socialist conformity that dominated the GDR under Honecker.

For some, it was the energy, aggression and speed of punk music that inspired, especially when compared with the sanitized and defanged nature of East German rock performed by official state bands like the Puhdys or Karat. Because the East German rock industry was supported by the state, bands were seen as supporters of the system and not outsiders around which opposition could coalesce. Age and innovation were also key factors appealing to young Germans: the musicians in City, for example, looked ‘old’ when compared with the teenagers in Schleim-Keim (because they were much older); and the Puhdys had been playing for more than a decade. Some found punk singing to be talismanic: as Harty Sachse, better known as Steve Aktiv, singer from Müllstation, remembered, “I had no idea about the fashion, nothing, zero. About the lyrics, I had no idea; it could have been right-wing music...At the moment, it didn’t matter. For the first time, only the music and this snotty singing was what counted.”¹¹⁵² For others, punk was exotic, mysterious, and the restriction of information about punk by authorities only seemed to dramatize the musical scarcity in the GDR: a *Neues Leben* reader wrote in demanding more coverage of punk by the youth magazine following a half-page article on the Clash.¹¹⁵³

Punk was a medium par excellence to express independence. Since the state controlled the East German music industry, punk could retain its independence and authenticity precisely because of its illegal status: denied access to state music structures such as recording and playing live, punks could avoid epithets of conformity and inauthenticity which they hurled freely at

¹¹⁵² Westhusen, *Zonenpunkprovinz*, p.15.

¹¹⁵³ Stephan Uhl, “Engagierter Rock,” *Neues Leben*, Nr.10, October 1985, p.12.

Eastern rock musicians while also avoiding the ideological contradictions accompanying commercialization. Excluded from the state music industry by SED authorities, punks were free to spew their vitriol at the state since they remained on the outside looking in and freed Eastern punk of any charges of collaboration. In a society dominated by centralized planning, punk was a wrench of spontaneity thrown into the machinery of socialist conformity. With the SED as the sole political party and mass organizations like the FDJ in place solely to ensure maximum productivity and compliance with regime wishes, the GDR was a site of institutionalized redundancy based around sacrifice for the state. To borrow Jonathan Zatlin's felicitous words, "people end up living to work, rather than working to live."¹¹⁵⁴

Punk became a vessel into which Eastern youths could pour their politics. As in the West, punks criticized earlier forms of GDR rock music that had lost its 'aura' of rebellion. As one punk explained to Furian, "Punk-Music is a completely different choice from any case that ever existed before since anyone can make music that wants to rather than people who can make music. And if someone is behind it, then it is more honest, which is why punk-music is much more honest and because of that, people listen to it because it speaks to their problems."¹¹⁵⁵ Youth's belief that punk was more sincere because the musicians stood behind their music and spoke to their audiences about everyday problems separated punk from previous forms of rock'n'roll in the GDR. Musicians and bands co-opted into state structures, playing sanitized music lacking in individuality, creativity, and bite were discredited as bereft of true meaning: "Other music [non-punk] is all so plain because, after all, there is no message there anymore."¹¹⁵⁶

¹¹⁵⁴ Zatlin, *Currency of Socialism*, p.5.

¹¹⁵⁵ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.19.

¹¹⁵⁶ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.18.

Honesty was the fundamental appeal of punk music to youths: “And I find it completely crucial that the musician stands behind what [they] do.”¹¹⁵⁷

To play punk music meant to play “engaged” music, to speak to rather than remain abstract from the problems of daily life.¹¹⁵⁸ Contemporary music was alienating to these youths precisely because the music reproduced illusions about society which punks sought to tear down. As one youth put it, “[w]ell, I didn’t really like the disco scene either—hanging around there somewhere in a discotheque, everything is so tedious there, everyone wants to be the best dancer, the most beautiful, and the women look for the best dancers.”¹¹⁵⁹ The superficiality of the Eastern music scene was contrasted with the richness offered by punk, both textually and musically. As another youth explained to Furian, “[b]ut how easy is that, that the punks make, with their lyrical content, let’s say, protest lyrics against society and against actually, what upsets them, that there is what we sang about in our lyrics.”¹¹⁶⁰ The music spoke to the ‘primitive’ and ‘aggression’ since the genre “has something to do with releasing energy and not sitting there and applauding during rehearsals.”¹¹⁶¹ What appealed the most about punk was its egalitarian nature, the idea that all could participate in making such honest music: “Well, music is more often than not the most important thing really, what a lot of punks like, is that they can make music they want by themselves.”¹¹⁶² The Do-It-Yourself (DIY) spirit was a crucial factor mobilizing youths in the punk movement and had a long GDR tradition as citizens often used DIY to overcome the

¹¹⁵⁷ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.19.

¹¹⁵⁸ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.19.

¹¹⁵⁹ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.17. For example, a number of youths have mentioned they were uninterested in going to the FDJ-Jugendklubs and sought alternative leisure activities that led them to punk. See the comments by Angela Kowalczyk, “Solidarität und Selbstbehauptung im DDR-Alltag,” in *Materialien der Enquete-Kommission „Überwindung der Folgen der SED-Diktatur im Prozeß der deutschen Einheit.“ (13. Wahlperiode des Deutschen Bundestages) Band V: Alltagsleben in der DDR und in den neuen Ländern*, ed., Deutscher Bundestag (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1999), p.127.

¹¹⁶⁰ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.17.

¹¹⁶¹ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., pp.18, 19.

¹¹⁶² BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.18.

limits of real-existing socialism: that anyone could simply stand up and participate if they desired was liberating in a society in which rewards for political conformity ruled.

As the youths Furian interviewed clarify, punk was understood as a “type of protest,” and a deliberate “rejection of the state, as it exists at the moment.”¹¹⁶³ At the forefront, then, punk protested the misuse of power and criminal methods practiced by the SED state: what especially displeased punks was the deceitfulness of a state that demanded obedience but could (would?) not offer the kind of favors that youths demanded. As a member of the East Berlin band Planlos complained, “I find it absolute nonsense that we always express our trust and they [the state] don’t, and power is maintained through such deceitfulness.”¹¹⁶⁴ Punk was a means of clearing away the lies and illusions dominating the GDR and spoke to youths about the dictatorial nature of life in the workers’ and peasants’ state: “At that time I was in such a pessimistic phase...I only saw black. And this motto ‘no future’ that is exactly what I felt then.”¹¹⁶⁵ To be a punk meant before everything else, for the first time to see “what the truth is...the truth about life.”¹¹⁶⁶ Nor are these isolated thoughts: as scholars have elsewhere noted, youth disillusionment throughout the history of the GDR was less about socialism or living in the GDR than hatred of the SED and the way it ruled the state as the statement above—“as it exists at the moment”—suggests.¹¹⁶⁷

Punks likewise criticized repression and authoritarian practices. Nor was it strictly the Berlin Wall or NVA soldiers protecting the borders that punks felt especially impinged upon their freedom but the very structures of daily life in the GDR. As in the West, punks in the GDR criticized what they called *Bürgerleben* (a petit-bourgeois way of life), the idea that one woke

¹¹⁶³ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.2.

¹¹⁶⁴ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.2.

¹¹⁶⁵ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.3. See also the band history accompanying the re-released Namenlos album, *Namenlos 1983-89* (Höhnle Records 097, 2007), n.p.

¹¹⁶⁶ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.4.

¹¹⁶⁷ See McDougall, *Youth Politics in East Germany*; and Saunders, *Honecker’s Children*.

up, worked all day only to come home at night and watch TV until falling asleep.¹¹⁶⁸ Speaking to the West Berlin newspaper *tageszeitung* in 1982 about why he turned to punk, Schleim-Keim's singer 'Otze' responded that, "The petit-bourgeoisie, for example, made me sick. For quite a lot of things that they are a part of, I am against 'Deutschsein.' The German is for me a petit-bourgeois and a petit-bourgeois by nature. This whole affectation bothers me, this mask that is there that no one takes off. That no one does what they want, is spontaneous; that rules are always laid down."¹¹⁶⁹ Even the traditional family unit was considered a form of structural oppression. When asked about the possibility of marriage, one of Furian's punks answered, "that isn't really such a thing with us. Anyway, I think that to get married and all that is bullshit; and also bringing children into the world."¹¹⁷⁰ Criticism of bourgeois norms and the traditional family values were part and parcel of punk's stylized opposition to 'normality.'

In the West, early punks cried 'No Future' because they lacked future prospects. In the East, youths instead complained of 'Too Much Future' because the future was seemingly set in stone: shuttled from school immediately to work until retirement after decades of service to the state, youths in the GDR had very little time or space to strike out on their own.¹¹⁷¹ Education policy in the GDR was designed to transform youths into 'socialist personalities' who could then contribute to the historic victory of communism: saturated with Marxist-Leninist ideology, socialist textbooks and teaching methods were meant to inculcate ideals of East German patriotism, hatred of the Western enemy, and the superiority of socialism.¹¹⁷² Youths attended a

¹¹⁶⁸ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.3.

¹¹⁶⁹ "Sobald ich auf die Straße gehe, fange ich an, mich zu bekotzen," *tageszeitung*, 31 August 1982, p.9.

¹¹⁷⁰ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.20.

¹¹⁷¹ 'too much future' was such an important concept that the major GDR punk exhibit in the 2000s—discussed in the Epilogue—was called that. See Boehlke and Gericke, eds. *too much future*.

¹¹⁷² See Saunders, *Honecker's Children*; Benita Blessing, *The Antifascist Classroom: Denazification in Soviet-occupied Germany, 1945-1949* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); and John Rodden, *Textbook Reds: Schoolbooks, Ideology, and Eastern German Identity* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

Polytechnical Oberschule (POS) for 10 years whereupon—depending almost exclusively on political commitment—youths had the opportunity to attend an Erweiterten Oberschule (EOS) to take the *Abitur* with the possibility of enrolling in a university, or could immediately begin an apprenticeship and enter the workforce.¹¹⁷³ The GDR education system was meant to foster obedience, submission to authority, and conformity rather than creativity: innovation and free-thinking were dangerous areas of ‘non-partisanship’ that could significantly impact one’s future in the anti-fascist state.

Outside of school, youths were expected to participate fully in state-sponsored youth culture, joining the Young Pioneers (JP) at age 6 and moving on to the Free German Youth (Freie Deutsche Jugend or FDJ) at age 14.¹¹⁷⁴ While never compulsory, the mass organizations nonetheless drew massive numbers: in its peak year 1987, well over 2 million youths were enrolled in the FDJ, a figure representing nearly 86.7 percent of the population between the ages of 14-25.¹¹⁷⁵ The FDJ sought to foster a sense of unity, togetherness, and communality: all youths participated in the same activities; all youths wore the same blue shirt.¹¹⁷⁶ Drill and activities were intended to train young people for their futures as socialist workers by inculcating a sense of collective conformity and purpose. The mass organizations offered young people structured lives, and especially tried to control free time away from school: FDJ-sponsored camping trips, dances, film-nights and other communal activities in an effort to monopolize youth leisure time.¹¹⁷⁷ As Katherine Verdery has detailed in the case of socialist Romania, the East European communist regimes all sought to seize ‘time’ from their citizens to prevent

¹¹⁷³ John Rodden, *Repainting the Little Red Schoolhouse: A History of Eastern German Education, 1945-1995* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹¹⁷⁴ See McDougall, *Youth Politics in East Germany*; and Ulrich Mählert and Gerd-Rüdiger Stephan, *Blaue Hemden – Rote Fahnen. Die Geschichte der Freien Deutschen Jugend* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1996).

¹¹⁷⁵ McDougall, *Youth Politics in East Germany*, p.234.

¹¹⁷⁶ On hatred of the blue FDJ shirt, see Saunders, *Honecker’s Children*, p.56.

¹¹⁷⁷ See the essays collected in Helga Gotschlich, ed., „*Links und links und Schritt gehalten... “ Die FDJ: Konzepte – Abläufe – Grenzen* (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 1994).

activity that might undermine state power: social activities and the various ‘honorary duties’ of the FDJ—meetings, award, etc.—were all intended to occupy significant blocks of time and thereby prevent youngsters from engaging in any forms of youthful dalliances that might lead to dissent or active opposition.¹¹⁷⁸

State sponsored youth culture was met by youths with various levels of commitment, ranging from zealous (a minority) to apathy (the majority) in the 1970s and 1980s.¹¹⁷⁹ For youths attracted to punk, school, the FDJ, and state youth culture were an enemy to be depised because of its state controlled nature and demands for total conformity: according to ‘Mike’ speaking to *Der Spiegel* in 1982, “This whole up-bringing to become a machine... the whole state-run youth scene made me sick. There was nothing there. So boring. When I think about our discotheques, I think: Puke!”¹¹⁸⁰ Punk was thus a crucial platform for achieving independence for GDR youths and a means to negate the lies of the GDR, a denial expressed lyrically, musically, communally, behaviorally and sartorially. Jörg Löffler, founder of Paranoia and a central figure in the Dresden punk scene, later explained that discovering punk music on the radio was a release from the crush of the collective: “For me and a few of my schoolmates, the English program on RTL [Radio Luxembourg], that... was *the discovery*. At last, music that was acceptable for us. No pop, no Schlager, no disco, we didn’t want to do the same as the other 90% of our class.”¹¹⁸¹

The extreme regimentation and uniformity of growing up in the GDR made punk appealing to those who thought or wanted to behave differently. As one of Furian’s punks

¹¹⁷⁸ Katherine Verdey, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp.39-57. These honorary activities became increasingly burdensome for citizens, see Esther von Richthofen, *Bringing Culture to the Masses: Control, Compromise and Participation in the GDR* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009). On the East German music industry, see Dan Wilton, “The ‘Socialisation’ of the State: Sport for the Masses and Popular Music in the GDR,” in *Power and Society in the GDR, 1961-1979: The ‘Normalisation of Rule’?* ed., Mary Fulbrook (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009), pp.117-129.

¹¹⁷⁹ See Saunders, *Honecker’s Children*.

¹¹⁸⁰ “Auf die Sahne,” *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 24, 14 June 1982, p.59.

¹¹⁸¹ Cited in Heusner, “Jörg Löffler – ein Punk-pionier aus der DDR,” n.p.

explained, “I came to punk because all the others, the people, made me sick. It’s always the same wherever you go.”¹¹⁸² Another punk told his Stasi interrogator that “everyone in our society is the same as the next one” while another was attracted to punk because no “East German looks like this.”¹¹⁸³ Non-conformity had its price however. As one of the Pfingstkirche punks explained, about life in the GDR, “if one doesn’t dance to the tune, then one is finished somehow.”¹¹⁸⁴ Like the early Western punk scene, individuality was an important impetus, the need to distinguish oneself from the pack, a drive that influenced many youths to embrace punk summed up in the slogan “Better dead than standardized” that a punk girl told Furian, a clear rejection of the GDR drive towards product standardization in the 1970s and 1980s.¹¹⁸⁵ As another young woman explained, “I always felt the need to show myself: alone, against the world, I’ll make it on my own...at that time for me, to be a punk, that was a self-confirmation”¹¹⁸⁶ *Anderssein* and individuality thus intertwined to protest the lack of alternativeness whereby ‘Too Much Future’ was a cry for individualization.

‘Too Much Future’ also represented a clear negation of work as the central category of GDR national identity.¹¹⁸⁷ Enshrined as the first article of the GDR constitution, work was both a goal and a responsibility of all GDR citizens. As a key propaganda claim in the moral contest against Western capitalism, full employment levels in the GDR were continually trumpeted against the millions of unemployed in the FRG, especially following the oil crises of the 1970s. But by the 1970s and 1980s, work had clearly lost its integrative meanings among youths.

According to surveys by the Leipzig Central Institute for Youth Research (Zentralinstitute für

¹¹⁸² BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.3.

¹¹⁸³ BStU, MfS, BV Erfurt, AOP 614/86, Bd. V/1, OV “Herbege,” Bericht über durchgeführte Aussprache, 28 March 1983, p.80; and BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr. 6101, Auskunft, 1 October 1984, p.36.

¹¹⁸⁴ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.2.

¹¹⁸⁵ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.11.

¹¹⁸⁶ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.4.

¹¹⁸⁷ On avoiding work in the GDR, see Dirk Moldt, *Nein, das mache ich nicht! Selbstbestimmte Arbeitsbiographien in der DDR* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2010).

Jugendforschung or ZIJ), work identification had been weakening among youths throughout the 1970s and 1980s, a result of poor planning, execution, and the culture of Schönfärberei (glossing over): as the authors of a 1988 study admitted, youths criticisms were “above all directed towards deficiencies in leadership (rigid and inflexible, bureaucratic), deficient commitment of leaders, glossing over things, even open lies in reports, a lack of understanding between employees, meaningless tasks, departmental-thinking and insufficient co-operation among leaders as well as ineffective work.”¹¹⁸⁸ The ‘building of socialism’ in the 1950s and 1960s had opened up so many new positions and produced a young and educated social class.¹¹⁸⁹ But by the 1970s and 1980s, these new positions had dried up. New employees from the 1950s and 1960s had been in their 20s and early 30s, and by the 1970s and 1980s, this newly created administrative elite was still firmly in control. The East German economy had likewise experienced tremendous growth in the 1950s and into the 1960s but had stalled considerably by the 1970s, a combination of poor planning, obsolete technology, and the disastrous effects of the oil crises on the socialist market that relied heavily on imported goods and technologies.¹¹⁹⁰ As the economy worsened and jobs became scarce, an entire generation of young East Germans became ‘blocked’ from upward mobility and even in some cases, from jobs.¹¹⁹¹

That work was a duty and demand—not a choice—was a major complaint irking youths who did not look upon labor as earlier generations had in the GDR. As the ZIJ study cited above made clear, “An independent job that leaves enough room for individual ideas and individual

¹¹⁸⁸ Emphasis in original. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/246, Bericht. Zur Lage der Jugend 1988, June 1988, p.149.

¹¹⁸⁹ Peter Chrisitan Ludz, *The Changing Party Elite in East Germany* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1972).

¹¹⁹⁰ See Zatlín, *The Currency of Socialism*; and Jeffrey Kopstein, *The Politics of Economic Decline in East Germany, 1945-1989* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

¹¹⁹¹ On blockages in the GDR, see Detlef Pollack, “Modernization and Modernization Blockages in GDR Society,” in *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, ed., Konrad H. Jarausch, trans. by Eve Duffy (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), pp.27-45.

decision-making is valued much more than earlier.”¹¹⁹² The demand for work coupled with the inability to meet the consumptive demands that youths desired was a major stumbling-block in SED policy, a consequence of Honecker’s decision to no longer postpone ‘socialism’ to an indefinite future as Ulbricht had. These beliefs were constantly expressed, such as when one of Furian’s punks claimed that it was “not my goal to always work like that, to always live like that, of course, I go to work because it’s practical for my life needs, it’s a necessity, I must earn money in order to live but I would like to be somehow more involved than simply this need.”¹¹⁹³ Punk ideology stressed that there was more to life than simply working and should instead be rooted in singular experiential experiences and meaningful communal bonds. Despite being an avowedly Marxist state that sought to ease the pains of industrial labor, many of the young punks that Furian interviewed expressed clear cases of alienation: “When I go to work, there I have no goal that I am actually working for.”¹¹⁹⁴ It was not work itself which punks hated, but rather work entailing no personal satisfaction or room for creativity: “If everyone had a job that they had fun at, then one couldn’t say that one hates work.”¹¹⁹⁵ The massification of work and production, rather than decreasing alienation seemed in fact to be increasing it.

Rejection of work took varied forms. Employed punks often found ways to skip work. Stasi reports on punks are replete with details about punks’ questionable work ethics: one Dresden punk had his work discipline characterized as “poor” and he himself was described as a “loafer.”¹¹⁹⁶ When punks did work they were often poor work colleagues. Other workers often complained about their dress or behavior and they were often subject to disciplinary

¹¹⁹² Emphasis in original. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/246, Bericht. Zur Lage der Jugend 1988, June 1988, p.146.

¹¹⁹³ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.3.

¹¹⁹⁴ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.14.

¹¹⁹⁵ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.14.

¹¹⁹⁶ BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, AIM 2399/89, Bd. I/1, Information, 25 February 1983, p.38.

meetings.¹¹⁹⁷ Accusations of sabotage and dissent were legion concerning punks: a young East Berlin punk was eventually sentenced to prison for slipping pacific poems into customers shopping bags.¹¹⁹⁸ Punk rejection of work went so far that punks from the Erlöserkirche in East Berlin used steel rods to break their pinkie fingers and then claim the insurance money while spending eight weeks time off work. Finger-breaking became so prevalent between 1983 and 1985 that eventually the MfS got wind of the operation and sentenced a number of youths to jail.¹¹⁹⁹ When punks did work, they were often employed in jobs not linked directly to the centrally-planned socialist economy. Many punks, for example, found work for Evangelical congregations as general handymen or ushers. Part-time work was crucial, since working for a couple of hours a day allowed for considerable free time to devote to musical activities: Jan Beyer, singer for the band Demokratischen Konsum—the name poking fun at the Konsum consumer cooperatives established under Honecker—drove a ‘Schwarztaxi’ (illegal taxi) to supplement his income.¹²⁰⁰

Implicit in punk critiques of the GDR work regime were deep criticisms of East German socialist modernity.¹²⁰¹ Band names functioned as ironic critiques of East German socialist ideals and reality. Planlos (‘no plan’ or ‘without a plan’) registered the over abundance of planning in the GDR and the gap between planning and reality. Betonromantik (‘concrete romance’) from East Berlin was a compound-word critique of the SED’s infatuation with concrete as a ‘modern’ building material. And the Frankfurt/Oder-based band Papierkrieg (‘red tape’) claimed their

¹¹⁹⁷ BStU, MfS, BV Erfurt, AOP 772/85, Bd. V/1, OV “Blauköpfe,” Eröffnungsbericht zum Anlegen des Operativ-Vorganges “Blauköpfe,” Reg.-Nr. IX 1412/81 auf der Grundlage des Straftatbestandes der staatsfeindlichen Hetze gemäß § 106 StGB, 19 November 1981, pp.32-33.

¹¹⁹⁸ See Kowalczyk, *Punk in Pankow*.

¹¹⁹⁹ See the numerous charges in BStU, MfS, HA IX, Nr. 9828, Urteil Im Namen des Volkes!, 1985, pp.1-18.

¹²⁰⁰ BStU, MfS, AOPK 10250/88, OPK “Konsum,” Operativinformation Nr. 36/86, 31 January 1986, p.17.

¹²⁰¹ On socialist modernity, see the essays collected in Katherine Pence and Paul Betts, eds., *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008).

name was an ironic aside about GDR bureaucracy and the amount of paper necessary to navigate socialist modernity.¹²⁰²

What upset punks most about the work regime of the GDR was the belief that one's youth and individuality was being wasted working for the benefit of a state which gave nothing in return: as one of Furian's punks put it, "above all, one works and does everything, and then one is still exhausted during free time."¹²⁰³ This awareness of present resignation and future regret expressed in the Western slogan 'No Future' was likewise claimed by frustrated Eastern punks: "For the things that you somehow really want to achieve, you have no future, which is a fact, you won't achieve them as a matter of course. I understand 'no future' just the way it is said: when one really has no future for his things."¹²⁰⁴ As another punk lamented sadly, "I had so much to experience but I wasn't going to be able to do anything at all."¹²⁰⁵

Next to work, anti-fascism was the second pillar upon which GDR national identity was built. As Jeffrey Herf and others have argued, unable to draw upon a national tradition, East Germany found its legitimacy in the victorious anti-fascist coalition led by the Soviets that defeated the Nazis in the Second World War.¹²⁰⁶ Undergoing tremendous societal transformations associated with the transition from capitalism to socialism during the Ulbricht years, East Germany—at least theoretically—no longer harbored structures conducive to fascism. Since fascism was a product of late-capitalist structures—so argued communist theoreticians—West Germany remained the home of Nazism. Themes such as eternal friendship with the Soviet Union, the martyrdom of figures such as Ernst Thälmann and the myth of

¹²⁰² *Atroma*, Nr. 3 (Paris: 1989), p.17.

¹²⁰³ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.14.

¹²⁰⁴ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.13.

¹²⁰⁵ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.14.

¹²⁰⁶ Josie McLellan, *Antifascism and Memory in East Germany: Remembering the International Brigades, 1945-1989* (Clarendon, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004); Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth*; and Herf, *Divided Memory*.

Germanic *Kultur* were used to integrate the GDR political community.¹²⁰⁷ Inculcated in school, anniversaries, work and the media, anti-fascism became a national identity culture for East Germany, an alibi for the ‘Other Germany’.

But by the 1970s, anti-fascism was losing its integrative force. Youths with no memory of the anti-fascist resistance had a difficult time reconciling the lessons from the 1930s with the realities of the 1970s and 1980s.¹²⁰⁸ The claim that the GDR represented the ‘peaceful’ ‘other’ Germany were contradicted by events—in 1979, the Soviets invaded Afghanistan—indicating that the narrative of anti-fascism was losing its believability.¹²⁰⁹ Punks had long accused the GDR and its leadership of totalitarianism and fascism: already by 1981, punks were wearing “thick, fat Stars of David” to symbolize the repression they felt by the state and they appropriated Jewish victimhood under the Nazis to represent this sartorially.¹²¹⁰ On the streets, punks were received by East Germans with comments such as “Alle ins KZ!” (All in Concentration Camps!) that only seemed to support their accusations of continued fascism and reinforced their identification with Jewish victimhood.¹²¹¹ In 1983, a group of East Berlin punks led by members from Namenlos and Planlos planned to lay a wreath at Sachsenhausen that read “Never Again Fascism – Punks from East Berlin” in an attempt to counter regime efforts to tar punks as fascists. Attempts to usurp state anti-fascism were not looked upon kindly. Stopped by the police at S-Bahnhof Oranienburg from proceeding to the concentration camp, the punks retreated to the city and instead laid the wreath at the Neue Wache where it remained for an hour

¹²⁰⁷ Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth*.

¹²⁰⁸ See Saunders, *Honecker's Children*.

¹²⁰⁹ Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth*, pp.194-197.

¹²¹⁰ Lindner and Westhusen, *Von Müllstation zu Grössenwahn*, p.63.

¹²¹¹ Lindner and Westhusen, *Von Müllstation zu Grössenwahn*, p.65.

before disappearing.¹²¹² These actions and others sought to subvert anti-fascist authority from the East German leadership and claim it for punk.

Song lyrics were rife with references that equated East German socialism with fascism, none clearer than the Namenlos song “Nazis wieder in Ostberlin” (Nazis once again in East Berlin). The song was written in 1982 by Michael Horschig and the Rostock band Virus X. Comparing the parallels between East Germany and the Nazi regime (“Big words, too much power, have made nothing but shit! / Big parades, hidden truncheons, have brought the war to Germany”) the song insisted that the SED—backed by the military might of the Soviets—was destroying East Germany (“Big slogans, too much power, have brought us to the abyss! / Red slogans, Soviet power, have destroyed Germany”). The refrain “Nazis, Nazis, Nazis wieder in Ostberlin!” denigrated the anti-fascist myth as nothing more than a charade. Songs like “MfS Lied” furthermore charged that the Stasi were the same as Hitler’s SS.

Whereas punk in the West became a springboard for political action especially for Hardcores, in the East—in the beginning—politics was looked upon with distrust and futility: put succinctly by one young punk girl to Furian, “I think that politics is all the same.”¹²¹³ As other scholars have noted, apathy and resignation were the dominant characterizations of youth political engagement in the GDR during the 1980s.¹²¹⁴ Eastern punks criticized the political culture in much the same way as Western punks: domination by several individuals in the pursuit of material satisfaction to the enslavement of others.¹²¹⁵ Distrust of politics by Eastern punks led many to embrace anarchism like their Western cousins. Understood variously as “No power. No laws,” “No bigwigs and guys like that,” “no limits” and “whatever you are in the mood for,”

¹²¹² Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.64-65.

¹²¹³ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.10.

¹²¹⁴ Saunders, *Honecker's Children*.

¹²¹⁵ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.10.

anarchism expressed vague desires for independence and freedom from SED control. However not every punk held the belief that anarchy was realistic. Some punks criticized their colleagues as delusional (“Anarchy doesn’t exist”) or idiotic (“dumb twaddle”), while others felt anarchy was nothing more than escapism: “Anarchy—this is also an escape [from reality] because one doesn’t know anymore what they want. In my opinion, this is impossible. It is an illusion, if a good one. One can try and do everything to achieve this. But it still remains a dream.”¹²¹⁶

Regardless of where they stood on anarchy, most punks agreed that socialism as it currently existed in the GDR was a disaster with little hope for future improvement: as one of Furian’s punks expressed, “If Marx saw what was happening here now...”¹²¹⁷

The distrust of overt politics meant that punks instead threw their energies into the cultural politics of non-conformity and individuality, politics often expressed through fashion. A crucial factor in the punk subculture as we saw with the West, appearances functioned as a means of reflecting one’s attitude and authentic inner self. As a member of Planlos told Furian, “Attitude and appearances go together; one cannot separate them from each other.”¹²¹⁸ The belief in the unity of body and attitude was central to punk’s dramatic appearances. So important was this belief that fashion became a barometer for one’s commitment to punk itself, a means of passing judgment and policing the subculture: “those who don’t go around looking like that [as a punk], are no punks, and those who go around looking like a punk but somehow without having the correct attitude, then they are not punks either, everything has to really mesh together.”¹²¹⁹

As in the West, individuals not fully committed were denigrated as “Mode-Punks” (Fashion-

¹²¹⁶ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.15; and BStU, MfS, BV Berlin AIM 3772/89, Bd. I/1, Bericht über die Kontaktaufnahme zu einem Punk-Fan im Rahmen der Vorbeugungsmaßnahmen zu den Motorrad WM in Brno/CSSR, 26 August 1982, p.82.

¹²¹⁷ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.16.

¹²¹⁸ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.9.

¹²¹⁹ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.9.

Punks) or “Plastics”: as one of Furian’s punks exclaimed, “...I find that absolutely shit, when punk is somehow commodified...among us there are also Mode-Punks. And there are also many who even dress like that when their parents are not there, and when they come back, they immediately run to the basement, hide their clothes and dress differently. That makes me sick. If they participate then they should also show it.”¹²²⁰

Appearances as revolution took several forms. Meant to shock society, youths cut their hair, overused make-up, ripped their clothes and transformed themselves into ugly punk bodies: “We make ourselves ugly to shock these types of people.”¹²²¹ Punk appearances both protested the superficiality of GDR society—“Everything always has to be about money, Mazda, who is the most beautiful and the nicest and who has the best manners, everything here, the whole fashion business, which car goes the fastest, the loveliest little weekend cottage”¹²²²—while at the same time outwardly expressed society’s deep-seated ugliness: “As a punk, you are only there as a thorn, as a provocation for society to see how far the society can cope.”¹²²³ The unity of ‘attitude and appearances’ was again at work distinguishing between society’s inauthentic self-portrayal which punk sought to expose with ugliness. At the same time, appearances and non-conformity also functioned as a means of fostering community, even developing self-assurance and confidence: “Then I cut my hair short and took one of my father’s sweaters, cut it up and so on, and then put it on... And at that time, I walked through the streets with real self-confidence even if people were staring at me.”¹²²⁴ Appearances were thus a means of protesting the societal collective, a celebration of individuality and policing the subculture.

¹²²⁰ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.9.

¹²²¹ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.8.

¹²²² BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.3.

¹²²³ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.9.

¹²²⁴ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.8.

As in the West, fashion was very important as a means of distancing independent youths from the conformity of GDR society: from the clean-cut look of the FDJ youth, the denim world of workers, and the long hair of the hippie generation. As in the West, the cliché punk uniform—leather jackets, spikes, Mohawk hairstyle—came later. The first GDR punks prided themselves on cleanliness to separate themselves from the hippies, gamblers and bluesers whose preference for well-used jeans, long hair, and earth-tones were an earlier attempt to mark off subculture.¹²²⁵ Dressing in out-of-date clothes and mixing and matching different clothing styles were attempts to shock the observer. Tight suits, outrageous shirts that mixed gender sensibilities were all part of the program. By the early 1980s, Eastern punk dress also succumbed to the ritualized punk look as conformity took over. Boots were usually military. Clothing was generally ripped and torn with patches, safety pins or chains sewn on. Shirts and pants tended to be colorful to separate the individual both from the ‘normals’ in society and from other punks. Sometimes pants or jackets were adorned with strips of fur or faux leopard-skin. Jackets were sometimes made of denim but defaced, pierced with spikes and bits of metal and full of band names or slogans written in marker across the back. Hair was cut short and rough to distinguish punks from hippies and workers who wore their hair slightly longer. Especially denim, the symbolic garment of the working-class in the GDR, needed defilment before it would be considered appropriate for punk.¹²²⁶ Due to scarcity and in spite of the rhetoric of international brotherhood, Western punks coming to visit the GDR capital were often in danger of losing their clothes: “plucking,” as it was called, involved stripping Western punks of their desirable (and rare) clothing and accessories and—as good socialists!—‘redistributing’ them among the ‘needy.’¹²²⁷

¹²²⁵ See Michael Rauhut and Thomas Kochan, eds., *Bye Bye, Lübben City. Bluesfreaks, Tramps und Hippies in der DDR*, erweiterte neuauflage (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2009).

¹²²⁶ Rebecca Menzel, *Jeans in der DDR: Vom tieferen Sinn einer Freizeithose* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2004).

¹²²⁷ *ostPUNK! too much future* (DVD, directors Carsten Fiebler and Michael Boehlke, 2006).

Interestingly, ‘plucking’ suggests that for all the rhetoric about DIY fashion, punks nonetheless desired iconic clothing and accessories that were only available in the West. Moreover, as in the West, fashion was a crucial litmus-test for determining status and establishing credibility among peers: Easterners whose clothing looked a little too new were derided as “Plastics” (fakes).¹²²⁸

But ideologically, as the comments about ‘plucking’ suggests, punk in the East was not so coherent that it could not avoid some of the same contradictions plaguing punk in the West. While ostensibly rejecting *Bürgerleben* and its forms of supposedly oppressive relationships, one of the punk’s interviewed by Furian claimed that “punks have sex just like the others,” thus pointing to the fact that punks were just like everyone else.¹²²⁹ Despite their castigations that other Eastern youths were only interested in looks and fashion, when confronted with their own investment in appearances, punks claimed defensively that, “[t]hat doesn’t mean that we stand in front of the mirror or something.”¹²³⁰ Despite claims about scene unity—“punks are terrifically glad together”—Furian’s punks also admitted to discriminatory practices.¹²³¹ The identification of certain youths as ‘Mode-Punks’ or ‘Plastics’ indicates that, as in the West, punks defined their scene against those felt to be not as authentic. Moreover, the elitism of Eastern punks was more than simply discursive. Punks were often attacked and stripped of their clothes if they were new to the scene or came over to East Berlin for the day from the West wearing coveted (real) leather jackets: as one of Furian’s punks suggested, “But if we are in the mood and we see that some new [punks] are there, that we don’t know, and want to do it, then their leather jackets are ripped off and the jeans and so on...”¹²³²

¹²²⁸ See *ostPUNK! too much future*.

¹²²⁹ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.20.

¹²³⁰ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.8.

¹²³¹ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.6.

¹²³² BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.5.

The violence perpetrated by Eastern punks against so-called ‘Plastics’ fundamentally contradicted punk’s critique of the GDR state. As Colonel, an early punk from East Berlin remembered (fondly?) in the documentary film *ostPUNK! too much future*, some punks simply took clothing and accessories because they wanted them, even though punks criticized the SED of criminal behavior and their “incorrect use of power.”¹²³³ Even punk oppression and criminalization by the state was ambiguous. While certainly youths did not enjoy the violence visited upon them by the police and members of the GDR citizenry, some nonetheless seem to have enjoyed their ‘outsiderness,’ even embracing martyrdom: as one punk told Furian disapprovingly, “A martyr role has spread very widely among the punks, to rush headlong into disaster, and that is bullshit.”¹²³⁴ For many, punk was a game to be played with the state, a game in which youths took on the role of the oppressed while seeking to outwit the oppressors: as Mike Göde remembered with a grin, a weekend without an encounter with the police meant an uneventful weekend.¹²³⁵ So while Eastern punks railed against the dictatorial East German state, they nonetheless enjoyed in their pariah status. In fact, it was punk’s move to legality after the Wende that has caused so much disorientation among former Eastern punks, a subject to which we will return in the Epilogue.

“Lieber sterben als genormt sein”: Social Dimensions of the East German Punk Scene

We don’t want anymore, what you want
 We want our freedom
 We are the people, we are the power
 We claim justice
 We are the people, we are the power

¹²³³ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.2. See also *ostPUNK! too much future*.

¹²³⁴ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., pg.4.

¹²³⁵ *ostPUNK! too much future*.

It is too late, if it crashes first

This is the reality
 And you realize how time flies
 You realize how you slowly putrefy here
 Like a sick cat howling

Thoughts are sterilized
 Words castrated by censorship
 Pictures falsified to keep up appearances
 To appear stronger after long years
 To shape and distort the will
 To norms through standardized norms
 Refuse to protest with violence
 Only caring about the neighbor's mistakes

This is the reality
 And you realize how time flies
 You realize how you slowly putrefy here
 Like a sick cat howling

Schleim-Keim, "Prügelknaben," *Nichts gewohnen, nichts verloren, vol.1*
 (Höhnle Records 042, 2000)

One of the anomalies of studying punk in East Germany is that we actually know more about the social dimensions of the subculture in the dictatorship than in the democracy thanks to the vigilant efforts of state authorities in the GDR. Constantly alert to any hints of dissent, the East German secret police kept continuous records of individuals and groups they felt threatened the state, and punk was one such subculture. And while we will explore the relationship between punk and the Stasi in the following chapter, these files nonetheless provide the basis for examining and identifying the social contours of the punk scene in the GDR: size, class, gender, numbers and much else. While not without their pitfalls that a sizable scholarly literature now addresses, these documents can nonetheless help us speak of the East German punk scene with a

bit more precision than with the West.¹²³⁶ What is perhaps most interesting about the Eastern punk scene were the incredible similarities to the subculture in the West, some of which we have already seen with the way punk was transmitted to the East, in the same way that punk spread to the West from the UK. With alternative living patterns, dress and hairstyle, notions about work and even sleep, punks in the East slipped through the cracks of official East German society and created an alternative world where youths felt they could live in a more authentic manner. What follows is an investigation into how this drive for independence and authenticity materialized structurally in the Eastern punk scene and those practices that shaped GDR punk.

Based on the incomplete records compiled by the Ministry of State Security, it appears that most Eastern punks were born after the year 1960, with the majority of the early scene members falling between the years 1962 and 1968 meaning that the Eastern scene was slightly younger than the Western scene.¹²³⁷ These numbers indicate that youths who became involved in the early punk scene in the late 1970s and early 1980s were overwhelmingly teenagers. In an early Weimar MfS scene report, for example, authorities identified 42 members, all of whom with a sole exception were born during the 1960s.¹²³⁸ Birth year places punk youths firmly within the grandchildren generation of the GDR, a collective fully socialized under communism with almost no memory of the pre-Honecker era.¹²³⁹ However, as in the West, a few influential

¹²³⁶ On the usefulness of using MfS files, see the essays collected in Klaus-Dietmar Henke and Roger Engelmann, eds., *Aktenlage: die Bedeutung der Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes für die Zeitgeschichtsforschung* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 1995).

¹²³⁷ The findings in the rest of the chapter are based upon the study of relevant punk files housed at the BStU. While not comprehensive—not all files relating to punk have been systematized nor is it clear how many were destroyed or disappeared—these conclusions are nevertheless based upon the hundreds of files cited in the footnotes.

¹²³⁸ BStU, MfS, BV Erfurt, KD Weimar, 875, pg.2.

¹²³⁹ On the generational divisions in GDR history, see especially Dorothee Wierling, “How Do the 1929ers and the 1949ers Differ?” in *Power and Society in the GDR, 1961-1979: The ‘Normalisation of Rule?’* ed., Mary Fulbrook (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009), pp.204-219; Dorothee Wierling, “Generations and Generational Conflicts in East and West Germany,” in *The Divided Past: Rewriting Postwar German History*, ed., Christoph Kleßmann (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), pp.69-89; and Dorothee Wierling, “Mission to Happiness. Comparing the Birth Cohort of 1949 in East and West Germany,” in *The Miracle Years. West Germany in the 1950s*, ed., Hanna Schissler (Princeton NJ.: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp.110-125.

early punk musicians were slightly older. Ralf Kerbach (b.1954), guitarist from the Dresden-based Zwitschermaschine, came from the Free Jazz milieu and saw in punk a new form of aesthetic experimentalism.¹²⁴⁰ Visual artist Conny Schleime (b.1953), one of Zwitschermaschine's singers, was likewise slightly older than the majority of punks. Generally speaking, older members came from a variety of artistic milieus and saw in punk a further possibility for self-expression after others avenues had become closed: Schleime, for example, distinctly remembers being drawn to punk because she could wear four hats all at once.¹²⁴¹ These older members were especially active in the pre-‘Härte gegen Punk’ years (see Chapter 9) but mostly disappeared from the scene after 1983, replaced by much younger members.

According to Stasi records, a majority of youths who became involved in the punk scene first encountered the genre while enrolled in POSs rather than the university-track EOSs. This indicates that punk appealed firstly to younger teens, and that there was a class-dimension to punk in the GDR that cannot be found conclusively in the West. The fact that most punks came from POSs suggests that those drawn to punk were either not excelling in schools or having disciplinary problems (often a result of their involvement with punk) that excluded them from the EOSs. Apprentices or young workers were another large pool of punks, although it was rare for youths to be first introduced to punk at the jobsite; usually youths were introduced to punk at school. Very few students in the EOS or universities were drawn to punk, though it is unclear why: while this can only remain speculative, perhaps university gave youths enough creative outlets to make punk redundant. Some bands—Schleim-Keim's infamous Ehrlich brothers to name but one example—shared family members as older brothers and sisters often socialized younger siblings into the punk scene: Mike Göde, who has subsequently sung in numerous East

¹²⁴⁰ See Rainer Bratfisch, *Freie Töne. Die Jazzszene in der DDR* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2005), esp. pp.170-177.

¹²⁴¹ Konstantin Hanke, “Ostpunk auf Schallplatte,” *Ox-Fanzine*, Nr.73 (Haan: August/September 2007), p.120.

Berlin-based bands since the early 1980s, remembers opening the front door to his home one night and seeing his older brother dressed in torn clothing and wondering at first if he had lost his mind.¹²⁴² But the vast majority of youths who became punks were introduced to the genre by their friends while attending school between the ages of 14 and 17.

The majority of youths drawn to punk lived with their parents, at least during their initial introduction into the scene. While a minority of older punks and alternatives lived on their own or squatted apartments (and this would increase during the 1980s), communal living usually came after embracing the subculture rather than prior: indeed, circumstantial evidence indicates that precisely because youths were still living with their parents, punk became an important avenue for teenage exploration, a route that often, however not always, ended in considerable family friction. Anecdotal evidence culled from interviews, memoirs and Stasi files suggests that while parents did not want their children arrested for their subcultural beliefs, only in very rare occasions did they support—much less approve of—their sons or daughters’ new lifestyle choice.¹²⁴³ Carsten Hiller’s father cried when he first cut his hair into a Mohawk.¹²⁴⁴ An Erfurt punk was kicked out of home by his parents who were fearful he would negatively influence his younger brother.¹²⁴⁵ Bernd Stracke, singer for Wutanfall, later agreed that he and his parents did not have a very good relationship on account of his attraction to punk.¹²⁴⁶ The public presence of punk in the GDR was thus directly linked to their liminal age—too old to stay at home under the supervision of their parents, but not old enough to be integrated into the socialist workforce and support themselves financially.

¹²⁴² *ostPUNK! too much future*.

¹²⁴³ See Kowalczyk, *Punk in Pankow*.

¹²⁴⁴ “No Reissbrett: Punk in der DDR,” p.117.

¹²⁴⁵ BStU, MfS, BV Erfurt, AOP 614/86, Bd. V/1, OV “Herberge,” Kriminalpolizei, 31 March 1983, pp. 53-55.

¹²⁴⁶ *ostPUNK! too much future*.

Numbers are difficult to pinpoint conclusively for the early GDR punk scene since we are reliant on MfS reports. As we will explore more thoroughly in the next chapter, the Stasi only began to accept the existence of punks in the GDR reluctantly: prior to 1983, they had grouped the genre under various categories such as “negativ-dekadent Jugendlichen” (negative decadent youths) or ‘rowdies’ (hooligans). The refusal to accept punk in the GDR makes ascertaining the numbers of youths attracted to punk problematic: a 1985 MfS report, for example, included homosexuals, lesbians, heavy metal listeners, conscientious objectors, punks and karate groups under the rubric of the ‘political underground’ in East Berlin during 1984.¹²⁴⁷ Moreover, in the early years of the decade, regional state authorities sought to ‘hide’ punk from East Berlin by massaging the numbers and grouping them with other ‘questionable’ alternative youth groups. Fearful that the appearance of ‘negative-decadent’ youths in their districts would raise questions about their ideological commitment, officials often flat out denied the existence of punks: for example, a 1982 Halle report denied the existence of punks in the Halle-district—“In the DE [Diensteinheit or Service Unit] area of responsibility no ‘punk bands’ exist and no ‘punks’ have made an appearance either”¹²⁴⁸—even though two months earlier District Naumburg had begun Operation ‘Widerstand’ to ferret out punks in the area, and only two weeks prior discussed on-going co-operation with the police concerning curbing the Naumburg punk scene.¹²⁴⁹ In the late 1980s, once the MfS and SED had accepted the existence of punk in the GDR, Stasi reports

¹²⁴⁷ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, BV-Leitung 149, Einschätzung ausgewählter Probleme der politisch-operativen Lageentwicklung unter jugendlichen Personenkreisen der Hauptstadt der DDR, Berlin, im Jahre 1984, 8 February 1985, pp.1-61.

¹²⁴⁸ BStU, MfS, BV Halle, Abt. XX, Sachakten Nr. 265, Berichterstattung zu jugendlichen “Punkern,” 25 October 1982, p.3.

¹²⁴⁹ BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr. 899, Teil 2 von 2, Einleitungsbericht, 13 August 1982, pp.166-168; and BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr. 899, Teil 2 von 2, Bericht über durchgeführte Absprache zu Erscheinungen der “Punk-Bewegung” und deren Bearbeitung mit der K I des VPKA Naumburg, 12 October 1982, pp.161-163.

began inflating punk numbers since they had a vested interest in keeping the ‘threat’ high.¹²⁵⁰

Even by ignoring the methodological questions about whether the numbers recorded by the MfS reports are even accurate, ‘creative accountancy’ by apparatchiks attempting to downplay or swell opposition has made it difficult to pinpoint the exact size of the GDR punk scene with precision.

Nevertheless, MfS records are a starting point for making educated guesses. Until 1979, there was barely a punk scene to speak of in East Germany and certainly no coalescing of a national scene as we saw occurring during that year in the Federal Republic. Punks that did exist were individuals and no city could count more than a handful of punks at any given time, with perhaps the exception of East Berlin.¹²⁵¹ Around 1980, however, numbers began increasing as small groups of punks progressively began appearing in cities throughout the GDR. East Berlin always remained the most populated punk city in the GDR, with numbers in the hundreds at any given time.¹²⁵² Smaller cities could count several dozen members of the local punk scenes: in 1982, Halle authorities recorded a core of 31 punks, while an early report from Erfurt mentions approximately 50 punks in the entire district.¹²⁵³ Concerts in the early 1980s drew audiences that could range anywhere from 50 to 300 people. An article in *tip*, a West Berlin magazine, estimated that there were roughly two thousand punks in the whole GDR in 1983, a number corroborated by MfS reports that put the national punk scene at nearly 1,700 and a circle of

¹²⁵⁰ In the Matthias-Domarschk-Archiv in Berlin, there exists a letter from Michael Horschig concerning the validity of Stasi numbers found in his file (OPK “Schwarz”). Horschig mentions that nearly all the numbers given by the Stasi in the file are widely exaggerated. See MDA, BV Berlin, AOPK 3474/88, Bd. I/1, OPK “Schwarz.”

¹²⁵¹ Lindner and Westhusen, *Von Müllstation zu Größenwahn*, p.61.

¹²⁵² Already between 1978 and 1980, a number of punk groups had formed in East Berlin. See Kowalczyk “Solidarität und Selbstbehauptung im DDR-Alltag,” p.128.

¹²⁵³ BStU, MfS, BV Halle, Abt. XX, Sachakten 265, Hinweise zu jugendlichen “Punkern” in der DDR. Ihr Schreiben vom 27. 9. 1982, Tgb.-Nr. 7113/82, 23 October 1982, p.15; and BStU, MfS, BV Erfurt, AOP 614/86, Bd. V/1, OV “Herberge,” Analyse zu politisch-operativ bedeutsamen Vorkommnissen und Handlungen unter jugendlichen Personenkreisen im Zusammenhang ihrer Identifizierung mit der Punkbewegung, 28 July 1982, p. 177.

sympathizers climbing perhaps as high as 10,000.¹²⁵⁴ By 1984 after police had cracked down hard on the punk scene and nearly halved the numbers (see Chapter 9), authorities calculated that the Eastern punk population had dwindled to approximately 900, with major concentration points in East Berlin (400), Leipzig (95), Magdeburg (60) and Cottbus (60).¹²⁵⁵

Since the foundation of the GDR, when confronted with domestic oppositional groups, security forces had always distinguished between more numerous ‘Sympathizers’ and a smaller, more dangerous ‘harte Kern’ (hard core), and the punk scene was no different.¹²⁵⁶ The latter were identified as the more active members of the subculture—bands members, organizers, those involved in alternative politics—while the former were more passive consumers: concert-goers and acquaintances but not committed, dangerous oppositionalists. ‘Sympathizers’ outnumbered the ‘harte Kern’ by a factor of 3 or 4 to 1 generally, but the MfS—themselves, in this instance, guided by notions of authenticity—felt the latter to be much more dangerous and concentrated their efforts in neutralizing the ‘harte Kern:’ as such, ‘Sympathizers’ were often not charged by police because they played “an insignificant role (supporters)” in the subculture, in the words of the MfS.¹²⁵⁷ These numbers declined slightly as the decade wore on, especially as competing youth subcultures—Skinheads, Heavy Metal fans, Goths (Gruftis) and New Romantics—began to vie with punk and emigration took its toll. As late as 1989, however, authorities were still

¹²⁵⁴ Dimitri Leningrad, “Die Punker vom Prenzlauer Berg,” *Tip*, Nr. 15, 1982, pp.18-19; BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr. 10321, Teil 2 von 2, Zwischenbericht zur ZA “Punk,” 17 February 1984, pp.549-555. See also Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, p. 139. Anna Saunders has recently claimed that the punk scene incorporated about 10,000 members, a number which is much too high and can only be reached if sympathizers are included. See Saunders, *Honecker’s Children*, p.73.

¹²⁵⁵ BStU, MfS, ZAIG, Nr. 3366, Information über beachtenswerte Erscheinungen unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen in der DDR, 18 May 1984, p.4.

¹²⁵⁶ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, BV-Leitung 149, Einschätzung ausgewählter Probleme der politisch-operativen Lageentwicklung unter jugendlichen Personenkreisen der Hauptstadt der DDR, Berlin, im Jahre 1984, 8 February 1985, p. 26.

¹²⁵⁷ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. VI, Nr. 613, Bericht zum Abschluß der OPK “Mary”, Reg.Nr. XX/260/83, 21 May 1984, p.17; see also BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr. 6101, Auskunft, 1 October 1984, p.36.

reckoning with 655 punks out of a total of 3510 ‘negative-decadent’ youths in the GDR.¹²⁵⁸ And since the total number of ‘negative-decadent’ youths did not decline appreciably, it is not clear as to whether the decline of punks in the GDR represents actual decline or whether authorities were simply recategorizing youths more accurately by their subcultures as they became more familiar with the various youth groupings over the 1980s. For these reasons, we can speak of a peak in 1982-1983 of at most two thousand punks in the ‘harte Kern’ with anywhere from six to ten thousand ‘Sympathizers,’ declining to approximately a thousand members following the 1983-1984 police actions, and perhaps waning slightly as the decade wore on.

East Berlin was not only the Hauptstadt der DDR (capital of the GDR), it was also the Hauptstadt der Punk. With its proximity to West Berlin radio stations and tourists, population size, reputation for artistic experimentation, and home to neighborhoods such as Prenzlauer Berg that housed alternative scenes, East Berlin acted like a magnet for youths identifying with punk. At any given time during the early years, half a dozen illegal punk bands such as Ahnungslos, Rosa Extra, and Bandsalat were in existence in East Berlin and in the early 1980s, a half-dozen Evangelical churches in the city supported the subculture (see Chapter 10). More populous cities such as Leipzig, Dresden, Halle and Magdeburg likewise boasted several bands and more than 100 scene members at any given time. Regional metropolitan centers such as Weimar, Erfurt, Cottbus or Karl-Marx-Stadt (now Chemnitz), similarly saw groupings of anywhere between 15 and 50 punks. Even provincial outposts like Eisenberg or Suhl had their share of punks by 1982-1983. In the countryside, punk was rare but not completely absent: Schleim-Keim’s Ehrlich brothers came from Stotternheim, a tiny Thüringian village near Erfurt, practicing away in the

¹²⁵⁸ BStU, MfS, HA XX/AKG, Nr. 448, Zur Lage unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen, 10 February 1989, pp.73-77.

barn because the noise upset their mother.¹²⁵⁹ More often than not, however, punks in provincial villages or the countryside quickly migrated to the bigger cities, especially to East Berlin.

In the beginning, public spaces were the main meeting places of the GDR punk scene. Fountains, parks, plazas, train stations, streets, even sitting around historical monuments were all suitable outdoor spaces where punks could gather in numbers away from parents and enjoy community together. Alexanderplatz in East Berlin was a famous early gathering place as punks would hang out under the World Clock or around the Freundschaftsbühnen drinking beers and fries purchased at ‘Tuti’ (Café Posthorn) or ‘SB’ (*Selbstbedingungen*) located under the Fernsehturm.¹²⁶⁰ Punks would meet Friday nights outside the Babylon Cinemas on Bülowplatz.¹²⁶¹ Each city had specific meeting points where youths travelling from other cities could be sure to find other punks: the IGA-Kiosk in Erfurt; the Marietta-Bar in Magdeburg in the 1980s.¹²⁶² But the most important early scene meeting place was the Kulturpark and the nearby Jugendklub ‘Kult’ in the former fairgrounds on the Spree in the Plänterwald (now part of Treptower Park). Drawing as many as 100 punks a day until it was closed permanently to punks with police batons in 1982, punks from around the GDR would travel to East Berlin on the weekend to hang out all day.¹²⁶³ This mobility raised the profile of the subculture dangerously in the minds of citizens and authorities. Public appearances often resulted in confrontations with police, proprietors or fellow GDR-citizens, so that by the mid-1980s, punks were being slowly forced indoors.

¹²⁵⁹ BStU, MfS, BV Erfurt, AOP 1794/83, Bd. V/1, OV “Gitter,” Betr.: Einschätzung zu der Person Ehrlich, Dieter, 8 February 1983, p.99. See Hahn and Willmann, *Satan, kannst du mir noch mal verzeihen*, p.10.

¹²⁶⁰ On East Berlin hangouts, see Kowalczyk, *Negativ und Dekadent*, pp.84-92.

¹²⁶¹ Kowalczyk, *Negativ und Dekadent*, pp.23-24.

¹²⁶² Hahn and Willmann, *Satan, kannst du mir noch mal verzeihen*, pp.17, 63-64.

¹²⁶³ See Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp. 194-205.

If we take a look at the GDR punk scene along gender lines, the early Eastern punk scene was similar to the West in that it was overwhelmingly dominated by men. As we saw in the West, despite the continual claim that punk was egalitarian, participation in the punk scene by women was always noticeably less than their masculine counterparts. In bands, especially early and more experimental bands, several prominent women were musicians. Singers such as Jana Schloßer from Namenlos and Conny Schleime from Zwitschermaschine were renowned across the DDR punk scene. Susanne ‘Susi’ Horn played bass guitar with Müllstation while Mita Schammel drummed for Namenlos. But these were exceptions rather than the norm: the numbers suggest that less than 10% of punk musicians in the GDR were women, that musical production was dominated by men.¹²⁶⁴ Among scene members, women were more prominent though still a decided minority. Some women were central to their specific scenes. The punk ‘Major’ is considered one of the first punks in East Berlin and her apartment was an important meeting place in the early scene.¹²⁶⁵ A Karl-Marx-Stadt punk woman was likewise a central figure in the city and her connections to figures from East Berlin to Prague linked the Saxon city to wider punk and youths networks as well as alternative politics among the church-based oppositional groups much to the angst of the MfS.¹²⁶⁶ Still, it is important to temper these conclusions. Based upon the MfS files, it is safe to suggest that women never accounted for much more than a fifth of punks in any one scene and most often considerably less than that. According to the number of investigations begun by the Stasi, only a few ever involved women.¹²⁶⁷ An early Weimar scene report from 1982 contains a diagram indicating the various scene members, their relationships to

¹²⁶⁴ See the figures in Boehlke and Gericke, eds., *too much future*, pp. 213-216.

¹²⁶⁵ See Kowalczyk, *Negativ und Dekadent*. On ‘Major,’ see BStU, MfS, AOPK 12605/79, Abschlußbericht zur OPK “Quadrat,” pp.144-146.

¹²⁶⁶ BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, Nr. 3640/89, Information zum OV “Venus” – Reg.Nr. XIV 3534/85, 20 May 1987, pp.39-41.

¹²⁶⁷ For a memoir discussing the experiences of women in the East German punk scene, see Angela ‘China’ Kowalczyk, *Wir haben gelebt!* (Berlin: CPL Verlag, 2007).

each other and the two Weimar punk bands Ernstfall and the Madmans. Of the 42 individuals identified by the Stasi, only 9 were women.¹²⁶⁸ While selective, this scene report is nonetheless proportionally representative. Reminiscing twenty-five years later, Harty Sachse and other Halle-area punks remember only a few women in the early punk scene, maybe ten-percent.¹²⁶⁹

The lack of women participants can be attributed to a variety of causes, some similar to the West suggesting a certain patriarchy inherent in punk and rock'n'roll generally, while others were more GDR specific. The most obvious cause, the aggressiveness and violence of the scene seems to have been generally oft-putting to women scene members, despite frequent Western observations that punk dancing in the GDR was significantly less violent than in the West.¹²⁷⁰ Since women in the GDR—despite the emancipatory claims of the regime—still suffered from the double burden at home, women had less time to devote to extra-curricular leisure activities.¹²⁷¹ Women participation in the GDR work-force meant that mothers depended on daughters to help with tasks in the home: occupied with domestic duties that socialist modernity had supposedly corrected, young daughters had less time to devote to outside subcultural endeavors.¹²⁷² The public nature of punk in the GDR may also have contributed to the lower female numbers: as scholars have noted elsewhere, under socialist morality, girls were expected to remain in the homes and not hanging around publicly with morally questionable characters.¹²⁷³ Social conservatism under Honecker was firmly entrenched in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and women had less leeway for pushing against the boundaries of decency than young men.

¹²⁶⁸ BStU, MfS, BV Erfurt, KD Weimar 875, p.2.

¹²⁶⁹ Westhusen, *Zonenpunkprovinz*, pp.66-68.

¹²⁷⁰ See *Rückstand*, Nr.6 (Gelsenkirchen: 1983), n.p.

¹²⁷¹ See Donna Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic: Women, the Family, and Communism in the German Democratic Republic* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007); and Leonore Ansorg and Renate Hürtgen, “The Myth of Female Emancipation: Contradictions in Women’s Lives,” in *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, ed., Konrad H. Jarausch, trans. by Eve Duffy (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), pp.163-176.

¹²⁷² Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic*; and Ansorg and Hürtgen, “The Myth of Female Emancipation.”

¹²⁷³ See Evans, *Life among the Ruins*; and Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*.

Finally, the cultivation of a macho, male, and ‘outsider’ image by punk made it difficult for women to identify with and adopt as several former punks have since argued: as in the West, to become punk meant to cease being a woman.

“Abfallprodukte der Gesellschaft”: DIY and the Consumption of Punk in the GDR

We have allegedly noise and dirt as ideals
 But those who say this should look at themselves first
 We were born with the characteristics of criminals
 And should languish eternally in prison

We would have no goal and also no honor
 Because money for us is not the real thing
 Because we shit on thee – their – order
 They compare you with the Anti-Christ

We don’t fulfill their poorly-planned norms
 We are not at the mercy of their power
 We are being patronized, we are being insulted
 Being pursued and harassed by them

We are a thorn in their sides
 Because we say what’s not right
 And they say: ‘You’re a filthy pig!’
 And you are despised and hated

Schleim-Keim, “Abfallprodukte der Gesellschaft,” *Abfallprodukte der Gesellschaft* (Nasty Vinyl 006, 2002)

While size, numbers, geographical distribution, class and gender of the East German scene show remarkable similarities to that of the West, the production and consumption of punk in the GDR indicates a number of differences between East and West. As we saw, industriousness by youths was a major factor in raising the profile of the genre, so much so, that in the early 1980s, the music industry moved in to commodify punk. And while the consequences of these actions were decidedly mixed, nonetheless, they point to the opportunities that Westerners had in producing

and consuming punk—chances unavailable to Easterners: from instruments to record production to distribution, the State Planning Commission and state ministries responsible for industry, trade and culture controlled every aspect of musical production in the GDR. In the East, shut out from the opportunities to produce and consume music, punks’ fashioned scenes almost completely from scratch and independent from the state. As such, youths created clothing, instruments and music on their own as DIY was the essential component to the flowering of GDR punk. In fact, the DIY nature of punk was one of the primary attractions of punk, since it appealed to a society that did not have extended opportunities to consume but did have tremendous experience in improvised consumption.¹²⁷⁴ Thus, the main difference between East and West was that due to illegality, GDR punk was able to avoid the difficult debates about commodification until nearly the end of the regime (see Chapter 11), and as such, for nearly a decade, punks produced and consumed the genre almost completely independently. By exploring the consumption of punk in the GDR, we can see how DIY ideals were essential in the creation of the Eastern punk scene.

Despite state restrictions, underground musical production in the punk scene flourished. Instruments came in a variety of shapes, sizes and makes. Guitars were often self-built or cheap Czech imports.¹²⁷⁵ Jörg Löffler, bassist from the Dresden band Paranoia, was forced to use bass strings on an acoustic guitar to make bass sounds.¹²⁷⁶ As one youth told a Western reporter, acquiring East German instruments required luck, connections and money: “There’s only one shop around here [Prenzlauer Berg] which gets about 10 guitars a year and you’ve got to have connections to get them. There is a big shop on the Alexanderplatz where you can get them but they’re very expensive, about 1,000 Marks.”¹²⁷⁷ Bass strings alone could cost 20 Marks—if you

¹²⁷⁴ See Stitzel, *Fashioning Socialism*, esp. pp.49-77.

¹²⁷⁵ Namenlos, *Namenlos 1983-89* (Höhnle Records 097, 2007), n.p.

¹²⁷⁶ Stadtmuseum Dresden, ed., *Renitenz in Elbflorenz*, p.6.

¹²⁷⁷ Ian Walker, “East Side Story: Children of the Berlin Wall,” *Observer Magazine*, 28 March 1983, p.12.

could find them.¹²⁷⁸ Klaus Ehrlich's first guitar used bicycle wires as strings and he connected the instrument to an old radio as an amplifier.¹²⁷⁹ Plugged into stereos and transistor radios, amateur musicians continually blew their overloaded equipment, often cutting concerts and practices short. Drums could be anything from a high-end Western import bought in the Intershops (rare) to a pair of cymbals and metal pots bought at the H.O.-Spielzeugladen (more common).¹²⁸⁰ 'Otze' Ehrlich's first drumset, so Jens-Peter 'Kid' Salzmann from *Küchenspione* remembers, was pieced together from a variety of materials and his bass drum was a desk drawer.¹²⁸¹ Microphones came dearly and PAs among punk bands were practically non-existent unless the youths had the technical knowledge to build their own amplifiers: more often than not though, singers simply screamed through a stereo.¹²⁸² Any musical instruments youths could get their hands on became suitable instruments from children's toy pianos to woodwinds and flutes. An existing Müllstation recording from 1982 consists of musicians banging on large metal pipes.¹²⁸³ The scarcity of equipment and necessary resort to DIY gave the GDR punk bands a sense of authenticity when compared with their Ostrock compatriots whose concerts featured expensive light shows and American equipment, a distinction also highlighting the gap between those with connections to the West and those without that was becoming increasingly noticeable throughout the 1980s.¹²⁸⁴

¹²⁷⁸ Dimitri Leningrad, "Die Punker vom Prenzlauer Berg," p.20.

¹²⁷⁹ Hahn and Willmann, *Satan, kannst du mir noch mal verzeihen*, p.9.

¹²⁸⁰ Tim Renner and Thomas Meins, "Neue Musik aus der DDR – die real existierende Welle (Teil 1)," *Sounds*, Nr. 8, August 1982, p.18.

¹²⁸¹ Hahn and Willmann, *Satan, kannst du mir noch mal verzeihen*, p.15.

¹²⁸² BStU, MfS, BV Erfurt, AOP 1794/83, Bd. V/1, OV "Gitter," Betr.: Einschätzung zu der Person Ehrlich, Dieter, 8 February 1983, p.99.

¹²⁸³ BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr. 899, Teil 1 von 2, Einleitungsbericht zur Durchführung der OPK "Müllstation," 16 August 1983, pp.32-37; and BStU, MfS, BV Halle, Sachakten 265, Einschätzung über die im Verantwortungsbereich festgestellten jugendlichen "Punker" bzw. "Punker-Gruppierungen." Ihr Schr. Vom 27.9.82, Tgb. Nr. 7113/82, 21 October 1982, pp. 16-17. For a copy of the program broadcast see tracks 1-10 on the CD accompanying Westhusen, *Zonenpunkprovinz*.

¹²⁸⁴ See Fulbrook, *The People's State*, esp. pp.229-231.

With Western punk records unavailable in the GDR and Eastern punk bands prohibited from recording, listening to punk became a subversive act and cassettes became the primary sources for listening to and transmitting punk in East Germany. The development of cheap tape recording technology and blank cassettes in the early 1980s gave youths the ability to reproduce music efficiently and easily transmit the contraband sounds. But at twenty Marks per tape, blank cassettes were almost prohibitively expensive, though still less than the cost of a smuggled Western LP: a Western fanziner was shocked that the first Toten Hosen album *Opel-Gang* was selling for 140 Marks in East Berlin.¹²⁸⁵ Generally, listeners copied-over existing tapes from East German bands or singers, and often copied Western radio shows beaming into the Zone.¹²⁸⁶ DJs from RTL, RIAS or the BBC often played whole albums because listeners in the socialist bloc were taping the LP on their home stereos—such as when John Peel played the entire three record *Sandinistas!* album by the Clash track by track in the days before its release in 1980. Duplicates were then made for everyone, traded around the country and carried in jacket pockets to be conveniently pulled out at parties—or quickly hidden, if the police made an appearance.¹²⁸⁷ Getting caught with illegal music meant confiscation and sometimes a jail term: arrested in possession of an illegal Schleim-Keim cassette, a Gotha-born youth was lucky to avoid jail time in 1984 despite being charged with ‘disturbing the socialist peace’ (§ 220 Öffentliche Herabwürdigung der staatlichen Ordnung).¹²⁸⁸

¹²⁸⁵ See Lindner, *DDR: Rock & Pop*, p.186. For the Toten Hosen album, see *Der Durchbruch*, Nr. 4 (Hasbergen: 1985), p.11.

¹²⁸⁶ See Bernd Stöver, “Radio mit kalkuliertem Risiko. Der RIAS als US-Sender für die DDR 1946-1961,” in *Zwischen Pop und Propaganda. Radio in der DDR*, eds., Klaus Arnold und Christoph Classen (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2004), pp.209-228.

¹²⁸⁷ Punks from Weimar, Sömmerda, and the surrounding area, for example, would come to Dieter ‘Otze’ Ehrlich’s house in Stotternheim to tape punk music. See BStU, MfS, BV Erfurt, AOP 1794/83, Bd. V/1, OV “Gitter,” Betr.: Einschätzung zu der Person Ehrlich, Dieter, 8 February 1983, p.99.

¹²⁸⁸ BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr. 10321, Teil 1 von 2, EV, 5 November 1984, pp. 221-230.

Cassettes and cheap tape recorders were likewise used to record practices or concerts and then to distribute them by hand among friends. Since non-registered bands could not record in the few state controlled studios, using a simple tape recorder—often brought home from the West by relatives or bought from Intershops—bands could quickly produce live tapes and then distributed them across the country: some estimate that hundreds of punks around the country were listening to the same duplicated cassette recording at the same time.¹²⁸⁹ Since recording in such a manner required minimal capital expenses—a tape recorder and single microphone placed in the center of the room—bands were able to easily record an album, thus participating in the same democratizing impulse that home recording had inaugurated in the West. Even if the sound quality of the recording was often poor, bands across the country could easily record and thereby enable young East Germans access to GDR punk. Further, these recordings were instrumental in transmitting a distinctive East German punk sound across the GDR and even into the West: East Berlin punks used recorded Eastern cassettes to trade with Westerners for rare products such as smuggled Western LPs.¹²⁹⁰ Susanne Binas has referred to these cassettes as carriers of ‘secret messages,’ an apt description of their function in the East German punk scene since they allowed an alternative means of producing and distributing punk music discretely throughout the country and accessible only to those with the cultural fluency to unlock their encrypted missives.¹²⁹¹

Smuggling Western records into the GDR was another means of distributing punk in the East. Since Western punk records were not available in the state record stores, youths seeking Western punk often had to travel outside the GDR to acquire these forbidden sounds. Unable to

¹²⁸⁹ Susanne Binas, “Die ‘anderen Bands’ und ihre Kassettenproduktionen – Zwischen organisiertem Kulturbetrieb und selbstorganisierten Kulturformen,” in *Rockmusik und Politik. Analysen, Interviews und Dokumente*, eds., Peter Wicke and Lothar Müller (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 1996), pp.48-60.

¹²⁹⁰ Konstantin Junkersdorf, “Wie ‘Blixa 2’ zu seinem neuen Haarschnitt kam oder Punks in der DDR,” *Zitty*, Nr. 3, 1983, p.57.

¹²⁹¹ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.455-471.

travel West, youths instead took trains East. Arriving in Warsaw, Budapest or Prague to purchase punk products, a lively exchange culture developed between youths in the GDR and these much visited socialist capitals.¹²⁹² With laxer import rules and more space to evade restrictions than in the GDR, punks often travelled to Budapest and loaded up on Western fanzines, records and clothing.¹²⁹³ Despite the relative ease with which punks could travel to their fellow communist brother-nations, returning home with their illicit goods was nevertheless difficult: often they were forced to hide their ill-gotten-gains such as concealing illegal punk albums in Schlager record sleeves. Punks were frequently stopped at the border, the contraband was confiscated, and sometimes even found themselves arrested: in 1988, a group of six Polish punks traveling to the East Berlin for the Frühlingsfest at the Erlöserkirche were stopped and detained because they were caught attempting to bring LPs and print literature to distribute and sell at the festival.¹²⁹⁴ Despite the difficulties in smuggling punk goods home, socialist neighbor-states continued to be a source of illicit traffic for East German youths who used the system to their own advantage.

On 1 August 1984, acquiring Western punk records suddenly became much easier.

Bowing to pressure exerted by the FRG to offer political concessions in exchange for loans that

¹²⁹² Scholars often link tourism with capitalism. As Kevin Meethan put it, tourism “is part of the process of commodification (or commoditization) and consumption inherent in modern capitalism.” But as Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker remind us, tourism, consumerism, and consumption “became a part of the modern world in the twentieth century that transcended ideological or economic systems.” See Kevin Meethan, *Tourism in Global Society: Place, Culture, Consumption* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p.4 and Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker, “Introduction,” in *Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist under Capitalism and Socialism*, Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker, eds. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), p.6. On GDR tourism as a means of attaining goods or experiences unavailable in East Germany, see Alon Confino, “The Travels of Bettina Humpel: One Stasi File and Narratives of State and Self in East Germany,” in *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics*, eds., Katherine Pence and Paul Betts (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008), pp.133-154.

¹²⁹³ See *Seelenqual*, Nr. 3 (Indersdorf: 1984), pp.15-16. On the Polish punk scene, see Timothy W. Ryback, *Rock Around the Bloc: A History of Rock Music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp.180-190. On the Hungarian punk scene, see Anna Szemere, *Up from the Underground: The Culture of Rock Music in Postsocialist Hungary* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001); and Anna Szemere, “The Politics of Marginality: A Rock Musical Subculture in Socialist Hungary in the Early 1980s,” in *Rockin’ the Boat: Mass Music and Mass Movements*, ed., Reebee Garofalo (Boston: South End Press, 1992), pp.93-115.

¹²⁹⁴ BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr. 10321, Teil 2 von 2, Operativinformation Nr. 15/88, 2 May 1988, pp.329-331.

by this time were crucial to maintaining East German solvency, state authorities in the GDR began allowing older residents to travel to West Berlin. Eastern travelers were allowed to bring back goods purchased in the FRG, and became an important source of Western goods that began to circulate in the GDR. Punks also took advantage of this ease on travel restrictions. Sending order lists with their grandparents to pick up records for them while in West Berlin, punks copied addresses and phone numbers of West Berlin record stores culled from Western radio programs and fanzines (broadcast with this purpose in mind). Returning home after visiting a relative in West Berlin and carrying a couple of LPs, Eastern border guards were less likely to check the senior-citizens exhaustively for contraband material. Even if security forces did happen to search the returning seniors, West Berlin record stores employees usually hid punk LPs in Frank Sinatra jackets because they knew that whenever an elderly GDR-citizen entered the store and purchased some punk albums, the records were destined for East German youths.¹²⁹⁵ In the GDR punk documentary *ostPUNK!*, Mike Göde fondly remembers sending his grandmother to the record store Core-Tex in West Berlin with a list of albums he wanted.¹²⁹⁶ Smuggling records shows how punks were able to circumvent state authorities in order to consume Western music in the GDR.

Like music, fashion was another element of the subculture based heavily in DIY and part and parcel of punk's critique of the political order. The key difference between punk fashion in the GDR and the West was that Eastern youths could not simply buy punk clothing in specialized boutiques as they could in the West: while Western punks often evoked the rhetoric of DIY when it came to fashion, Easterners had no choice. At first, part of the reason was ignorance: only hearing punk on the radio, East German youths did not know how punks should dress.¹²⁹⁷ Later it was a question of opportunity: as Jörg Löffler has pointed out, punks in the East did not have an

¹²⁹⁵ *ostPUNK! too much future.*

¹²⁹⁶ *ostPUNK! too much future.*

¹²⁹⁷ Westhusen, *Zonenpunkprovinz*, p.15.

opportunity to go to Blue Moon in Schöneberg to buy punk clothes.¹²⁹⁸ Still, simply because ‘Blue Moon East’ did not exist, did not mean that Eastern punks did not consume fashion like their Western counterparts and they similarly invested their dressing patterns with meaning. Nor does Löffler’s romanticized image of ‘authentic’ punk in the East tell the whole story: punks often made trips to Budapest or Warsaw where they could purchase ‘punk-fashions’ that they could not in the GDR. While Löffler’s comment about DIY fashion in the East is overstated, nonetheless, DIY fashion was more prevalent in the East than in the West. Usually reclamation projects, punk fashions were often pulled from rubbish heaps and then modified to suit their owners new purposes: as Dick Hebdige noted years ago, bricolage was a crucial component of youth cultures in general and punk specifically.¹²⁹⁹ Since punk clothing was often based in the destruction of fashion rather than creation, DIY style fit in well with GDR fashion traditions of improvisation.¹³⁰⁰ Torn leather jackets and boots were often found discarded in garbage piles throughout the GDR and punks salvaged and patched them that gave them a gritty, authentic look: a Dresden youth’s father cut up his leather jacket but he sewed it back together again and wore it anyway.¹³⁰¹ Buttons were homemade—a self-made sticker glued onto a beer cap—while some punks were able to make metal spikes at their industrial jobs.¹³⁰²

As we saw in the West, the locally-rooted punk scenes were nationalized through the production of music, and the criticism and debate fostered by the alternative press about punk music. In the East, neither the production of GDR punk music nor was the alternative press crucial in binding the punk scene together. Instead, acts of face-to-face contact—hanging out

¹²⁹⁸ “No Reissbrett: Punk in der DDR,” p.116. See also “Was machen die Bands von damals Heute?” *Taugenix: Deutschpunk Fanzine*, Nr. 4 (Celle: 2008), p.63.

¹²⁹⁹ Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London and New York: Routledge, 1979).

¹³⁰⁰ Stitzel, *Fashioning Socialism*, pp.49-77.

¹³⁰¹ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, p.266.

¹³⁰² “Was machen die Bands von damals Heute?” *Taugenix*, p.63.

together or attending a concert—were the sinews that bound the GDR punk scene together. As observed above, the gatherings at the Plänterwald in East Berlin in the first years of the GDR punk scene was the most important national gathering as punks from across the state travelled to the capital every weekend. When the Plänterwald was shut to punks in 1982 and the regime subsequently moved to repress the subculture the following year, the scene, as a national entity, was reduced to rumor. Face-to-face contact was thus essential in asserted the idea that Eastern punk was a movement, was an alternative community, and was a unified whole. While face-to-face contact was not unimportant in the West, it attained a much higher degree of importance in the East precisely because punk commodities such as records and fanzines did not exist to link the larger scene together: and in the GDR, concerts were the single most important face-to-face activity, one that defined Eastern punk.

As a collective experience, concerts enabled punks from all over the GDR to come into contact with one another, negotiate community, and act out experimental dreams, if only for a couple of hours at a time. Concerts were more than simply listening to performers playing music: music was traded, relationships were formed, individual's life histories were shaped, ideas were shared, poetry was read—even plays were on more than one occasion performed. Concerts became events that confirmed to youths the existence of another GDR, one based on difference, individuality and *Anderssein*. With no recorded East German punk music to speak of, the concert experience itself became the only consumable punk product in the GDR, and this product, perhaps, became even more important than the actual music performed.

Arriving early, producing your ticket, finding a seat, and listening to the music were not how punk concerts in the East operated. Concerts were rare, and youths traveled up to 300 kilometers distance to experience a punk concert often waking up early in the morning and then

traveling by train, bus or hitchhiking. While posters advertised upcoming shows in the West, in the East, word of mouth had to suffice since authorities continually attempted to hinder these events. While this method was necessary, the so-called “flüstern-method” (‘whisper-campaign’) often caused problems: on more than one occasion punks heard about a concert in a far away city only to show up and find no concert taking place. Concerts could be spontaneous: in the film *flüstern & SCHREIEN*, Feeling B set up on a North Sea beach and played an impromptu concert for bathers as the sun set.¹³⁰³

As in the West, the punk concert was an attempt to break down the barriers between audience and performer. Sometimes audience members got up and joined the band on stage; other times, the self-made equipment would blow up after only three songs. Unknown bands would show up unannounced and convince organizers to let them share the stage. Practice sessions often transformed into concerts as a dozen friends crammed into a squatted basement or apartment living room to listen to their friends hammer out a few songs and later leave with ears ringing. Even listening demanded active engagement since it was difficult to make out the lyrics due to low-quality equipment. The poor or self-made guitar and amplifiers used by punks meant that live, punk songs were a jumble of distortion and yelling. As in the West, concerts were a colorful mix of controlled (and sometimes not-so-controlled) chaos.

The first concerts took place wherever they could. The *Dachboden* or attic-space in East German apartment buildings saw many a live set but concerts also took place in squatted or empty buildings where bands practiced and lived. Bands such as Tapentenwechsel convinced school authorities to let them play at their high school *Abschlußfest*, and were sandwiched between a poetry reading and a Volkskunst presentation.¹³⁰⁴ Members of Rosa Extra, one of the

¹³⁰³ *flüstern & SCHREIEN. ein rockreport* (DVD, director Dieter Schumann, 1987).

¹³⁰⁴ Renner and Meins, “Neue Musik aus der DDR – die real existierende Welle (Teil 1),” p.19.

early East Berlin-based bands, managed to convince their secondary school teacher to let them have a concert in the school gym. After three songs the band was forced to stop and the teacher was subsequently fired.¹³⁰⁵ Concerts in apartments were rare since the loud noise quickly attracted the ire of neighbors. More often than not, a restaurant, bar or community hall witnessed one punk concert and no more, as organizers registered the event as a marriage reception or private party to conceal the real nature of the show from authorities; afterwards, the owners would vow never to host a punk concert again.¹³⁰⁶

The live performance was the zenith of Eastern punk. Since the illegal punk bands could not record albums, concerts were the only means by which Ostpunks could consume their own music. Moreover, the lack of concerts in the East resulted in an important consequence: their very scarcity fueled the desire for authentic concert experience that crucially elevated punk concerts to the status of ‘events.’ And punk concerts became ‘events’ because they created stories. As we saw in the West, famous concerts became badges of authenticity: to say ‘one was there’ was a means of establishing one’s credibility, a method of demonstrating legitimacy and authenticity. Eastern punks could insert their personal concert experiences into a narrative flow of rebellion. Concerts became unique moments in time, moments that authorities only reinforced with their repressive methods: punks were sometimes arrested the day before concerts took place; or the police intercepted trains full of punks heading to concerts and shipped them back to their originating city; or expensive equipment such as microphones at the concert site was sometimes damaged or stolen by agents. A punk could ‘make it’ to a concert by outwitting the police while her friends were ‘caught’. Regardless of the outcome, both endings resulted in the creation of individual historical narratives; stories that could be retold and help constitute the

¹³⁰⁵ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.502-503.

¹³⁰⁶ See Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.348-353.

national scene. Indeed, the very scarcity of concerts in the East helped turn those concerts that did manage to take place into extraordinary experiences.

Conclusions

By 1982, when Furian began gathering information on punk, the subculture had established itself in East Germany as an alternative space sustained by a rough ideological outlook and structures whose members defined themselves in opposition to mainstream society and its authoritarian political order. With no record scene or alternative press to bind the community together, the punk scene sustained itself with shared ideas on music and politics, and through regular meetings and sporadic but eventful concerts. In gathering in the Plänterwald every weekend, punk became an indelible component of the GDR everyday much to the dismay of authorities. While the total number of East German punks was never more than a minority of GDR youths, punk's presence in the GDR was never strictly about numbers. As more and more punks gathered in public, authorities became increasingly aware of the ways in which the subculture challenged the foundations of East German identity and state policy. At the same time that Gilbert Furian was conducting interviews with East Berlin punks, state officials were coming to terms with the dramatic realization that they could no longer simply refuse to acknowledge the existence of punk in the GDR. And in August 1983, Erich Mielke, head of the Ministry for State Security, finally ordered the Stasi to move 'Härte gegen Punk.'

Chapter 9: ‘Härte gegen Punk’: State Responses to the East German Punk Scene

“Nazis wieder in Ostberlin”

Persecution of the Jews – Mass slaughter, over Germany’s dark night!
Nazis, Nazis, Nazis again in East Berlin!

Big slogans, too much power, have only made shit!
Nazis, Nazis, Nazis again in East Berlin!

Big parades, hidden truncheons, have brought us to the abyss!
Nazis, Nazis, Nazis again in East Berlin!

Red slogans, Soviet power, have destroyed Germany!
Nazis, Nazis, Nazis again in East Berlin!

Namenlos, “Nazis wieder in Ostberlin,” *Namenlos 1983-89* (Höhnle Records 097, 2007)

On 30 April 1983, the largest East German punk festival to date took place in Halle in the Christuskirche. Organized by Moritz Götze, guitarist for a Halle-based band, and youth pastor Siegfried Neher, the concert featured music by a number of GDR punk bands: Planlos, Größenwahn, Namenlos, Restbestand and Wutanfall. Beginning at 4 pm, the ‘Evangelischer Jugendabend’ was watched by several hundred fans that traveled to Halle that day from cities across the GDR. Although technically illegal, punk bands had been performing sporadically at Jugend Werkstätten (Youth Workshops) in Protestant Churches since 1981 under the aegis of youth outreach programs catering to young Easterners such as Offene Arbeit (Open Work) and supported by a number of sympathetic younger ministers such as Neher.¹³⁰⁷ By the first week of May, reports about the Halle concert began appearing on desks in the Ministry for State Security.

¹³⁰⁷ On the Offene Arbeit, see Henning Pietzsch, *Jugend zwischen Kirche und Staat: Geschichte der kirchlichen Jugendarbeit in Jena 1970-1989* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2005). On its relation to the wider East German opposition, see Ehrhart Neubert, *Geschichte der Opposition in der DDR 1949-1989* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2000), pp.289-299, 426-441, 685-690.

Particularly disturbing were lyrics belonging to one of the Berlin-based bands: “Cops behind me, cops before me / Beat the cops to death if you see them.”¹³⁰⁸ While Namenlos remained unidentified, lyrics attacking the regime immediately alerted the Stasi to the potential for trouble.¹³⁰⁹

In June, Namenlos performed again, this time at the Erlöserkirche in East Berlin at a ‘Blues-Messe’ (Blues Mass). Following the 1978 church-state agreement that secured space for ‘a church within socialism,’ elements within the Protestant Churches pushed to broaden religious influence, especially among young Easterners. Organized at first by Pastor Rainer Eppelmann in several East Berlin-area churches from the late-1970s to the mid-1980s, the Blues-Messen featured music, religious sermons, and tentative political discussion to the exasperation of the regime.¹³¹⁰ While the blues fans received Namenlos poorly, throwing stones, bottles and even bratwurst at the band, according to more sympathetic eye-witnesses, the band played a blistering set.¹³¹¹ Singing subversive songs such as ‘Lied über die Staatsgrenze,’ ‘Nazis wieder in Ostberlin’ and ‘MfS-Lied,’ Namenlos raucously attacked the regime and its policies. In August, the MfS opened Operation ‘Namenlos’ with “subversion” (*Zersetzung*) of the band being the

¹³⁰⁸ BStU, MfS, BV Halle, Sachakten 265, Bericht zum Punkertreffen in der Christusgemeinde am 30. April 1983, 5 May 1983, p.51. For further details on the concert, see BStU, MfS, BV Halle KD Halle VIII 55/82, Bd. 2, Operative Information, pp.106-108.

¹³⁰⁹ The band wanted to remain nameless to help avoid detection but the poster for the 30 April 1983 concert called them Namenlos, so they kept it. Rebecca Hillauer, “Aufgepasst, du wirst bewacht...!” *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 21 February 2003, p.2.

¹³¹⁰ On the Blues-Messe, see Dirk Moldt, *Zwischen Haß und Hoffnung: Die Blues-Messen 1979-1986* (Berlin: Robert Havemann-Gesellschaft, 2008); Michael Rauhut and Thomas Kochan, eds., *Bye Bye, Lübben City. Bluesfreaks, Tramps und Hippies in der DDR*, erweiterte neuauflage (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2009).

¹³¹¹ On the 24 June 1983 concert specifically, see Moldt, *Zwischen Haß und Hoffnung*, pp.289-301; and Ronald Galenza and Heinz Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...: Punk, New Wave, HipHop und Independent-Szene in der DDR 1980-1990* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2005), pp.508-509. The concert was still remembered years later by eye-witnesses, see Ian Walker, *Zoo Station: Adventures in East and West Berlin* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1987), pp.27-28, 92.

primary objective.¹³¹² All four musicians were arrested and were confronted with damning lyrics such as “Do you work for Erich – no! / Do you work for the party – no! / Do you work for Russia – no!” On 3 February 1984, each band member was convicted by a Pankow district court of ‘slandering the state’ (§ 220 Öffentlicher Herabwürdigung): Michael Horschig and Jana Schlosser, the principal lyricists, were sentenced to one and a half years each; bassist Frank Masch was given one year; and drummer Mita Schammel—a minor at the time—spent six weeks in prison.¹³¹³

Operation ‘Namenlos’ set in motion a massive crackdown on the genre that is useful to investigate because it highlights why popular music was so contested in East Germany. By using music to voice discontent with ‘real-existing socialism,’ youths mobilized punk to confront the legitimacy of the SED state. Under its auspices, Minister for State Security Erich Mielke ordered the Stasi to move violently against the small Eastern punk scene. As the oral command outlined, “[t]he minister has given the order to move ‘hard’ against ‘punk’ to prevent further escalation of the movement.”¹³¹⁴ The order inaugurated a year-long offensive by state security forces that nearly crippled the Eastern punk scene. Known punks were jailed or drafted into the army (National Volksarmee, or NVA). Those with applications to emigrate (Übersiedlungsantrag) were speedily issued exit papers. Several illegally existing punk bands were forcibly split up and the rest penetrated with spies. Punks were forbidden to associate with one another publicly (Umgangsverbote), banned from restaurants, refused entry into youth clubs, and even prohibited from entering certain city districts (Aufenthaltsverbote). Of an estimated two thousand punks in

¹³¹² For a detailed consideration of the policy of *Zersetzen* (which means ‘to undermine,’ ‘to subvert,’ or ‘to break down’) and its place within Stasi operations from the 1970s onwards, see Sandra Pingel-Schliemann, *Zersetzen: Strategie einer Diktatur* (Berlin: Robert-Havemann-Gesellschaft, , 2004).

¹³¹³ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, AOP 3316/85, Bd. 1, Abschlußbericht zum OV “Namenlos,” 9 February 1984, pp.276-280.

¹³¹⁴ BStU, MfS, OV “Namenlos,” BV Berlin, AU 4425/84, Bd. 3, Absprachevermerk, 9 August 1983, p.95.

the GDR in early 1983, a year later authorities estimated that less than half were still affiliated with the subculture.¹³¹⁵

Why, after several years of uneasy tolerance, did the MfS respond so forcefully to punk? Why did the SED regime feel so threatened by such a marginal youth subculture? By exploring the ways in which the regime tried to make sense of punk we can understand why SED authorities responded with such violence to the genre, and investigate the consequences of these actions: by persecuting the subculture to the edge of extinction, the state pushed punks into the Evangelical Churches where they became socialized into the political opposition and eventually helped contribute to toppling the regime. While most scholarship on the GDR under Honecker focuses on increasing economic weakness and political rigidity, grass-roots cultural forms likewise helped destabilize SED authority by challenging the moral legitimacy of the state and were crucial for the coalescence of the opposition movement in the late 1980s.¹³¹⁶ In the historical literature, some studies suggest that opposition in the later decades of the GDR was more often found in the minds of the upper-level SED officials than in reality: classically expressed by Karl Wilhelm Fricke, that enemies in the GDR were ‘determined by the system’ because the state categorized all activity not under its control as dissent.¹³¹⁷ In Mike Dennis’ succinct overview of the MfS, for example, the author discusses punk under the heading “Creating an Enemy.”¹³¹⁸ Likewise, Jeannette Z. Madarász, in her study of conflict and

¹³¹⁵ BStU, MfS, ZAIG 3366, Information über beachtenswerte Erscheinungen unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen in der DDR, 18 May 1984, p.4.

¹³¹⁶ For a succinct overview of East German scholarship that highlights the predominance of economic and political understanding, see Corey Ross, *The East German Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of the GDR* (London: Arnold, 2002).

¹³¹⁷ Karl Wilhelm Fricke, *Opposition und Widerstand in der DDR. Ein politischer Report* (Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1984), pp.18-20.

¹³¹⁸ Mike Dennis, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality* (London: Pearson, 2003), p.141. According to Marc-Dietrich Ohse, “Often it was the SED itself which ‘created’ its opponents through obstruction and political misinterpretation. This became particularly clear in its response to alternative cultural forms, especially subversive youth culture. Such subcultures were expressions of social distinction and generational conflict and not genuinely politically motivated.”

compromise under Honecker, stresses that the regime itself was often responsible for manufacturing enemies: “The state turned them [subcultures] into potential dissidents by isolating them and not providing space for their activities.”¹³¹⁹ While not incorrect, more often than not these arguments tend to deny political consciousness to youths by rendering them passive and removed from any active agency.

But as we saw in the previous chapter, punk was a challenge to the East German regime and while young punks concentrated in the first few years on carving out space for their alternative culture, as the lyrics to ‘Nazis wieder in Ostberlin’ suggest, they became increasingly public and explicitly oppositional; Mielke had cause to be hard. Mobilizing the language of rebellion and toying with notions of revolution, punk stylized itself as a threat to the regime that, in the end, was treated as such by SED authorities. By investing youth with such hopes for the future, when young East Germans rejected this vision, then the threat they represented was tremendous. On a very basic level, in claiming total control over its charges and then failing to provide for their needs, SED youth policy was often in bitter opposition to the actual desires of youths themselves.

The question then is not why did the regime order ‘Härte gegen Punk’ but why was this order given in the summer of 1983? Here the role of the West is essential and indicates how the ‘größer Nachbar’ (larger neighbor) increasingly influenced the GDR in pursuing policies that, in the end, only worked to further undermine the state. Precisely as bands such as Namenlos began performing for larger GDR audiences, aided by eased travel restrictions won under the auspices of détente, Western journalists discovered Eastern punk and detailed the scene in a

See Marc-Dietrich Ohse, “German Democratic Republic,” in *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe: Origins of Civil Society and Democratic Transition*, eds., Detlef Pollack and Jan Wielgohs (Aldershot, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), p.87.

¹³¹⁹ Jeannette Z. Madarász, *Conflict and Compromise in East Germany, 1971-1989: A Precarious Stability* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp.140, 153-161.

number of articles and reports. At the same time, Eastern punks began circumventing the Iron Curtain and communicating to the outside world by publishing reports in the West, and even managing to release music in West Germany. These accounts and activities shocked the upper leadership cadres of the SED who worried that Eastern punk was damaging the image of the GDR abroad and efforts at home to foster a distinct socialist society. In fact, in important ways, it was actually the political resonance that Western reports gave to Eastern punk that fully convinced SED authorities to move ‘Härte gegen Punk’—fundamentally, Western privileging amplified punk’s political critique well beyond the subculture’s small numbers. As Western observers zoomed in onto punk as a source of opposition in the GDR, the subculture came to embody publicly the failure of East German socialism: the celebrated punk slogan ‘No Future’ evolved into a powerful rhetorical thrust against a regime whose entire *raison d’être* was centered on building utopia.

‘Härte gegen Punk’ thus marks a critical turning point in the history of East German punk and illuminates the important role played by the West in influencing events in the GDR. By interpreting punk as a Western cultural Trojan Horse meant to corrupt Eastern youths, ‘Härte gegen Punk’ shows why the SED was never able to incorporate musical subcultures like punk into society successfully and why these small subcultural forms became sources of tremendous friction within GDR society. The SED responded to punk with devastating force, a response suggesting fragility and weakness; an (over-)reaction which only worked to further destabilize an already tottering regime.

‘Punk Biographies’ and Eastern Interpretations of the Genre

GDR – STATE BORDER! STOP OR I SHOOT!!!

(shots, screams)

Electric fence and barbed wire – so that no one dares cross – from East and West

Automatic firing device and minefield – so that we like it here – in Germany, Germany East

Murderers in the border turrets – prevent our path to you – to Germany, Germany West

Dog patrols do bite – to pinch us before freedom (impudence) – because that’s just the way things are

Blood hound, wall, barbed wire – supports the concentration camp machinery – in our beautiful (shitty) state

Germany, Germany East – Germany, Germany West – East and West, East and West

Namenlos, “Lied über die Staatsgrenze,” *Namenlos 1983-89*
(Höhnle Records 097, 2007)

To understand why the state responded so forcefully to punk, we must first explore how the regime understood the subculture. While no official SED position on punk exists since authorities refused to acknowledge the existence of the genre in East Germany, we can nonetheless read how the regime made sense of the genre through the records of the secret police files and reports that appeared in the GDR press. As a forum of dissemination rather than debate, the East German media was used by the SED to educate its readers about the unattractiveness of its western cousin, and spilt considerable ink using punk to this end.¹³²⁰ Claiming that punk was a symptom of Western decadence and degeneration, the result of moral, political and social corruption, the state media used punk to reaffirm the socialist economic road to communism by elevating the moral righteousness of the GDR.¹³²¹ Indeed, according to these early statements,

¹³²⁰ Simone Barck, Christoph Classen and Thomas Heinmann, “The Fettered Media: Controlling Public Debate,” in *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, ed., Konrad H. Jarausch, trans. by Eve Duffy (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2006), pp.213-239.

¹³²¹ The state media often focused on Western social ills—drugs, unemployment, homelessness—to condemn their capitalist rivals. See, for example, the series “Leute in der anderen deutschen Republik” that ran in *Junge Welt* in January 1988: “Fata Morgana im Kopf und im Magen Heroin,” *Junge Welt*, 13 January 1988, p.4; “Ob es lohnt? Es

the socio-economic conditions producing punk did not even exist in the GDR. Charged with ‘solving’ the punk problem, the Stasi kept copious files on the subculture as it sought to understand its adversary and then eliminate it. Both press and MfS believed punk was rooted in capitalist inequality and posited that the genre was a form of Western cultural imperialism whose intent was to corrupt East German youth. However, by interpreting the genre as a Western cultural policy, SED authorities and cultural critics were forced to explain why East German youths appeared so susceptible. To do so, they privatized the genre, locating the site of punk ‘conversion’ within the home and blaming individual moral weakness rather than collective socialist failures.

The programmatic statement on punk in the GDR was entitled “Krisenkultur von der Müllhalde” (‘Cultural Crisis from the Garbage Dump’) and appeared in the SED party organ *Neues Deutschland* on 3/4 June 1978.¹³²² With a subtitle stressing punk’s historical continuity as a political subculture (“After the hippies came the punks”) and its personification of crisis in Western capitalism and society (“A new fashion trend channels the problems of youth in capitalism”), the article classified punk as a “counter-culture” (*Gegenkultur*) protesting the “commodity fetishism” (*Warenfetischismus*) of the West. Arguing that punk was produced by the economic crisis then gripping the West, Ingolf Bossenz’s interpretation of the genre represented the official ideological understanding of the subculture that would remain in force until the end of the 1980s. Emerging as “spontaneous, aimless protest of young people who expect nothing more from the capitalist system,” punk appeared in Western countries due to “the intensifying capitalist economic crisis that, especially among youth has left a feeling of economic insecurity and growing fear for the future.” Quoting the *Süddeutscher Zeitung* approvingly,

gibt keine Alternative!” *Junge Welt*, 20 January 1988, p.4; and “Hasch und Heroin zwischen Deutsch und Mathe,” *Junge Welt*, 27 January 1988, p.2.

¹³²² Ingold Bossenz, “Krisenkultur von der Müllhalde,” *Neues Deutschland*, 3/4 June 1978, p.16.

Bossenz suggested that youths “need a valve, in order to vent their frustrations about the economic situation that affects them especially.”

Over the years, numerous articles and books reinforced the official position with lurid depictions of punk fashion, violence and especially the scene’s flirtation with fascism that seemingly confirmed the GDR’s claim that the FRG was a continuation of Nazi Germany.¹³²³ In his slim but influential book on rock music—one of only a few ever produced in the GDR—Stefan Lasch, long-time moderator at youth radio DT 64, spoke for many when he wrote that punk “was and is a socially limited musical phenomenon in highly developed capitalist states,” a genre that had “its roots in the unstable social structure...in the despair of young people and the hopelessness of the capitalist social system.”¹³²⁴ Musically, the genre was considered “illiteracy” and derided as a “so-called musical style.”¹³²⁵ Veteran East German rockers Lift claimed that for the development of the GDR music scene, punk was “hardly the right alternative.”¹³²⁶ Lyrics were considered irrelevant (“The lyrics are actually all the same”) and commentators agreed that “there is no (real) music there.”¹³²⁷ In the *Junge Welt*, cultural critic Günther Görtz argued that punk was a fad dreamt up by marketers seeking to commodify protest. Linking punk’s musical rise to stagnation in the current rock scene—one of punk’s own origin myths—Görtz suggested that the music industry was desperate to discover the next big trend.¹³²⁸ As *Neues Leben* succinctly observed four months later, “[t]he great days of the Beatles were over a long time

¹³²³ See Mary Fulbrook, *German National Identity after the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), esp. pp.55-67.

¹³²⁴ Stefan Lasch, *PS: Rockmusik*, 2nd ed. (Berlin, 1983), pp.35, 37.

¹³²⁵ Günther Görtz, “Punk: Profit mit Protest,” *Junge Welt*, 14 December 1977, p.5; and Charles R. Allen, “Fäulnis mit Musik,” *Weltbühne*, Nr. 45, 10 November 1981, pp.1415-1416.

¹³²⁶ “DDR-Rocker gegen „Neue deutsche Welle“,” *Volksblatt Berlin*, 11 June 1982, p.13.

¹³²⁷ Wolfgang Kohrt, “Die Kinder aus der Mülltonne,” *Neues Leben*, Nr. 9, September 1982, pp.9-10.

¹³²⁸ Günther Görtz, “Punk: Profit mit Protest,” *Junge Welt*, 14 December 1977, p.5.

ago.”¹³²⁹ Still, while politically the subculture was lambasted as a marketed parody of rebellion, authors nonetheless agreed that the capitalist economic system had originally produced punk: “Without a doubt the punk movement emerged first as an opposition movement against the deterioration of the social situation of many youths in capitalism.”¹³³⁰ Readers responded to these articles by wondering if punks, the system producing punk, or both, were sick.¹³³¹

These interpretations of punk recapitulated much of what Western critics were saying which is understandable since, unable to visit London or Düsseldorf in person, GDR ‘experts’ on punk relied almost exclusively on the Western press for information as the press-clipping files in the Stasi archive reinforce.¹³³² However, Eastern claims that capitalist socio-economic contradictions produced punk presented a difficult dilemma for the regime: how to explain the existence of punk(s) in the GDR? To address this thorny question, Bossenz argued that while in origin punk was an authentic articulation of youthful (working-class) protest, now “it was sent, controlled and diverted by the imperialist propaganda machinery to make [youths] forget the causes and those responsible for the social misery of youth.” Instead, punk was a sophisticated weapon of Western cultural and ideological diversion meant to draw strength away from working-class and anti-imperialist forces. “Today,” so Bossenz, “punk is one of the weapons in the arsenal of bourgeois ideology whereby the masses are manipulated under the label of pseudo-revolutionary protest which stabilizes the imperialist system.” Other articles similarly distanced punk from meaningful change by reasserting the primacy of the SED as the vanguard of

¹³²⁹ Annette Mewis and Lutz Schmidt, “Punk-Rock: die jüngste Welle der westlichen Popmusik,” *Neues Leben*, Nr. 3, March 1978, p.4.

¹³³⁰ Annette Mewis and Lutz Schmidt, “Punk-Rock: die jüngste Welle der westlichen Popmusik,” *Neues Leben*, Nr. 3, March 1978, p.5; Wolfgang Kohrt, “Die Kinder aus der Mülltonne,” *Neues Leben*, Nr. 9, September 1982, p.11.

¹³³¹ “nl im leserbrief,” *Neues Leben*, Nr. 6, June 1978, p.12.

¹³³² See BStU, MfS, ZAIG 10519, Bd. I; and BStU, MfS, ZAIG 10519, Bd. II.

revolution and the GDR as the home of social transformation.¹³³³ By depoliticizing punk, the SED rendered it passive, merely a reflection of economic crisis rather than an attempt to change (Western) society. Moreover, by tying punk to Western infiltration and marketed inauthenticity ('trend'), the Eastern media was able to explain punk in the socialist body politic as a foreign presence—an explanation justifying repressive intervention.

Unsurprisingly, the Stasi arrived at similar conclusions. However unlike the state media, the MfS sought to track down precisely why young Easterners appeared so susceptible to Western cultural forms. Prior to 1981, punks were classified as social deviants, lumped into the oft-used pejorative moral categories of 'asocials' and 'rowdys.'¹³³⁴ As outsiders, punks suffered harassment by East German police—identification verifications, interrogations, and orders to leave public spaces—but incarceration was rare and punishment usually involved seizing “time” in the words of Katherine Verdey rather than more serious legal penalties.¹³³⁵ For example, on the morning of 31 January 1981, a group of nine Weimar punks were questioned on Alexanderplatz due to their “decadent appearances.” Standing near the Centrum department store, the group had attracted the attention of citizens who complained about their clothing to authorities.¹³³⁶ After questioning, East Berlin officials sent the offending youths back to Thuringia without further ado though some of them were soon embroiled in other police

¹³³³ Mewis and Schmidt, “Punk-Rock.” See also Ulrich Schwemin, “Keine Chance für Punks und Popper,” *Junge Welt*, 2 December 1980, p.4.

¹³³⁴ On 'asocials,' see Sven Korzilius, *'Asoziale' und 'Parasiten' im Recht der SBZ/DDR. Randgruppen im Sozialismus zwischen Repression und Ausgrenzung* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2005); and Matthias Zeng, *“Asoziale” in der DDR: Transformationen einer moralischen Kategorie* (Münster: LIT, 2000). On 'rowdys,' see Mark Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs and Rock 'n' Roll: Teenage Rebels in Cold-War East Germany* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009); and Thomas Lindenberger, *Volkspolizei. Herrschaftspraxis und öffentliche Ordnung im SED-Staat 1952-1968* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2003), pp.367-443.

¹³³⁵ Angela 'China' Kowalczyk, *Punk in Pankow. Stasi-“Sieg”: 16jährige Pazifistin verhaftet!* (Berlin: Anita Tykve Verlag, 1996); and Katherine Verdey, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp.39-57.

¹³³⁶ BStU, MfS, HA IX, Nr.9048, Vorkommen mit Jugendlichen und Jungerwachsenen in Berlin-Mitte, 31 January 1981, pp.39-45

operations.¹³³⁷ While the MfS had always been interested in punks arrested by the police, the subculture had not attracted specific attention until late 1981 when the genre was reassigned to Main Directorate XX, the division charged with combating political opposition under the leadership of Mielke's top lieutenant Rudi Mittag.¹³³⁸

The transfer of authority from the criminal police to the Stasi can be explained by the larger political tensions of the day and the growing public prominence of punks in the GDR. Worry about internal security had intensified as the Cold War heated up again in the late 1970s and early 1980s due to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and NATO's double-track decision.¹³³⁹ Domestically, Easterners were growing increasingly restless, a situation expressed by the growth of dissident groups that began to gather in the Evangelical Churches, especially the emerging independent peace movement. In 1980, the first 'Peace Week' took place and members adopted the 'swords into ploughshares' armband as their symbol of protest against the militaristic policies of both superpower blocs. Banned in the winter of 1981-1982, the patch became symbolic of the struggle of the independent peace movement against state hegemony.¹³⁴⁰ By 1981, Eastern punks were regularly gathering in public spaces such as central squares, train stations and parks across the country. Especially on weekends in East Berlin, groups of up to one hundred youths could be found in the Kulturpark Plänterwald (now the Spreepark), or gathered under the television tower at restaurants 'Tute' and 'SB' on Alexanderplatz.¹³⁴¹ The public prominence of punk was a worrying sign for authorities since the early 1980s were becoming a

¹³³⁷ Some lived in a squatted building that came under observation. BStU, MfS, BV Erfurt AOP 772/85, Bd. V/1, Eröffnungsbericht zum Anlagen des Operativ-Vorganges "Blauköpfe," 19 November 1981, pp.26-44.

¹³³⁸ On XX, see Thomas Auerbach, Matthias Braun, Bernd Eisenfeld, Gesine von Prittitz, Clemens Vollnhals, *Hauptabteilung XX: Staatsapparat, Blockparteien, Kirchen, Kultur, 'politischer Untergrund'* (Berlin: BStU, 2008).

¹³³⁹ See Jeffrey Herf, *War By Other Means: Soviet Power, West German Resistance, and the Battle of the Euromissiles* (New York and Toronto: The Free Press, 1991).

¹³⁴⁰ See Pietzsch, *Jugend zwischen Kirche und Staat*, pp.157-244; Neubert, *Geschichte der Opposition in der DDR*, pp.398-404; and Klaus Ehring and Martin Dallwitz, *Schwerter zu Pflugscharen. Friedensbewegung in der DDR* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch, 1982).

¹³⁴¹ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein ...*, pp.30-70.

period of increasing domestic struggle between the state trying to head off dissent before it spread and the burgeoning grass-roots protest groups attempting to break the SED monopoly on power.

Incorporation into the Stasi's spheres of influence did not at first ramp up repression, and it was only in December 1983—i.e. *after* 'Härte gegen Punk'—that the MfS distributed an early draft of its first major statement on punk that argued the genre was "a manifestation of capitalist society and rejects the bourgeois way of life in its entirety. It is a phenomenon based in violence, rejection of society and is pessimistically oriented."¹³⁴² Claiming that punk found its origins solely in Western capitalist society and then "imitated" (Nachahmung) by GDR youths, the circular explained that those appearing in East Germany as punks were manipulated by the Western media seeking to sow dissent in the GDR: "The development of such manifestations among certain youths in the GDR is the result of intensified propagation of such behaviors in the western mass media with the aim of initiating a 'punk movement' following the western example, to drive youths into 'opposition' to the socialist society." The memorandum warned that increasingly, punks were moving towards more open political confrontation: "Particularly important in this regard is that punk groups are increasingly endeavoring to present themselves as oppositional groups, not only through their outward appearances but also through behavior and specific activities including so-called punk rock." Emphasizing punks' "inactivity," "pessimism about the future" and "asocial attitude towards life," the circular was adamant that the subculture was both a reactionary movement tending towards "fascist ideology," while at the same time veering towards "the rejection of every social system, dealing with anarchist thought, glorifying the concept of absolute freedom and keeping themselves busy with violent actions."

¹³⁴² BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.6015, Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen "Punkern" in der DDR, 25 November 1983, pp.76-85. The final version came out seven months later as BStU, MfS, ZAIG 3366, Information über beachtenswerte Erscheinungen unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen in der DDR, 18 May 1984.

Raising fears about punk connections to Western youths and dissidents in the Evangelical Churches, the MfS was convinced that despite the limited appeal of the genre, the subculture was nevertheless extremely dangerous: “Altogether, it is estimated that ‘punks’ represent a numerically limited group of people in the districts, but that they can nonetheless contribute to endanger public order and security because of their appearances against every social/state order and their striving for anarchy, as well as representing a potential reserve of oppositionalists.”

Since according to experts the genre did not have socialist origins, MfS authorities felt compelled to explain why some East Germans became punks. To do so, the Stasi created what I call ‘punk biographies.’ While documenting the status of cases, opening and closing operations, or considering a youth as a potential informer, MfS officials reviewed the case history of the subject in an attempt to establish the moment of punk ‘conversion.’ By locating the precise moment of ‘conversion,’ authorities believed they could then take steps to prevent further acts of Western diversion. ‘Punk biographies’ also served an important ideological function for the MfS. By locating ‘conversion’ in moments of individual moral weakness, they deflected attention away from any hint of socialist inadequacies or state failings. In so doing, the state convinced itself that socialist institutions were blameless, a rationalization which helps partly account for the refusal to reform during the 1980s. Furthermore, the privatization of dissent justified further interventions into the home which, as Paul Betts has recently shown, was one of the last sites escaping systematic penetration by the Stasi and a source of constant worry for the state security apparatus.¹³⁴³

The home was the first site of punk ‘conversion,’ a space long-viewed with suspicion by authorities who argued that the continued existence of the domestic sphere was a vestige of

¹³⁴³ Paul Betts, *Within Walls: Private Life in the German Democratic Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

bourgeois capitalism that stymied attempts to fuse public and private. Homes with solid work records, political loyalty, and strong familial relationships were archetypes of a good socialist environment, and authorities often contrasted youths who grew up in a “politically positive (parental) home” favorably when compared with those tending towards ‘anti-social behavior.’¹³⁴⁴ By contrast, broken homes were highlighted as a key factor when explaining an attraction to punk. Innumerable biographies mention parents or relatives who were unable to exert control over children and the Stasi concluded that in most cases, “no positive influence” was received at home.¹³⁴⁵ Often youths who became punks were ‘problem’ children growing up and there was frequent mention of “up-bringing difficulties.”¹³⁴⁶ Homes lacking a strong father figure, differences in child rearing techniques, psychiatric disorders, divorce and even being “spoiled” (außergewöhnlich verwöhnt) were all cited as ‘causes’ leading to punk.¹³⁴⁷ Poor relationships with members of their Wohnbesitz (residential estate), alcoholism, and even smoking were also sometimes blamed.¹³⁴⁸ With parents shouldering much of the blame for punk, the private world of the home became the focal point of MfS criticism.

While signs of negative attitude could be gleaned from home-life, the Stasi believed actual punk ‘conversion’ nearly always took place at school and usually the result of peer initiation. Despite good upbringing, attentiveness in school, and commitment to state-sponsored activities, youths could still be led astray. This excerpt from a Potsdam case-file, for example,

¹³⁴⁴ BStU, MfS, AOPK 10250/88, Einleitungsbericht zur OPK “Konsum,” 03 April 1986, p.10.

¹³⁴⁵ BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.899, Teil 1 von 2, Einleitungsbericht zum Anlegen einer operativen Personenkontrolle, 17 January 1983, p.132; BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. VI 613, Einleitungsbericht zur operativ-interessanten OPK “Mary,” 25 January 1983, p.5; and BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.6101, Auskunft, 1 October 1984, p.37.

¹³⁴⁶ BStU, MfS, AOPK 12605/79, Eröffnungsbericht zur OPK “Quadrat”, 27 Aug. 1978, p.5; and BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.6101, Auskunft, 1 October 1984, pp.33, 79.

¹³⁴⁷ BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.6101, Auskunft, 3 October 1984, p.31; BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.6101, Auskunft, 1 October 1984, p.33, 37; BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. VI 613, Bericht zum Abschluß der OPK “Mary,” 21 May 1984, p.17; and BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, Nr.3113, Hinweise zu einer Punk-Anhängerin, 14 September 1987, pp.68-69.

¹³⁴⁸ BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.6101, Auskunft, 3 October 1984, pp.30-31; and BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.6101, Auskunft, 1 October 1984, p.33, 36, 38.

illustrates how ‘conversion’ took place: “Approximately at the beginning of the 8th school-year, due to the inadequate supervision in the parental home over her leisure time, the accused increasingly came under the influence of negative youths whereby her school accomplishments and social attitude were worsened.”¹³⁴⁹ All the themes of ‘conversion’ can be found in this excerpt: negative peer group influence; the dangers of leisure time; and a lack of parental authority. Rather than blaming the educational system or state leisure activities, authorities indicted school friends as the principle culprit.¹³⁵⁰ Youths drawn to punk often had numerous arguments in school or suffered from poor grades, and many either dropped out of school or were kicked out for disciplinary breaches.¹³⁵¹ The lack of supervision during free time was considered a major ‘cause.’ When asked to explain the behavior of one East Berlin punk, a school director pointedly shifted the blame by suggesting that the school had no influence over the youth once the school year was finished in July.¹³⁵²

Work was another revealing space. Whereas ‘conversion’ almost never occurred on the job site, behavior while on the clock gave hints as to which youths were more susceptible than others. As we have seen, youths drawn to the genre rejected work as part of their ideology, especially mass production which offered no opportunity for individuality or self-expression. ‘Punk biographies’ suggested that youths attracted to the genre were often withdrawn on the job and had difficulties forming personal relationships with their work colleagues.¹³⁵³ The MfS files innumerate the many difficulties youths drawn to punk had at work such as the inability to work

¹³⁴⁹ BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.6075, Teil 1 von 2, Schlußbericht, April 1986, p.229.

¹³⁵⁰ BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.899, Teil 1 von 2, Einleitungsbericht zum Anlegen einer operativen Personenkontrolle, 17 January 1983, p.131-132; BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.6075, Teil 1 von 2, Schlußbericht, April 1986, p.229-230; and BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.6101, Auskunft, 1 October 1984, pp.79-80.

¹³⁵¹ BStU, MfS, AOPK 2383/88, Bd.1, Ausgangsbericht zur OPK “Rose,” 2 September 1982, p.10; BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.6101, Auskunft, 1 October 1984, p.34, 36; and BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.6075, Teil 1 von 2, Schlußbericht, April 1986, p.229.

¹³⁵² BStU, MfS, AOPK 12605/79, Eröffnungsbericht zur OPK “Quadrat,” 27 August 1978, p.5.

¹³⁵³ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. VI 613, Einleitungsbericht zur operativ-interessanten OPK “Mary”, 25 January 1983, p.4; and BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.6101, Auskunft, 1 Oct. 1984, p.35.

unsupervised, poor work records, and frequent absences.¹³⁵⁴ Punks were disciplined continuously for various work-related infractions.¹³⁵⁵ Character flaws run throughout the reports. Some had “bad reputations;” others were deemed “irresponsible” or “politically uninterested,” and most were considered “easily influenced.”¹³⁵⁶ To put these criticisms in perspective, the character of punk Stasi informer IM ‘Käpp’n’ was extolled upon agreeing to subvert the punk scene in Leipzig: “At work he enjoys popularity attributed to his polite, modest manner and inconspicuous way of acting.”¹³⁵⁷ Ill-discipline and poor character traits were thus evidence to MfS authorities of individual weaknesses and were continuously reiterated to ‘explain’ why certain youths were susceptible to Western influence. By contrast, work was seen as redemptive, even ‘curing’ one East Berlin youth of punk.¹³⁵⁸

Constantly lurking beneath the surface of personal failing was the West. Practically every ‘punk biography’ made reference to the negative impact the Western media was having on Eastern youths. Listening to Western radio or watching Western television was evidence of developing—in the words of the Stasi—“strong Western influences.”¹³⁵⁹ Direct contact with Westerners was equally dangerous and authorities began noticing a disturbing “increase in entry activity by punks from the non-socialist states and West Berlin” to the GDR, a result of the eased restrictions Bonn had won from East Berlin.¹³⁶⁰ Even artistic milieus held dangerous potential.

¹³⁵⁴ BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.6101, Auskunft, 1 October 1984, p.34, 80.

¹³⁵⁵ BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.6075, Teil 1 von 2, Schlußbericht, April 1986, p.229.

¹³⁵⁶ BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.6101, Auskunft, 3 October 1984, p.31; BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.6101, Auskunft, 1 October 1984, p.35, 36, 38-39; BStU, MfS, AOPK 10250/88, Einleitungsbericht zur OPK “Konsum,” 3 April 1986, p.10; BStU, MfS, AOPK 10250/88, Operativinformation Nr. 36/86, 31 January 1986, p.15.

¹³⁵⁷ BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 643/86, Bd. I/1, Vorschlag zur Werbung eines IM im Sicherungsbereich negativ-dekadente Jugendliche/Gruppierungen/Punker, 30 July 1983, p.111.

¹³⁵⁸ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. VI 613, Bericht zum Abschluß der OPK “Mary,” 21 May 1984, p.19.

¹³⁵⁹ BStU, MfS, AOPK 12605/79, Übersichtsbogen zur operativen Personenkontrolle, 27 August 1978, p.3; BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.899, Teil 1 von 2, Einleitungsbericht zum Anlegen einer operativen Personenkontrolle, 17 January 1983, p.131; and BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. VI 613, Bericht zum Abschluß der OPK “Mary,” 21 May 1984, p.17.

¹³⁶⁰ BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.6075, Teil 1 von 2, Schlußbericht, April 1986, p.230; BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.6015, Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen “Punkern” in der DDR, 25 November 1983, pp.79-80. On eased travel, see Patrick

Jan Beyer, singer for the Demokratischen Konsum, was a model student until he began working at the Deutsche Staatsoper, according to the Stasi.¹³⁶¹ The belief that Western diversion was causing youthful unrest in the GDR was not a new claim. Famously, the 17 June 1953 uprising was blamed on Western provocateurs, and other musical ‘incidents’—the 1977 Rolling Stones riot, for example—were similarly blamed on Westerners.¹³⁶² Thus ‘punk biographies’ easily slotted into traditional GDR discourses about foreign threat and enemy infiltration. And by personalizing ‘conversion’—like the GDR press’ emphasis on the marketed nature of the genre—‘punk biographies’ shifted punk from social critique to morality tales of personal failure that necessitated vigilance rather than reform.

While authorities spent considerable effort trying to explain punk theoretically, for the general population who dealt with punks in their daily lives, the subculture caused constant friction. As in the West, punk disdain of everyday society whom they called ‘Stinos’ (Stink normale or stinking normal) was reciprocated tenfold as citizens often complained to police about strangely dressed youths hanging around as the example of the Weimar punks above suggests.¹³⁶³ Older citizens often complained about youths disturbing the public and punk arrest records are littered with convictions for disturbing the peace.¹³⁶⁴ Citizens found punks offensive on three main accounts: their appearances; the damage they caused to public and private property; and the loud noise they made. Punk fashion consistently drew the ire of citizens who

Major, *Behind the Berlin Wall: East Germany and the Frontiers of Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.199-208.

¹³⁶¹ BStU, MfS, AOPK 10250/88, Einleitungsbericht zur OPK “Konsum,” 3 April 1986, p.10.

¹³⁶² See Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs and Rock 'n' Roll*, pp.92-93; and Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*, pp.61-64.

¹³⁶³ BStU, MfS, HA IX, Nr.9048, Information, 1 February 1981, pp.40-44. See also Angela Kowalczyk in “Solidarität und Selbstbehauptung im DDR-Alltag,” in *Materialien der Enquete-Kommission „Überwindung der Folgen der SED-Diktatur im Prozeß der deutschen Einheit .“ (13. Wahlperiode des Deutschen Bundestages) Band V: Alltagsleben in der DDR und in den neuen Ländern*, ed., Deutscher Bundestag (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1999), pp.127-129.

¹³⁶⁴ See, for example, BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam, AKG, Nr.155, Bericht über eine nichtgenehmigte Veranstaltung durch Punks am 03.08.1985 in Bergholz-Rehbrücke, 4 August 1985, pp.221-225.

were shocked when confronted by youths with safety pins shoved through their cheeks or dressed in tattered clothing.¹³⁶⁵ Punk penchant for fascist imagery—Iron Crosses or Swastikas, usually intended as ironic commentary on the present political regime—was likewise met with misunderstanding.¹³⁶⁶ Civilians working security for discos, youth clubs and concerts regularly excluded punks wearing chains and spikes, fearful that such accessories would be used as weapons.¹³⁶⁷

But it was parties that caused the biggest friction between punks and society. Since punk music and bands were banned from playing in official GDR clubs, private parties were the most frequent sites of the punk concert experience. Noise complaints were quickly registered whenever punk bands played or practiced: for this reason, practice spaces found either in church basements or in abandoned buildings lasted the longest.¹³⁶⁸ Loud music and noise, drunkenness, public urination, fighting, destruction of property and general feelings of angst among citizens were all cause for complaint. At a party in Bergholz-Rehbrücke, in the Potsdam district in 1984, for example, a family was attacked by youths after a night of partying.¹³⁶⁹ Punks even came into conflict with fellow oppositionalists. At the squatted apartment complex on Fehrbelliner Straße 7 in East Berlin where Wolfgang Rüdtenklau, Tom Sello, Carlo Jordan and other dissidents lived, the constant parties by punks associated with the bands Rosa Extra and Feeling B disturbed

¹³⁶⁵ BStU, MfS, BV Chemnitz, Nr.3023/88, Bd. I, OV "Punkt," Information, 2 January 1979, p.257. See also Kowalczyk, "Solidarität und Selbstbehauptung im DDR-Alltag," pp.127-128.

¹³⁶⁶ BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, Abt. XX, Nr.00120-01, Informationsbericht Nr. 01/83, 5 January 1983, pp.22-23; BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr.1312/2, Rechtsgerichtete "Punker"-Gruppen, 10 January 1983, pp.3-4. On wearing pictures of Lenin and Hitler on their clothes, see the comments by 'Colonel' in Gilbert Furian and Nikolaus Becker, *"Auch im Osten trägt man Westen."* Punks in der DDR – Und was aus Ihnen geworden ist (Berlin: Verlag Thomas Tilsner, 2000), p.99.

¹³⁶⁷ BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, KD Leipzig-Stadt, Nr.00038, Befragungsprotokoll, 9 September 1984, pp.27-29.

¹³⁶⁸ BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam, AOP, Nr.1591/87, Bd. V/1, Bericht über ein Gespräch mit dem Gen. Oltn. Hopp – ABV in der Hebbelstr., 15 April 1986, p.366.

¹³⁶⁹ BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam, AKG, Nr.155, Bericht über eine nichtgenehmigte Veranstaltung durch Punks am 03.08.1985 in Bergholz-Rehbrücke, 4 August 1985, pp.221-225.

families with small children.¹³⁷⁰ Authorities seemed especially concerned whenever punks traveled great distances or congregated in large groups: even sleeping over after a party tended to draw the attention of the MfS.¹³⁷¹ Most threatening was when punks were causing disturbances that might be witnessed by foreigners such as in East Berlin or at Interhotels.¹³⁷²

While older citizens were more prone to report punks to authorities, younger citizens seemed to have enjoyed taking matters into their own hands. In the early years, young workers especially seemed to enjoy fighting with punks. Part of the reason punks gathered in such large groups publicly was for protection. Michael Horschig, guitarist from Namenlos, recalls being afraid to go to the bathroom in discos for fear of being jumped by ‘Stinos’ and lone punks caught walking home late at night were especially prone to assault.¹³⁷³ In the late 1980s, Nazi Skinheads and football hooligans were particularly dangerous. Skinheads took pride in ‘cleaning up’ the GDR of punk and fans of Berlin FC, the football team that played in Prenzlauer Berg, often roamed the streets after matches looking for punks to fight or throw rocks at squatted punk buildings.¹³⁷⁴ Halle-area punks vividly remember that punks all knew when and where the weekend football matches were taking place because they wanted to avoid the city centers that day or being caught on a train full of hooligans.¹³⁷⁵ Still, despite these violent encounters, as

¹³⁷⁰ Udo Grashoff, *Schwarzwohnen. Die Unterwanderung der staatlichen Wohnraumlenkung in der DDR* (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2011), pp.148-153; and Ronald Galenza and Heinz Havemeister, *Mix mir einen Drink. Feeling B. Punk im Osten* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2003), pp.332-333.

¹³⁷¹ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, Nr.3104, Rapportmeldung, 27 July 1987, pp.37-38.

¹³⁷² BStU, MfS, BV Halle, Abt. XX, Sachakten 3445, Vorkommnis Interhotel “Stadt Halle” am 21.12.1985, 21December 1985, pp.1-2.

¹³⁷³ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.30-34.

¹³⁷⁴ See Ingo Hasselbach with Tom Reiss, *Führer-Ex: Memoirs of a Former Neo-Nazi* (New York: Random House, 1996).

¹³⁷⁵ Westhusen, *Zonenpunkprovinz*, pp.69-74.

numerous memoirs and contemporary reports indicate, punks do seem to have reveled in their hated status and often welcomed these tests of strength, and even to have responded in kind.¹³⁷⁶

Western Media and the *discovery* of Eastern Punk

I don't want any authority! I don't want any more lies! I want no more state borders! I want no more GDR!

I don't want! ... Do you not know, what I want? Do you not know, what I want? Do you not know, what I want?

I don't want any uniforms! I don't want a new army! I don't want any state security! I don't want any more lies!

I don't want! ... Do you know, what I want? ...
You could wake Sleeping Beauty with a kiss! But I believe you have to fight to wake up!

Namenlos, "Ich will Nicht!" *Namenlos 1983-89*
(Höhnle Records 097, 2007)

While the MfS wrestled with the meaning of punk, circumstances in 1982 and 1983 propelled the subculture and state towards open confrontation. Despite rigorous ideological and linguistic gymnastics explaining away punk in the GDR, state officials were never truly at ease with the reality that punk did in fact exist in the GDR. But why did a handful of youths demand such forceful reaction? Because under the watchful eyes of West German tourists and reporters, punks came to represent the failure of East German state socialism under Honecker and the looming specter of dissent. In the early 1980s, Western journalists began detailing the efforts of young East Germans to resist the authoritarian strictures of the SED, and punks functioned as living embodiments of the bankruptcy of the regime and the grass-roots opposition that had begun forming in the GDR. Crucially, as the Western reports made unequivocally clear, the emergence

¹³⁷⁶ See the comments by Mike Göde in *ostPUNK! too much future* (DVD, directors Carsten Fiebeler and Michael Boehlke, 2005).

of alternative lifestyles in the GDR was not a result of Western influence or diversion as the SED claimed, but due to the political, economic, social and psychological want found in ‘real-existing socialism.’ The role played by the West in influencing the East here is critical: by dramatizing the threat posed by punk, Westerners decisively influenced SED policy which, in the end, only further fragmented East German society by driving youths fully into opposition.

Confined to a small subculture, Eastern punk critiques were easily contained. In the early years, authorities successfully restricted punk’s public presence by quickly whisking youths away to the East Berlin police station on Keibelstraße whenever they appeared on Alexanderplatz security cameras.¹³⁷⁷ Small concerts held in attics or the cellars of dilapidated buildings were only watched by audiences in the dozens, and since it was only possible to record a limited number of scratchy demo cassettes that circulated within the scene, punk was confined overwhelmingly to members of the subculture. But when dozens of investigative exposés in Western newspapers, Eastern scene reports in FRG fanzines, and even GDR punk music began appearing in the West in 1982 and 1983, the situation quickly changed. Depicting an alternative youth culture eking out an existence in opposition to mainstream GDR society, the scandalous reports and biting lyrics contested the idealized socialist modernity and youth culture trumpeted by socialist propaganda. Illustrating the importance Eastern authorities gave on the influence of the West, the articles and music were acute sources of embarrassment for a regime desperate to cultivate a distinct socialist identity in the face of increasing Western political, economic, cultural and national hegemony. Moreover, as *Der Spiegel* recognized, the accounts and

¹³⁷⁷ Interview with Bernd Stracke, *Kalpa Vriksche*, Nr.1 (n.p.: n.d.), n.p. See also Kowalczyk, “Solidarität und Selbstbehauptung im DDR-Alltag,” pp.127-129.

activities announced a new dimension to GDR dissent: this generation of Eastern alternatives was willing to make their protest public.¹³⁷⁸

The articles appearing in Western newspapers and magazines all share a common theme: youths turning their backs on ‘real-existing socialism’ in an attempt to build more meaningful community on the margins of society.¹³⁷⁹ Writing for *Observer Magazine* in the UK, Ian Walker vividly describes a party lasting until dawn, a curious mix of punks, bikers, hippies and skinheads communally sharing drinks and dinner while dancing to an eclectic mix of Rolling Stones, Ramones and New Order.¹³⁸⁰ Despite political and police pressure, the articles narrate how youths were throwing their energies into alternate lifestyles that were returning meaning to their lives. As voyeuristic glimpses over the Berlin Wall, anecdotes of repression figured prominently. *Zitty* wrote about frequent arrests and police actions.¹³⁸¹ *Sounds* discussed state control of musical production in the GDR and the inability of Eastern punk bands to make records.¹³⁸² *Der Spiegel* spoke of censorship and generational crisis as youths abandoned a state that—so they claimed—provided them with nothing.¹³⁸³ Infused with the moral language of

¹³⁷⁸ Peter Wensierski and Wolfgang Büscher, “„Wenn du unten bist, trauchst du ab“,” *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 40, 3 October 1983, p.122. See also Peter Wensierski and Wolfgang Büscher, “„Ganz schön kaputt sieht das alles aus“,” *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 41, 10 October 1983, pp.117-134; and Peter Wensierski and Wolfgang Büscher, “„Ich lieb’ dich nicht, du liebst mich nicht“,” *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 42, 17 October 1983, pp.103-133.

¹³⁷⁹ For responses by former Eastern punks to the appearance of themselves in the Western newspaper articles, see the testimony of Bernd Michael Lade in the East Berlin punk reunion documentary *Störung Ost*. Furthermore, as *Der Spiegel* journalist Peter Wensierski reminds viewers, these articles were also important glimpses into life on the other side of the Berlin Wall for Westerners who only had access to official propaganda depictions of life in the GDR. See *Störung Ost: Punks in Ostberlin, 1981-1983* (DVD, directed by Mechthild Katzorke and Cornelia Schneider, 1996).

¹³⁸⁰ Ian Walker, “East Side Story: Children of the Berlin Wall,” *Observer Magazine*, 28 March 1983, p.14.

¹³⁸¹ Konstantin Junkersdorf, “Wie ‘Blixa 2’ zu seinem neuen Haarschnitt kam oder Punks in der DDR,” *Zitty*, Nr. 3, 1983, pp.56-58.

¹³⁸² Tim Renner and Thomas Meins, “Neue Musik aus der DDR – die real existierende Welle (Teil 1),” *Sounds*, Nr. 8, August 1982, pp.18-19; and Tim Renner and Thomas Meins, “Neue Musik aus der DDR – die real existierende Welle (Teil 2),” *Sounds*, Nr. 9, September 1982, pp.18-19.

¹³⁸³ “Zensur aus Punkow,” *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 28, 12 July 1982, p.14; and Peter Wensierski and Wolfgang Büscher, “„Wenn du unten bist,” pp.122-139.

human rights reflecting a post-Helsinki world, the articles were odes to the possibilities of difference in the East under state socialism.

The articles continually reaffirmed that tedium of life behind the Wall and desires for individuality were the major factors pushing youths towards alternative life. When asked why he turned to punk, a youth interviewed by *die tageszeitung* responded that, “well, for the first time to break free from the whole uniform mass, to stand out a little.”¹³⁸⁴ Sabine Bredy, in an article appearing in *Konkret*, argued that the banality of the Eastern rock scene and official youth culture contributed decisively to the move towards punk.¹³⁸⁵ The articles repeatedly mentioned that according to official pronouncements, punk did not even exist in East Germany. This denial of punk in the GDR led to a torturous exchange between Bredy and Reiner Heinemann, then head of the ‘Festival des politischen Liedes’ and a member of the FDJ Zentralrat:

[Bredy]: ‘So, here there are no punk bands?’

Heinemann: ‘No...no’

[Bredy]: ‘But the director of the H.d.j.T. [Haus der jugend Talent] said that he has seen some.’

Heinemann: ‘Yes, well, there are a couple around... that’s for sure. But real punk bands? Surely you mean rock bands.’

[Bredy]: ‘No, punk bands.’

Heinemann: ‘You mean...just punks?’

[Bredy]: ‘No, punk bands.’

Heinemann: ‘Well, here there are none with these claims. That doesn’t correspond to the feeling of life among youth in the GDR. Unemployment, drugs, no prospects...there is none of that here.’¹³⁸⁶

Six months later *Observer Magazine* described a Blues-Messe featuring punk bands such as Reasors Exzess and attended by two thousand fans.¹³⁸⁷ With sarcastic asides mocking official

¹³⁸⁴ “Sobald ich auf die Straße gehe, fange ich an, mich zu bekotzen,” *tageszeitung*, 31 August 1982, p.9. See also, “Auf die Bühne,” *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 24, 14 June 1982, pp.59-60.

¹³⁸⁵ Sabine Bredy and Ilse Ruppert, “Wir wollen artig sein!” *Konkret*, 8 August 1982, pp.74-86.

¹³⁸⁶ Bredy and Ruppert, “Wir wollen artig sein!,” p.86.

¹³⁸⁷ Walker, “East Side Story,” p.10.

claims (“[t]his officially non-existing scene”), the SED was humiliated by these articles that described the total disconnect between official claims and lived reality.¹³⁸⁸

By exploring a thriving alternative music scene on the margins of GDR society, the articles personalized the deficiencies of ‘real-existing socialism’ and linked youth opposition directly to these disappointments. In so doing, the articles located the roots of Eastern punk in the failures of socialism not in Western capitalist subversion. A number of interviews took place in squatted apartments, accenting the housing crisis confronting East German citizens, especially younger ones who often had to wait years for an apartment.¹³⁸⁹ The painter ‘Hans’ was forced to make his own baggy Fifties trousers and red shoes while ‘Ulrike’ fashioned dresses and “punk” jewelry” because neither could satisfy their sartorial desires from state-owned fashion houses.¹³⁹⁰ As the examples make clear, the limits of socialist consumerism were overcome not by state paternalism that was the basis of SED rule but by individual effort and imagination.¹³⁹¹ Amiga, the state record company, was unable to produce more than a couple albums per month because the state was unable to procure enough rubber and plastic to physically produce enough records, again pointing to the material deficiencies essential to the SED’s end of the bargain.¹³⁹² Despite assertions that socialism offered more humane and fulfilling work—part and parcel of socialism’s moral claim over capitalism—the numerous youths featured in the articles were mostly employed part-time and supplemented their wages through individual initiatives in the

¹³⁸⁸ ““Ihr könnt wenigstens aus brüllen”,” *Der Spiegel*, Nr.1, 3 January 1983, p.44.

¹³⁸⁹ Dimitri Leningrad, “Die Punker vom Prenzlauer Berg,” *Tip*, Nr.15, 1982, pp.18-19. On squatting in the GDR, see Udo Grashoff, *Schwarzwohnen. Die Unterwanderung der staatlichen Wohnraumlenkung in der DDR* (Göttingen: V&R, 2011).

¹³⁹⁰ Walker, “East Side Story.”

¹³⁹¹ On improvised fashion in the GDR, see Judd Stitzel, *Fashioning Socialism: Clothing, Politics and Consumer Culture in East Germany* (Oxford and New York, 2005), esp. pp.49-77.

¹³⁹² Walker, “East Side Story,” p.14; Renner and Meins, “Neue Musik aus der DDR (Teil 1),” pp.18-19; and Renner and Meins, “Neue Musik aus der DDR (Teil 2),” pp.18-19.

second economy such as driving illegal taxi cabs.¹³⁹³ For those youths still in school, they were under no illusions about their future job prospects—nor was work looked upon as meaningful or even desirable.¹³⁹⁴ Deflating the achievements of the socialist state, the articles suggested that despite the claims of the “welfare dictatorship,” the SED was a hindrance in the pursuit of authentic living that youths found instead in alternative culture: as ‘Ulrike’ put it succinctly, “the GDR doesn’t cramp my style.”¹³⁹⁵

Most damaging, the articles challenged the notion that punks were Western infiltrators and internal enemies. Interviewed youths continually reaffirmed their Eastern identities and distaste for the West. When asked about the differences between East and West, one punk shrugged nonchalantly, “[s]ome people think that because I am not positive towards this country that I would like to go to the West. But I think that there is the same shit here as well as over there. There is always a government, a power that wants to stay in power and will use force to hold onto it.”¹³⁹⁶ As *Zitty* concluded, a “taste for Western music,” did not mean a “taste for capitalist society.”¹³⁹⁷ What the articles do collectively portray was an alternative subculture coalescing on the margins of East German society, but a community nonetheless inseparable from the conditions of life in the GDR. As *Der Spiegel* concluded, “[m]ost of those who publicly declare themselves to be the bogey-man of the middle classes, environmentalists, or pacifists, as servants of God or as young Christians, are the ones who pointedly call themselves East Germans....and they mostly feel it to be a disgrace to leave the country – doesn’t matter whether you go voluntarily or are forced. Those from East Berlin, Jena, and other places that have been

¹³⁹³ See BStU, MfS, AOPK 10250/88, Operativinformation, 31 January 1986, p.17.

¹³⁹⁴ Wensierski and Büscher, ““Wenn du unten bist,” pp.126, 129.

¹³⁹⁵ Walker, “East Side Story,” p.14. See Konrad H. Jarausch, “Care and Coercion: The GDR as Welfare Dictatorship” in *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, ed., Konrad H. Jarausch, trans. by Eve Duffy (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2006), pp.47-69.

¹³⁹⁶ “Sobald ich auf die Straße gehe,” pg.9.

¹³⁹⁷ Walker, “East Side Story,” p.14; Junkersdorf, “Wie ‘Blixa 2’,” p.58.

deprived of their citizenship, who now live in West Berlin, feel like exiles and do not mourn their state but their country.”¹³⁹⁸

The articles were reinforced by a number of publications appearing in the West in the early 1980s. Olaf Leitner, long-time radio moderator at RIAS, published *Rockszene DDR* in 1983, still the most thoroughgoing treatment of the Eastern rock scene, its idiosyncrasies, its differences from the West, and its prophylactic restrictions that inhibited creative and artistic freedom.¹³⁹⁹ While an even-handed treatment, exploring in considerable detail the at-times confusing and overlapping committees and institutions that make up the East German music industry, and explicating the structures and policies in place to develop a national rock culture, Leitner is devastating in his critique of the cultural conservatism in the Eastern rock industry that made it nearly impossible for young artists to break in, the total subordination of music to politics, and the corresponding sublimation of artistic creativity for political expediency. A year later, Wolfgang Büscher and Peter Wensierski, investigative journalists for *Der Spiegel*, published *Null Bock auf DDR*, a book-length follow-up to their earlier articles for the liberal Hamburg-based magazine that borrowed its very title from the Eastern punk scene (No Future DDR).¹⁴⁰⁰ In *Null Bock auf DDR*, the authors argued that beneath the tranquil surface of the state, outrage was brewing as East Germans—homosexuals, women’s rights advocates, environmentalists, religious believers, peace groups and young punks—were unhappy with the GDR, and abandoning the outward political conformity and private autonomy that underwrote the Honecker era. Instead, these groups were politicizing the public with their personal politics and becoming increasingly organized. While these two titles are perhaps the most famous, they

¹³⁹⁸ Wensierski and Büscher, “‘Wenn du unten bist’,” p.136.

¹³⁹⁹ Olaf Leitner, *Rockszene DDR: Aspekte einer Massenkultur im Sozialismus* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt-Taschenbuch Verlag, 1983).

¹⁴⁰⁰ Wolfgang Büscher and Peter Wensierski, *Null Bock auf DDR: Aussteigerjugend im anderen Deutschland* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt-Taschenbuch Verlag, 1984).

represent a number of books on East German youth and alternative culture appearing in these years in the West as (Western) authors increasingly focused on the oppositional politics of the GDR underground.¹⁴⁰¹ Crucially, these journalistic forays behind the Berlin Wall proved decisive to politicizing the alternative cultures in the GDR and especially in connecting them to the political opposition. Nor were they intended solely for Western consumption since they often “boomeranged” back into East Germany: smuggled across the border and passed around squats or church youth groups, the MfS expressed considerable consternation whenever they seized another illegal copy.¹⁴⁰²

At the same time as these reports began appearing in the mainstream press, within the Western punk scene, articles from East German punks reporting on conditions in the GDR increasingly began turning up in FRG fanzines. As we saw, fanzines were a mainstay of Western punk scenes, but in East Germany, a fanzine scene or culture was for all intents and purposes nonexistent.¹⁴⁰³ Publishing in the GDR was strictly controlled by the state, and authors of independently published material were liable for arrest.¹⁴⁰⁴ Fear of prosecution had a chilling effect on fanzine production in the GDR. Since GDR law was ambiguous in its wording about what qualified as a political document, nearly any sort of published tract could fall under this

¹⁴⁰¹ See, for example, Norbert Haase, Lothar Reese, and Peter Wensierski, *VEB Nachwuchs: Jugend in der DDR* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt-Taschenbuch Verlag, 1983); Jutta Wilhelmi, *Jugend in der DDR: Der Weg zur „sozialistischen Persönlichkeit“* (West Berlin: Verlag Gebr. Holzapfel, 1983); Wolfgang Büscher, Peter Wensierski, Klaus Wolschner and Reinhard Henkys, *Friedensbewegung in der DDR: Texte 1978 – 1982* (Hattingen: edition transit, 1982); and Peter Wensierski and Wolfgang Büscher, *Beton ist Beton: Zivilisationskritik aus der DDR* (Hattingen: edition transit, 1981).

¹⁴⁰² BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, AIM 254/89, Bd. I/V, Operativinformation Nr. 307/85, 3 October 1985, pp.161-162. Leitner was considered a major enemy of the state. See BStU, MfS, HA XX/9 1255, Einschätzung zur politisch-operativen Situation in den Berufs- und Amateurrockformationen der DDR, 14 October 1986, pp.112-113. On “boomeranging,” see Steven Pfaff, *Exit-Voice Dynamics and the Collapse of East Germany: The Crisis of Leninism and the Revolution of 1989* (Durham and London, 2006), p.90.

¹⁴⁰³ On the East German fanzine scene, see Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.472-489.

¹⁴⁰⁴ Ilko-Sascha Kowalczyk, “Von „aktuell“ bis „Zwischenruf“. Politischer Samisdat in der DDR,” in *Freiheit und Öffentlichkeit. Politischer Samisdat in der DDR 1985-1989: Eine Dokumentation*, ed., Ilko-Sascha Kowalczyk (Berlin: Robert-Havemann-Gesellschaft, 2002), pp.21-104.

category, making any reproduction highly dangerous as Gilbert Furian discovered. Compounding matters, since the SED exerted tight control over copying facilities and equipment, access to and experimentation with reproduction technology—so important for fanzines—was extremely circumscribed for GDR punks.¹⁴⁰⁵ As the influential Leipzig band L'Attentat explained to the globally distributed US fanzine *Maximum Rock 'N' Roll*, fanzine-production in the GDR was “not important enough for such a risk.”¹⁴⁰⁶ But these restrictions did not mean that GDR punks did not try to participate in Western fanzines, and in the early 1980s Easterners managed with increasing skill to engage in the international alternative press network even if participation was mostly circumscribed and in the main directed outwards rather than inwards.

Writing reports about local scenes or bands, Eastern youths tried to describe to Westerners what punk was like behind the Iron Curtain. Figures such as Bernd Stracke, singer for Wutanfall and L'Attentat in Leipzig, and Jörg Löffler, bassist for Paranoia and later Kaltfront in Dresden, became well-known in the West for their contributions to FRG fanzines such as *Kabeljau*, *Durchbruch*, *Der Ketzer* and others. City scene reports detailed daily activities in their locales—active bands, where punks hang-out, recent concerts, and contact information for visiting Westerners—while band reports sought to give readers a sense of the vibrant Eastern scene. Westerners were extremely interested in any confrontations between punks and state authorities since these incidents confirmed the oppositional nature of Eastern punk for them.¹⁴⁰⁷ Eastern report authors such as Löffler and Stracke often received copies of the finished fanzine

¹⁴⁰⁵ On independent publishing in the GDR, see Hubertus Knabe, “„Samisdat“ – Gegenöffentlichkeit in den 80er Jahren,” in *Opposition in der DDR von den 70er Jahren bis zum Zusammenbruch der SED-Herrschaft*, ed., Eberhard Kuhrt (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1999), pp.299-320.

¹⁴⁰⁶ *Maximum Rock 'N' Roll*, Nr. 47 (San Francisco, CA: April 1987), n.p.

¹⁴⁰⁷ For an example of the subject matter that interested Western fanzine authors, see BStU, MfS, HA XX, 900, Teil 2 von 2, Information zu NSW-Verbindungen von Punkern, 21 March 1986, pp.401-405. See also BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.6075, Teil 1 von 2, Schlußbericht, date unclear, p.231.

that they then shared around the GDR punk community.¹⁴⁰⁸ Usually sent by mail, Westerners were instructed to hide fanzines in normal mail so that authorities could not detect the contraband materials inside.¹⁴⁰⁹ Since the avenue of musical production was closed to Eastern punk bands, Western fanzine articles were often the only way by which Westerners could hear about their Eastern cousins unless they crossed the border to attend a concert.

Generally speaking, fanzine reports constructed narratives of rebellion that cast punks as revolutionaries fighting against a repressive state dictatorship. Despite police and state pressure, these missives confirmed that Eastern youths were nonetheless able to live their lives authentically without sacrificing their morals by making peace with the unlawful SED regime. For Western fanzine readers, Eastern reports were akin to morality plays. For all the alleged ‘suffering’ by Westerners, at least they did not have it as bad as their brethren in the East. Or as one Western fanzine author put it, “[f]or that we can all be glad to live here even if it is not soooo great. At least we can still give our opinion about the government without immediately having the state security service at the door.”¹⁴¹⁰ Easterners published nicknames and locations where GDR punks could be found so that when Westerners crossed the border as tourists, they could meet up with fellow youths who often supplied GDR punks with hard-to-get Western consumables. The travelogue was a quintessential component of the punk fanzine as we saw, and Western youths traveling to the GDR on school trips or for the day often wrote detailed reports about these Eastern encounters.¹⁴¹¹ Even if participation in the Western punk scene was for the most part unidirectional, it was nonetheless an important conduit allowing Eastern youths to

¹⁴⁰⁸ BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.6075, Teil 2 von 2, Vernehmungsprotokoll der Beschuldigten, 13 June 1985, pp.243-249.

¹⁴⁰⁹ *Kabeljau*, Nr. 2 (Norderstedt: 1984), p.34.

¹⁴¹⁰ *Destruktiven Mythen*, Nr. 3 (Wörrstadt: 1984), p.17.

¹⁴¹¹ See, for example, *Der Aktuelle Mülleimer*, Nr. 1 (Böblingen: 1980), n.p.; *A.d.S.W.*, Nr. 5 (Darmstadt: March/April 1983), n.p.; *Der Durchbruch*, Nr. 1 (Hasbergen: 1984), n.p.

escape the confines of the socialist bloc, and played a key role in raising consciousness within the international subculture about life on the other side of the Iron Curtain.

The publication of numerous reports about Eastern punk in the West was amplified tenfold by the appearance of East German punk music in the West. John Peel, the legendary disc-jockey at the BBC often received demo cassettes from East European bands which he then played on his radio program to be copied and then redistributed throughout the socialist bloc.¹⁴¹² But East German punk music suddenly started appearing in West Germany as well which presented a much closer threat to the SED. Alfred Hilsberg, while in the GDR researching the Eastern underground scene for *Der Spiegel*, met with members from the band Müllstation on 13 June 1983 in East Berlin. The musicians were interested in releasing a record in the West on his Zick Zack label and planned to record their set during a concert in the Eisleben Petrikirche the following week, a recording that Hilsberg would then smuggle to Hamburg.¹⁴¹³ While the Müllstation release did not in the end take place—members of the band got cold feet—this was not the first time that GDR punk music was heard in the FRG.¹⁴¹⁴ Meeting early in 1982, Müllstation had given radio moderators Tim Renner and Thomas Meins—authors of several articles on punk in the GDR that appeared in *Sounds*—a cassette recorded in their practice space.

¹⁴¹² See the conversation between John Peel and ‘Speiche’ in *Störung Ost*.

¹⁴¹³ BStU, MfS, HA XX/9, Nr.1696, Information über Aktivitäten der Redaktion “Spiegel” in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Inhaber einer Hamburger Plattenfirma “Zick-Zack,” 16 June 1983, pp.6-7; BStU, MfS, HA XX/9, Nr.1696, Information über Aktivitäten westlicher Medien zur Erarbeitung von Material über die sogenannte Untergrund-Kultur in der DDR, 20 June 1983, pp.8-10; BStU, MfS, HA XX/9, Nr.1696, fax, 17 June 1983, p.30; BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.899, Teil 1 von 2, Einleitungsbericht zur Durchführung der OPK “Müllstation,” 16 August 1983, pp.32-37.

¹⁴¹⁴ For more on the Müllstation-Hilsberg connection, see “Alfred Hilsberg – Mit ZickZack in der „Zone“ oder: warum was nicht funktionieren konnte,” in *Spannung. Leistung. Widerstand. Magnetbanduntergrund DDR 1979-1990*, eds., Alexander Pehlemann and Ronald Galenza (Berlin: Verbrecher Verlag, 2006), pp.156-162.

On their 20 September 1982 show *Der Club* on NDR II, Renner and Meins played Eastern punk in the West for the first time in history.¹⁴¹⁵

But the biggest coup was *DDR von unten/eNDe*, the first GDR punk vinyl released in the West featuring Zwitschermaschine and Sau-Kerle (aka Schleim-Keim). The album was the brainchild of Dimitri Hegemann (‘Dimitri Leningrad,’ *tip* journalist and later founder of the legendary Berlin techno club Tresor), who met members of the East Berlin band Rosa Extra at a party in 1982 and suggested releasing an East German punk record in the West.¹⁴¹⁶ Conceived originally to feature a number of GDR bands, Rosa Extra in the end recruited the experimental art-rock band Zwitschermaschine from Dresden that included Prenzlauer Berg poet Sascha Anderson and the hardcore outfit Schleim-Keim. With connections throughout the GDR, Anderson was able to set up a recording session at a private home studio near Dresden.¹⁴¹⁷ In early January 1983, the three bands met and recorded a number of songs for the album that Anderson took back with him to East Berlin.¹⁴¹⁸ Fearful that participation in the project might result in arrest, Rosa Extra in the end backed out and Schleim-Keim used the false name Sau-Kerle (a derogatory term for Stasi agents) as disguise.¹⁴¹⁹ Using his diplomatic connections, Anderson had the recordings smuggled to Ralf Kerbach—founding guitarist of Zwitschermaschine who had since emigrated—who mixed and mastered the album in the RIAS-

¹⁴¹⁵ BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.899, Teil 1 von 2, Einleitungsbericht zur Durchführung der OPK “Müllstation,” 16 August 1983, pp.32-37; BStU, MfS, BV Halle, Abt. XX, Sachakten 265, Einschätzung über die im Verantwortungsbereich festgestellten jugendlichen “Punker” bzw. “Punker-Gruppierungen” Ihr Schr. Vom 27.9.82, Tgb. Nr. 7113/82, 21 October 1982, pp.16-17. For a copy of the program broadcast see tracks 1-10 on the CD accompanying Westhusen, *Zonenpunkprovinz*.

¹⁴¹⁶ Konstantin Hanke, “Ostpunk auf Schallplatte,” *Ox-Fanzine*, Nr.73 (Haan: August/September 2007), pp.120-121.

¹⁴¹⁷ The emergence of private home studios was the result of greater pressures towards the commercialization of GDR popular music in the late 1970s and 1980s. See Edward Larkey, “GDR Rock goes West: Finding a Voice in the West German Market,” in *German Politics and Society*, Vol.34, Nr.4 (Winter 2005), pp.55-58.

¹⁴¹⁸ BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, AIM 392/90, Information über durchgeführte Tonbandaufnahmen in den Proberäumen der “Dresdener Musikbrigade” in 8023 Dresden, Hubertusstraße 23, auf Initiative von “Sascha” Alexander Anderson, 26 January 1983, pp.82-84.

¹⁴¹⁹ BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, AIM 392/90, Schreiben des Leiters der Bezirksverwaltung vom 30.07.1986 geipi/AKG VVS Ddn.-Nr.51/86, 12 September 1986, p.260.

studios in West Berlin and organized production.¹⁴²⁰ Released in May 1983, the record attained cult status in the West much to the exasperation of GDR authorities.¹⁴²¹

The end result of these reports and recordings was to raise the profile of Eastern punk in the West enormously which outraged SED authorities. The diverse information was at first difficult to piece together. But in the wake of the punk concerts and Western reports in the first half of 1983, Stasi officials increasingly viewed the genre in a much more threatening light. Punk was certainly hostile as even a cursory glance at the lyrics of Namenlos' songs suggest, but in the early years as we have seen, GDR youths were mostly focused on carving out alternative leisure space for their subcultural activities. However, the numerous articles, fanzine reports, and recordings convinced MfS authorities that these subcultural activities were symptomatic of a larger conspiracy. In fact, in answering the original query—why did the state respond so forcefully to punk?—we can almost reverse Karl Wilhelm Fricke's classic conclusions that enemies in the GDR were 'determined by the system' because the state categorized all activity not under its control as dissent.¹⁴²² Rather than Eastern officials looking for enemies and finding them, it was Western journalists searching for opposition in the GDR that found it in the punk scene—and then proceeded (admirably!) to convince the SED of their findings as well. The Namenlos concerts capped an eventful two years that convinced the regime that punk could no longer be taken lightly as youthful indiscretion and authorities needed to administer much harder medicine to halt the Western infection.

¹⁴²⁰ BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, AIM 392/90, Schreiben des Leiters der Bezirksverwaltung vom 30.07.1986 geipi/AKG VVS Ddn.-Nr.51/86, 12 September 1986, p.259.

¹⁴²¹ Furthermore, on 1 June 1983, the ZDF television program *Kennzeichen D* broadcast an investigative report on punk in the GDR including film shot at a Keks concert. See *Störung Ost*.

¹⁴²² Karl Wilhelm Fricke, *Opposition und Widerstand in der DDR: Ein politischer Report* (Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1984), pp.18-20.

“MfS-Lied”: The State Strikes Back

I sit at home with a bottle of beer. On the radio, a punk tinkles on the piano
 Then I light a cigarette and masturbate in my dirty hand!
 Pay attention, you're being watched – by the Mf Mf SS!

Then, at last, I walk the streets for a long time, a drunkard waltzes to the side
 Then, at last, I go through the door, until now someone sneaks behind me!
 Pay attention, you're being watched – by the Mf Mf SS!

I am KO'ed and want to go home, I'm thinking about having a good nap
 Then I phone my buddy – but there's still someone else there on the wire!
 Pay attention, you're being watched – by the Mf Mf SS!

Namenlos, “MfS-Lied,” *Namenlos 1983-89*
 (Höhnle Records 097, 2007)

There can be no doubt that the appearance of Eastern punk in the West disturbed SED state authorities immensely. Full of quotes and pictures of East German punks, the articles pointed to the deep connections between alternative culture in the GDR and the Western media. The belief that punk was a political conspiracy aimed at corrupting Eastern youths, with state-wide organization and connections to various oppositional groupings throughout both East and West, and directed from the FRG, seemed apparent. That the *DDR von unten/eNDe* album was a collaboration between punk bands from East Berlin, Dresden and Erfurt with links to the Eastern art and dissident scene via Anderson and Western media figures such as Hegemann only reinforced the belief that at least a tacit policy of Eastern cultural subversion was in place—and the diplomatic aid Anderson received in smuggling the album West seemingly removed all doubt. The suggestion that an alternative culture developing in opposition to mainstream society, with links to a variety of dissident groups, connections to the West, and aesthetics steeped in revolution, took on added weight in the geo-political situation of the times. And while this paranoid reading by the MfS gave the GDR punk scene a centralized and directed quality that as

we know is erroneous, the official interpretation of punk at the time seemed plausible and gave authorities ample justification for suppression.

With their tales of repression and brutality, SED authorities believed that the Western reports had severely damaged the public image and reputation of the GDR abroad and repercussions began immediately. Punks pictured in the articles had their photographs enlarged, were identified and jailed.¹⁴²³ Apartments appearing in the pictures that could be recognized were raided and the occupants arrested.¹⁴²⁴ Charges were initiated against Hegemann.¹⁴²⁵ Accused of ‘illegal association with Westerners’ (§ 219 Ungesetzliche Verbindungsaufnahme)—puzzling since he was a Westerner—and ‘slandering the state’ (§ 220), Hegemann was convicted in absentia with defaming the SED party and inciting youths to rebellion. According to the indictment, his article brought “the youth policy of the SED into discredit...and punks themselves are encouraged to strengthen their abnormal way of life.”¹⁴²⁶ Articles on Eastern punk appearing in the West for the most part disappeared after 1983, suggesting that SED efforts worked to poison the trust that was essential in getting youths to open up to Western journalists about life in the GDR in the first place.

Immediately following the release of *DDR von unten/eNDe*, singer ‘Otze’ Ehrlich of Schleim-Keim was arrested though his mother and friends were able to hide much of the

¹⁴²³ BStU, MfS, HA XXII 596/2, Eröffnungsbericht zum OV “Boheme 1” – gemäß §§ 219 und 220 StGB, 20 August 1982, pp.12-17; Wensierski and Büscher, “„Wenn du unten bist”,” p.123; and Walker, “East Side Story,” p.14. See also Mike Dennis and Norman LaPorte, *State and Minorities in Communist East Germany* (New York and Oxford, 2011), p.109; and Furian and Becker, “*Auch im Osten trägt man Westen*,” p.123.

¹⁴²⁴ Junkersdorf, “Wie ‘Blixa 2’,” p.56; and BStU, MfS, HA, XXII 596/2, Ergänzung zum Eröffnungsbericht, 2 September 1982, p.18.

¹⁴²⁵ BStU, MfS, HA, XXII 596/2, Eröffnungsbericht zum OV “Boheme 1” – gemäß §§ 219 und 220 StGB, 20 August 1982, pp.12-17

¹⁴²⁶ BStU, MfS, HA, XXII 596/2, Eröffnungsbericht zum OV “Boheme 1” – gemäß §§ 219 und 220 StGB, 20 August 1982, p.12.

incriminating evidence from the illegal recordings.¹⁴²⁷ With inflammatory songs such as “Spion im Café” and “Scheiß Norm,” ‘Otze’ was charged with slander and incarcerated for a number of months.¹⁴²⁸ However, the victory was hollow. As the closing report investigating Schleim-Keim laments, the record was an international slap in the face: “It was planned, to bring these recordings to WB [West Berlin] and release them with the aim of embarrassing the GDR internationally.”¹⁴²⁹ The case of Jörg Löffler ended similarly. A central figure in the Dresden scene, Löffler wrote scene reports for numerous Western fanzines and authors would in turn ship the finished product back East to be distributed, and even come to Dresden or East Berlin to socialize with ‘Löffel’ and other Eastern punks.¹⁴³⁰ But after opening his mail and intercepting a copy of *Der Ketzer* that contained a report about Dresden that authorities deemed slanderous, the MfS began proceedings that would eventually land Löffler in jail for 4 months and 3 years of probation.¹⁴³¹

But wholesale repression of the Eastern scene was only on the cards once punks began appearing on stages in front of large audiences in the East. The actions of Hegemann and ‘Otze’ were unfortunate but the political ramifications were small since the reports and music only appeared in the West and thus only had a limited resonance in the GDR. But once punks began broadcasting their subversive ideas in the *East*, matters changed quickly. While punks had long given concerts as we have seen, playing in front of a dozen friends was not considered a

¹⁴²⁷ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt.XX, 3104, IM-Bericht (mündlicht), 24 October 1986, p.231. See also Anne Hahn and Frank Willmann, *Satan, kannst du mir noch mal verzeihen: Otze Ehrlich, Schleimkeim und der ganze Rest* (Mainz: Ventil Verlag, 2008), pp.84, 95, 126-130; Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein....*, pp.123-124, 126-135.

¹⁴²⁸ BStU, MfS, HA XX 476, Schreiben des Leiters der Bezirksverwaltung vom 30.07.1986, 1 October 1986, pp.301-303; BStU, MfS, HA XX 10321, Teil 1, Information über die Einleitung eines Ermittlungsverfahrens wegen ungesetzlicher Verbindungsaufnahme und öffentlicher Herabwürdigung (§§ 219, 220 StGB) gegen den Ehrlich, Dieter aus Stotternheim, Kreis Erfurt, 31 March 1983, pp.259-263; and BStU, MfS, HA XX 10321, Teil 1, Abschlußbericht zum OV “Gitter” IX 168/83, 24 November 1983, pp.273-276.

¹⁴²⁹ BStU, MfS, HA XX 10321, Teil 1, Abschlußbericht zum OV “Gitter” IX 168/83, 24 November 1983, p.273.

¹⁴³⁰ BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, AOP 1567/88, OV ‘Gegenschlag’; and BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, AOP 1567/88, Bd.I, Eröffnungsbericht, 28 September 1983, pp.4-5. See also *Testament*, Nr.5 (July/August 1983), n.p.

¹⁴³¹ “Was machen die Bands von damals Heute?” *Taugenix*, Nr.4 (2008), p.63.

systematic attempt by youths to challenge the authority of the SED, even if such activity was not condoned. Early MfS reports by informers indicate that while the state kept an eye on such gatherings, these concerts rarely resulted in large-scale police action beyond fines for disturbing the ‘socialist peace’ if youths were caught in the act. Part of the disinterest was due to poor equipment quality and singing style, as informers attending early punk shows were rarely able to record specific lyrics in their reports and usually only offered general impressions about song themes, circumstances that perhaps explain why authorities had difficulty charging punks with treasonous statements.¹⁴³² However, once punks began performing on church stages with access to qualitatively better microphones and equipment—not to mention the Western press detailing their actions—punk lyrics and activities suddenly became infinitely more discernible and threatening to the SED.

In this context of heightened Western observation and direct public challenge, Mielke ordered his officers to move ‘Härte gegen Punk.’ In a seven-point oral command issued in early August 1983, Mielke outlined a course of action intended to eliminate the GDR punk threat permanently.¹⁴³³ Relevant charges were to be initiated against youths guilty of breaking the law. Local authorities were to support “measures to subvert” (*Zersetzungsmaßnahmen*) the national scene. In particular, authorities were to identify any lyricists and composers, as well as any known punks and their gathering places. Punk ties to the Evangelical Churches, the independent peace movement, the Greens and similar “garbage” (*Abfall*) were to be recorded, especially international contacts. Finally, steps were to be taken to hinder any future punk concerts (so-called *Störaktionen*). ‘Härte gegen Punk’ represented a major shift in relations between the state and the East German punk scene. Gone were the days of relatively harmless police harassment,

¹⁴³² See, for example, Furian and Becker, “*Auch im Osten trägt man Westen*,” p.96.

¹⁴³³ The ‘Härte gegen Punk’ order appears to have been solely an oral command. See BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, AU 4425/84, Bd. 1, Absprachevermerk, 9 August 1983, p.179.

replaced by the full deployment of the state machinery designed to decisively cripple the punk scene. In the coming year, coordination between police, Stasi, and state functionaries sought to destroy Eastern punk rot and branch and disrupt any political impact punk might have had through arrests, enlistment, emigration, and other forms of subversion.

There was no question in the mind of the judge presiding over the Namenlos case that the band consciously attempted to subvert the state and influence others negatively as the concluding statements make clear. “It is therefore proven that the defendants slandered the state order, state bodies and their activities and measures in public,” the judge ruled, “This was also the goal of all defendants, as they confessed in the main hearing among other things with the statement that they wanted to resist non-violently the social system of the GDR and also wanted to influence other citizens accordingly.”¹⁴³⁴ Comparing SED officials and Soviet authorities to Nazis (“Soviet power has destroyed Germany...Nazi bastards, out of East Berlin” from the song “Nazis wieder in Ostberlin”) and highlighting the lack of freedom in the GDR (“Walls and electric fence steal our freedom here” from the song “Lied über die Staatsgrenze”), Namenlos’ lyrics were considered particularly offensive by the presiding judge during sentencing.¹⁴³⁵ The year-and-a-half-long prison sentences handed down to Schlosser and Horschig were intended as a clear warning to all GDR punks as the judge made explicit in his closing statement: “Nonetheless, it must be made clear to the defendants that such a disregard of the public and state order in the form mentioned for the purposes of influencing other young citizens cannot be tolerated.”¹⁴³⁶

Well beyond the charges laid on perpetrators appearing in the Western articles or involved in the *DDR von unten/eNDe* record, ‘Härte gegen Punk’ increased police pressure on

¹⁴³⁴ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, AU 4425/84, Bd. 1, Urteil, 3 February 1984, p.250. For an account of the Namenlos affair, see Rebecca Hillauer, ‘Aufgepasst, du wirst bewacht...!’, *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 21 February 2003, p.2.

¹⁴³⁵ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, AU 4425/84, Bd. 1, Urteil, 3 February 1984, pp.249-251.

¹⁴³⁶ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, AU 4425/84, Bd. 1, Urteil, 3 February 1984, p.251.

punks exponentially in the coming year. Arrest and prosecution were generally the first and most effective steps in combating punk. § 106 (Staatsfeindliche Hetze, or ‘anti-state agitation’), § 217 (Zusammenrottung, or ‘banding together’) and § 220 (‘slandering the state’) were the most frequent charges. Slander or agitation could mean almost anything from noise complaints to painting treasonous slogans on walls to simply being dressed as a punk in public. A 1985 punk party in Bergholz-Rehbrücke, for example, was broken up and one punk was charged with § 220 (3) “wearing a fascist symbol on the clothing” because he was wore a patch with a crossed out swastika (an anti-fascist symbol).¹⁴³⁷ Arrested punks were questioned about their clothes, and in several cases, punks were arrested because authorities assumed the chains punks were wearing as bracelets were weapons and began simply confiscating youths’ clothes while in custody as both a retroactive punishment and future deterrent.¹⁴³⁸ The charge of Zusammenrottung was used to keep punks from gathering together publicly. If more than three punks were caught together, they could be prosecuted under § 217. Other frequent charges included § 219 (‘illegal international contacts’), and the all purpose charge of § 215 (Rowdytum, or ‘hooliganism’) that could cover nearly any public display of disorderliness from public drunkenness to singing too loudly. Being charged with these various criminal offences could mean sentences of up to three years of jail. Whereas the courts had previously been more lenient—often handing out suspended sentences or fines—after ‘Härte gegen Punk,’ judges became much more vigilant in prosecuting punks.

Interrogation was another powerful means of combating punk. Youths were often summoned to the police station for questioning and “clarification of a matter” (Zur Klärung eines

¹⁴³⁷ BStU, MfS, HA XX 6075, Teil 2 von 2, Information über eine nichtgenehmigte Veranstaltung durch Punks am 03.08.1985 in Bergholz-Rehbrücke, 7 August 1985, pp.269-272.

¹⁴³⁸ BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig, Abt. XX, Nr.00120/03, Aussprachebericht, 7 February 1983, pp.2-4; BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig, Abt. XX, Nr.00120/03, Aussprachebericht, 1 February 1983, pp.5-6; and BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig, KDfS Leipzig-Stadt, Nr.00038, Befragungsprotokoll, 9 September 1984, pp.27-29. See also Hasselbach, *Führer-Ex*, p.24.

Sachverhalts) eventually became a punk ritual, a rite of passage for members of the subculture.¹⁴³⁹ Trips to the police station meant hours answering questions, and often forcible haircuts (“scalping”).¹⁴⁴⁰ At police stations, punks lost precious leather jackets, buttons, chains, boots and other fashion accessories that had taken significant time and resources to accumulate.¹⁴⁴¹ Often, after hours of waiting to be questioned, punks were simply told to go home. If interrogated, authorities pressured young punks into revealing information about their activities and the scene, and threatened them with more serious charges or imprisonment in an effort to scare them or recruit them as informers.¹⁴⁴² Convinced that punk was a threat to socialism, Stasi officers asked about foreign contacts, Western literature and music, and especially about the goals of the punk movement itself which often left youths dumb-founded since they could not provide adequate answers to these questions.¹⁴⁴³ Hoping to break the punk scene, the MfS used interrogation sessions to terrorize youths into abandoning their subversive activities. Getting the slip of paper in the mail summoning one to the police station meant a period of intense fear, a night of rehearsing answers and wracking one’s memory for treasonous deeds committed or incriminating words uttered—of trying to guess who had betrayed you.¹⁴⁴⁴

The SED also used conscription and emigration to further weaken Eastern punk. By 1983, many of the early punks had applied to leave for the West, part of the large wave of GDR

¹⁴³⁹ Heike Löffler, “Subkultur in Dresden: ‘Zur Klärung eines Sachverhalts’,” in *too much future – Punk in der DDR*, eds., Michael Boehlke and Henryk Gericke (Berlin: Verbrecher Verlag, 2007), pp.206-215. See also Manfred Stock and Philipp Mühlberg, *Die Szene von Innen: Skinheads, Grufties, Heavy Metals, Punks* (Berlin: LinksDruck Verlag, 1990), pp.179-180; and the testimony during *Störung Ost*.

¹⁴⁴⁰ Furian and Becker, “*Auch im Osten trägt man Westen*,” pp.70, 114; and Hasselbach, *Führer-Ex*, p.24.

¹⁴⁴¹ “Wir standen mit einem Bein im Knast,” *Der Tagesspiegel*, 26 August 2005, p.23.

¹⁴⁴² “Wir standen mit einem Bein im Knast,” *Der Tagesspiegel*, 26 August 2005, p.23.

¹⁴⁴³ See Leningrad, “Die Punker vom Prenzlauer Berg,” p.18; Junkersdorf, “Wie ‘Blixa 2’,” p.57; Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, p.46; and Furian and Becker, “*Auch im Osten trägt man Westen*,” pp.126-127.

¹⁴⁴⁴ See Kowalczyk, *Punk in Pankow*. Slavenka Drakulić has argued that “autocensorship”—the process of self-criticism forced upon the individual under socialism when confronted with state authorities with supposed subversive activities—was the most powerful form of oppression. Slavenka Drakulić, *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), pp.80-81.

citizens applying to emigrate in the early eighties.¹⁴⁴⁵ Despite measures discouraging emigration, authorities used deportation as a method of removing problematic individuals from the socialist collective and many of the early GDR punks quickly found themselves in West Germany, Italy and elsewhere in the West.¹⁴⁴⁶ The army functioned similarly. The SED often used the military to discipline earlier youth subcultures such as the Beats in the 1960s, Blues fans in the 1970s, and punks in the 1980s were no different.¹⁴⁴⁷ Obligatory military service was demanded of all GDR citizens and the state started drafting numerous punks into the NVA.¹⁴⁴⁸ While a number of youths refused military service and were sent to jail as a result, the goal of removing youths from the scene was still accomplished.¹⁴⁴⁹ After 18 months of military service, authorities hoped that Eastern punk would simply wither away.

Perhaps most inventively, the MfS used punk's own notions of authenticity to subvert the scene. Since trust was integral to the subculture, the infiltration by Stasi informants was particularly damaging to the Eastern punk scene. While the influx of IMs ramped up dramatically under 'Härte gegen Punk,' the MfS had already begun recruiting punks as early as 1980, a well-known development within the subculture.¹⁴⁵⁰ By 1983, IM penetration had created a climate of inherent suspicion within the Eastern scene. Anxiety about infiltration was so extreme that fears the Stasi was listening often meant that punk gatherings amounted to little more than sullen silence as punks sat around not talking, fearful of incriminating themselves

¹⁴⁴⁵ Bernd Eisenfeld, "Die Ausreisebewegung – eine Erscheinungsform widerständigen Verhaltens," in *Zwischen Selbstbehauptung und Anpassung: Formen des Widerstandes und der Opposition in der DDR*, eds., Ulrike Poppe, Rainer Eckert, and Ilko-Sascha Kowalczyk (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 1995), pp.192-223.

¹⁴⁴⁶ Interview with Bernd Stracke, *Kalpa Vriksche*, No. 1 (n.p.: n.d.), n.p. See also BStU, MfS, HA XX 6071, Teil 2 von 2, Abschlußbericht OV "Park," 11 July 1985, pp.195-197.

¹⁴⁴⁷ Fenimore, *Sex, Thugs and Rock 'n' Roll*, pp.184-205.

¹⁴⁴⁸ "Wir standen mit einem Bein im Knast," p.23.

¹⁴⁴⁹ Kowalczyk, "Solidarität und Selbstbehauptung im DDR-Alltag," p.129; and "Wir standen mit einem Bein im Knast," p.23.

¹⁴⁵⁰ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.40-43.

while in the presence of suspected informers.¹⁴⁵¹ Paranoia even led to violence. At a 1985 Wutanfall concert in the Erlöserkirche, a punk was accused of being an informer and assaulted by a number of youths.¹⁴⁵² Doubt introduced into the punk scene by the Stasi soured the trust punks had built up among one another. The MfS even went so far as to tar influential punks with the Stasi brush. IMs within the punk scene would spread rumors that jailed or arrested youths had made deals with the Stasi to taint their reputations.¹⁴⁵³ Even punks in the West were not immune. Ralf Kerbach, the guitarist from *Zwitschermaschine* instrumental in releasing *DDR von unten/eNDe*, had emigrated to West Berlin in 1982. But because Kerbach still retained many close contacts in the GDR, the MfS spread the rumor that he was a Stasi informer, thereby ruining his credibility within the GDR punk scene.¹⁴⁵⁴

Jail terms, emigration and military service were all intended to purge the scene of key members, and authorities consciously targeted the ‘harte Kern’ of the subculture. Some punks accepted their punishments and vowed to keep resisting. Michael Horschig and Jana Schlosser from *Namenlos* both refused to emigrate and instead elected to spend a year and a half in jail if it meant they could remain in the GDR and continue to undermine the regime once they had served their sentences.¹⁴⁵⁵ But even for Schlosser, as she remembered years later, the scene had changed when she emerged from jail a year later: “the air was somehow gone.”¹⁴⁵⁶ Even for those who

¹⁴⁵¹ See Dennis and Laporte, *State and Minorities in Communist East Germany*, p.166.

¹⁴⁵² BStU, MfS, HA XXII 17399/6, 6. Aktivitäten in jüngster Zeit, c.1985, p.39. See also BStU, BV Halle, KD Halle VIII 55/82, Bd.2, Bericht, 24 January 1984, p.186.

¹⁴⁵³ Kowalczyk, “Solidarität und Selbstbehauptung im DDR-Alltag,” pp.128-129. Spreading rumors was a common component of *Zersetzen*. See Gary Bruce, *The Firm: The Inside Story of the Stasi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.130-134.

¹⁴⁵⁴ BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, AOP 2424/83, Bd.I, Vorschlag zur Abregistrierung des K e r b a c h, Ralf, geb. 12.3.56 whft. Berlin-West, vom OV “Grund” der Abt. XX und Weiterbearbeitung in KK. Teilarchivierung des Materials zu K. im Archiv der Abt. XII, 27 October 1982, p.67.

¹⁴⁵⁵ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, AOPK 3474/88, OV “Schwarz”, Bd.1, Eröffnungsbericht zur OPK “Schwarz,” 21 January 1987, p.10. See also Hillauer, “Aufgepasst, du wirst bewacht...!” p.2.

¹⁴⁵⁶ Furian and Becker, “*Auch im Osten trägt man Westen*,” p.108; and Hillauer, “Aufgepasst, du wirst bewacht...!” p.2.

chose emigration, the decision was difficult since it meant abandoning one's friends.¹⁴⁵⁷ The consequences of 'Härte gegen Punk' tore families apart. Michael Bernd Lade wanted to refuse his military service but his mother spent "the whole night on her knees begging me to go to the army and not destroy the life of the family."¹⁴⁵⁸ Sometimes jail or military service fundamentally changed youths. 'Spion,' one of the earliest East Berlin punks and singer for one of the first GDR punk band Ahnungslos, was one of many who came out of jail a Neo-Nazi, an even more anti-socialist youth movement.¹⁴⁵⁹ For Schlosser and others, "Härte gegen Punk' accomplished what it had set out to achieve, "the community that we had had before was no longer there. They [the state] had in fact managed to smash punk to pieces."¹⁴⁶⁰

Conclusions

In the end, 'Härte gegen Punk' very nearly broke the Eastern punk subculture. 1983 marked a major turning point for East German punks and the scars remain to this day.¹⁴⁶¹ By 1984, the first punk generation was dead, the scene disorganized and directionless, and the remaining members increasingly sought protection within the Evangelical Churches. Rough estimates by the MfS indicate that the Eastern punk scene declined to half its size as a result of the 'Härte gegen Punk' actions to less than one thousand youths in the scene, many of whom languished in jail or army barracks.¹⁴⁶² Of the seventeen existing punk bands, five were broken up permanently, and the others infiltrated by Stasi operatives who worked to hinder any oppositional activity. By

¹⁴⁵⁷ Interview with Bernd Stracke, *Kalpa Vriksche*, No. 1 (n.p.: n.d.), n.p.

¹⁴⁵⁸ "Wir standen mit einem Bein im Knast," p.23.

¹⁴⁵⁹ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.38-39.

¹⁴⁶⁰ Furian and Becker, "*Auch im Osten trägt man Westen*," p.120; and Hillauer, "Aufgepasst, du wirst bewacht...!" p.2.

¹⁴⁶¹ See the testimony by the members of Namenlos in the documentary *ostPUNK! too much future*.

¹⁴⁶² BStU, MfS, ZAIG 3366, Information über beachtenswerte Erscheinungen unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen in der DDR, 18 May 1984, p.4.

threatening the socialist way of life with a provocative ideology and alternative living that questioned the authority and legitimacy of the SED, punk fundamentally challenged state authority. Confined to a small subculture, punk was an irritant to the SED rather than a threat. However, once thrust onto the international stage by Western observers, SED officials increasingly viewed the subculture with alarm. As Eastern punks started appearing on stages, releasing albums and publicizing their plight in the West, the regime sought to eliminate the movement with force. Corrupting the scene from within and closing in on it from without, the Stasi nearly destroyed Eastern punk. Youths who survived 'Härte gegen Punk' retreated to the shelter provided by the Evangelical Churches, regrouped, and would eventually help contribute to the demise of the state that they hated with such visceral intensity, the subject to which we now turn.

Chapter 10: Punk in the Evangelical Churches and the Politics of Opposition

Foot Soldiers of the Opposition

On 18 May 1984, an important circular written by the Central Evaluation and Information Group (Zentrale Auswertungs- und Informationsgruppe, or ZAIG), the so-called “brain trust” of the Stasi, was distributed throughout MfS departments and among leading SED officials including Egon Krenz, Friedrich Dickel and others.¹⁴⁶³ “Information about noteworthy manifestations of negative-decadent youths in the GDR” was the first comprehensive statement on punk in the GDR by the MfS, a look back on the successes of ‘Härte gegen Punk’ and a guide to future operational goals against the subculture. Charged with analyzing information collected by the MfS on punk, ZAIG updated much of the central points from the earlier memorandum “Findings about youthful punks in the GDR” explored in the previous chapter. Citing *Der Spiegel*, *Konkret* and *tip* by name, ZAIG reiterated that the Western media was attempting to foster dissent among young East Germans in the hopes of causing a rift to open between youths and the state: “The underlying trend of the statements included was the attempt to produce ‘proof’ about the existence of oppositional youths in the GDR to create a so-called conflict situation between the state and youths in the GDR.”¹⁴⁶⁴ Influenced by the West German media and Western contacts, ZAIG argued, Eastern youths were, “forming... a politically negative attitude towards the socialist state order and the societal organization of the GDR” and were identifying with

¹⁴⁶³ Mike Dennis, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality* (London: Pearson, 2003), p.56. For an overview of ZAIG, see Roger Engelmann and Frank Joestel, eds., *Die Zentrale Auswertungs- und Informationsgruppe* (Berlin: Die Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Abt. Bildung und Forschung, 2009).

¹⁴⁶⁴ BStU, MfS, ZAIG 3366, “Information über beachtenswerte Erscheinungen unter negativ-dekadten Jugendlichen in der DDR,” 18 May 1984, p.3.

“bourgeois notions of freedom, pseudo-pacific and partially radical leftwing thought and its propagation that presents itself in the rejection of branches of the social development of the GDR.”¹⁴⁶⁵ Most alarming, perhaps, was the remark that some punks were “presenting a normal appearance” at work and school, and thus presented a double danger: both subversive and undetectable.¹⁴⁶⁶

Noting with satisfaction that five illegal punk bands had been “broken up” (Auflösung) during ‘Härte gegen Punk,’ the bulk of the communique detailed the current situation: numbers and concentration points; appearances and lifestyle; criminal activities and Western contacts; and especially, the role played by the Evangelical Churches in offering safe haven for punks trying to escape persecution as part of their youth outreach programs.¹⁴⁶⁷ Charging that “reactionary religious office holders” were providing punks with secure space for gatherings where they were susceptible to “pseudo-pacific and neutralist thought,” ZAIG touched upon a sensitive MfS nerve: fear of opposition groups coalescing.¹⁴⁶⁸ Since détente began in the early 1970s, the MfS had been plagued with nightmare scenarios of small groups uniting to form a large opposition movement, and part of the stability of the GDR throughout the decades can be traced to Stasi successes at keeping dissident figures and groups isolated.¹⁴⁶⁹ As punks gathered under the roofs of the Evangelical Churches to escape the wrath of ‘Härte gegen Punk,’ however, the successes that ZAIG had earlier lauded now seemed premature.

¹⁴⁶⁵ BStU, MfS, ZAIG 3366, “Information über beachtenswerte Erscheinungen unter negativ-dekadten Jugendlichen in der DDR”, 18 May 1984, p.5

¹⁴⁶⁶ BStU, MfS, ZAIG 3366, “Information über beachtenswerte Erscheinungen unter negativ-dekadten Jugendlichen in der DDR”, 18 May 1984, p.4.

¹⁴⁶⁷ BStU, MfS, ZAIG 3366, “Information über beachtenswerte Erscheinungen unter negativ-dekadten Jugendlichen in der DDR”, 18 May 1984, p.8.

¹⁴⁶⁸ BStU, MfS, ZAIG 3366, “Information über beachtenswerte Erscheinungen unter negativ-dekadten Jugendlichen in der DDR”, 18 May 1984, pp.7-8.

¹⁴⁶⁹ Jeannette Z. Madarász, *Conflict and Compromise in East Germany, 1971-1989: A Precarious Stability* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp.52-53.

The role of the Evangelical Churches in the GDR has received, next to the Stasi, the bulk of scholarly writing since the collapse of East Germany. Major debate centers on the role played by the Protestant Churches in either sustaining or destabilizing the SED regime.¹⁴⁷⁰ Some studies, influenced by the scandalous revelations emanating from the seized Stasi files indicating how far the secret police had penetrated religious institutions, detail the co-opted nature of the Churches under socialism by pointing to figures such as the controversial Stasi informer Manfred Stolpe whose efforts as Consistorial President of the Evangelical Churches helped deflect criticism of the state and control the religious body.¹⁴⁷¹ By contrast, others have stressed attempts by religious leaders to carve out a niche for the Churches within socialism and fight for concessions from the regime.¹⁴⁷² Others tend to emphasize both sustaining and destabilizing qualities. Robert Goeckel, for example, argues that while the Churches were hot-houses of dissent, the state was nonetheless able to use them to channel criticism and domesticate disaffection.¹⁴⁷³ Mary Fulbrook has in turn drawn attention to the inability of the upper church leadership to adequately control the rebellious lower clergy whose labors were essential in protecting the vulnerable opposition groupings.¹⁴⁷⁴

The place of dissent and opposition in the GDR has likewise remained contentious. Some commentators, especially former activists, have emphasized the lonely nature of their work.

¹⁴⁷⁰ For an overview of these debates, see Corey Ross, *The East German Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of the GDR* (London: Arnold, 2002), pp.97-125.

¹⁴⁷¹ See Gerhard Besier, *Der SED-Staat und die Kirche 1969-1990. Die Vision vom 'Dritte Weg'* (Frankfurt am Main: Propyläen, 1995); Gerhard Besier, *Der SED-Staat und die Kirche 1983-1991. Höhenflug und Absturz* (Frankfurt am Main: Propyläen, 1995); Gerhard Besier, *Der SED-Staat und die Kirche. Der Weg in die Anpassung* (Munich: Bertelsmann, 1993); and Gerhard Besier and Stephan Wolf, eds., *'Pfarrer, Christen und Katholiken'. Das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit der ehemaligen DDR und die Kirchen*, 2. durchgesehene und um weitere Dokumente vermehrte auflage (Neukirchen: Neukirchen Verlag, 1992). On Stolpe, see Ralf Georg Ruth, *IM 'Sekretär'. Die 'Gauck-Recherche' und die Dokumente zum Fall 'Stolpe'* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1992).

¹⁴⁷² Detlef Pollack, *Kirche in der Organisationsgesellschaft. Zum Wandel der gesellschaftlichen Lage der evangelischen Kirchen in der DDR* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1994).

¹⁴⁷³ Robert F. Goeckel, *The Lutheran Church and the East German State: Political Conflict and Change under Ulbricht and Honecker* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp.247-273.

¹⁴⁷⁴ Mary Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship: Inside the GDR 1949-1989* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp.115-118.

Eberhard Neubert, for example, has pointedly written about “conformity” being the dominant characteristic amongst the majority of the GDR population and that those actively contesting SED hegemony could only be counted in the hundreds at any given time.¹⁴⁷⁵ His contention is supported by studies suggesting that the majority of citizens supported or at least tolerated the state throughout the 1960s and 1970s, and that only in the 1980s did the compromises between state and citizenry begin to break down.¹⁴⁷⁶ By contrast, other scholars have sought to locate more broad-based disaffection. Armin Mitter and Stefan Wolle argued that following the failed 1953 uprising, the GDR was marked by a “latent civil war” between the state and society.¹⁴⁷⁷ While the authors have subsequently backed off from this contentious position in their more recent writings, other scholars have likewise sought to locate broader levels of opposition and the ways in which dissatisfaction manifested.¹⁴⁷⁸ Scholars have now shown, for example, that considerably more broad-based discontent among workers and university youths took place throughout the GDR when the Warsaw Pact forcibly ended the reforming impulses in Czechoslovakia during the Prague Spring.¹⁴⁷⁹ Akin to earlier controversies surrounding

¹⁴⁷⁵ Ehrhart Neubert, *Geschichte der Opposition in der DDR 1949-1989* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2000), pp.17-25.

¹⁴⁷⁶ See Jeannette Z. Madarász, *Conflict and Compromise in East Germany*; Heinz Niemann, *Hinterm Zaun. Politische Kultur und Meinungsforschung in der DDR – die geheimen Berichte an das Politbüro der SED* (Berlin: Edition Ost, 1995); and Heinz Niemann, *Meinungsforschung in der DDR. Die geheimen Berichte des Instituts für Meinungsforschung an das Politbüro der SED* (Cologne: Bund, 1993).

¹⁴⁷⁷ Armin Mitter and Stefan Wolle, *Untergang auf Raten. Unbekannte Kapitel der DDR-Geschichte* (Munich: Bertelsmann, 1993).

¹⁴⁷⁸ Stefan Wolle, *Die heile Welt der Diktatur. Alltag und Herrschaft in der DDR 1971-1989*, 2. durchgesehene Auflage (Berlin: Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 1998).

¹⁴⁷⁹ See Mary Fulbrook, “Popular Discontent and Political Activism in the GDR,” in *Contemporary European History*, Vol.2, Nr.3 (November 1993), esp. pp.271-276; and Stefan Wolle, “Die DDR-Bevölkerung und der Prager Frühling,” in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte. Beilage zur Wochenzeitung Das Parlament*, B36/92 (28 August 1992), pp.35-45.

resistance under Nazism—what constitutes dissent?—debate centers on how one defines opposition, and what qualifies as resisting behavior or activity?¹⁴⁸⁰

The place of punk in the Evangelical Churches and its relation to the opposition is similarly controversial. Supporters claim that punk was a crucial voice carving out public space for dialogue that countered the totalizing claims of the SED.¹⁴⁸¹ Detractors insist that punk was essentially non-political and was an oftentimes disruptive and unreliable element hindering the opposition.¹⁴⁸² Following ‘Härte gegen Punk,’ the subculture found refuge in the Evangelical Churches and became firmly integrated and socialized into the oppositional politics sheltered within. Once incorporated into dissident networks, punks began tentatively and then more actively to participate in the protest culture fomented by the various groups that would coalesce into the opposition movement: peace activists, human rights advocates, environmentalists, women’s rights groups and others. As these groups began challenging the SED and eroding its political legitimacy, punks became essential members of the movement because their concerts were sites to publicize opposition goals to large audiences and could attract youths to the cause. Prior to ‘Härte gegen Punk,’ the genre’s critiques had been mostly restricted to lifestyle choices, and only a few bands such as Namenlos were more explicitly and publicly political. But under the tutelage of dissident activists, punk resistance became channeled and youths were transformed into the foot soldiers of the opposition. Whether in staging concerts, participating in

¹⁴⁸⁰ For an overview of the relevant literature, see Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretations*, 4th ed. (London: Arnold, 2000), pp.183-217; and Michael Geyer and John W. Boyer, eds., *Resistance against the Third Reich, 1933-1990* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

¹⁴⁸¹ Patricia Anne Simpson, “Born in the ‘Bakschischrepublik’: Anthems of the Late GDR,” in *Transformations of the New Germany*, ed., Ruth A. Starkman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp.89-111; and Patricia Anne Simpson, “Soundtracks: GDR Music from ‘Revolution’ to ‘Reunification’,” in *The Power of Intellectuals in Contemporary Germany*, ed., Michael Geyer (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp.227-248.

¹⁴⁸² Henning Pietzsch, *Jugend zwischen Kirche und Staat: Geschichte der kirchlichen Jugendarbeit in Jena 1970-1989* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2005). See also Anne Hahn and Frank Willmann, *Satan, kannst du mir noch mal verzeihen: Otze Ehrlich, Schleimkeim und der ganze Rest* (Mainz: Ventil Verlag, 2008), pp.77-78.

protest marches, writing reports in samizdat newspapers, or observing polling stations to detect election fraud, punks contributed decisively to the political opposition in the GDR. This does not mean that the opposition and punk became ideal bed-fellows, as deep tensions remained between these two groups that shared similar goals but vastly different methods which the state tried to exploit. Nevertheless, by the late 1980s, socialization into oppositional politics and contact with dissident groups had given punk a political direction that it had lacked a mere five years earlier.

The purpose of ‘Härte gegen Punk’ had been to destroy the subculture. But instead of breaking the genre, ‘Härte gegen Punk’ politicized the subculture, yet another instance of the regime trying to solve a problem that only made the situation worse with the solution.¹⁴⁸³ In the years after ZAIG triumphantly listed the achievements of ‘Härte gegen Punk,’ the SED was unable to capitalize upon the initial successes of the action and in fact, the situation rapidly deteriorated for the state. Punks drafted into the army or sent to jail began returning after serving their sentences, new bands were formed and new adherents became involved in the subculture: by 1986, the scene had reformed. Recognizing that their efforts at suppressing the genre had failed, the MfS began moving away from the more violent methods characterizing ‘Härte gegen Punk,’ and readjusted its strategy towards a more subtle policy of infiltration and quiet subversion. But even though the Stasi was able to wholly penetrate the subculture with IMs, in the end, there was very little to show for its efforts and punk political activities only increased rather than decreased. After ‘Härte gegen Punk,’ the strategic initiative passed from the regime to the opposition, so much so that by the late 1980s, punks were instrumental in helping to breach the Berlin Wall and ending the SED regime in East Germany.

¹⁴⁸³ Detlef Pollack has argued convincingly that attempts to homogenize society—in this case, eliminating dissent—only produced more heterogeneity. See Detlef Pollack, “Modernization and Modernization Blockages in GDR Society,” in *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, ed., Konrad H. Jarausch, trans. by Eve Duffy (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), pp.27-45.

“Ich bin ein real existierendes Produkt!” Punk in the Evangelical Churches

Perhaps the most improbable chapter in the history of GDR punk was the genre's relationship with the Protestant Churches. But without the protections supplied by young pastors in the Evangelical Churches, 'Härte gegen Punk' may well have spelled the end of the subculture in the GDR. With numbers slashed in half and numerous bands broken up or penetrated by the Stasi, the first Ostpunk generation died over the course of 1983-1984. Already by 1981, Protestant Churches had begun opening their doors to punk, providing spaces for youths to gather, share ideas, listen to music, and even stage (rare) concerts. But in the years following 'Härte gegen Punk,' the Evangelical Churches became the most important space for punks under attack by the state, and it is not overstating to suggest that without these religious institutions shielding youths, the genre in East Germany might not have survived, let alone thrived. While in no sense united either in aims or actions, punks and church officials were nonetheless able to fashion a workable relationship allowing both groups to pursue their divergent goals that, in the end, helped to undermine the authority of the socialist regime. Younger pastors welcomed punk into their congregations as part of their Offene Arbeit (OA) outreach programs for youths and other 'outsider' groups, a continuation of long-standing efforts at opening up public space to religious influence and counteracting the declining numbers of Christian believers in the GDR. Using church space creatively, punks benefited from the 'church within socialism' to fashion alternative niches in the cracks of officially tolerated society. But punk residence in the Churches was rarely free from tension, especially between the younger sympathetic clergy and the upper-level religious and state authorities who sought to close off space for the genre. By examining

the East Berlin punks who found a home first in the Pfingstkirche and later in the Erlöserkirche, we can explore the contested punk-church alliance that illuminates more generally how pushing from below was essential in transforming more individualized protest in the 1980s into an oppositional movement.

In order to understand how and why punk came to dwell in the Evangelical Churches, an examination of the historical circumstances surrounding the Protestant Churches in the GDR, and especially the OA is necessary. In the immediate postwar period, Christianity and Socialism existed in a state of overt hostility as the atheistic state sought to undermine the Evangelical Churches' authority as a rival to state socialism. As one of the few institutions remaining intact and seemingly untainted by charges of fascism from the Nazi period, the Protestant Churches represented a serious threat to communist authority as an alternative focus of allegiance.¹⁴⁸⁴ That the Protestant Churches in East Germany remained affiliated with Western ones under the larger Protestant Churches of Germany association (Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland or EKD) was distressing to the SED who viewed unity with such non-socialist institutions as a potential danger.¹⁴⁸⁵ The socialist state immediately sought to drive Christianity from everyday life in the East, ruling that schooling was to be the priority of the state in 1951, criminalizing the Junge Gemeinde (church youth groups or JG) in 1952, and introducing the Jugendweihe as a political rival to confirmation in 1954.¹⁴⁸⁶ The Churches responded to these frontal attacks by declaring

¹⁴⁸⁴ Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, pp.91-94.

¹⁴⁸⁵ See Wendy R. Tyndale, *Protestants in Communist East Germany: In the Storm of the World* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2010), pp.33-36; Goeckel, *The Lutheran Church and the East German State*, pp.52-55.

¹⁴⁸⁶ See Hermann Wentker, "'Kirchenkampf' in der DDR. Der Konflikt um die Junge Gemeinde 1950-1953," in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, Vol.42 (1994), pp.95-127; and Hermann Wentker, "Die Einführung der Jugendweihe in der DDR: Hintergründe, Motive und Probleme," in *Von der SBZ zur DDR. Studien zum Herrschaftssystem in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone und in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, ed., Hartmut Mehringer (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 1995), pp.136-165.

that belief in God was incompatible with communist obedience, thereby challenging Christians to reject state ideology.¹⁴⁸⁷

However by the 1960s, both SED authorities and church officials began to accept that the continued existence of the East German state required a *modus vivendi*. This realization ushered in a second phase of church-state relations, one marked by reconciliation between the two institutions.¹⁴⁸⁸ Eager to sever ties between East and West, state authorities welcomed the decision by the Eastern Churches to split from their Western cousins and form the Federation of Protestant Churches (Bund der Evangelischen Kirchen or BEK) in 1969.¹⁴⁸⁹ Alarmed by declining church attendance—church attendance numbers had plummeted from 92.2 percent of the total population to 68.8 percent between 1950 and 1964—the Church leadership believed that an understanding with the state was necessary to carve out unfettered areas of influence that would allow the churches greater possibilities of attracting new members.¹⁴⁹⁰ The BEK decision inaugurated a series of discussions during the 1970s that culminated in the Church-State Agreement on 6 March 1978, whereby Honecker and the church leadership agreed to a limited partnership recognizing the Protestant Churches within socialist society and guaranteeing religious activity free from political interference—a slippery formulation that would later come back to haunt the state.¹⁴⁹¹ Secular authorities believed that the Churches would become a stabilizing institution within socialism while church officials hoped that the agreement would fortify space within society for increased religious activity.

¹⁴⁸⁷ Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, pp.95-96.

¹⁴⁸⁸ Mary Fulbrook is slightly less charitable, suggesting that this was a period rather of co-optation. Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, pp.106-109.

¹⁴⁸⁹ Tyndale, *Protestants in Communist East Germany*, pp.36-38; Goeckel, *The Lutheran Church and the East German State*, pp.75-85.

¹⁴⁹⁰ Detlef Pollack, "Von der Volkskirche zur Minderheitskirche. Zur Entwicklung von Religiosität und Kirchlichkeit in der DDR," in *Sozialgeschichte der DDR*, eds., Hartmut Kaeble, Jürgen Kocka, and Hartmut Zwahr (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1994), pp.271-294, here Table 1, p.272.

¹⁴⁹¹ Goeckel, *The Lutheran Church and the East German State*, pp.241-246.

The Church-State Agreement inaugurated the final phase of church-state relations, a period characterized by severe miscalculations by the state. While the SED believed that the Agreement would enable greater state control over church congregations, these hopes were soon dashed by the inability of the church leadership to manage the more unruly associations supported by church pastors at the lower levels of the church hierarchy. As Mary Fulbrook and others have argued, mistaking the church organizational structure as operating along the same democratic-centralist lines as the SED, state officials fundamentally misjudged the ability of the church authorities to control its grass-roots members.¹⁴⁹² And by guaranteeing the Evangelical Churches a protected foothold within socialist society, Honecker and the SED unwittingly secured a springboard for the political activism of the 1980s.

Throughout the East German dictatorship, the Protestant Churches initiated various outreach programs aimed at bolstering membership, especially among young citizens. Since the 1950s, the objective of the JGs was to offer youths an alternative social network to the state-sponsored Freie Deutsche Jugend (Free German Youth or FDJ) by featuring fun activities such as discussion groups, camping and dances that were intermixed with religious instruction.¹⁴⁹³ In the 1960s, the Churches began offering 'self-help' programs designed for various 'outsider' groups excluded from socialist society such as alcoholics, drug addicts, homosexuals and others.¹⁴⁹⁴ The most important youth outreach program the Offene Arbeit. The OA originated in Thuringia in 1969, under the leadership of pastors Walter Schilling and Thomas Auerbach in

¹⁴⁹² Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, pg.116. See also Tyndale, *Protestants in Communist East Germany*, pp.45-46.

¹⁴⁹³ See Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, pp.94-95, 102.

¹⁴⁹⁴ See, for example, MDA, Ki 13/02, "Rückblickbeschreibung der OFFENEN ARBEIT (OA) Halle/Halle-Neustadt," May 1987, pp.1-2. In 1976, an instruction program specializing in working with 'outsider' youths was set up at the Stephanus-Foundation in Weißensee, East Berlin. Graduates included Bernd Schröder and Lorenz Postler who became deeply involved in OA youth work with GDR punks. See Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder – das Chaos ist aufgebraucht, es war die schönste Zeit. Fragmente zur Geschichte der Offenen Arbeit Berlin und der Kirche von Unten* (Berlin: Eigenverlag, 1997), pp.17-22.

Jena.¹⁴⁹⁵ Open to ‘outsiders’ excluded from the state, OA programs were a mixture of traditional youth group activities such as sports, camping and hikes, coupled with discussion and information sessions to help youths deal with the problems of daily life.¹⁴⁹⁶ Especially under the tutelage of Auerbach, whose pedagogical techniques drew inspiration politically from the West and the Prague Spring, OA programs sought to help youths help themselves.¹⁴⁹⁷ While not guided by religious instruction per se, Offene Arbeit activists nonetheless felt their activities fell under traditional auspices of Christian charity.¹⁴⁹⁸ By the 1980s, while the OA had spread throughout the GDR, they were a continuous problem for religious authorities. On the one hand, OA programs provided a valuable social service helping youths and were attractive to new and young members. But on the other hand, large gatherings of ‘outsider’ youths were feared by state authorities who battled with the church leadership to evict OA groups from their homes in the Protestant Churches. The lack of religious instruction was a major issue: if the OA programs were not particularly religious then why were they taking place on church property?

The imbrication of alternative culture and music under church roofs evolved further with the inauguration of the Bluesmesse (Blues Masses) that began in the mid-1970s under the leadership of the radical pastor Rainer Eppelmann at the Samariterkirche in East Berlin that were touched upon in the previous chapter.¹⁴⁹⁹ Mixing blues music, religious sermons and political commentary, the Bluesmesse drew thousands of audience members and state authorities were unable—despite their best efforts—to halt what was codified by the Church-State Agreement as

¹⁴⁹⁵ Pietzsch, *Jugend zwischen Kirche und Staat*, pp.30-104.

¹⁴⁹⁶ For an overview, see Neubert, *Geschichte der Opposition in der DDR*, pp.183-187, 289-299, and 426-441.

¹⁴⁹⁷ Pietzsch, *Jugend zwischen Kirche und Staat*, pp.54-55.

¹⁴⁹⁸ See the letter from JG Jena-Stadmitte to the Jena church authorities justifying their activities in MDA, Ki 09, “Offener Brief,” 23 May 1986, pp.1-2. For attempts by church authorities to introduce more religious instruction into the OA in JG Jena-Stadmitte, see Pietzsch, *Jugend zwischen Kirche und Staat*, pp.121, 128-130, and 165.

¹⁴⁹⁹ On the Bluesmesse, see: Michael Rauhut and Thomas Kochan, eds., *Bye Bye, Lübben City. Bluesfreaks, Tramps und Hippies in der DDR*, expanded edition (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2009); Dirk Moldt, *Zwischen Haß und Hoffnung: Die Blues-Messen 1979-1986* (Berlin: Robert-Havemann-Gesellschaft, 2008); and Thomas Kochan, *Den Blues haben. Momente einer jugendlichen Subkultur in der DDR* (Berlin: LIT, 2002).

an ‘inner-church affair.’¹⁵⁰⁰ While drawing rebukes from his superiors who under state pressure feared the SED would clamp down on the churches, Eppelmann and other like-minded preachers were emboldened by the huge crowds to continually push the boundaries of what was politically acceptable for the ‘church within socialism.’¹⁵⁰¹ Protestant support of punk was thus part of a long-standing commitment on the part of the Evangelical Churches and Offene Arbeit to integrate youth, music, and ‘outsider’ groups, and conflict over the subculture likewise built upon a long tradition of state and church disagreement.¹⁵⁰² The mix of tradition, opportunity, and individual initiative helps to explain Protestant interests in supporting punk during the 1980s and why the state sought to eliminate it.

In late 1981, punks established themselves at the Pfingstkirche on Petersburgerplatz in Friedrichshain, East Berlin, a union representative of the possibilities and tensions that arose between punk, the churches and the state.¹⁵⁰³ On 22 May 1979, church authorities had ruled that the three-room Turmwohnung (tower-room) in the Pfingstkirche could be used for OA programs giving wayward youths space indoors to assemble. In July 1981, punks came to an OA evening meeting for the first time and asked about the possibility of staging a concert or securing space for bands to practice. Invited to attend the twice-weekly meetings, punks began attending more frequently. By December, over 100 punks were in attendance and the subculture soon came to

¹⁵⁰⁰ On attempts to stop the Bluesmesse, see the operational reports in BStU, MfS, HA XX/4 267; and BStU, MfS, HA XX 2360. Also Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, pp.32-63.

¹⁵⁰¹ For contextualizing the Bluesmessen in the larger opposition movement, see Neubert, *Geschichte der Opposition in der DDR*, pp.441-445. See also Rainer Eppelmann, *Fremd im eigenen Haus. Mein Leben im anderen Deutschland* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1993), pp.141-169.

¹⁵⁰² On the imbrication between the Blues scene and the OA, see Annette Leo, “Die Halleluja-Liedlein könnt ihr vergessen: Walter Schilling und die ‘Offene Arbeit’ der Evangelischen Kirche,” in *Bye Bye, Lübben City. Bluesfreaks, Tramps und Hippies in der DDR*, eds., Michael Rauhut and Thomas Kochan, expanded edition (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2009), pp.468-479.

¹⁵⁰³ Between 1982 and 1991, Petersburgerplatz was known as Kotikowplatz.

dominate the proceedings. By the end of 1982, 100-150 punks were meeting every Monday and Friday including youths coming from as far away as Magdeburg to participate.¹⁵⁰⁴

The OA meetings were an opportunity for punks to express themselves freely without fear of persecution—there was even a sign banning photographs (“Taking photographs for official or private purposes is strictly prohibited!”) underlining the state-free nature of the Turmwohnung.¹⁵⁰⁵ Despite the suspected presence of Stasi informers at the meetings, former Eastern punks nonetheless make this point explicit when asked why youths were attracted to the OA programs.¹⁵⁰⁶ Freedom enabled discussions to range from politics to family life to everyday issues such as social alienation and state repression without fear of incrimination. Youth workers who led the evening meetings such as Lorenz ‘Lore’ Postler and Uwe ‘Kuli’ Kulisch used these meetings to discuss practical concerns affecting youths daily: What were your rights while under arrest? How to improve in school? How to mend relations with estranged parents? Problems of alcoholism and unemployment were also popular topics of discussion.¹⁵⁰⁷ Political discussions featured prominently as punks challenged each other to work through their feelings about society and how change could be effected—social justice in the GDR was perhaps the popular subject

¹⁵⁰⁴ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, KD Friedrichshain 2208, “Bericht über die Besichtigung der Räumlichkeiten in der Pflingstkirche, die den Punkern zur Verfügung stehen,” 3 March 1983, pp.2-3. See also, MDA, Ki 12/01, Lorenz Postler, “Kurze innerkirchliche Information über die wichtigsten Geschehenisse der Punkarbeit / KKR Friedrichshain – Aus der Sicht der angestellten Mitarbeiters,” c.1983, pp.1-10; and Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, pp.63-123.

¹⁵⁰⁵ MDA, Ki 12/01, Lorenz Postler, “Kurze innerkirchliche Information über die wichtigsten Geschehenisse der Punkarbeit / KKR Friedrichshain – Aus der Sicht der angestellten Mitarbeiters,” c.1983, p.1. See also Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, p.82.

¹⁵⁰⁶ “No Reissbrett: Punk in der DDR,” *Ox-Fanzine*, Nr.72 (Haan, June/July 2007), p.118. Schnüffeln (snooping) was a much-discussed subject. See MDA, Ki 12/01, Lorenz Postler, “Kurze innerkirchliche Information über die wichtigsten Geschehenisse der Punkarbeit / KKR Friedrichshain – Aus der Sicht der angestellten Mitarbeiters,” c.1983, p.4.

¹⁵⁰⁷ See MDA, Dirk Moldt Papers, Lorenz Postler, “Aktueller Nachtrag der soz.-diak. Jugendarbeit mit jugendlichen Punks,” c.1983, p.21; and MDA, Ki 12/01, Lorenz Postler, “Kurze innerkirchliche Information über die wichtigsten Geschehenisse der Punkarbeit / KKR Friedrichshain – Aus der Sicht der angestellten Mitarbeiters,” c.1983, p.4. ‘Lore’ also held weekly counseling sessions for more personal matters. See MDA, Ki 12/01, Lorenz Postler, “Bericht zur Lage – Punkarbeit,” 5 Jan 1983, p.1; and Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, p.73.

addressed during these discussions.¹⁵⁰⁸ ‘Kuli’ and ‘Lore’ often approached the evenings on punk terms. For example, graffiti adorning the walls of the Turmwohnung such as ‘I am a real-existing product!’ and ‘The best sport is philistine-murder’ were used as talking points.¹⁵⁰⁹ Birthday parties and holidays such as Fasching and Silvester were celebrated communally, and meetings became an opportunity for punks to pool resources—cigarettes, money, even sweets and vitamins—to send to jailed friends.¹⁵¹⁰ As with traditional youth work, outdoor activities played a prominent role. In 1983, the Pflingstkirche punks undertook hiking expeditions and even formed a football team.¹⁵¹¹ The Turmwohnung was a punk space extraordinaire in the GDR, a place where youths could express themselves without fear of repression.

While the dissident groups forming under the protective roofs of the churches were united in their opposition to the East German dictatorship, there were nonetheless significant splits concerning the path to liberation. Divisions were frequent within the dissident groups over the methods to be used, and especially between the various groups and church officials. The question of how to challenge the SED was a central issue. Dissidents such as Bärbel Bohley and her group Frauen für den Frieden (Women for Peace) were explicit in using church space politically to challenge the SED’s monopoly on power.¹⁵¹² The church leadership, on the other hand, was less

¹⁵⁰⁸ For subject matter discussed during the meeting, see the remarks by IM ‘Thomas Kwasnick’ in BStU, MfS, HA XX 6097, Teil 2 von 2, “Informationsbericht zu einer Punkgruppe in Berlin,” 15 July 1985, pp.322-324.

¹⁵⁰⁹ MDA, Ki 12/01, Lorenz Postler, “Kurze innerkirchliche Information über die wichtigsten Geschehenisse der Punkarbeit / KKR Friedrichshain – Aus der Sicht der angestellten Mitarbeiters,” c.1983, pp.1-2; BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, KD Friedrichshain 2208, “Bericht über die Besichtigung der Räumlichkeiten in der Pflingstkirche, die den Punkern zur Verfügung stehen,” 3 March 1983, p.2; and Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, p.74.

¹⁵¹⁰ MDA, Ki 12/01, Lorenz Postler, “Kurze innerkirchliche Information über die wichtigsten Geschehenisse der Punkarbeit / KKR Friedrichshain – Aus der Sicht der angestellten Mitarbeiters,” c.1983, pp.3-4; MDA, Ki 12/01, “Brief der offenen sozialdiakonischen Arbeit im Turm der Pflingstgemeinde,” 6 March 1983, p.2; and Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, pp.72-73.

¹⁵¹¹ MDA, Ki 12/01, “Brief der offenen sozialdiakonischen Arbeit im Turm der Pflingstgemeinde,” 6 March 1983, p.3; MDA, Ki 12/01, Lorenz Postler, “Kurze innerkirchliche Information über die wichtigsten Geschehenisse der Punkarbeit / KKR Friedrichshain – Aus der Sicht der angestellten Mitarbeiters,” c.1983, pp.7-8; and Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, pp.95-100.

¹⁵¹² Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, pp.212-213. See also Ulrike Poppe, “‘Der Weg ist das Ziel’. Zum Selbstverständnis und der politischen Rolle oppositioneller Gruppen der achtziger Jahre,” in *Zwischen*

interested in challenging the SED directly than in retaining influence for Christianity in the GDR. While these two aims often coincided, at important junctures they diverged substantially. Such was the case with punk in the Pfingstkirche. Already by late 1981, church officials were receiving citizen complaints and pressure from city officials to throw the punks out of the Turmwohnung. As punks arrived for their evening meetings, they would pick up beer and schnapps at the nearby Kaufhalle where employees complained about their rudeness and the heated exchanges they had with citizens. In the morning, empty and broken bottles would litter the Petersbergerplatz. Nearby residents complained about the noise levels and public urination while the punks waited outside for the evening sessions to begin.¹⁵¹³ The Gemeindegemeinderat (Municipal Church Authority or GKR), the religious authority at the Pfingstkirche was especially incensed by the graffiti on the walls of the Turmwohnung and at the consumption of alcohol on church property.¹⁵¹⁴ While the OA did not permit alcohol within the Turmwohnung and stopped youths from bringing beer to the meetings, punks would drink beforehand and sip from their bottles in the bathroom.¹⁵¹⁵

Already on 17 December 1981, Church Superintendent Ingrid Laudien was called before municipal authorities who complained that punks “were making a decadent impression due to their clothes and because of that were causing public anger” and ordered to explain why the OA

Selbstbehauptung und Anpassung. Formen des Widerstandes und der Opposition in der DDR, eds., Ulrike Poppe, Rainer Eckert, and Ilko-Sascha Kowalczyk (Berlin: Ch. Links, 1995), pp.244-272, esp.252-254.

¹⁵¹³ MDA, Ki 12/01, “Brief der offenen sozialdiakonischen Arbeit im Turm der Pfingstgemeinde,” 6 March 1983, p.3; MDA, Dirk Moldt Papers, Lorenz Postler, “Aktueller Nachtrag der soz.-diak. Jugendarbeit mit jugendlichen Punks,” c.1983, pp.27-28; MDA, Ki 12/01, Lorenz Postler, “Kurze innerkirchliche Information über die wichtigsten Geschehenisse der Punkarbeit / KKR Friedrichshain – Aus der Sicht der angestellten Mitarbeiters,” c.1983, pp.3, 5; and Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, pp.73-74, 82.

¹⁵¹⁴ See also Hahn and Willmann, *Satan, kannst du mir noch mal verzeihen*, p.26.

¹⁵¹⁵ MDA, Ki 12/01, Lorenz Postler, “Kurze innerkirchliche Information über die wichtigsten Geschehenisse der Punkarbeit / KKR Friedrichshain – Aus der Sicht der angestellten Mitarbeiters,” c.1983, pp.1-2; and Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, pp.71, 78, 83-84.

supported punk.¹⁵¹⁶ Laudin and youth deacon Bernd Schröder defended the OA work and succeeded in convincing city officials not to pursue their protests more forcefully. In March 1982, after much back and forth between state and religious officials, the GKR decided to terminate the lease agreement at the Pfingstkirche citing damages and numerous contract breaches. However, that summer, through pleas from Superintendent Laudien, the GKR agreed to reverse its decision and again ruled that the Turmwohnung could be reopened to punks after renovations in the fall of 1982.¹⁵¹⁷ However, by March 1983, again following complaints about disorder in the Turmwohnung, municipal authorities managed to close down the punk space following a city inspection that discovered several fire code violations, a standard practice by the SED who used fire safety to close numerous church spaces over the years.¹⁵¹⁸ Again summoned to the Stadtrat (municipal council), Superintendent Laudien was accused of supporting a “melting-pot of anti-state youths.” Responding that she “as a Christian... is committed to helping people who have difficulties in their lives, people like punks, alcoholics, etc.,” Superintendent Laudien reluctantly capitulated when faced with the abundant fire code violations.¹⁵¹⁹ Expecting trouble at the following week’s meeting on 11 March 1983—what the punks called a Tränenabend or ‘evening of tears’—police shadowed and finally dispersed the sixty punks who

¹⁵¹⁶ Cited in Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, p.73.

¹⁵¹⁷ For a detailed timeline of events, see MDA, Ki 12/02, “Fliegendes Papier 6,” June 1987, pp.1-3; and Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, pp.79-81.

¹⁵¹⁸ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, KD Friedrichshain 2208, “Bericht über die Besichtigung der Räumlichkeiten in der Pfingstkirche, die den Punkern zur Verfügung stehen,” 3 March 1983, pp.2-3; MDA, Ki 12/01, Lorenz Postler, “Kurze innerkirchliche Information über die wichtigsten Geschehenisse der Punkarbeit / KKR Friedrichshain – Aus der Sicht der angestellten Mitarbeiters,” c.1983, pp.3, 5; and Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, pp.88-92. For similar attempts to shut down JG Jena-Stadtmitte for hygiene concerns and fire code violations, see Pietzsch, *Jugend zwischen Kirche und Staat*, pp.92-94, 283.

¹⁵¹⁹ Cited in Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, p.89. See also MDA, Ki 12/01, Lorenz Postler, “Kurze innerkirchliche Information über die wichtigsten Geschehenisse der Punkarbeit / KKR Friedrichshain – Aus der Sicht der angestellten Mitarbeiters,” c.1983, pp.5-6.

had gathered sadly before the Pfingstkirche hoping that the Turmwohnung would somehow be restored to them.¹⁵²⁰

The end of punk in the Pfingstkirche was a disappointing chapter in the church-punk relationship and a bitter defeat for young pastors such as ‘Kuli’ and ‘Lore’ who believed that all their good work was being put into jeopardy.¹⁵²¹ But these events nonetheless show how grass-roots initiatives were producing conflicts between the church leadership and state authorities. The marginal nature of punk, the youthfulness of the constituents, and the insignificant political weight that the subculture and youth pastors could muster—not to mention the larger political and domestic confrontations occurring in the early 1980s—all contributed in closing the Pfingstkirche to punk. There can be no doubt that the MfS played a significant role in influencing the course of events.¹⁵²² We now know that a number of punks gathering at the Pfingstkirche were IMs and many of the activities that contributed to the aggravation between punk, the church, and the state—smashed bottles, debris, graffiti on the walls—have been attributed to the work of the Stasi.¹⁵²³ Nor was the Pfingstkirche an isolated affair: Stasi subversion was likewise crucial in destroying the Erfurt OA in 1984, and the MfS continually sought to sabotage the influential Jena JG-Stadtmitte.¹⁵²⁴ Walking a narrow tightrope between acceding to state demands and maintaining church autonomy gave church officials little margin for error and often religious leaders needed to make sacrifices in order to preserve hard-won

¹⁵²⁰ MDA, Ki 12/01, Lorenz Postler, “Kurze innerkirchliche Information über die wichtigsten Geschehenisse der Punkarbeit / KKR Friedrichshain – Aus der Sicht der angestellten Mitarbeiters,” c.1983, pp.6-7; BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, KD Friedrichshain 2208, Objek ‘Platz’,” 11 March 1983, pp.5-17;and Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, pp.94-95.

¹⁵²¹ See MDA, Ki 12/01, Lorenz Postler, “Bericht zur Lage – Punkarbeit,” 5 Jan 1983, p.1.

¹⁵²² See Mike Dennis, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality* (London: Pearson, 2003), pp.164-165.

¹⁵²³ See, for example, BStU, MfS, BV Berlin AIM 1489/91, Bd.I/1; and BStU, MfS, BV Berlin AIM 1489/91, Bd.II/1. At the Erfurt OA, for example, approximately 45 IMs frequented the meetings. See Hahn and Willmann, *Satan, kannst du mir noch mal verzeihen*, p.32.

¹⁵²⁴ Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, p.70; and Pietzsch, *Jugend zwischen Kirche und Staat*, pp.285-305.

space: in the end, the termination of punk at the Pfingstkirche was a necessary sacrifice, in their minds, for maintaining autonomy within the GDR. But the defeat at the Pfingstkirche shows how the conflicts and tensions between the upper-clergy and the lower-level pastors were increasingly unbalancing the Honecker-era compromises embodied by the Church-State Agreement.

Moreover, the events in 1983 taught figures such as ‘Kuli’ and ‘Lore’ about the unreliability of the upper-church hierarchy in supporting the OA and of the need to circumvent church leaders to continue their efforts at helping troubled youths.¹⁵²⁵ Thus, rather than exerting a calming influence, events such as those at the Pfingstkirche only served to drive younger pastors and ‘outsider’ groups towards more radical positions.

AlöshA and the Protest Politics of Punk

The history of punk in the Pfingstkirche indicates some of the difficulties of punk integration into the Evangelical Churches. Nonetheless, following ‘Härte gegen Punk’ the subculture was able to establish a lasting presence within the Churches and was socialized into the protest politics of the many opposition groups gathering in these relatively protected spaces. By exploring the dimensions of punk oppositional politics we can assess the contributions of the subculture to the resistance movement in East Germany. One of punk’s principle claims is to resist, and we have seen how punk ideology and practices often directly challenged the SED. But what role did punk play in the opposition movement in the GDR? To what extent did punk contribute to the downfall of the SED regime?

¹⁵²⁵ See the impassioned plea for help that fell on deaf ears in MDA, Ki 12/01, Lorenz Postler, Uwe Kulisch, und Gerd Jäger, “Information an den Bischof Dr. Forck und den Generalsuperintendent Dr. Krusche mit der Bitte, ein Gespräch mit entsprechenden staatlichen Stellen zu suchen,” 29 March 1983, p.1.

The place of punk in the history of the opposition is contentious. Most punks did not have the patience to sit around strategizing the downfall of the SED and had long since abandoned debate in favor of action. Church activists similarly disapproved of punk methods and behavior. On 11 May 1983, after a Youth Day at the St. Michaeliskirche in Karl-Marx-Stadt, someone graffitied “punks, fuck off with anarchy already” on an outside wall and an invitation to attend a church event at the Jena JG-Stadtmittel two weeks later was withdrawn.¹⁵²⁶ The primary aim of punks, especially in the early years, was to use church spaces to gather safely and if possible to stage concerts. But when allowed to stage concerts in churches, punk organizers and church authorities often clashed. For example, on 27-28 May 1983, at a Workshop in the Auferstehungskirche in East Berlin, a photo-documentation about the Jena Peace Movement was set up but Pastor Christa Sengespeick demanded it immediately be taken down, fearful of running afoul with state officials who might interpret the concert as a political event. Her request unheeded, Sengespeick began taking the exhibit down herself, only to have the punks put it back up; the back and forth went on for some time.¹⁵²⁷ At other concerts, damages to church property, and especially smoking and drinking inside churches caused much friction.¹⁵²⁸ Punk provocations likewise put pressure on the opposition groups who were trying to secure space for themselves within the churches. Fearful that religious authorities would stop their limited support, members of the opposition often directed their anger at punks that were seemingly endangering the movement recklessly. In the Jena JG-Stadtmittel, the rift between punks and

¹⁵²⁶ MDA, Dirk Moldt Papers, Lorenz Postler, “Aktueller Nachtrag der soz.-diak. Jugendarbeit mit jugendlichen Punks,” c.1983, p.20.

¹⁵²⁷ Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, pp.155-156.

¹⁵²⁸ See Hahn and Willmann, *Satan, kannst du mir noch mal verzeihen*, p.26; and Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, p.160.

activists opened so wide that, in the words of former activist Henning Pietzsch, “hardly anyone wanted anything to do with them [punks].”¹⁵²⁹

As the events at the Pfingstkirche illustrate, gatherings of punks usually resulted in unwanted attention by the state security apparatus—observation that the church leadership consistently sought to avoid. Disorderliness and drunkenness characterized many punks as it did in the West, and former dissidents are right to criticize those who came to be called Suff-Punks (Drunk-Punks).¹⁵³⁰ During ‘Härte gegen Punk,’ the earlier refrain of ‘No Future’ and ‘No Fun’ transformed into ‘More Fun’—liable at any time for military service, jail or forced emigration, a number of youths turned to drinking.¹⁵³¹ Further driving a wedge between punks and dissidents was the work of Stasi IMs. Punk IM band members would deliberately practice their music too loud, smash bottles and gather drunkenly in groups publicly. Under specific instructions from their handlers, punk IMs were to distract their objects by diverting their energies into more destructive and less politically confrontational avenues.¹⁵³²

But if the history of punk in the Pfingstkirche illuminates the tensions between youths and the church hierarchy, it also shows how punks came to embrace oppositional politics and work in conjunction with dissidents. After a brief stint a few blocks away in the Galiläakirche under the shelter of Pastor Gerhard Cyrus, the Pfingstkirche punks came to reside in the Erlöserkirche in East Berlin-Rummelsburg where they took over the dilapidated Profihaus behind the church and resided there until the end of the GDR. The Erlöserkirche had long been a site for so-called Randgruppen (marginal groups) to gather since it was far from the center of the city where Western tourists might see them and punks at first were allowed to meet in the

¹⁵²⁹ Pietzsch, *Jugend zwischen Kirche und Staat*, p.248.

¹⁵³⁰ Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, p.326.

¹⁵³¹ Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, pp.124-125.

¹⁵³² For Stasi interests in punk IMs, see especially IM ‘Dominique’ and IM ‘Käpt’n’. BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig AIM 2017/88, Bd.I/1 and Bd.II/1; and BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig AIM 643/86, Bd.I/1 and Bd.II/1.

Profihaus twice a week.¹⁵³³ In 1984-1985, many of the punks who were drafted into the army or jailed during ‘Härte gegen Punk’ began returning home, and the first concerts started taking place in the Profihaus in early 1985. Politically radicalized after experiencing repression first-hand, these punks called their community ‘AlösA’ (using the anarchy symbol for both ‘A’s) to distinguish them from the more self-destructive Suff-Punks such as the Blauen Möwen (drunk seagulls) group at the Galiläakriche who numbed themselves with alcohol.¹⁵³⁴ As in the Turmwohnung, various activities took place from concerts and outdoor activities to reading circles and even learning English so they could better understand foreign punk song lyrics.¹⁵³⁵ Concerts ran regularly and attracted high numbers, and in 1988, contact was made with the owner of the Blockshock in Kreuzberg, and touring punk bands such as Disaster Area, R.A.F. Gier, and Upright Citizens would first play in West Berlin and then cross the Berlin Wall to play using Eastern equipment in the Profihaus thus linking the East and West concert scenes for the first time.¹⁵³⁶ Importantly, Eastern bands holding state licenses were banned from performing at the Profihaus, walling off the independent Erlöserkirche scene from ‘inauthentic’ punks tainted by their complicity with the state (see Chapter 11).¹⁵³⁷ Foreign LPs were often acquired in Poland or Hungary and then smuggled back to the Erlöserkirche community where they were taped and circulated throughout the country.¹⁵³⁸ AlösA punks began participating directly in oppositional activities, contributing to samizdat literature such as the *mOAning star*, *Umweltblätter* and *Un-freie Gesellschaft*, and publishing the very first GDR fanzines *Inside* and

¹⁵³³ Ronald Galenza and Heinz Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...: Punk, New Wave, HipHop und Independent-Szene in der DDR 1980-1990* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2005), p.108; and Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, p.208.

¹⁵³⁴ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.110-111; Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, p.124.

¹⁵³⁵ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.112, 114-115; Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, p.349.

¹⁵³⁶ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.115-116.

¹⁵³⁷ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.112, 116, 119.

¹⁵³⁸ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, p.115.

AlösA.¹⁵³⁹ Not content to remain in Rummelsberg, many punks took their protests public, participating in demonstrations against, for example, the International Monetary Fund congress on the steps of the Pergamonmuseum in 1988, counting voters during the GDR elections fraud in May 1989, and protesting the Tiananmen Square massacre that summer.¹⁵⁴⁰ With contacts throughout the GDR, the West, Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia, the AlösA punks were a central organizational hub in the political struggle against the SED.¹⁵⁴¹

As this short listing of AlösA activities implies, characterizing punk as a hindrance to the opposition movement is uncharitable. As Fulbrook and others argue, church support enabled small, individual circles of resistance to coalesce into a movement by linking them together in a loose network of dissent. Whereas the SED had previously found success in isolating dissent, by the 1980s, the regime was increasingly unable to stop groups from uniting.¹⁵⁴² For example, the *Umweltbibliothek*, an environmental library founded in the basement of the Zionskirche in Prenzlauer Berg, East Berlin, became a central institution linking environmental activists, human rights groups, and supporters of the peace movement into a collective of opposition.¹⁵⁴³ What turned the isolated groups into a movement was the ability to connect and share information despite state impediments, and punk played a role in joining these groups together. By 1985 and 1986, as punks returned from jail or the NVA, a new sense of political activism mobilized many of the returning youths. Writing articles for samizdat literature, populating meetings and reading circles, taking to the streets to protest publically, and throwing huge open-air concerts such as the Kirchentag von Unten in 1987 and the Frühlingsfest in 1988 (see below), punk helped raise the

¹⁵³⁹ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, p.118; and Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, pp.202-207.

¹⁵⁴⁰ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.111-112, 114. On the IMF protests, see BStU, MfS, HA IX Fo/1212.

¹⁵⁴¹ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.112, 114-115.

¹⁵⁴² Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, pp.215-217.

¹⁵⁴³ See Neubert, *Geschichte der Opposition in der DDR*, pp.629-632; and Wolfgang Rüdtenklau, *Störenfried. ddr-opposition 1986-89* (Berlin: BasicDruck, 1992).

consciousness of the GDR citizenry and through their activities, gave activists larger platforms to reach innumerable others with their messages.

Involvement in oppositional politics took innumerable forms, whether marching in the Olof Palme 'March for Peace' in 1987 or celebrating the anniversary of the death of the anarchist Erich Mühsam in Oranienburg in 1988.¹⁵⁴⁴ The sum total however was to deeply imbricate the genre into the politics of the opposition, and in so doing, punks became the foot soldiers of East German dissent. Affected personally by the militaristic policies of the regime, punks became directly involved in the conflict over military service, and in the burgeoning peace movement of the GDR. Some punks protested the military policies of the regime by becoming conscientious objectors and refusing to partake in military service despite the risks involved.¹⁵⁴⁵ The Evangelical Churches had long battled with the state over conscription and Protestant activists were instrumental in setting up alternative military service for conscientious objectors (Bausoldaten or construction soldiers).¹⁵⁴⁶ The regime often blamed "reactionary" religious influences for giving young punks the courage to abstain from military service.¹⁵⁴⁷ Some punks participated publicly such as demonstrating against the stationing of SS 20s by the Soviet Union in Halle or attempting to disrupt a military parade celebrating the 40th anniversary of the GDR by unfurling a banner with pacific slogans in Potsdam in 1989.¹⁵⁴⁸ Church concerts sometimes began with anti-war films, while other punks wrote pacific poems that were secretly slipped into customer shopping bags while checking out their groceries as a leaflet seized by the MfS entitled

¹⁵⁴⁴ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abteilung XX, Nr.3110, "Einleitung OPK 'Wähler'," 31 August 1989, p.27; and BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.10321, Teil 2 von 2, "Politisch-operative Sicherung einer 'Erich-Mühsam-Ehrung' in Oranienburg/Potsdam am 6. 4.1988," 6 April 1988, p.380.

¹⁵⁴⁵ Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, pp.213-218.

¹⁵⁴⁶ See, for example, the punks observed in OPK 'Aussteiger.' BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.6047, "Abschlussbericht zur OPK 'Aussteiger'," 22 August 1986, pp.94-97.

¹⁵⁴⁷ BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.11515, "Abschlussbericht zur OPK 'Chaot'," 3 April 1984, p.2.

¹⁵⁴⁸ BStU, MfS, BV Halle, AIM 482/87, Bd.I, "Abschrift," 21 September 1983, p.92; and BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.472, "Information über geplante feindlich-negative Aktivitäten im Rahmen der Aktion 'Jubiläum'," 5 October 1989, pp.47, 49.

“Aufruf” (Appeal) clearly indicates: “People, defend yourself! Stop the 3rd World War! Refuse to handle weapons! Be united, don’t persecute each other! Use the money for rearmament for environmental protection! Everyone deserves the freedom of speech and the right to associate with communities sharing interests! Fight against Neo-Nazism!”¹⁵⁴⁹

The environment was another prominent political cause drawing punks into state critiques, especially anti-nuclear politics following the 1986 reactor meltdown in Chernobyl. Bands such as Müllstation took an active role in protesting atomic power and used their concerts to collect signatures for petitions to send to the Volkskammer (the GDR parliament) demanding the state rethink its nuclear policy.¹⁵⁵⁰ Other punks voiced protest through more direct action. In 1986, two members of the punk band Vitamin A attempted to mobilize public opinion against the construction of a power plant in Stendal in the Magdeburg district. Inviting punks to Magdeburg for a weekend in June 1986, the two punks hoped to organize a counter-demonstration that would disrupt the 21st Arbeiterfestspiele (Workers’ Festival) taking place at the same time.¹⁵⁵¹ The samizdat literature of the GDR, especially those titles concerned with environmental issues such as the *Umweltblätter* were omnipresent as punks contributed articles, and the scene itself becoming a distribution node for passing along information and leaflets at concerts, band practices and parties.¹⁵⁵²

Punk involvement in opposition politics flowed from their rejection of the state and criticisms of the SED. Critiques of SED environmental policies, calls for arms reductions, self-

¹⁵⁴⁹ BStU, MfS, HA, Nr.900, Teil 2 von 2, “Information zur Punk-Werkstatt am 07.12.85 in Halle,” 27 December 1985, p.414; and BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt.VI, Nr.613, “Einleitungsbericht zur operativ-interessanten OPK ‘Mary’,” 25 January 1983, p.4.

¹⁵⁵⁰ BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.472, [no title], n.d., p.97.

¹⁵⁵¹ BStU, MfS, HA IX, Nr.14162, “Zu Aktivitäten von Anhängern der ‘Punk-Bewegung’ und deren Unterstützung durch kirchliche Kräfte,” n.d., pp.4-6. For information on the arrest and subsequent trial of the two punks for these activities, see Edda Ahrberg, “Wenn man als Punk Musik macht – der operative Vorgang ‘Terz’,” in *Beschädigte Seelen: DDR-Jugend und Staatssicherheit*, eds., Jörn Mothes, Gundula Fienbork, Rudi Pahnke, Renate Ellmenreich and Michael Stognienko (Rostock: Edition Temmen, 1996), pp.310-336.

¹⁵⁵² See BStU, BV Chemnitz, XX 636, [blacked out title], n.d., p.21.

help groups set up to disseminate information and techniques for avoiding military service—these were not isolated issues but were all intrinsically related to punk’s rejection of the GDR “as it exists at the moment,” as one of Gilbert Furian’s punks put it so succinctly.¹⁵⁵³ The case of Michael Horschig, the guitarist from Namenlos that we encountered in the previous chapter, is here representative. After completing his jail term, Horschig ran an anarchist reading circle between 1984 and 1985. In 1986, he helped circulate two petitions sent to the Volkskammer demanding a referendum on the question of nuclear power in the GDR. Later that same year, Horschig was distributing anti-SED literature penned by the Trotskyist ‘Sozialistische Osteuropakomitee’ among members of the Erlöserkirche. In 1987, Horschig again ran afoul with the MfS because of a purported plot to kidnap Karl-Eduard von Schnitzler, the infamous host of *Schwarzer Kanal*, the television program devoted to exposing lies in the FRG media. An initiator of the Kirche von Unten and Frühlingsfests that we will explore shortly, Horschig was arrested in 1988 for smuggling a thousand copies of an international punk fanzine into the GDR from Poland.¹⁵⁵⁴ Despite these activities, Horschig continued to play with Namenlos, was a part-time worker at the Zionskirche and a volunteer at the Umweltbibliothek.¹⁵⁵⁵

Horschig’s life-history indicates the tremendous overlap between punk and dissident politics, and he was not alone. Thomas ‘Kaktus’ Grund was another such figure. Instrumental in the development of the Jena JG-Stadtmitte and the work of the Jena Peace Movement throughout the 1970s and 1980s, ‘Kaktus’ was also a music fan. In 1986, he began recording the Jena in-house punk band Airtramp, and by the fall of the Berlin Wall, his illegal tape label Hinterhof Productions—one of only a handful of independent record labels in the GDR—had released 25

¹⁵⁵³ BStU, MfS, HA XXII, Nr.17742, Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: P U N K, n.d., p.2.

¹⁵⁵⁴ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, AOPK 3474/88, OPK ‘Schwarz’, Bd.2, “Vernehmung,” 18 April 1988, pp.87-89.

¹⁵⁵⁵ See BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, AOPK 3474/88, OPK ‘Schwarz’, Bd.1, “Eröffnungsbericht zur OPK ‘Schwarz’,” 23 January 1987, pp.8-12.

cassettes featuring 15 bands which he sold at concerts that circulated throughout East Germany.¹⁵⁵⁶ As he later wrote, “This music was a subcultural answer to the formative life-historical experiences of youth. For them [youth] punk was an alternative culture against the state-ordered culture from above...It was necessary for survival and protest at the same time.”¹⁵⁵⁷ To detail the experiences of Horschig and ‘Kaktus,’ however, does not mean to imply that punks and dissidents saw eye to eye on every issue—as with church authorities, friction continually cropped up between dissidents and punks. But the cross-pollination between punk and opposition politics was important because by staging large concerts, opposition activists were able to disseminate information and publicize dissent. Thus, one of the central aspects of the uneasy union forged between punk and the dissidents in the Protestant Churches was overcoming SED hegemony of the public sphere in the GDR.

As we saw, the concert was the defining experience in the East German punk scene and became events for both punks and dissidents that were instrumental in putting the regime on the defensive and claiming critical space from the SED. Punk concerts helped to break down isolation by bringing diverse groups together and (inter)nationalizing the oppositional movement. Support for punk concerts in the churches did not begin in East Berlin but rather in regional cities. The first church punk concert featured Schleim-Keim and the Madmens and took place in the Johannes-Lang-Haus in Erfurt on 12 December 1981. Concerts staged in the churches were not simple musical events but a deep imbrication of music, politics and religion. Lasting 3 or 4 hours, sermons were given by the pastor to the gathered throng before and during

¹⁵⁵⁶ On the independent cassette labels in the GDR, see Alexander Pehlemann, “Von Virus X und Zwecklos über Trash Tape Rekords,” in *Likedeeler. Zeitstreitschrift aus Greifswald*, Nr.19 (2008), pp.12-14; “KlangFarBen von der Peripherie – Frank Bretschneider,” in *Spannung. Leistung. Widerstand. Magnetbanduntergrund DDR 1979-1990*, eds., Alexander Pehlemann and Ronald Galenza (Berlin: Verbrecher, 2006), pp.136-145; Susanne Binas, “Die ‘anderen Bands’ und ihre Kassettenproduktionen – Zwischen organisiertem Kulturbetrieb und selbstorganisierten Kulturformen,” in *Rockmusik und Politik. Analysen, Interviews und Dokumente*, eds., Peter Wicke and Lothar Müller (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 1996), pp.52-54

¹⁵⁵⁷ Cited in Pietzsch, *Jugend zwischen Kirche und Staat*, pp.299, 308-309.

the music sets. At most concerts, crowds were a mix of punks, political activists, religious enthusiasts, hippies and so-called ‘normals.’ These mixed crowds point to the desire across a broad swath in the GDR for musical alternativeness and the broad appeal of dissident politics. Like the more famous Bluesmesse, punk concerts became forums in which large audiences could be reached which were not necessarily religious or politicized but who could then disseminate oppositional thought to even wider networks. Church protection and union with oppositional groups allowed punks to channel their at-times limited politics of resistance—their ideas, their bodies and their scenes—into the public arena and to translate their personal forms of opposition into political action.

Punk concerts were utilized by the radical lower-level clergy and political activists as opportunities to circulate oppositional information among large publics. At a 22 October 1983 concert in the Christusgemeinde in Halle featuring Arbeitsgeil, for example, a display organized by ‘Kuli’ was presented inside the church. Exhibiting photographs taken by peace activists under the slogan “True Freedom and Democracy” and featuring documents about the Jena Peace Movement including letters addressed to Honecker and the Staatsrat (state council), the exhibit was meant to inform patrons about the goals of the peace movement.¹⁵⁵⁸ At a large concert staged at the Jena JG-Stadtmitte on 7 September 1985 to a crowd of 300, a number of anti-war proclamations were made before Schleim-Keim, Paranoia, Antitrott and Arschlos played.¹⁵⁵⁹ Later that same year, on 7 December in the Christusgemeinde in Halle, before L’Attentat, Andreas Auslauf and Schleim-Keim took the stage, an anti-war presentation was given by Pastor Neher who showed pictures from the Great War and read selections from the book *Schön die Heimat zu verteidigen* before urging everyone to decide whether to object to their military

¹⁵⁵⁸ BStU, MfS, HA XX/AKG 6353, “Durchführung einer sogenannten ‘Punk-Werkstatt’ am 22.10.1983 in Halle,” 4 November 1983, pp.9-10.

¹⁵⁵⁹ See BStU, MfS, HA XX/AKG 6353, “Bericht zur ‘Punker’-Werkstatt,” 26 September 1985, pp.43-49.

service.¹⁵⁶⁰ On 15 November 1986, in the Kirche am Kaßberg in Karl-Marx-Stadt (now Chemnitz), a Friedenwerkstatt (peace workshop) featuring Antitrott, also witnessed a number of seminars during which participants debated questions of peace.¹⁵⁶¹ The ‘1st Anti-Apartheid Concert’ condemning the South African regime was held at the Magdeburger Dom on 17 December 1988 and featured Müllstation and Virus X.¹⁵⁶² These are but a few of the many concerts held in the Evangelical Churches over the 1980s featuring a mixture of oppositional politics and punk music as dissidents used these events to publicize their anti-regime critiques.

Punk concerts also became sites for connecting oppositional GDR politics with the international punk scene, especially the West German. As we saw in the previous chapter, contact between Westerners and Eastern youths had been one of the reasons why the Stasi had declared ‘Härte gegen Punk.’ And even though crossing the Berlin Wall was difficult for Western punks who were often held up by the East German border personnel, nonetheless, many were able to slip across.¹⁵⁶³ In June 1984, die Toten Hosen played a secret GDR show in East Berlin. Passing over the border ‘disguised’ in jeans and sporting ‘normal’ haircuts, once safely across, the band was met by contacts and taken to a church where they played with borrowed equipment in front of excited, dancing viewers.¹⁵⁶⁴ R.A.F. Gier used the relaxed visa controls during the international Leipzig Messe to tour the GDR. Crossing at West Berlin on 12 March 1986, the band drove south to Leipzig where they tried to establish contact with internationally-known L’Attentat guitarist Imad Abdul Majid. Arriving at his apartment, the band met with

¹⁵⁶⁰ BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.900, Teil 2 von 2, “Information zur Punk-Werkstatt am 7.12.85 in Halle,” 27 December 1985, pp.413-414.

¹⁵⁶¹ BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 2017/88, Bd. II/1, “2. Treffbericht IMS ‘Dominique’,” 25 November 1986, p.64.

¹⁵⁶² BStU, MfS, BV Halle, KD Eisleben VIII 2654/86, Bd. II/1, “Information,” 23 November 1988, p.111.

¹⁵⁶³ Ian Walker, *Zoo Station: Adventures in East and West Berlin* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1987), pp.9-10.

¹⁵⁶⁴ BStU, MfS, HA XVIII, Nr.9339, “Illegale Einreise der Punk-Gruppe ‘Tote Hosen’,” 15 June 1984, p.1. See also *Rückstand*, Nr.6 (Gelsenkirchen, 1983), p.15.

Easterners, played an impromptu show and returned home.¹⁵⁶⁵ Once the AlösA punks made contact with the Blockshock in Kreuzberg, a number of Western bands crossed at Friedrichsstraße to entertain Eastern audiences. Using the equipment of Namenlos and Reasors Exzesz, West German acts such as Disaster Area, Porno Patrol, Upright Citizens and others played over the years in the ProFi Haus at the Erlöserkirche.¹⁵⁶⁶

These Western contacts helped publicize the concerns of punk and the criticisms of the SED regime in the West, and concerts featuring international bands confirmed many of the fears the MfS had about punk. Western journalists and fanzine authors often showed up to Eastern concerts and detailed the events to Western readers.¹⁵⁶⁷ West Berliners also crossed at Friedrichsstrasse to attend church concerts in East Berlin and in so doing, established contact with Eastern punks.¹⁵⁶⁸ Concerts featuring Western bands were used especially by human rights activists to raise awareness about international political causes because they drew the attention of the Western media much to the horror of the Stasi who noted alarmingly the presence of an American Fores Network radio host and the author of the West Berlin fanzine *Ich und mein Staubsauger* at a Toten Hosen concert that was planned to help raise money for food to send to Romania in the Hoffnungskirche in Pankow on 9 April 1988.¹⁵⁶⁹ Knowing the public attention Western bands drew, Ostpunks regularly sought to organize concerts with their Western cousins such as in the fall of 1986, when members of Potsdam's Reaktion tried to set up a show with

¹⁵⁶⁵ BStU, MfS, BV Chemnitz, 3023/88, Bd.II, "Abschrift eines Tonbandmitschnittes der Sendung 'Treffpunkt' aus Rias II vom 20.12.86 in der Zeit vom ca. 17.07 Uhr – 17.30 Uhr," n.d., pp.54-62.

¹⁵⁶⁶ For a listing of the many Western bands that played at the Profihaus, see Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, p.119.

¹⁵⁶⁷ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, Nr.3106, "Bericht über Veranstaltung am 9.4.1988 in Berlin-Pankow, 110 Berlin Elsa-Brändström-Str. 36. Gemeindehaus der Hoffnungskirche," 11 April 1988, pp.84-87.

¹⁵⁶⁸ BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.10321, Teil 2 von 2, "Erste operative Ergebnisse zum Material der Arbeitsgruppe XVII vom 10. April 1986, Einreise einer Punkerguppe aus Berlin (West) am 12.4.1986 in die Hauptstadt der DDR, Berlin," 14 April 1986, pp.408-409; and BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, Nr.3104, "Information – Speicherung," 22 October 1984, p.34.

¹⁵⁶⁹ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, Nr.3106, "Bericht über Veranstaltung am 9.4.1988 in Berlin-Pankow, 110 Berlin Elsa-Brändström-Str. 36. Gemeindehaus der Hoffnungskirche," 11 April 1988, pp.84-87.

Normahl, though it never came to pass.¹⁵⁷⁰ Nor was it simply Western bands that caused consternation at the MfS. Bands coming from the socialist bloc to the GDR likewise spoke to the internationalism of punk and raised fears of punk ideology spreading throughout the communist East as well.¹⁵⁷¹ Polish bands performed often at church-sponsored shows and attracted fans crossing the border in possession of Western records and literature that while semi-legal in Poland were strictly forbidden in the GDR.¹⁵⁷²

Alternative politics, the at-times tenuous relationship between the Evangelical Church leadership and the dissident groups forming within the Christian institution, the public nature and involvement of the Western media in promoting the Eastern opposition, the pressure being placed on the SED from below, and the importance of punk concerts, can all be seen in the renegade Kirchentages von Unten (Church Days from Below), held at the Pflingstkirche on 24-26 June 1987.¹⁵⁷³ Running concurrently to the official Kirchentages der evangelischen Kirche (Church Days of the Evangelical Churches), Berlin-Brandenburg, 24-28 June 1987, the dissident event was intended as a response to the recently canceled Friedenswerkstatt (Peace Workshop) under state pressure and a protest against the official event.¹⁵⁷⁴ Upset at the cosy relationship between church leaders and the SED, and the lack of space for the East Berlin Offene Arbeit (that still had not found a permanent home following its ejection from the Pflingstkirche back in 1983), the event was a mix of religious sermons, public information forums, art installations and

¹⁵⁷⁰ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, 3104, "Information," 29 October 1986, pp.226-227.

¹⁵⁷¹ See BStU, MfS, HA, Nr.10321, Teil 1 von 2, "Teilnahme von DDR-Bürgern und ehemaligen DDR-Bürgern an einem Punk-Musik-Konzert am 24. April 1987 in Prag/CSSR," 17 April 1987, pp.232-233.

¹⁵⁷² A group of 6 Polish punks were stopped at the border carrying numerous records and cassettes that they wanted to sell at the 1988 Frühlingsfest at the Erlöserkirche and more ominously a list of approximately 50 addresses of punks from the GDR, FRG, Poland and Czechoslovakia. See BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.10321, Teil 2 von 2, "Operativinformation Nr. 15/88," 2 May 1988, pp.329-331.

¹⁵⁷³ Generally, see Hans-Jürgen Buntrock, "Die Kirche von Unten," in *'Freiheit ist immer Freiheit...'* Die Andersdenkenden in der DDR, ed., Ferdinand Kroh (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1988), pp.181-209.

¹⁵⁷⁴ MDA, Ki 12/02, "Fliegendes Papier 1," n.d., p.1; and MDA, Ki 12/02, "Fliegendes Papier 2," May 1987, pp.1-2. See also "Kirchentag in Ost-Berlin stößt auf Kritik," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 24 June 1987, p.5.

performances by a number of punk bands: die Firma, L'Attentat, Kein Talent, Antitrott, Andreas Auslauf and Namenlos.¹⁵⁷⁵ At first threatening to occupy a church if space was not given, eventually the BEK acceded to the demands of activists, fearful of the media exposure an occupation would entail and pressured by the state to find a quiet compromise.¹⁵⁷⁶ In the end, church officials gave activists the Pfingstkirche to hold the event.

Overwhelmed by the public response, the two-day festival drew over 6,000 people; so many that the nearby Galiläakirche was also needed since the Pfingstkirche was too small.¹⁵⁷⁷ The event had musical performances, a communal café, photograph exhibitions, booths selling samizdats and rare books, group meetings on the future direction of the Kirche von Unten, and lectures on subjects entitled 'With Jesus no state is necessary – Jesus from below' and 'Is Jesus an Anarchist?'¹⁵⁷⁸ On Sunday 28 June, members of the Kirche von Unten secretly infiltrated the final closing ceremony for the official Kirchentages held at an arena on the outskirts of East Berlin. Unrolling banners reading 'Glasnost in State and Church,' the demonstrators further embarrassed church authorities which had sought to halt the festival in the weeks prior to the event.¹⁵⁷⁹ Crucially, the events of the weekend in the Pfingstkirche were caught on Western cameras and extensively detailed by Western journalists in the days to come despite the silence of the Eastern media.¹⁵⁸⁰

¹⁵⁷⁵ MDA, Ki 12/02, "Fliegendes Papier 3," June 1987, pp.1-2; MDA, Ki 12/02, "Bericht zum Kirchentag von Unten," n.d., pp.1-8; MDA, Ki 12/02, "Warum ein Kirchentag von UNTEN?," n.d., pp.3-4; and MDA, PS 002/07, Thomas Berndt, "„Und ICH will bei euch wohnen“ DOCH ICH DARF ES NICHT ZENTRAL," in *Aktuell*, Nr.7, 3 December 1986, pp.2-3.

¹⁵⁷⁶ See MDA, Ki 08/02, "Presseinformation," 25 June 1987, p.1; and MDA, Ki 08/02, "Presseinformation," 26 June 1987, p.1.

¹⁵⁷⁷ MDA, Ki 12/02, "Bericht zum Kirchentag von Unten," n.d., pp.1-8.

¹⁵⁷⁸ MDA, Ki 12/02, "Bericht zum Kirchentag von Unten," n.d., p.1; and MDA, Ki 12/02, "Fliegendes Papier 4," June 1987, pp.1-3.

¹⁵⁷⁹ Thüringia Bishop Werner Leich was forced to specifically address this action which he charged endangered the official Kirchentages and threatened the Church's position within the GDR. See MDA, Ki 12/02, Werner Leich, "16. Rundbrief," 2 July 1987, p.2.

¹⁵⁸⁰ Karl-Heinz Baum, "Punks und Skinheads in der Pfingstgemeinde," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, Nr.146, 29 June 1987, p.3; Peter Jochen Winters, "Sie pochen auf ihr Asylrecht in der Kirche," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 29

The Kirchentages von Unten was a great success, and on 11-12 September 1987, the Kirche von Unten (Church from Below) was founded by a number of religious and youth outreach figures from the Offene Arbeit programs such as Uwe Kulisch, Thomas ‘Kaktus’ Grund and Lorenz Postler, long-time activists such as Vera Wollenberger, opposition groups such as the Friedrichsfelder Friedenskreis, the Umweltbibliothek, and Third World groups, as well as numerous punks such as Michael Horschig.¹⁵⁸¹ The Kirche von Unten gave punks an organizational umbrella from which to critique the state and give their politics focus. In the coming two years, the Kirche von Unten was a major force driving the regime to defeat as its grass-roots activities, penchant for public promotion, and Christian simplicity reminded many of the Prague Spring’s ‘socialism with a human face.’¹⁵⁸² Furthermore, the Kirchentages von Unten indicates the immense buildup from below that was pressuring the SED in the final years of the regime and the role of these events in furthering the cooperation between the various groups. Kirche von Unten members would write later that the Kirchentages von Unten was an eye-opening experience for all involved: “Suddenly there was euphoria that only a few weeks before we had not expected. Those of us in the OA got to know people who had been politically active for years and who impressed us with their experiences and their radical views, and on the other hand, seemed to like our way of going about things together, our liveliness and unconventionality, so that we were all in this manner enriched.”¹⁵⁸³

June 1987, p.5; “Christen in beiden deutschen Staaten zur Zusammenarbeit aufgerufen,” *Der Tagesspiegel*, Nr.12 693, 29 June 1987, p.6; Hans-Rüdiger Karutz, “Gläubige zwischen Freude und Frust,” *Die Welt*, Nr.148, 30 June 1987, p.3; and Andreas Meier, “Die große Stunde einer Minderheit,” *Rheinischer Merkur*, Nr.27, 3 July 1987, p.21. See also Eastern analyses by dissidents of these reports in MDA, PS 107/15, “Der Kirchentag von Unten im Spiegel der westlichen Medien,” in *Umweltblätter*, Nr.15, 27 July 1987, n.p.

¹⁵⁸¹ See MDA, PS 047/11, “Fliegende Abschlusserklärung,” in *Grenzfall*, Nr.7/87, July 1987, n.p; and Neubert, *Geschichte der Opposition in der DDR*, pp.686-690.

¹⁵⁸² See, for example, the declaration by the Kirche von Unten on the decision to hold a second ‘Kirchentages von unten’ in Halle. MDA, Ki 13/02, “Fliegendes Papier der Kirche von unten,” n.d. [1988], p.1.

¹⁵⁸³ Cited in Kirche von Unten, ed., *Wunder gibt es immer wieder*, p.235.

The Kirchentages von Unten likewise indicates the deep imbrication between music and politics that characterizes the final years of punk in the GDR. In early 1980s, punks had been content to carve out leisure spaces for the musical pursuits of their subculture. But by the last years of the decade, punks were active members in the GDR opposition. As we have seen, punks were involved in a variety of dissident politics throughout the 1980s, and as they became more directly involved in the activities of the opposition, they supplied participants to populate their protest activities in the years to come. Importantly, the increasing inability of the SED to hinder punk concerts speaks volumes to the weaknesses of the regime by 1987. Whereas for years the state had used the Church as a dam for channeling and domesticating opposition politics, the success of the Kirchentages von Unten signaled that the barrier was about to burst. Despite tremendous state pressure on church officials in the weeks leading up to the Kirchentages von Unten, all that could be achieved was the assurance that no violent occupation would take place. At the actual event, the MfS made no arrests, fearful that trouble might jeopardize Honecker's long-awaited visit to the FRG in the fall. Embarrassed by a number of articles detailing the event that appeared in the West, the SED was nonetheless powerless. Despite the state's best efforts at limiting the political impact of the subculture, punk was helping to repoliticize the long-dormant East German public sphere.

Rethinking the Enemy: Stasi Revision and Penetration of the Punk Scene

By 1986, the MfS came to accept that 'Härte gegen Punk' was not having the desired effect. Instead of destroying punk, 'Härte gegen Punk' had in fact made the genre more dangerous by driving its members into the opposition movement. As an early 1985 regional MfS report stated

frankly, “hostile-negative influences” of oppositional “centers, organizations and forces” among the region’s youth had in fact increased in 1984 rather than decrease.¹⁵⁸⁴ By 1986, those punks jailed or drafted into the military were slowly returning to their respective scenes and new, younger members were further bolstering the ranks as older punks moved on, or in many cases, out of the GDR. According to a later MfS report, despite the losses ‘Härte gegen Punk’ had inflicted, the subculture had rebounded and new members had increased the overall numbers back up to around a thousand youths nationwide, a figure remaining relatively stable throughout the 1980s.¹⁵⁸⁵ Disturbingly, the Stasi was also beginning to discover a plethora of new youth groups such as Skinheads, Goths (Gruftis), New Romantics and Heavy Metal fans. Like punk, these groups were considered by the MfS to be populated by ‘negativ-feindlich Jugendlichen’ and a potentially destabilizing force. Importantly, as MfS reports made clear, punk concerts following ‘Härte gegen Punk’ were actually increasing rather than decreasing, and nearly all of them were taking place within the Protestant Churches and thus reaching much wider audiences than had earlier performances.

International scrutiny meant that repression only raised Western outcry, a situation the SED and MfS leadership were desperate to avoid, especially since they were involved in complicated negotiations with Bonn over life-saving loans and Honecker’s long awaited visit to the FRG in the mid-1980s.¹⁵⁸⁶ At the same time, the Western media frequently reported on the various dissidents, human rights activists and youth groups emerging in East Germany and any

¹⁵⁸⁴ BStU, MfS, BV Halle Sachakten AKG 2045, “Einschätzung ausgewählter Probleme der politisch-operativen Lageentwicklung unter jugendlichen Personenkreisen im Jahr 1984,” 14 February 1985, p.2.

¹⁵⁸⁵ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok, 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, p.7.

¹⁵⁸⁶ Jonathan R. Zatlin, *The Currency of Socialism: Money and Political Culture in East Germany* (Washington, DC: German Historical Institute, 2007), pp.104-144; and Konrad H. Jarausch, *The Rush to German Unity* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp.97-101.

hint of repression drew condemnation of the GDR political system.¹⁵⁸⁷ As the East German economic crisis worsened over the decade, Western loans became a life-saving umbilical cord to the embattled SED.¹⁵⁸⁸ However, the West did not simply give the East German leadership Deutschmarks free of charge and conditions for the loans included amnesty for political prisoners, increased travel between East and West Berlin, and greater political relaxation.¹⁵⁸⁹ As a consequence, Western loans were always ‘bought’ with Eastern political concessions. As activists began using the Western media to broadcast their struggles, the SED was faced with a difficult decision: having driven punk into the Protestant Churches and thus forfeiting their ability to ‘solve’ the punk problem coercively, the SED and security apparatus needed a new means of dealing with the oppositional subculture.

On 7 July 1986, Rudi Mittag issued a decree that circulated extensively throughout the MfS (VVS 68/86) that guided Stasi punk policy until the fall of the Berlin Wall.¹⁵⁹⁰ Repeating the same charges as earlier Stasi reports about punk—that the Western mass media was to blame for punk—VVS 68/86 went on to describe the various ‘characteristics’ of punk and other ‘negativ-dekadenten’ youth groups.¹⁵⁹¹ Punks could be identified, the report claimed in a series of points, by their

- Unkempt, partially torn, dirty or smeared clothing – striking, mostly dyed hair, striking haircuts (Mohawk, standing-up hair);

¹⁵⁸⁷ See Steven Pfaff, *Exit-Voice Dynamics and the Collapse of East Germany: The Crisis of Leninism and the Revolution of 1989* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), pp.96-99.

¹⁵⁸⁸ Jeffrey Kopstein, *The Politics of Economic Decline in East Germany, 1945-1989* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), pp.90-95; and Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, pp.37-38.

¹⁵⁸⁹ For example, on 1 August 1984, retirees were able to spend up to 60 days in the West. See Zatlín, *The Currency of Socialism*, p.141.

¹⁵⁹⁰ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, pp.1-29.

¹⁵⁹¹ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, pp.6-8.

- glorifying anarchist thought, rejecting existing state system or any state authority;
- aggressive, provocative appearances;
- “Punks” subdivide themselves in light of certain interests or external features in different ways (New Romantics, Hard-Core-Punk, Schmuddle-Punk, KID-Punk, etc.);
- Since approximately 1982, “punks” are included in the “offene Jugendarbeit” in some evangelical congregations.¹⁵⁹²

Listing much of the criminal behavior the Stasi had observed in the subculture during the previous few years, VVS 68/86 made much of punks’ “lack of discipline, aggressive behavior, search for open confrontation with their environment,” their “perpetration of criminal acts,” and blamed these tendencies on their “inadequate learning and performance preparedness in school/professional training, missing shift and arriving late at work.”¹⁵⁹³ Introducing the subculture as “a manifestation based in violence, rejecting society and without any constructive orientations,” the report offered little new in terms of interpreting punk.¹⁵⁹⁴ Again foreign contact to the Federal Republic and West Berlin among GDR punks was a major concern of the MfS, especially reports by Eastern punks appearing in fanzines and records released in the West.¹⁵⁹⁵ Lumping Neo-Nazis, Skinheads, Heavy Metal fans and punks together in the same category, the

¹⁵⁹² BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, p.7.

¹⁵⁹³ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, pp.11-13.

¹⁵⁹⁴ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, p.6.

¹⁵⁹⁵ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, pp.14-15, 17-18.

report focused on the fascist tendencies among the Eastern youth groups, even mentioning West German Neo-Nazi leader Michael Kühnen.¹⁵⁹⁶

Similar to the ZAIG 3366 report discussed earlier, VVS 68/86 detailed the intimate relationship that had been developing between punk and the Evangelical Churches. Listing sixteen churches and congregations supporting the genre throughout the GDR, especially the Offene Arbeit came under heavy criticism from the state security apparatus. “This form of ‘offenen Jugendarbeit’,” claimed the report, “is being used to concentrate punk supporters under the control of religious institutions and to influence them in a hostile and negative manner. Particularly active are religious workers, especially those known to be hostile-negative.”¹⁵⁹⁷ As always, youths were not necessarily to blame but rather dangerous pastors who were using punk for oppositional ends. “In many youth congregations that have developed into meeting places for punk supporters (see appendix),” ran VVS 68/86, “the responsible hostile clerical personnel give the ‘punks’ the possibility to disseminate their decadent ideas.”¹⁵⁹⁸ The Stasi was especially concerned with punk concerts, recognizing that during these events, “the ‘opinion of punks’ [are] propagated and youths who are present [are] encouraged to ‘drop out’ and to adopt ‘alternative lifestyles’.”¹⁵⁹⁹ The lyrical content of punk songs—an appendix contained song lyrics—were considered especially dangerous because they vocalized oppositional thought among GDR youths.

¹⁵⁹⁶ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, pp.16-17.

¹⁵⁹⁷ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, pp.8, 10-11, and Anlage 1.

¹⁵⁹⁸ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, p.9.

¹⁵⁹⁹ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, p.9.

The more public activities that punks and the OA had undertaken in recent years were condemned due to the unwanted attention they were drawing: “With these activities, on the one hand, they achieved public effectiveness, and on the other hand, contacts and connections in adjacent districts were established and reinforced.”¹⁶⁰⁰ Fundamentally, the OA and dissident leaders were using punk to strengthen their influence and to foment oppositionist ideology among youths, according to the report: “The illegal punk bands and their appearances act as the decisive reason for the participation in events or banding together in such groups. In this sense, they are also being used by hostile clerical forces in order to attract negative-decadent youths for the events—particularly within the framework of the ‘offenen Jugendarbeit’.”¹⁶⁰¹ After listing a number of recent concerts—along with performing bands and audiences—VVS 68/86 concluded that, “the operational findings described above make clear to what extent hostile clerical forces are involved in this area and to which extent anti-socialist ideologies, anti-communist rabble and neo-fascist elements and platforms are being offered and conduct or behavior in opposition to socialism are being promoted.”¹⁶⁰²

VVS 68/86 called for a full reorientation in the fight against punk. Recognizing that despite small numbers, due to their “high public effectiveness and society-damaging behavior,” punk needed to be stopped in a subtler fashion than ‘Härte gegen Punk.’¹⁶⁰³ The report outlined a seven-step plan to better contain the subculture. The first and most important suggestion was to

¹⁶⁰⁰ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, p.8.

¹⁶⁰¹ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, p.9.

¹⁶⁰² BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, p.11.

¹⁶⁰³ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, p.2.

institute “a qualitative improvement of IM-work” among punks in order “to guarantee a permanent and current area overview.”¹⁶⁰⁴ Second, a full listing of the existing punk bands, groups and subculture members among the various regions of the GDR was needed.¹⁶⁰⁵ Third, all contacts between punks and members of the political underground were to be recorded.¹⁶⁰⁶ Fourth, any connections between GDR punks and Westerners—especially fanzine authors and “radical right-wing groups”—were to be severed.¹⁶⁰⁷ Fifth, important punk groups and individuals were to be identified and operations initiated against them.¹⁶⁰⁸ Sixth, any grouping exhibiting fascist tendencies were to be “dissolved” (aufzulösen) and their political impact hindered by all available state and social forces.¹⁶⁰⁹ Finally, all illegal punk bands were to be registered—Appendix 2 contained a list of 33 punk bands nationwide—and their political and social influence restricted.¹⁶¹⁰ While many of the suggestions were not new, the increased emphasis on IM work and clandestine subversion was important because the MfS hoped to torpedo punk with stealth rather than drawing unnecessary attention to the subculture in the West by using more public coercion.

¹⁶⁰⁴ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, p.2.

¹⁶⁰⁵ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, p.2.

¹⁶⁰⁶ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, p.2.

¹⁶⁰⁷ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, p.3.

¹⁶⁰⁸ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, p.3.

¹⁶⁰⁹ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, p.3.

¹⁶¹⁰ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, p.3.

VVS 68/86 called on authorities to make special efforts to hinder any concerts taking place on church property and to secure, in the words of the report, “higher public order and security.”¹⁶¹¹ However, intervention by state authorities was difficult since the Church-State Agreement limited state intervention in strictly religious affairs which was why religious figures always include religious content at even punk concerts.¹⁶¹² These difficulties help explain why the Stasi increasingly turned to silent subversion and informer work in the last two decades of the GDR. IMs and relevant officials were to punctually make available any information relating to up-coming concerts in order to give the MfS adequate time to apply pressure to organizers, performers and youths.¹⁶¹³ Local authorities were to ensure that events or concerts taking place in a church were legally compliant with all elements of the ‘Event Ordinance’ (Veranstaltungsverordnung), a decree introduced in 1983 as a means of limiting church events because it compelled organizers to register any assembly with local police beforehand.¹⁶¹⁴ Authorities—both official and unofficial—were to document all comings and goings at concerts, the names of those performing and organizers, along with any punishable acts taking place during the event. However, only afterwards—out of sight—were punks and others to be arrested and charged.¹⁶¹⁵ In order to more effectively defend against the genre, VVS 68/86 ordered all

¹⁶¹¹ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, p.4.

¹⁶¹² Let alone the fact that, as Mary Fulbrook reminds us, the churches should be understood primarily as a religious institution. See Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, p.115.

¹⁶¹³ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, p.3.

¹⁶¹⁴ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, p.3. An earlier ordinance forcing religious authorities to register public events introduced in 1970 was abandoned for all intents and purposes in 1973. See Goeckel, *The Lutheran Church and the East German State*, pp.191-192, 228-229.

¹⁶¹⁵ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, p.4.

district (Kreis) and regional (Bezirk) authorities to henceforth provide monthly reports on punk to the Evaluation and Information Group (Auswertungs- und Kontrolgruppe, or AKG) of Main Directorate XX for systematic analysis. As the circular stressed, any local initiatives—“preventative measures” in the euphemistic words of Mittag—taken against punks were to be confirmed by Hauptabteilung XX/2 first, giving MfS policy against punk an even more centralized direction than before.¹⁶¹⁶

The MfS had already been moving in this direction in its continuing efforts to combat the opposition movement, and especially the successes that punk concerts were experiencing. On 25 February 1985, Mielke issued Service Instructions (Dienstanweisung) 1/85 on the “political-operational safeguarding of events.”¹⁶¹⁷ Recognizing that due to the complicated international relationships of the SED and GDR, public concerts and events were achieving powerful political meaning at the present time, and that the enemy recognized this and was using them to destroy the state: “With these events, the enemy aims his attacks against the intended political-ideological objectives and endeavors to use these for provocations and disturbances of the state security and public order.”¹⁶¹⁸ Outlining the lines of command and measures for neutralizing the political influence of such events and concerts (seizing illegal leaflets, hindering participants, preventative arrests, etc.), Mielke stressed that at all costs, the MfS and state authorities needed to stem the flow of church-based activities and must do so without attracting negative attention from the Western media with overtly coercive means. That same month, Mielke issued Service Instructions 2/85 on the “Preventative hindering, exposure and fighting of political underground

¹⁶¹⁶ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 008323, “Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher, besonders sogenannter Punker, innerhalb der DDR und Maßnahmen zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung dieses Personenkreises,” 7 July 1986, p.5.

¹⁶¹⁷ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 007569, “Dienstanweisung Nr. 1/85 zur politisch-operativen Sicherung von Veranstaltungen,” 25 February 1985, pp.1-15.

¹⁶¹⁸ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 007569, “Dienstanweisung Nr. 1/85 zur politisch-operativen Sicherung von Veranstaltungen,” 25 February 1985, p.3.

activity.”¹⁶¹⁹ The frequency of “political underground activity” (politischer Untergrundtätigkeit or PUT) was increasing, and “[a]bove all, is aimed at the attempt to weaken, undermine and destabilize societal conditions through the elimination of the socialist state and social order.”¹⁶²⁰ Combating PUT was “a task for the whole society” and Mielke called for the early notice of the enemy’s plans to give the state time to take preventative measures. “[P]ublicly effective and deliberately provocative appearances” were to be contained and any subversive contacts between East and West eliminated, especially among former Easterners now residing in the West.¹⁶²¹ To accomplish these goals, Mielke commanded that increased “effectiveness of the work” with IMs was of the highest necessity.¹⁶²² Officials were to cultivate contacts, build trust with their charges, and use IMs to expose any threatening activities.¹⁶²³ IMs were to infiltrate the churches, youth groups, and cultural organizations that were hot-beds of dissent.¹⁶²⁴ In the wake of VVS 68/86, each MfS Bezirk leadership received their marching orders, and by the end of 1986, monthly reports on punk activities were due to their regional AKGs and Main Directorate XX.¹⁶²⁵ By recruiting IMs from the various dissident groups, it was hoped that the MfS would be able to direct, divert and hopefully incapacitate the activities of the opposition.

Why did the Stasi move from forceful repression (‘Härte gegen Punk’) to silent infiltration and sabotage (VVS 68/86)? As we have seen, ‘Härte gegen Punk’ nearly broke punk

¹⁶¹⁹ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 005083, “Dienstanweisung Nr. 2/85 zur vorbeugenden Verhinderung, Aufdeckung und Bekämpfung politischer Untergrundtätigkeit,” 20 February 1985, pp.1-39.

¹⁶²⁰ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 005083, “Dienstanweisung Nr. 2/85 zur vorbeugenden Verhinderung, Aufdeckung und Bekämpfung politischer Untergrundtätigkeit,” 20 February 1985, p.3.

¹⁶²¹ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 005083, “Dienstanweisung Nr. 2/85 zur vorbeugenden Verhinderung, Aufdeckung und Bekämpfung politischer Untergrundtätigkeit,” 20 February 1985, pp.8-9.

¹⁶²² BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 005083, “Dienstanweisung Nr. 2/85 zur vorbeugenden Verhinderung, Aufdeckung und Bekämpfung politischer Untergrundtätigkeit,” 20 February 1985, p.11.

¹⁶²³ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 005083, “Dienstanweisung Nr. 2/85 zur vorbeugenden Verhinderung, Aufdeckung und Bekämpfung politischer Untergrundtätigkeit,” 20 February 1985, pp.11-15

¹⁶²⁴ BStU, MfS, BdL/Dok. 005083, “Dienstanweisung Nr. 2/85 zur vorbeugenden Verhinderung, Aufdeckung und Bekämpfung politischer Untergrundtätigkeit,” 20 February 1985, pp.11-12.

¹⁶²⁵ See BStU, MfS, BV Rostock, BdL 2755, “Aufgabenstellung zur politisch-operativen Bearbeitung von Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens feindlich-negativer und negative-dekadenter Jugendlicher/Jungerwachsener, insbesondere sogenannter Punker,” 30 October 1986, pp.1-3.

and although the attendant publicity had been troublesome, the policy certainly worked to devastate the subculture by destroying the first Ostpunk generation. Domestically, the flowering of the many oppositional groups over the course of the 1980s speaks to growing discontent among the GDR population. Efforts at integrating citizens with long-time SED policies such as anti-fascism or hatred of the West were failing, and even the revival of older non-socialist German traditions—Martin Luther, Frederick the Great, and Bismarck—never really worked.¹⁶²⁶ Even further, the apparatus of honorary volunteering that was essential in maintaining SED control over GDR society—youth club managers, work brigade leaders, housing bloc secretaries, etc.—declined significantly during this last decade as individuals increasingly abandoned these posts that promised considerable work and little reward.¹⁶²⁷ Internationally, dependent on the West for life-sustaining loans, the GDR could ill-afford to upset its neighbor with human rights abuses. Both international and domestic conditions are thus important, and VVS 68/86 was not alone in stressing IM work but rather part of a much broader shift in tactical strategy undergone by the MfS since the 1970s.¹⁶²⁸

But there is a significant—indeed, crucial—domestic reason explaining why the MfS rethought its strategy vis-à-vis the subculture in the mid-1980s. Aware that punks were becoming increasingly integrated into dissident circles, the Stasi began using punks to infiltrate the opposition groups. As punks became socialized into the politics of the opposition movement, punk IMs became valuable contacts for the MfS thus exposing the complicated nature of punk integration into dissident politics. Already in 1980 and 1981, the MfS began recruiting punk IMs,

¹⁶²⁶ See Anna Saunders, *Honecker's Children: Youth and Patriotism in East(ern) Germany, 1979-2002* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp.32-35, 51-58; and Mary Fulbrook, *German National Identity after the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), pp.87-92.

¹⁶²⁷ See Esther von Richthofen, *Bringing Culture to the Masses: Control, Compromise and Participation in the GDR* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009), pp.190-206.

¹⁶²⁸ Dennis, *The Stasi*, pp.112-113.

some of whom such as IM ‘Berry’ and IM ‘Erich’ became long-time informers on the scene.¹⁶²⁹

Over the course of the 1980s, the Stasi was able to fully penetrate the East German punk scene with unofficial informers. Consulting the files of the former East German security apparatus, the numbers of punks recruited to work for the MfS as IMs is vast. Primarily interested in placing informers in the illegal punk bands, the list of bands with at least one member working for the Stasi at one time or another reads like a who’s who of East German punk: Schleim-Keim, Kein Talent, HAU, Kalabatek Exzek, Anti X, Zwitschermaschine, Müllstation, Antitrott, Pffft..., Papierkrieg, L’Attentat, Wutanfall, die Vision, Der Expander des Fortschritts, Reaktion, Brennende Zahnbürsten, K.V.D., Creepers, Vitamin A, Küchenspione, Wartburgs für Walter, Fabrik, Meldepflicht, MOFN, Madmens, and probably others still unrevealed at present time. Die Firma—the name itself a euphemism for the Stasi—had two members working for the MfS. Wutanfall had multiple members working for the Stasi. The interest in band members was part of the Stasi’s larger strategy of controlling “ring-leaders” (Rädelführers) throughout East German society. Organizers and important members of the more political punk groups—such as in Alösa or the Jena JG-Stadtmitte—were similarly targeted as the various Stasi circulars on punk suggest. At any punk gathering, the MfS could count on a number of IMs to be present. Scholars more or less agree that approximately one in every seven citizens in the GDR was employed by the Stasi at one time or another (if we include occasional informers) and these numbers seem about right for the East German punk scene as well.¹⁶³⁰ But if we only consider the actual punk band musicians, the number might in fact be closer to one in four.

In light of punk ideology and especially the anti-state emphasis, why would punks work for the MfS? As with all informers, a variety of motives explain why some choose to work for

¹⁶²⁹ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.40-43.

¹⁶³⁰ See John O. Koehler, *Stasi: The Untold Story of the East German Secret Police* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), p.9

the Stasi but for punks, they can generally be broken down into three categories of motive. First and foremost, fear and state pressure must be foregrounded as one of the primary reason for collaboration. Young and usually threatened with arrest, Stasi officers pressured punks with threats and future difficulties if they did not agree to work with the state. IM 'Biafra' is a case in point. Coming into view of the MfS after being arrested along with other punks in Halle-Neustadt for listening publicly to anti-state punk songs, after searching his bedroom at his parents house, authorities discovered nearly two dozen illegal cassettes. Receiving probation instead of jail time, 'Biafra' was shaken by his narrow escape, as indicated by his nearly complete break with punks following his arrest. During a series of contact meetings with the MfS, his arrest and the cassettes were raised a number of times during their conversations and while the threats remained unspoken, they were nonetheless implicit. Yielding to the intimidation, 'Biafra' agreed to work with the MfS.¹⁶³¹

Others were motivated by ideological beliefs, convictions nurtured expertly by Stasi handlers. IM 'Berry,' perhaps the longest running informer in the East Berlin punk scene is an eminent example here. Interrogated after attempting to travel to Prague for a motorcycle race, 'Berry' began reporting on his fellow East Berlin punks in 1982. Considered "reliable and honest" by the Stasi, 'Berry' had a "fundamentally positive attitude towards the social conditions in the GDR" and the trust built up between him and his MfS contact was strong.¹⁶³² According to his file, 'Berry' worked with the MfS because of "conviction," and was "pleased about the conversations," asking only "whether it will always be like that, that he ['Berry'] can address all of his problems."¹⁶³³ The MfS stoked 'Berry's' fears about emerging nationalism within the punk

¹⁶³¹ See BStU, MfS, BV Halle, Abt. XX VIII 2003/86, Bd.I/1 and II/1.

¹⁶³² BStU, MfS, BV Berlin AIM 3772/89, Bd.I/1, "Auskunftsbericht," 27 October 1983, p.14.

¹⁶³³ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin AIM 3772/89, Bd.I/1, "Auskunftsbericht," 27 October 1983, p.17; and BStU, MfS, BV Berlin AIM 3772/89, Bd.I/1, "Bericht zum zweiten Kontaktgespräch," 31 August 1982, p.86.

subculture. Outlining their concerns to ‘Berry,’ the Stasi convinced him that the enemy was trying to build a Skinhead opposition movement in the GDR through the use of the Western mass media.¹⁶³⁴ Recognizing the uncertainty in ‘Berry,’ his doubts about punk and state motives, the Stasi exploited them to the hilt: “His motives are mainly the prevention of hostile political activities, [and] he showed an absolute rejection against Skinheads and Nazi-punks. He would not like the disappearance of the punk movement as an alternative for the unresolved problems of the youths. Here, he [‘Berry’] must be worked through further intensive ideological conversations, in order to show him other paths towards a solution.”¹⁶³⁵ In subsequent meetings, the MfS hammered home the state ideological position, discussing with ‘Berry’ the pros and cons of socialism, and the necessity of vigilance and collaboration to overcome his occasional hesitancy.¹⁶³⁶

But punks were not solely pressured or persuaded into working for the state: for many punks, the MfS was a means of acquiring privileges as they used the MfS to secure benefits that otherwise were unobtainable. Nearly every punk IM received money from the Stasi and the state security office became an important source of revenue for the subculture—at 50 or 100 Marks at a time, for teenage youths, these sums were significant.¹⁶³⁷ IM ‘Michael Müller,’ for example, less a punk than a free-jazz musician whose apartment became a central meeting place for the alternative scene in Dresden, had thousands of Marks worth of musical equipment bought for

¹⁶³⁴ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin AIM 3772/89, Bd.I/1, “Bericht über die Kontaktaufnahme zu einem Punk-Fan im Rahmen der Vorbeugungsmaßnahmen zu den Motorrad WM in Brno/CSSR,” 26 August 1982, pp.83-84.

¹⁶³⁵ Underline in original. BStU, MfS, BV Berlin AIM 3772/89, Bd.I/1, “Bericht über die Kontaktaufnahme zu einem Punk-Fan im Rahmen der Vorbeugungsmaßnahmen zu den Motorrad WM in Brno/CSSR,” 26 August 1982, p.84.

¹⁶³⁶ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin AIM 3772/89, Bd.I/1, “Bericht über die Kontaktaufnahme zu einem Punk-Fan im Rahmen der Vorbeugungsmaßnahmen zu den Motorrad WM in Brno/CSSR,” 26 August 1982, p.85

¹⁶³⁷ See BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 2017/88, Bd.I/1, “Quittungen über ausgezahlte Beträge und geleistete Sachwerte,” n.d., p.182.

him by the MfS.¹⁶³⁸ IM ‘Biafra’ was given blank cassettes for his cooperation.¹⁶³⁹ IM ‘Käpt’n’ used subversion to destroy Wutanfall in exchange for support from the Stasi in acquiring a better apartment.¹⁶⁴⁰ IM ‘Dominique’ sought to emigrate from the GDR and believed that working for the MfS would help his candidacy: reading through his file, ‘Dominique’ became increasingly unstable as it became clear that the Stasi was not interested in helping him emigrate to the West and finally he erupted at his MfS controller in a fit of rage.¹⁶⁴¹ As a means of securing privileges, punks actively sought to use state fear to make gains even if their manipulation did not always come to fruition.

What sort of activities did punk IMs engage in for the Stasi? Perhaps most important was hindering concerts, whether by damaging equipment, sidetracking bands or other means of subversion. Wrecking hard to repair musical equipment and especially stealing valuable microphones before performances was probably the most frequent activities. For example, IM ‘Käpt’n’ was able to keep Wutanfall from playing at a 22 October 1983 show in the Christusgemeinde by not travelling with the band to Halle.¹⁶⁴² IMs were to keep an ear open for any Western contacts, especially those with political ties such as with the West German Greens. As the emigration crisis increased during the 1980s as especially young East Germans began applying to leave for the West, IMs were to help convince youths to stay in the GDR. IMs were to especially report on the activities taking place within the opposition groups in the churches. Again, IM ‘Dominique’ is representative since, with extensive connections throughout the GDR and the West, ‘Dominique’ was well positioned to report on any oppositional activities. In late

¹⁶³⁸ See BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, AIM 392/90, Bd.I/1, “Quittung,” 29 June 1983, p.183.

¹⁶³⁹ BStU, MfS, BV Halle, Abt.XX VIII 2003/86, “Bericht über das 7. Kontaktgespräch,” 27 January 1988, p.164.

¹⁶⁴⁰ BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 643/86, Bd.I/1, “Vorschlag zur Werbung eines IM im Sicherungsbereich negative-dekadente Jugendliche/Gruppierungen/Punker,” 30 July 1983, p.115.

¹⁶⁴¹ See BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 2017/88, Bd.I/1, “Information,” 26 August 1988, p.203-205.

¹⁶⁴² BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 643/86, Bd.II/1, “Treffbericht,” 20 October 1983, p.22.

1987, ‘Dominique’ was instructed to cultivate his ties with the East Berlin scene and work his way into the Umweltbibliothek so that he could borrow samizdat literature and bring them to his MfS controller.¹⁶⁴³ In early 1988, ‘Dominique’ was able to give copies of *mOAning star*, *Grenzfall*, and the Kirche von Unten *Info-Blatt* to the Stasi.¹⁶⁴⁴ Thus punk collaboration with the MfS was always two-way street: the state sought to utilize youths in sabotaging the punk scene and opposition while at the same time, punks used the Stasi to secure privileges.

In light of this complexity, was the Stasi revision successful? Were punks an effective force in subverting dissident politics? In a word: no. If success is judged in terms of gaining access to and reporting on events taking place within the Evangelical Churches and dissident groups, then yes, punks were effective. But the Stasi had plenty of informers already within the opposition groups, and punk IM reports simply compounded the piles of information that the MfS was already trying to sift through. Moreover, the tension between punks and dissidents, and the reluctance of punks to take the lead—part of their ideological aversion to authority—meant that punks were not particularly effective in disrupting the politics of the opposition since they rarely were in a position to direct dissident activities. As foot soldiers, punks were essential in populating the opposition but they were not interested in leading it. Critically, very few punks worked for the Stasi with the state’s interests in mind. Other than a few exceptions such as IM ‘Berry,’ most punk IMs were more focused on manipulating the regime to secure privileges, and thus putting individual interests ahead of state concerns. Fundamentally, as the state had misjudged the Churches, so too did they misread punk.

When one flips through the extensive files of the former Ministry of State Security on punk, there does not seem to be a single event cancelled due to IM efforts, nor any significant

¹⁶⁴³ BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 2017/88, Bd.II/1, “Treffbericht,” 23 October 1987, p.121; and BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 2017/88, Bd.II/1, “Treffbericht,” 14 January 1988, pp.120-123.

¹⁶⁴⁴ BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 2017/88, Bd.II/1, “Treffbericht,” 9 March 1988, p.127 and 133.

strategic victories achieved by the Stasi beyond local successes such as IM ‘Käpt’n’ keeping Wutanfall from playing at the Christuskirche in Halle on 22 October 1983 (the concert still proceeded, just without Wutanfall). While a number of bands were broken up, new bands were formed, and often from members of the recently disbanded group. In fact, being IMs did not seem to stop youths from playing in punk bands nor trying to release music, write articles for Western fanzines, or engage in other subversive activities. ‘Otze’ from Schleim-Keim, for example, was an IM for the Stasi at various points though his intractable behavior (*eNDe/DR von Unten*) and demands for money (his primary motive), meant the state received next to nothing from its investment in him.¹⁶⁴⁵ The behavior of punks towards their Stasi controllers and the steady exasperations of the MfS towards their charges indicated that the security apparatus recognized the limited advantages gained by punk IMs. Even as loyal an informer as ‘Berry’ needed continuous reinforcement by his MfS controllers in order “to build up the political motivation for his actions.”¹⁶⁴⁶ After having convinced him about the righteousness of his actions during one meeting, his handler would have to repeat the whole process again during the next meeting when ‘Berry’ would again raise doubts about what he was doing.¹⁶⁴⁷

Nor was ‘Berry’ alone. IM ‘Dominique,’ the prize jewel in the punk IM crown due to his many contacts and influence within the GDR scene and abroad, continually missed his contact meetings, refused to answer requests to meet, and constantly stalled MfS demands to turn over a tape of the band L’Attentat that had been smuggled to the West via Switzerland and released on

¹⁶⁴⁵ See Hahn and Willmann, *Satan, kannst du mir noch mal verzeihen*, pp.28-29, 55, 134-138.

¹⁶⁴⁶ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, AIM 3772.89, Bd.I/1, “Bericht über die Kontaktaufnahme zu einem Punk-Fan im Rahmen der Vorbeugungsmaßnahmen zu den Motorrad WM in Brno/CSSR,” 26 August 1982, p.84.

¹⁶⁴⁷ See BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, AIM 3772.89, Bd.I/1, “Bericht über die Kontaktaufnahme zu einem Punk-Fan im Rahmen der Vorbeugungsmaßnahmen zu den Motorrad WM in Brno/CSSR,” 26 August 1982, p.84; and BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, AIM 3772.89, Bd.I/1, “Bericht zum zweiten Kontaktgespräch,” 31 August 1982, pp.85-86.

X-Mist, an independent West German record label.¹⁶⁴⁸ After the West German band EA80 showed up at his apartment to play a surprise show in the East, the IM refused to report the event to the MfS until he was confronted with it later and set up further shows with other West German bands.¹⁶⁴⁹ To the vexation of the MfS, despite working as an informer, ‘Dominique’ continued to organize punk shows throughout the GDR and give interviews to Western fanzines: reminding ‘Dominique’ again and again that such actions were illegal seems to have fallen on deaf ears.¹⁶⁵⁰ By 1988, the MfS seems to have become satisfied with ‘Dominique’ only setting up shows in Leipzig, but the IM even appears to have disobeyed this Stasi ‘victory.’¹⁶⁵¹ When the MfS demanded ‘Dominique’ attend the Leipzig marches at the Nikolaikirche in October 1989, the IM refused without suffering any consequences for his disobedience. The actions by ‘Dominique’ are representative of the difficult relationship between punk IMs and the MfS: continually missing their appointments, reporting concerts well after the fact, concealing their Western contacts, and talking about their Stasi status to innumerable individuals makes it difficult to wonder why the MfS persisted in this sort of ‘collaboration’ for so long.¹⁶⁵²

The ineffectiveness of the Stasi in controlling punk—whether through coercion or subversion—is more than apparent in a repeat performance of the Kirchentages von Unten: the Frühlingfest, held at the Erlöserkirche in East Berlin, on 22-24 June 1988. Crucially, the Frühlingfest shows how punk and the dissident groups had won access to the public sphere in the GDR, and how the initiative had passed decisively from the SED to the opposition, regardless of Stasi efforts to rethink state strategy. Organized by AlöSA and the Kirche von Unten, the two-

¹⁶⁴⁸ See BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 2017/88, Bd.II/1, “Treffbericht,” 28 February 1986, pp.5-7; and BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 2017/88, Bd.I/1, “2. Aussprachebericht,” 4 February 1986, p.39.

¹⁶⁴⁹ BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 2017/88, Bd.II/1, “Treffbericht,” 9 October 1986, p.57; and BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 2017/88, Bd.II/1, “Treffbericht,” 25 November 1986, p.65.

¹⁶⁵⁰ BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 2017/88, Bd.II/1, “Treffbericht,” 14 January 1988, p.123.

¹⁶⁵¹ BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 2017/88, Bd.II/1, “Treffbericht,” 9 March 1988, p.127.

¹⁶⁵² For example, IM ‘Käpt’n’ failed to tell the MfS about the Intermedia Festival in Coswig because he did not think it was political. BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 643/86, Bd.II/1, “Treffbericht,” n.d., p.56.

day festival featured bands from the GDR, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Italy, and West Germany. Word of mouth drew crowds of approximately 1,000 each day from across the GDR, FRG, and Eastern Bloc.¹⁶⁵³ The state tried to stop the festival. Pressure was exerted on the church leadership by the Ministry of the Interior but to no avail.¹⁶⁵⁴ Despite the borders being closed to punks between 18-24 April that managed to stop the Polish band Tribuna Brudu, the majority of foreign bands and fans made their way across safely.¹⁶⁵⁵ Michael Horschig, searched at the Polish border by customs agents and found in possession of a thousand copies of the very first GDR punk fanzine *Inside*, was detained and interrogated but ultimately released without charges.¹⁶⁵⁶ A number of Polish punks were likewise turned back at the border because they were carrying illegal LPs and cassettes.¹⁶⁵⁷ Despite the consumption of alcohol, the MfS reported (sadly?) that “there were no public-effective disruptions of order and security.”¹⁶⁵⁸ Nor did any police controls take place at the Erlöserkirche while the concert was taking place.¹⁶⁵⁹ In the end, the MfS was satisfied with impotently castigating the church leadership for allowing Western bands to play in the Erlöserkirche.¹⁶⁶⁰ The event, participants, and punk bands were all known

¹⁶⁵³ See MDA, PS 072/08, *mOAning star*, Nr.8 (4711/09), May 1988, pp.3-5.

¹⁶⁵⁴ BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.10329, “Operative Information: Zusammenfaßte Erkenntnisse zum geplanten Punk-open-air vom 22. – 24.4.1988 in der Erlöserkirche,” 14 April 1988, p.3.

¹⁶⁵⁵ BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.10329, “Operative Information: Zusammenfaßte Erkenntnisse zum geplanten Punk-open-air vom 22. – 24.4.1988 in der Erlöserkirche,” 14 April 1988, p.3; and BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr.10329, “Operative Information: Punkkonzert mit Beteiligung von Gruppen aus soz. sowie nichtsozialistischen Staaten und Westberlin,” 29 April 1988, pp.32-33.

¹⁶⁵⁶ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin APOK 3474/88, Bd.2, “Vernehmung,” 18 April 1988, pp.87-89.

¹⁶⁵⁷ BStU, MfS, HA XX 10321, Teil 2 von 2, “Operativinformation Nr. 15/88,” 2 May 1988, pp.329-331.

¹⁶⁵⁸ BStU, MfS, HA XX 10329, “Operative Information: PUNK-KONZERT in der ev. Erlösergemeinde am 22./23.4.88,” 25 April 1988, p.9.

¹⁶⁵⁹ BStU, MfS, HA XX 10329, “Operative Information: PUNK-KONZERT in der ev. Erlösergemeinde am 22./23.4.88,” 25 April 1988, p.10.

¹⁶⁶⁰ BStU, MfS, HA XX 10329, “Operative Information: PUNK-KONZERT in der ev. Erlösergemeinde am 22./23.4.88,” 25 April 1988, p.10.

well in advance, but except for a few minor hiccups, none of the MfS actions hindered the festival in any appreciable manner.¹⁶⁶¹

The 1988 Frühlingsfest says much about the downfall of the SED and the role punk played in bringing about the demise of state socialism. To say this does not mean to suggest that without punk, the GDR would have remained stable and the SED in control. But punk is representative of popular protest taking place at the grass-roots, why opposition groups were able to broadcast their messages, and how their politics were essential in undermining SED political legitimacy. The Frühlingsfest shows precisely how there came to be an opposition in the first place, and why the MfS was unable to stop its coalescence. At concerts and public activities, punks were able to bring varied groups together, share information, and raise consciousness about the deficiencies of East German society. Following ‘Härte gegen Punk,’ punks were socialized into the burgeoning opposition groups forming within the protection of the Evangelical Churches who gave their energies direction and purpose. While the MfS sought to utilize the genre to infiltrate and sabotage the opposition, punks proved to be poor spies, a phenomenon speaking to the declining effectiveness of the Stasi in managing dissent in the 1970s and 1980s. As Detlef Pollack has argued, since deterrence rested on fear of retaliation, the switch from overt terror to silent subversion meant that oppositionalists could ignore state anger with increasing impunity, and the SED leadership was soon faced with an intractable dilemma, especially when the West was watching: “On the one hand they had at their disposal all means of power related to politics, police and the secret service, on the other hand any uncontrolled deployment of these means had negative consequences for their own rule. While they regularly

¹⁶⁶¹ By mid-April, the MfS had a detailed report about the up-coming event. See BStU, MfS, HA XX 10329, “Operative Information: Zusammenfaßte Erkenntnisse zum geplanten Punk-open-air vom 22. – 24.4.1988 in der Erlöserkirche,” 14 April 1988, pp.1-4.

had to apply force, they more and more harmed themselves by doing so.”¹⁶⁶² While the regime sought every avenue of hindering punk concerts, in the end, the MfS was forced to content itself with silent observation. Despite completely penetrating the punk scene, such saturation remained useless in stopping the politics of the opposition, and by 1988, it was clear that the Stasi had failed in its efforts to stop punk.

Conclusions

The ‘Härte gegen Punk’ years of repression at first seemed successful. Bands were broken up, punks numbers declined and existing scenes were corrupted. However, the successes of ‘Härte gegen Punk’ were only temporary. Within a couple of years, punk numbers had rebounded, new bands had formed, and concerts were increasing in frequency. Importantly, ‘Härte gegen Punk’ had driven punk into the protection of the Evangelical Churches and politicized the movement. Seeking shelter within the confines of the Evangelical churches in youth programs such as the Offene Arbeit, punks were able to rebuild their alternative scenes and challenge official hegemony over public space, much to the frustration of state officials. Belatedly, authorities realized that oppression had only driven punks deeper into the arms of the opposition making them more dangerous not less. This realization called for a revision in MfS policy but the move towards quiet subversion never bore fruit. The failure of the MfS to contain punk called for an even more radical reorientation of SED policy, and in the final years of the GDR, authorities began to consider the previously unimaginable: supporting punk.

¹⁶⁶² Detlef Pollack, “Modernization and Modernization Blockages in GDR Society,” in *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, ed., Konrad H. Jarausch, trans. by Eve Duffy (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), p.38.

Chapter 11: Subversion or Collaboration? ‘die anderen Bands’ and the Politics of Punk Integration

“Miteinander reden ist Gold”: Punk in the GDR

On 9 February 1989, *Junge Welt* ran an article about a Friday night concert featuring the amateur band Revanche at the Halle-area FDJ-Jugendklub ‘Silberhöhe.’¹⁶⁶³ Featuring a picture of FDJ First Secretary Eberhard Aurich laughing with three punks and called “Miteinander reden ist Gold” (‘Talking together is golden’), the article is representative of SED efforts to de-politicize the subculture after years of repression. Described as fun and exciting—“The drinks are colorful, the public is colorful, and so too is the hair”—while remaining serious and political—the four were debating GDR military policy—life in the FDJ-Jugendklub was portrayed as a space for education, leisure and youthful exploration. “At my club, no one is guaranteed their youth club place. Everyone has their chance. Clothes and hair that sticks down or up are at best an aid but on no account a criterion for deciding who is admitted and who must be turned away,” explained manager Winfried Töffels. The message was clear: the FDJ-Jugendklubs were open to all, even previously excluded punks. Aurich listened intently as his young interlocutors suggested that more promotion and media support for bands such as Revanche would appeal to youths. Ensuring no misunderstanding, the article concluded unambiguously: “The ‘Silberhöhe’ is a good place for conversations of this kind. Because here there is space for everyone and everyone has their chance.”

Five years after ‘Härte gegen Punk,’ the SED leadership was forced to concede that repression, instead of destroying the subculture, had instead made punk *more* dangerous by

¹⁶⁶³ Wolfgang Kirkamm, “Miteinander reden ist Gold – nicht nur in der ‘Silberhöhe,’” *Junge Welt*, 9 February 1989, p.3.

pushing youths into the arms of the political opposition. As we saw, already by 1986, the MfS had begun moving away from the brutal ‘Härte gegen Punk’ methods and was instead focusing on silent infiltration and quiet subversion. However, events in late 1987 involving Skinhead attacks, concomitant public outcry, and Western condemnation finally convinced a dawdling SED to integrate youth subcultures into state structures. On 2 February 1988, the Politbüro passed a resolution calling for the integration of ‘outsider’ youths especially into FDJ-Jugendklubs that legalized punk’s place in East German society. Though integration entailed significant political concessions by punks, the opportunities to record and perform were a chance many were willing to take. By late 1988, ‘die anderen Bands’—as the state supported punk acts were called—could be heard on the radio, read about in popular music magazines, listened to on Amiga records, experienced live in FDJ-Jugendklubs or watched on the big screen in the DEFA feature film *flüstern & SCHREIEN*. In relaxing the pressure on punk, the SED hoped to split the movement while at the same time mobilize popular music to stabilize their increasingly tottering regime.

However, the 2 February 1988 decision by the Politbüro in many ways masked trends that had already passed the SED by: the legislation only confirmed de jure, what had already been taking place de facto. Already by 1986, SED officials at the regional and district levels had begun sponsoring punk bands as entertainment in their fiefdoms or in state-sponsored music festivals. That same year, the GDR youth radio station DT 64 began featuring punk music on Lutz Schramm’s path-breaking program Parocktikum. By 1987, punk bands were playing more-or-less openly in FDJ-Jugendklubs and at official festivals. Thus, the reluctant decision by the Politbüro shows on the one hand, how desperate the SED was to secure any kind of popular support, and on the other, how much the initiative for setting the political and cultural program in

the GDR had already been lost by the regime. That the Politbüro acceded to changes that had already happened at the grass-roots indicates how pressure from below was forcing changes from above: no longer setting the agenda, the SED was responding to circumstances rather than initiating them as it had earlier with ‘Härte gegen Punk.’ The SED hoped that integrating the genre into state structures would dilute punk’s critical messages and de-politicize the political impact of punk concerts by flooding the market with a more sanitized version of Eastern punk.

Throughout the Honecker era, the state often tried to mobilize popular music—even Western music—to establish popular legitimacy. Indeed, by the late 1980s, it is arguable that popular music was the last remaining SED cultural offering still appealing to GDR citizens.¹⁶⁶⁴ While Honecker’s initial promise of ‘no taboos’ was quickly junked, by the 1980s the state was again turning to music to help integrate youth into society. Domestically, the 1970s and 1980s witnessed the flowering of the GDR rock scene. Bands such as Karussell, Lift, Electra, Stern Combo Meißen, and above all the Puhdys, represented East German musicianship at its best, were popular at home and even gained a measure of international success.¹⁶⁶⁵ In the 1980s, a number of bands such as Silly and City, and large festivals such as ‘Rock für den Frieden’ (‘Rock for Peace’) and the ‘Festival der politischen Lieder’ (‘Festival of Political Songs’), enjoyed popular success and helped the SED fashion an indigenous Eastern cultural product around which Eastern identity—and theoretically SED legitimacy—could coalesce.¹⁶⁶⁶ Indeed,

¹⁶⁶⁴ Olaf Leitner estimates that 380,000 youth dances took place in 6,600 FDJ-Jugendklubs with total visitors being 76 million. See Olaf Leitner, *Rockszenen DDR: Aspekte einer Massenkultur im Sozialismus* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1983), pp.226-227.

¹⁶⁶⁵ On Ostrock, see Puhdys, *Abenteuer Puhdys* (Berlin: Neues Leben, 2009); Gerd Dehnel and Christian Hentschel, eds., *Es brennt der Wald... Die Rockszenen im Ostblock* (Berlin: Neues Leben, 2008); Christian Hentschel and Peter Matzke, *Als ich fortging... Das große DDR-Rock-Buch* (Berlin: Neues Leben, 2007); Christian Hentschel, ed., *Du hast den Farbfilm vergessen. Und andere Ostrockgeschichten* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2002); Jürgen Balitzki, *electra. LIFT. Stern Combo Meißen: Geschichten vom Saschsendreier* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2001); and Jürgen Balitzki, *Rock aus erster Hand* (Berlin: Lied der Zeit, 1985).

¹⁶⁶⁶ Alexander Osang, *Tamara Danz – Legenden* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2008); and Christian Hentschel and Peter Matzke, eds., *Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! City. Das Buch* (Berlin: Neues Leben, 2007). Generally, see Michael Rauhut,

in a 1984 interview, Honecker bragged that there were 5,000 amateur bands contributing to a distinctive socialist identity in the GDR.¹⁶⁶⁷

However, as in the West, youths increasingly began to tune out the older rock acts. Partly this can be explained by indigenous circumstances and partly because Western music worked to undermine the East. In the 1980s, record sales—already limited to begin with—slipped as the economy shrank.¹⁶⁶⁸ Radio listeners overwhelmingly tuned in to Western stations offering more current and varied programming.¹⁶⁶⁹ Due to the complex system of advancement in the Eastern music industry, it was very difficult for new acts playing original music to displace older, more established rock bands, a situation making it impossible for a generation of younger bands to break into the mainstream.¹⁶⁷⁰ Concert halls and Jugendklubs began hiring less expensive DJs, or *Schallplattenunterhalter* (‘Record Entertainers’) as they were known in the GDR, to spin records rather than hiring a more expensive live band.¹⁶⁷¹ Since musician salary in the GDR was linked to playing live rather than record sales, only the top-acts of the older rock generation could afford financially to pursue music as a career. As both Ralph Jessen and Detlef Pollack have argued, socialist policies and resulting blockages, rather than liquidating class differences—as Sigrid Meuschel claimed—reproduced them by fashioning a society in which privilege and

Schalmei und Lederjacke. Udo Lindenberg, BAP, *Underground: Rock und Politik in den achtziger Jahren* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf und Schwarzkopf, 1996), esp. pp.11-47.

¹⁶⁶⁷ “Europa von Atomwaffen freizumachen – das ist und bleibt unser großes Ziel,” *Neues Deutschland*, 6 January 1984, p.4.

¹⁶⁶⁸ Edward Larkey, *Rotes Rockradio. Populäre Musik und die Kommerzialisierung des DDR-Rundfunks* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2007), p.69. On the economic deficiencies, see Leitner, *Rockszenen DDR*, pp.398-400.

¹⁶⁶⁹ See Larkey, *Rotes Rockradio*, pp.319-328. The Leipzig Central Institute for Youth Research conducted numerous studies tracking youth listening habits and found that an overwhelming majority of Eastern youths were listening to Western radio. See BArch DC 4/717, Holm Felber and Hans-Körg Stiehler, “Das Verhältnis Jugendlicher zur populären Musik,” December 1987, pp.1-94.

¹⁶⁷⁰ See especially Leitner, *Rockszenen DDR*, pp.135-172.

¹⁶⁷¹ By 1989, there were approximately 6,000 amateur DJs and 100 professional DJs. See Bernd Lindner, *DDR: Rock & Pop* (Cologne: Komet Verlag, 2008), p.137. See also Leitner, *Rockszenen DDR*, p.226.

political loyalty created a two-tiered society.¹⁶⁷² By the mid-1980s, East German popular music was in crisis as youths chafed for new and fresher acts which were unable to break into the GDR music industry.

To compensate, the SED increasingly turned to the West. Beginning in the mid-1970s, Amiga, the state-record company, began licensing more and more Western records to market in the East, hoping to make up the shortfall in record sales: in 1982, for example, Amiga brokered a deal with RCA to distribute Western records in the GDR and more importantly, Eastern records in the FRG that would bring in much needed foreign currency.¹⁶⁷³ Attempts to stop East Germans from listening to Western radio or watching music television (*Formel Eins* on ARD was the West German equivalence of MTV and came on the air in 1983) had, for all intents and purposes, stopped in the 1970s.¹⁶⁷⁴ DJs and live bands, officially required to maintain a 60:40 split between Eastern and Western music began playing more and more Western songs that their patrons were demanding: the disco ‘Insel der Jugend’ in East Berlin, for example, was famous for its disregard of the 1958 Ordinance.¹⁶⁷⁵ By the late 1980s, even Western musicians such as Bob Dylan, Joe Cocker and Bruce Springsteen were invited to play at enormous open-air concerts to hundreds of thousands of enthralled GDR-citizens: and the much-needed economic

¹⁶⁷² See Detlef Pollack, “Modernization and Modernization Blockages in GDR Society,” in *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, ed., Konrad H. Jarausch, trans. by Eve Duffy (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), pp.27-45; Ralph Jessen, “Mobility and Blockage during the 1970s,” in *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, ed., Konrad H. Jarausch, trans. by Eve Duffy (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), pp.341-360; and Sigrid Meuschel, *Legitimation und Parteiherrschaft in der DDR. Zum Paradox von Stabilität und Revolution in der DDR 1945-1989* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1992).

¹⁶⁷³ Amiga had first begun licensing Western records in the 1960s, starting with the Beatles. See Leitner, *Rockszenen DDR*, p.179.

¹⁶⁷⁴ Mary Fulbrook, *The People’s State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), pp.60, 135.

¹⁶⁷⁵ On the ‘Insel der Jugend,’ see Ronald Galenza and Heinz Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...: Punk, New Wave, HipHop und Independent-Szene in der DDR 1980-1990* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2005), pp.565-566.

and political goodwill generated by these huge festivals should not be underestimated.¹⁶⁷⁶ Nor does imminent collapse appear to have stopped the SED. Even as the Berlin Wall was falling, the FDJ had begun planning a world-wide concert involving artists playing simultaneously in Berlin, London and New York for 1990.¹⁶⁷⁷

Western music, however, was always a double-edged sword for the SED. By the 1980s, it was clear that the appeal of East German rock among youths was declining as an overwhelming majority preferred Western popular music.¹⁶⁷⁸ But tapping into Western music meant abandoning an Eastern identity that the SED was attempting to cultivate through the older Eastern rock acts. What the SED needed was newer Eastern bands to take the mantle from the older rockers—but the very structures of the East German music industry blocked new bands from emerging successfully. Only outside of state structures could these new bands be found. Thus the illegal punk and independent scene in the mid-1980s became an attractive choice for SED efforts to reinvigorate East German popular music.

Still, the move to integrate punk and mobilize popular music was applied unevenly across the state as different levels of government officials often clashed in their approaches,

¹⁶⁷⁶ See Christoph Dieckmann, *My Generation. Cocker, Dylan, Honecker und die bleibende Zeit* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 1999); and Rauhut, *Schalmei und Lederjacke*, pp.128-178.

¹⁶⁷⁷ SAPMO-BArch, DY 24/20627, Aurich to Krenz, 6 September 1988, pp.1-4; SAPMO-BArch, DY 24/20627, Aurich to Honecker, n.d., pp.1-5; and SAPMO-BArch, DY 24/20627, Aurich to Honecker, 13 September 1988, pp.1-2

¹⁶⁷⁸ In the 1988 study “GDR Rock Music and GDR Youth,” conducted by the Leipzig Central Institute for Youth Research, lead author Holm Felber opened in devastating fashion: “The facts alone, especially for our country, offer a bleak picture: GDR rock music in the second half of the Eighties shows itself to be clearly in crisis. The data in the empirical part of the expert report regarding the acceptance of GDR rock and pop offerings among the youth of our country – which signals superficially a worrying loss of resonance, principally and above all in a crisis of credibility and authenticity and in the backwardness in the technology of production and distribution of popular music – find in the complaints of rock musicians about an apathetic audience and poor media effects an almost exact correspondence.” Later, the study asserted that only 11% of GDR youths preferred popular music produced under socialism, a number comparing unfavorably to 89% who preferred music produced in capitalist states. These numbers had declined tremendously over the course of the 1980s, down from 22% in 1985, 31% in 1984, and 49% in 1979. See BArch, DC 4/728, Holm Felber, “DDR-Rockmusik und DDR-Jugend: Teil 1: Problempapier,” December 1988, p.2; and BArch, DC 4/728, Holm Felber, “DDR-Rockmusik und DDR-Jugend: Teil 2: Expertise,” December 1988, p.35. More generally, see Rauhut, *Schalmei und Lederjacke*, pp.48-66.

misunderstandings that reveal the SED breaking apart under the economic pressures of a bankrupt state and the political challenges of the opposition. In the same year that Joe Cocker entertained 65,000 concert-goers in Berlin at an FDJ-sponsored event, out of an estimated 3,000 young people who had gathered on the Unter den Linden near the Berlin Wall to listen to Genesis and David Bowie playing in front of the former Reichstag in West Berlin, 158 people were arrested and the crowds were forcibly dispersed with police batons.¹⁶⁷⁹ Nor were ‘die anderen Bands’ content to remain puppets of the SED, and sought to use their new-found freedom to challenge accepted Eastern norms, push the boundaries of political possibilities, and win new public space for alternative thought and discussion. These efforts raise a critical question: were ‘die anderen Bands’ collaborators? Or were they able to use state integration to subversively chip away at the political legitimacy of the SED? The attempt to legitimize SED rule through music was a final, desperate cultural bribe by the SED to win support for their unpopular rule. By exploring the consequences of state integration for punk, we can see how pushing from below widened the fissures opening under state socialism. The emerging Skinhead menace and growing realization of the importance music could play in winning youth back to the SED, finally convince the regime to rethink its repressive position on punk and work to incorporate the genre rather than ostracize it. However, it is debatable whether state integration of punk had any appreciable effect on gaining the political legitimacy that the SED craved. Perhaps most lastingly, the move by some punks and bands to integrate themselves into state structures split the subculture and was to have tremendous consequence especially for punk memory in re-unified Germany as we will see in the Epilogue.

“diese Sorte müßte man vernichten”: Zionskirche and the Skinhead Threat

¹⁶⁷⁹ See Rauhut, *Schalmei und Lederjacke*, pp.128-131.

On 17 October 1987, a concert featuring the East Berlin punk band die Firma and the West Berlin act Element of Crime took place in the Zionskirche in Prenzlauer Berg in East Berlin. The Zionskirche was the center of much oppositional activity throughout the 1980s: Pastor Simon was a key figure in the GDR dissident movement and the church's basement housed the Umweltbibliothek, an environmental library that sought to raise consciousness about the damaging GDR environmental policy that published samizdat literature such as *Grenzfall* and the *Umweltblätter*.¹⁶⁸⁰ That evening an audience of five hundred packed the church. Shortly after 10 pm as the concert was ending, approximately thirty Skinheads stormed the church. Yelling “Siegheil,” “Heil Hitler,” “Communist swines, Jewish swines,” “Jews out of German churches” and “these kinds of people should be exterminated” (‘diese Sorte müßte man vernichten’), the Skinheads attacked audience members before being forced back outside. Punching audience-members waiting for the tram, the Skins roamed the neighborhood searching for victims before the police were phoned. Despite cries for help, the police waited silently in side streets around the Zionskirche—the concert was under surveillance—until reinforcements had arrived. When asked why they did not intervene earlier, one of the police officers is reported to have answered incredulously, “[w]ould YOU want to go into such a crowd?”¹⁶⁸¹

The brazen Skinhead attack took the regime by surprise.¹⁶⁸² While internecine fighting among youth cultures threatening the state was not a necessarily unfavorable from the SED point

¹⁶⁸⁰ See Wolfgang Rüdtenklau, *Störenfried. ddr-opposition 1986-1989* (Berlin: BasicDruck, 1992).

¹⁶⁸¹ BStU, MfS, HA VII 2738, “Information über eine Störung der öffentlichen Ordnung und Sicherheit nach einer Veranstaltung in der Zionskirche in Berlin, 1054, am 17. Oktober 1987, gegen 22.15 Uhr,” 4 November 1987, p.155. See also Gordon Charles Ross, *The Swastika in Socialism: Right-Wing Extremism in the GDR* (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovac, 2000), pp.95-97.

¹⁶⁸² While the MfS had received reports on Neo-Nazi activity as far back as 1978/1979, and the number of Skin-related *Vorkommnisse* (‘special incidents’) had spiked dramatically since 1982/1983, the MfS—like the public—was caught by surprise by the Zionskirche attack. See Walter Süß, *Zu Wahrnehmung und Interpretation des*

of view, vigilante justice abrogated the state monopoly on force which could set a dangerous precedent. The Zionskirche attack was not the first Skinhead attack on punks. As in the West, by the mid-1980s, the Skinhead and punk movements had grown increasingly hostile as each adopted political positions on opposing ends of the political spectrum.¹⁶⁸³ Swelling the Skinhead ranks were football hooligans and Neo-Nazis who infused their ideology of hatred and violence into the subculture.¹⁶⁸⁴ As in the West, many Skins were also former punks since both subcultures shared anti-state hatred and penchants for provocation: shouting ‘Heil Hitler’ in an anti-fascist state was perhaps even more provocative than ‘No Future’.¹⁶⁸⁵ By 1987, fights between groups of punks and Skins were frequent in the GDR though authorities downplayed these scraps as youthful rather than political quarrels, fearful of admitting to the existence of Nazism in the a state claiming to have vanquished fascism.¹⁶⁸⁶ But never before had Nazi Skins assaulted activists associated with the opposition movement who had Western contacts and channels for circumventing the SED’s media monopoly.¹⁶⁸⁷ That police had watched the assault without intervening seemed to suggest to victims at the time that the regime at least tacitly supported the Skinheads, however, there is no evidence to be found in the MfS archives that support these occasional claims.¹⁶⁸⁸

Rechtsextremismus in der DDR durch das MfS (Berlin: Der Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1993), pp.17-19.

¹⁶⁸³ On the Skinhead movement in Germany, see Timothy S. Brown, “From England with Hate: Skinheads and ‘Nazi Rock’ in Great Britain and Germany,” in *Between the Avant-Garde and the Everyday: Subversive Politics in Europe from 1957 to the Present*, eds., Timothy S. Brown and Lorena Anton (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2011), pp.111-131; and Klaus Farin and Eberhard Seidel-Pielen, *Skinheads* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1997).

¹⁶⁸⁴ See Ross, *The Swastika in Socialism*, pp.69-84.

¹⁶⁸⁵ Ross, *The Swastika in Socialism*, pp.71-72.

¹⁶⁸⁶ Ross, *The Swastika in Socialism*, pp.27-28.

¹⁶⁸⁷ Ross, *The Swastika in Socialism*, p.95.

¹⁶⁸⁸ See Rüdtenklau, *Störenfried*, p.262; and Süß, *Zu Wahrnehmung und Interpretation des Rechtsextremismus*, p.18, footnote 38.

The autumn of 1987 has generally been understood as a key moment in the history of the opposition movement in the GDR.¹⁶⁸⁹ If Honecker's state visit to the FRG in September 1987 was perhaps the high point in his regime, the subsequent months can only be read as the beginning of the end for socialism in East Germany. The Zionskirche attack forced the state to admit publicly for the first time that Nazism had not been eradicated in the anti-fascist state.¹⁶⁹⁰ Then, on the night of 24-25 November, the Umweltbibliothek was raided by security forces. Printing equipment used to publish samizdat was seized and five dissidents arrested.¹⁶⁹¹ On 17 January 1988, activists attempting to unfurl banners reading among others, the famous saying by Rosa Luxembourg 'Freedom is always...the freedom of those who think differently,' were arrested during the annual Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg memorial march. The next day protests were recorded in nearly forty cities across the GDR and several prominent dissidents arrested such as Freya Klier and Stefan Krawczyk agreed to 'voluntarily' leave the country.¹⁶⁹² The public outcry over these events was significant, and activists sought to utilize them to force the regime into dialog about reforming the state.¹⁶⁹³ It was into this maelstrom of heightened conflict between the opposition and SED regime, in which state power was manifested so violently, that the Zionskirche attack and subsequent outcry should be understood. Dissidents used the Western media to generate uproar over the Skinhead attack and in so doing, started carving out discursive space for dialogue over the ills of GDR society. The state responded with measures intended to de-politicize the youth subcultures by integrating them into state structures.

¹⁶⁸⁹ See Jeannette Z. Madarász, *Conflict and Compromise in East Germany, 1971-1989: A Precarious Stability* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp.2, 84, 192-195; and Stefan Wolle, *Die heile Welt der Diktatur. Alltag und Herrschaft in der DDR 1971-1989* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1999), pp.52, 67.

¹⁶⁹⁰ Ross, *The Swastika in Socialism*, pp.95-96.

¹⁶⁹¹ See Rüdtenklau, *Störenfried*, pp.114-122.

¹⁶⁹² Ehrhart Neubert, *Geschichte der Opposition in der DDR 1949-1989* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2000), pp.697-698.

¹⁶⁹³ The MfS was well-aware that the opposition sought to open dialog through these events. See BStU, MfS, HA IX 772, "Stellungnahme zur Information vom 3. 11. 1987 über ein Gespräch mit [blacked out]," 9 November 1987, p.19.

For punks, the decision to integrate ‘outsider’ youths meant that state institutions such as recording studios and FDJ-Jugendklub stages that had previously been denied to the genre were now officially available. While punk was not the primary reason for the decision to integrate youth subcultures, it was nonetheless the punk scene that took the fullest advantage of state weakness when it did happen.

The first reports on the Zionskirche attack appeared in the West. Picking up a story on the evangelical press service wire, West German newspapers began reporting on 20 October 1987 that several dozen Skinheads had stormed the Zionskirche during a punk concert and assaulted numerous concert-goers. The Berliner *Tagesspiegel* mentioned that similar events had taken place at previous punk concerts, as did reports broadcast by RIAS II.¹⁶⁹⁴ The Eastern media remained silent. On 20 October and then on 27 October, meetings were held in the Umweltbibliothek and one hundred people signed an *Eingabe* (‘petition’) to the GDR Staatsrat (‘State Council’) complaining about the lack of police action on the evening of the attack.¹⁶⁹⁵ Dissident pastor Rainer Eppelmann led a service in November devoted to discussing the dangers of Nazism in the GDR at the Samaritenkirche.¹⁶⁹⁶ Later that same month, East Berlin theologian Rudi Pahnke condemned the development of an indigenous East German neo-fascism that was published in the *Frankfurter Rundschau*.¹⁶⁹⁷ Radio stations RIAS II and DLF moderated a number of programs over the coming weeks on the subject and invited speakers such as

¹⁶⁹⁴ See “Schwere Krawall in Ost-Berliner Zionskirche,” *Der Tagesspiegel*, 20 October 1987, p.14; “Krawalle in Ostberliner Zionskirche,” *Die Welt*, 20 October 1987, p.4; and BStU, MfS, HA IX 772, “Skinhead-Ausschreitungen in Berlin,” 20 October 1987, p.59.

¹⁶⁹⁵ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/313, “SED Hausmitteilung, Schulz to Krenz,” 3 November 1987, p.3. The *Eingabe* was a (subtle) form of expressing dissatisfaction while also a (overt) means of acquiring redress in the GDR and was enshrined within the state constitution as a right of all citizens. See Felix Mühlberg, *Bürger, Bitten und Behörden: Geschichte der Eingabe in der DDR* (Berlin: K. Dietz, 2004).

¹⁶⁹⁶ BStU, MfS, HA IX 1588, “Pfarrer Eppelmann zu rechtsradikalen Jugendlichen in der DDR,” 12 November 1987, p.1.

¹⁶⁹⁷ Karl-Heinz Baum, “Nazi-Parolen und ein Überfall auf die Zions-Kirche,” *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 21 November 1987, p.3.

Eppelmann to discuss rising racist behavior among Eastern youths.¹⁶⁹⁸ An ‘Anti-Nazi-Liga’ was founded in the Zionskirche in November and the radical West Berlin ‘Antifa’ promised help against any future Skinhead attacks.¹⁶⁹⁹ Punks in cities such as Halle would eventually form so-called ‘Skinhead-Destruction-Units’ (‘Skinhead-Vernichtungs-Kommandos,’ or SVKs) which were essentially street-fighters looking for Skinheads to brawl with.¹⁷⁰⁰ Within two weeks of the Zionskirche attack, FDJ officials were receiving complaints from members clamoring for a state response, complaints forwarded to Egon Krenz, Erich Mielke, and other high-up SED officials.¹⁷⁰¹

Soon, other incidents involving Skinheads quickly convinced authorities of the need to radically reshape state youth policy vis-à-vis youth subcultures. Authorities had already recorded a five-fold increase in acts of violence of an extreme right-wing nature between 1983 and 1987.¹⁷⁰² Not a week after the Zionskirche incident, on 22 October, a group of Skinheads tried to attack purported homosexuals on Alexanderplatz.¹⁷⁰³ Swastikas were found graffitied on walls in the toilets of an NVA barrack in Storkow near East Berlin.¹⁷⁰⁴ Authorities recorded a further nine incidents involving Skinhead attacks during November and December, and 45 youths were found guilty of ‘expressing fascist or racist remarks’ under § 220 (3) over the course of 1987.¹⁷⁰⁵ Between November 1987 and February 1988, the Jewish cemetery on Schönhauser Allee was

¹⁶⁹⁸ See BStU, MfS, HA IX 772, “Neonazis in der DDR,” 10 November 1987, pp.61-62; BStU, MfS, HA IX 772, “Antisemitismus in der DDR,” 17 November 1987, pp.64-65.

¹⁶⁹⁹ See BStU, MfS, HA IX 1588, “Rechtliche Einschätzung,” 16 November 1987, pp.57-59; and BStU, MfS, BV Berlin Abt.XX 3104, “Aktivitäten des Pfarrer Eppelmann im Zusammenhang mit dem Auftreten sogenannter Skinheads,” 11 February 1988, pp.40-41.

¹⁷⁰⁰ Ross, *The Swastika in Socialism*, p.146.

¹⁷⁰¹ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/313, “SED Hausmitteilung, Schulz to Krenz,” 3 November 1987, pp.1-4.

¹⁷⁰² Ross, *The Swastika in Socialism*, p.89.

¹⁷⁰³ See BStU, MfS, HA XX 6022, “Abschlußbericht zum OV ‘Konzert’,” 23 August 1988, p.417.

¹⁷⁰⁴ Ross, *The Swastika in Socialism*, p.91.

¹⁷⁰⁵ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/313, “Information zu Ermittlungsverfahren gegen Anhänger der Skinheads, des Heavy metal und Punks,” 7 December 1987, pp.30-32. See also Ross, *The Swastika in Socialism*, p.90.

vandalized repeatedly, and gravestones were damaged and daubed with fascist slogans.¹⁷⁰⁶ The decisive incident, however, occurred on 1 November in the town of Velten in Oranienburg, a small northern suburb of East Berlin. That evening, a group of between 80 and 100 youths, among them a considerable number of Skinheads threw a party in the Gaststätte ‘Weimann.’ Shortly after midnight, after threatened repeatedly for attempting to stop the party, the owner phoned the police. When officers arrived, the youths attacked the police and were only dispersed after one of the officers managed to fire several warning shots into the air. As the injured officers recovered inside the restaurant, several youths returned and vandalized the officers’ patrol car.¹⁷⁰⁷ While Skinheads attacking punks was a somewhat ambiguous act, assaulting police officers was not.

The regime response to the Zionskirche attack and rising Skinhead threat was twofold. The first prong involved judicial action, media propaganda, and an attempt to blame the West that sought to distance the Skinheads from the GDR. The second prong sought to integrate youth subcultures more fully into state structures and thereby de-politicize them. Although both responses ran simultaneously, the failure of the first to find substantial resonance among the public (in both East and West Germany) convinced authorities of the need to fully support the second solution. Despite the outward silence, officials frantically sought answers to the sudden Skinhead menace. On 22 October, five Skinheads were arrested for their role in the Zionskirche attack and by the end of November, four stood trial in Berlin-Mitte on charges of § 215

Rowdytum.¹⁷⁰⁸ In the intervening weeks, the regime had settled on a public trial with coordinated

¹⁷⁰⁶ Ross, *The Swastika in Socialism*, p.94; and Paul Hockenos, *Free to Hate: The Rise of the Right in Post-Communist Eastern Europe* (New York: Routledge, 1993), p.84.

¹⁷⁰⁷ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/885, “Bericht über tätliche Angriffe auf Angehörige der Volkspolizei durch Mitglieder einer ‘Skinhead’-Gruppierung am 01. 11. 1987 in Velten, Kreis Oranienburg,” 16 November 1987, pp.10-18.

¹⁷⁰⁸ “Rowdys ermittelt,” *Berliner Zeitung*, 19 November 1987, p.12; Karl-Heinz Baum, “Nazi-Parolen und ein Überfall auf die Zions-Kirche,” *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 21 November 1987, p.3; “Prozeß gegen „Skinheads“ in Ost-Berlin,” *Berliner Morgenpost*, 28 November 1987, p.2; “In Berlin-Mitte begann Prozeß gegen Rowdys,” *Neues*

press coverage and the involvement of church authorities.¹⁷⁰⁹ The show trial would demonstrate that the regime was not soft on fascism and would act as a warning to similar minded youths. And the public nature of the trial would show state transparency to the West at a time when outrage over the regime's raid of the Umweltbibliothek was high.¹⁷¹⁰ On 4 December, the presiding judge handed down jail sentences ranging from one year for the youngest defendant to two years for one of the supposed ring-leaders of the attack.¹⁷¹¹

Despite the guilty verdicts, citizens were livid and the public indignation shows how the opposition was starting to carve out a partial public sphere to criticize the regime. In the first place, Easterners questioned the GDR media silence on the Zionskirche attack and a report on youth opinion to the FDJ Zentralrat noted that, once again, early Western reporting on the incident had decisively influenced public opinion negatively towards the SED.¹⁷¹² Letters inundated the Eastern press as readers complained that the sentences were far too light for a state supposedly founded on and defined by anti-fascism. One remark typifies the outrage: "I find the series of events that took place in the Zionskirche outrageous. But the absolute cherry on top was the sentence. Absolutely insufficient! Such people need to be shown where the hammer

Deutschland, 28-29 November 1987, p.6; "Prozeß gegen Rowdys begann," *Berliner Zeitung*, 28-29 November 1987, p.8; and Sabine Sauer, "Prozeß in Berlin eröffnet," *Junge Welt*, 28-29 November 1987, p.2.

¹⁷⁰⁹ The Skinhead trials were closely followed by the Department for Security Questions of the Central Committee of the SED. See SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/838, "Protokoll über die Abteilungsschulung und Sektorenleiterberatung," 23 November 1987, pp.257-262; SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/838, "Protokoll über die Abteilungsschulung und Sektorenleiterberatung," 7 December 1987, pp.264-267; SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/839, "Protokoll, Sektorenleiterberatung," 18 January 1988, pp.10-11; SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/839, "Protokoll über die Sektorenleiterberatung," 26 January 1988, pp.13-14.

¹⁷¹⁰ See BStU, MfS, HA IX 772, "Information," 6 November 1987, pp.32-38.

¹⁷¹¹ BStU, MfS, HA IX 1588, "Urteil. Im Namen des Volkes!" 4 December 1987, pp.26-49. See "Strafanträge im Prozeß gegen Rowdys," *Neues Deutschland*, 2 December 1987, p.8; "Im Ost-Berliner Skinhead-Prozeß zwei Jahre Haft beantragt," *Der Tagesspiegel*, 2 December 1987, p.15; Sabine Sauer, "Strafanträge im Prozeß gegen Rowdys gestellt," *Junge Welt*, 2 December 1987, p.7; "Geringe Freiheitsstrafen für Rowdys," *Neues Deutschland*, 4 December 1987, p.8; and Karl-Heinz Baum, "Vier Skinheads in Ost-Berlin zu Freiheitsstrafen verurteilt," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 4 December 1987, p.1.

¹⁷¹² SAPMO-BArch, DY 24/11422, "Information über die aktuell-politische Diskussion unter der Jugend," 22 December 1987, p.6. See also SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/313, "'Aktennotiz' by Abteilung Sicherheitsfragen," 2 February 1988, pp.58-60.

hangs.”¹⁷¹³ The *Neues Deutschland* headline that reported the sentencing—“Short prison sentences for rowdys”—confused readers who asked whether it was intended ironically or critically.¹⁷¹⁴ Even Honecker began receiving petitions from irate citizens demanding firmer action and had a number of officials meet with outraged letter-writers in an attempt to placate public opinion.¹⁷¹⁵

To add insult to injury, Hans-Dieter Schütt, editor at *Junge Welt*, enraged readers with an editorial suggesting that dissidents protesting the recent raid on the Umweltbibliothek and Skinheads from the Zionskirche attack were one and the same: attempts by the class-enemy to undermine the East German state.¹⁷¹⁶ The state prosecutor, with marching orders from Krenz and Honecker, quickly appealed the sentences, and on 22 December, all four defendants had the lengths of their prison sentences doubled.¹⁷¹⁷ Between November 1987 and July 1988, in nine separate trials, a total of forty-nine youths between the ages of 16 and 25 were handed sentences ranging from five months to six and a half years in prison for violent activity.¹⁷¹⁸ Despite the frequent trials and lengthy sentences, the judicial proceedings did little to placate GDR citizens.

¹⁷¹³ SAPMO-BArch, DY 24/11422, “Information über die aktuell-politische Diskussion unter der Jugend,” 22 December 1987, p.6.

¹⁷¹⁴ “Geringe Freiheitsstrafen für Rowdys,” *Neues Deutschland*, 4 December 1987, p.8. See SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/313, “letter from Saender to Herrmann,” 4 December 1987, p.19.

¹⁷¹⁵ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/313, “ZK Hausmitteilung, Krenz to Honecker,” 13 January 1988, pp.49-56.

¹⁷¹⁶ Hans-Dieter Schütt, “Warum freue ich mich über den Protest gegen ein Gerichtsurteil?” *Junge Welt*, 12-13 December 1987, p.7. By 1986, *Junge Welt* was the largest GDR newspaper, even outpacing the party-organ *Neues Deutschland*. See Anke Fiedler and Michael Meyen, “Jenseits von Gleichförmigkeit und Propaganda: Warum es sich lohnt, DDR-Zeitungen zu untersuchen,” in *Fiktionen für das Volk: DDR-Zeitungen als PR-Instrument. Fallstudien zu Zentralorganen Neues Deutschland, Junge Welt, Neue Zeit und Der Morgen*, eds., Anke Fiedler and Michael Meyen (Berlin: LIT, 2011), p.8, Figure 1.

¹⁷¹⁷ “Strenge Strafen gegen Rowdys,” *Junge Welt*, 23 December 1987, p.2; Sabine Sauer, “Härte gegen Skinrowdys – das ist nur gerecht,” *Junge Welt*, 30 December 1987, p.6; and SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/313, “ZK Hausmitteilung, Krenz to Honecker,” 4 December 1987, pp.20-23.

¹⁷¹⁸ “Prozeß gegen acht Rowdys,” *Berliner Zeitung*, 27 January 1988, p.8; “Weiterer Prozeß gegen Rowdys eröffnet,” *Junge Welt*, 27 January 1988, p.7; “Acht weitere Rowdys zu Freiheitsstrafen verurteilt,” *Berliner Zeitung*, 4 February 1988, p.12; “Freiheitsstrafen für Rowdys,” *Junge Welt*, 4 February 1988, p.7; Leonore Dietrich, “Unsere Ideale lassen wir nicht antasten,” *Junge Welt*, 27 April 1988, p.7; “Weitere Details im Skinhead-Prozeß,” *Junge Welt*, 4 May 1988, p.7; and Frank Schumann, “Urteile im Oranienburger Prozeß verkündet,” *Junge Welt*, 12 May 1988, p.7. See also Ross, *The Swastika in Socialism*, pp.137-138.

“How can it be possible [right-wing behavior] after these youths have received a socialist education?” typified many of the questions directed towards the *Junge Welt*.¹⁷¹⁹

Citizens did not want long prison sentences but rather frank discussions about fascism in the GDR: a debate the SED tried to avoid. The regime was clearly uncomfortable that Eastern youths were fascist Skinheads. Many of the internal memos circulating between the offices of Honecker, Krenz, and others related to whether the youths—“rascals” in Günter Schabowski’s choice word—had actually uttered fascist slogans or not.¹⁷²⁰ Desperate to deflect attention from any hint of domestic fascism, the regime eagerly seized upon revelations that a number of West Berlin Skinheads, prior to the Zionskirche attack, had attended a party at the East Berlin restaurant ‘Sputnik’ and had encouraged the perpetrators to assault the concert. While the first Skinhead trial had focused more on the individual case histories of the four defendants—and as an unspoken corollary, the indigenous evolution of fascism in the GDR—the later trials made much more about the Eastern Skinheads’ ‘Western connections,’ even going so far as to suggest that the attack was “inspired” by the dozen West Berlin Skins present at ‘Sputnik.’¹⁷²¹ Despite the evidence confirming that nearly all the Western Skins had left for West Berlin prior to the Zionskirche attack, the judge, prosecutors, and Eastern media seized upon their presence to highlight the dangers posed by the increased East-West traffic to the GDR.¹⁷²² SED authorities even went so far as to attempt to extradite a number of West Berlin Skinheads to the GDR to

¹⁷¹⁹ IZJ, JW 269, “‘Leserbriefe an die ‘Junge Welt’/Junge Welt, Leserbriefredaktion’,” October-November 1989, letter 70.

¹⁷²⁰ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/313, “letter from Schabowski to Krenz,” 7 December 1987, p.24.

¹⁷²¹ See BStU, MfS, HA IX 772, “Information,” 6 November 1987, pp.26-38, esp. pp.29-30.

¹⁷²² See especially the article by Thomas Heubner published in the widely-read *Das Magazin* in 1988 in which he argued that Skinheads in the East were corrupted by Western Neo-Nazis and that any fascist activity in the East is a result of Western media manipulation. Thomas Heubner, “Kahlköpfe und Janusköpfe,” *Das Magazin*, Nr.8 (1988), pp.32-36. See also Ross, *The Swastika in Socialism*, pp.139-141.

stand trial for their participation in the Zionskirche attack.¹⁷²³ That media reports drained the Zionskirche attack of any political motivation by persistently referring to the perpetrators as ‘rowdys’ or ‘criminals’ only furthers the point.

While the regime tried to placate public opinion, rhetoric about harmful influences from the West and concomitant talk about the need for increased border control diluted any return that the long prison sentences were achieving on the battlefield of public opinion. As the numerous petitions and protest letters reveal, people desired a real confrontation with Nazism in the GDR, not long jail terms for a dozen thugs.¹⁷²⁴ Schütt especially drew the ire of the public, so much so, that, for the first time in GDR history, dissident Vera Wollenberger brought libel charges against Schütt and the *Junge Welt*.¹⁷²⁵ The suggestion by Schütt that the Church should be considered an ‘enemy’ due to its ‘support’ from the Western media brought up painful memories among church leaders of the ‘Kirchenkampf’ during the 1950s.¹⁷²⁶ Pastor Simon lodged an official protest with the state Presse Office regarding the treatment of his parishioners by the Eastern media as did the Evangelical Student Congregation.¹⁷²⁷ City youth pastor Wolfram Hülsemann, in a formal protest letter to the *Junge Welt* circulated within the BEK and during a series of radio interviews,

¹⁷²³ See SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/313, “letter from Borchert to Krenz,” 12 February 1988, p.68. See also “Strafverfolgungsantrag gegen Westberliner Skins,” *Junge Welt*, 16 February 1988, p.9; and “Ersuchen um Strafverfolgung gegen Westberliner Skinheads,” *Berliner Zeitung*, 16 February 1988, p.2.

¹⁷²⁴ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/313, “Kurzinformation zur ARD-Sendung ‘Kontraste’ vom 19.7.1988, 21.00 Uhr, erster Beitrag von Peter Wensierski,” n.d., pp.73-77.

¹⁷²⁵ Hans-Dieter Schütt, “Opposition mit der Augenbraune,” in *ohnMacht: DDR-Funktionäre sagen aus*, eds., Brigitte Zimmermann and Hans-Dieter Schütt (Berlin: Verlag Neues Leben, 1992), pp.204-205. Schütt, in his autobiographical writings and statements since the collapse of the GDR, has been very self-critical about his career in journalism. See the interview in “Hans-Dieter Schütt. Immer bereit für einen groben Keil,” in *Die Grenze im Kopf. Journalisten in der DDR*, eds., Michael Meyen and Anke Fiedler (Berlin: Panama Verlag, 2011), pp.183-194; and his autobiography, Hans-Dieter Schütt, *Glücklich beschädigt. Republikflucht nach dem Ende der DDR* (Berlin: WJS, 2009).

¹⁷²⁶ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/277, “Gespräch mit pfarrer Simon und Rainer Mrugalla am 20.1.1988, 15.00 bis 16.00 Uhr, in der Redaktion Junge Welt,” 21 January 1988, pp.57-62. In an interview after the collapse of the GDR, Schütt said that the decision to lump oppositionists and Skinheads together were his alone. See Schütt, “Opposition mit der Augenbraune,” p.198.

¹⁷²⁷ MDA, Ki 02/04, Hans Simon, Christian Halbrock, and Sabine Kaulbarsch, “Brief an das Presseamt beim Vorsitzenden des Ministerrates,” 4 February 1988, pp.1-2. See also MDA, Ki 10/01, Evangelische Studenten Gemeinden, “Brief an Hans-Dieter Schütt,” 4 January 1988, pp.1-2.

protested the further insinuations from Schütt and the state that the Zionskirche attack was a singular incident, a claim that tried to deflect attention away from fascism in the GDR.¹⁷²⁸

Despite a number of meetings between *Junge Welt* editors and clergy—in addition to numerous letter exchanges with irate readers endeavoring to calm the emotions Schütt’s article had raised—the damage had been done.¹⁷²⁹

The Skinhead attacks and public outcry finally convinced the regime that the Stasi was no longer effectively containing ‘negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen.’ The vociferous public outrage and repeated Skinhead violence convinced the regime that if the stick could no longer achieve state goals then perhaps the carrot could help de-politicize the subcultures through cooptation instead.¹⁷³⁰ Following the Velten assault, the SED Central Committee’s Department for Security Questions prepared a detailed report about the event.¹⁷³¹ After reviewing the incident, the memorandum offered a number of suggestions to curb such behavior in the future. Arguing forcefully that state youth policy “must also reach youths who shut themselves off consciously from our politics and organize with like-minded people in specific groupings,” the report called for a comprehensive overhaul of current policies.¹⁷³² Redoubled efforts at promoting socialist

¹⁷²⁸ See MDA, PS 117/02, “Dialog statt Demagogie mit verdrehten Fakten,” *Wendezeit*, Nr.2, 17 February 1988, pp.13-15; MDA, PS 117/02, “I-A Eingabe des Stadtjugendpfarrers Wolfram Hülsemann an den Zentralrat der FDJ (vom 15.12.1987),” *Wendezeit*, Nr.2, 17 February 1988, pp.1-2; MDA, PS 117/02, “I – B Offener Brief von Hülsemann an alle Landesjugendpfarrer,” *Wendezeit*, Nr.2, 17 February 1988, pp.2-3; and MDA, PS 117/02, “I – C Interview von Stefan Berg mit Hülsemann,” *Wendezeit*, Nr.2, 17 February 1988, pp.3-5.

¹⁷²⁹ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/277, “Gespräch mit pfarrer Simon und Rainer Mrugalla am 20.1.1988, 15.00 bis 16.00 Uhr, in der Redaktion Junge Welt,” 21 January 1988, pp.57-62. See also MDA, TH 04, “letter from Schütt to Thiede,” 28 January 1988, p.1-2.

¹⁷³⁰ According to Schütt, *Junge Welt* received an enormous amount letters (“Eine risengroße”) of “quite honest” (‘wirklich ehrlich’) opinions, which put a lot of pressure on the editors, though was equally dangerous for the writers because every week the MfS collected them for analysis. See “Hans-Dieter Schütt. Immer bereit für einen groben Keil,” p.194.

¹⁷³¹ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/885, Abteilung für Sicherheitsfragen, “Bericht über tätliche Angriffe auf Angehörige der Volkspolizei durch Mitglieder einer ‘Skinhead’-Gruppierung am 01.11.1987 in Velten, Kreis Oranienburg,” 16 November 1987, pp.10-18.

¹⁷³² SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/885, Abteilung für Sicherheitsfragen, “Bericht über tätliche Angriffe auf Angehörige der Volkspolizei durch Mitglieder einer ‘Skinhead’-Gruppierung am 01.11.1987 in Velten, Kreis Oranienburg,” 16 November 1987, p.16.

behavior was to take place at schools, businesses, institutions, restaurants, FDJ-Jugendklubs, dances and sporting events.¹⁷³³ The FDJ was charged with increasing its efforts at winning youths with “meaningful leisure activity,” while the Eastern media was pressed to condemn any hint of fascism, violence and terror.¹⁷³⁴ The MfS and police were to intensify their efforts at maintaining the socialist peace and the “disbanding” of any “negative groupings.”¹⁷³⁵ The report called for in particular public transparency to counter any negative effect that Western coverage was having on domestic GDR affairs: “The GDR press should be aggressively informed about special incidents with negative groupings that become effective in public, to prevent rumors and to strengthen the state authority and the co-operation of citizens in the hindering and ending of such actions.”¹⁷³⁶

The report made a deep impression on the SED leadership, especially Krenz. At the time, Walter Friedrichs, the long-time head of Leipzig’s Central Institute of Youth Research was bombarding Krenz (former head of the FDJ) with studies lamenting the political apathy of GDR youth.¹⁷³⁷ On 17 November, Krenz, then head of SED security affairs, received the memorandum and suggested to Minister of the Interior Friedrich Dickel that now would be an appropriate time to prepare proposals for the FDJ and other mass organizations.¹⁷³⁸ Gerd Schulz, head of the

¹⁷³³ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/885, Abteilung für Sicherheitsfragen, “Bericht über tätliche Angriffe auf Angehörige der Volkspolizei durch Mitglieder einer ‘Skinhead’-Gruppierung am 01.11.1987 in Velten, Kreis Oranienburg,” 16 November 1987, p.16.

¹⁷³⁴ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/885, Abteilung für Sicherheitsfragen, “Bericht über tätliche Angriffe auf Angehörige der Volkspolizei durch Mitglieder einer ‘Skinhead’-Gruppierung am 01.11.1987 in Velten, Kreis Oranienburg,” 16 November 1987, p.16.

¹⁷³⁵ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/885, Abteilung für Sicherheitsfragen, “Bericht über tätliche Angriffe auf Angehörige der Volkspolizei durch Mitglieder einer ‘Skinhead’-Gruppierung am 01.11.1987 in Velten, Kreis Oranienburg,” 16 November 1987, p.17-18.

¹⁷³⁶ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/885, Abteilung für Sicherheitsfragen, “Bericht über tätliche Angriffe auf Angehörige der Volkspolizei durch Mitglieder einer ‘Skinhead’-Gruppierung am 01.11.1987 in Velten, Kreis Oranienburg,” 16 November 1987, p.18.

¹⁷³⁷ See SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/233, “Zu den verschärften Angriffen des imperialistischen Gegners auf die Jugendpolitik der SED,” 14 June 1987, pp.19-50; and SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/246, “Zum Entwicklungsstand und zu Entwicklungsproblemen unserer Jugend – 1987,” n.d., pp.57-86.

¹⁷³⁸ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/885, “letter from Krenz to Dickel,” 18 November 1987, p.19.

Central Committee's Youth Department, assured Wolfram Herger, head of the Department for Security Questions, that the FDJ Central Council would evaluate the report with particular care.¹⁷³⁹ All parties involved agreed with Herger that a “comprehensive assessment of the situation” was necessary before Honecker's up-coming speech to the First Secretaries of the regional leadership, scheduled for February 1988.¹⁷⁴⁰ The result was the 2 February 1988 Politbüro two-fold ruling, “Information from the Central Council of the FDJ about the attempts by the class-enemies to bring about strengthened political-ideological influence over the youth” and “Measures to be undertaken by the FDJ for the improvement of the political-ideological work with all youths.”¹⁷⁴¹

Whereas ‘Information...’ recapitulated traditional SED concerns about the subversive nature of Western cultural policy and products—radio, television, music, fashion—in inspiring youth cultures in the GDR that were detrimental to socialism, ‘Measures...’ was designed to integrate previously excluded youths into the East German collective in the hopes of curbing the spate of recent anti-state activity, a complete reorientation of SED youth policy with the FDJ playing the leading role. The goal was to integrate especially those GDR youths who rejected state organization such as punk. As the report underlined, despite the successes of the FDJ, “[a]lltogether it is estimated however that the political-ideological work has not reached all youths yet.”¹⁷⁴² Punks, Skinheads, Heavy Metal fans, Poppers, New Romantics, Gruffies, and others with “anti-socialist goals” gathering in the Evangelical Churches were to be neutralized: “The goal of these measures must be to disband hostile and hooligan groupings and groups, to

¹⁷³⁹ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/885, “letter from Schutz to Herger,” 19 November 1987, p.8.

¹⁷⁴⁰ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/885, “SED Hausmitteilung, Herger to Krenz,” 17 November 1987, p.9.

¹⁷⁴¹ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/ J IV 2/2/ 2258, “Information des Zentralrates der FDJ über Versuche des Klassenfeindes, verstärkt politisch-ideologischen Einfluß auf die Jugend zu nehmen; Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit allen Jugendlichen,” 2 February 1988, pp.101-115.

¹⁷⁴² Underlined in original. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/ J IV 2/2/ 2258, “Information des Zentralrates der FDJ über Versuche des Klassenfeindes, verstärkt politisch-ideologischen Einfluß auf die Jugend zu nehmen; Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit allen Jugendlichen,” 2 February 1988, p.112.

win the majority of their supporters for the activities of the FDJ and to isolate initiators.”¹⁷⁴³

Regional, District, and FDJ leadership, state and social organizations, security forces—even FDJ-Jugendklub bouncers (*Ordnungsgruppen*)—were to increase their vigilance in stamping out any hint of Western ideology.¹⁷⁴⁴ Anti-socialist behavior, fascism, anti-Semitism or anti-foreigner hate among Eastern youths was to be confronted immediately.¹⁷⁴⁵ The Eastern youth media—Jugendfernsehen, *Junge Welt*, and DT 64—were to also take active roles.¹⁷⁴⁶ Above all, special attention was to be given to developing “an interesting and diverse cultural and leisure life in the basic organizations and youth clubs of the FDJ,” since the centerpiece behind the new direction in SED youth policy was to be the FDJ-Jugendklub.¹⁷⁴⁷

According to the 2 February 1988 decree, the political-ideological work at the FDJ-Jugendklubs to date had been lax, a situation partially contributed to the difficulties that the GDR was now experiencing. As the ruling lamented, “The mood in some Jugendklubs is not always oriented towards the development and strengthening of the socialist ways of life and behaviors. There are also signs that Jugendklubs admission is conditional on the [outward] appearances of youths. These youths [‘outsiders’] are thereby further isolated and pushed away.”¹⁷⁴⁸ The goal

¹⁷⁴³ Underlined in original. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/ J IV 2/2/ 2258, “Information des Zentralrates der FDJ über Versuche des Klassenfeindes, verstärkt politisch-ideologischen Einfluß auf die Jugend zu nehmen; Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit a l l e n Jugendlichen,” 2 February 1988, pp.113-114.

¹⁷⁴⁴ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/ J IV 2/2/ 2258, “Information des Zentralrates der FDJ über Versuche des Klassenfeindes, verstärkt politisch-ideologischen Einfluß auf die Jugend zu nehmen; Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit a l l e n Jugendlichen,” 2 February 1988, p.114.

¹⁷⁴⁵ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/ J IV 2/2/ 2258, “Information des Zentralrates der FDJ über Versuche des Klassenfeindes, verstärkt politisch-ideologischen Einfluß auf die Jugend zu nehmen; Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit a l l e n Jugendlichen,” 2 February 1988, p.113.

¹⁷⁴⁶ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/ J IV 2/2/ 2258, “Information des Zentralrates der FDJ über Versuche des Klassenfeindes, verstärkt politisch-ideologischen Einfluß auf die Jugend zu nehmen; Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit a l l e n Jugendlichen,” 2 February 1988, pp.114-115.

¹⁷⁴⁷ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/ J IV 2/2/ 2258, “Information des Zentralrates der FDJ über Versuche des Klassenfeindes, verstärkt politisch-ideologischen Einfluß auf die Jugend zu nehmen; Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit a l l e n Jugendlichen,” 2 February 1988, p.111.

¹⁷⁴⁸ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/ J IV 2/2/ 2258, “Information des Zentralrates der FDJ über Versuche des Klassenfeindes, verstärkt politisch-ideologischen Einfluß auf die Jugend zu nehmen; Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit a l l e n Jugendlichen,” 2 February 1988, p.112.

was to reverse these negative trends and instead use leisure to win youths to socialism. As part of the 1986 SED Party Day, the FDJ had pledged “a full, ideological-cultural and touristic-sporting life and to always care for a healthy and merry atmosphere.”¹⁷⁴⁹ In the Jugendklubs, this meant organizing “dances and sociability” for youths and above all, the “arrangement of current and sophisticated programs.”¹⁷⁵⁰ As ‘Measures...’ reiterated, these efforts were to produce “pride” in the achievements of the GDR and help youths “staunchly side with socialism in the current battles as well as having an active life position.”¹⁷⁵¹ As sites of learning and fun, the FDJ-Jugendklub was to marshal leisure to secure the loyalty of GDR youths and further the goals of the SED. As the decree concluded, “The leadership of the FDJ [must] direct its attention more towards the recreational behavior of youths and the creation of interesting FDJ-life in all Jugendklubs.”¹⁷⁵²

The 2 February 1988 decision is significant on several levels. First and foremost, the decree transferred the ‘solution’ to the punk ‘problem’ from the Stasi to the FDJ. While the MfS continued its efforts at subverting punk—often, as we will see, to the detriment of SED policies—Mielke’s days of directing GDR punk policy were over. Secondly, the recognition that the numerous oppositional groups were coming together under the protection of the Evangelical Churches and using punk concerts, poetry readings and other leisure activities to spread dissident thought among Eastern youths was an important conclusion drawn by SED authorities. But the

¹⁷⁴⁹ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/ J IV 2/2/ 2258, “Information des Zentralrates der FDJ über Versuche des Klassenfeindes, verstärkt politisch-ideologischen Einfluß auf die Jugend zu nehmen; Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit a l l e n Jugendlichen,” 2 February 1988, p.10.

¹⁷⁵⁰ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/ J IV 2/2/ 2258, “Information des Zentralrates der FDJ über Versuche des Klassenfeindes, verstärkt politisch-ideologischen Einfluß auf die Jugend zu nehmen; Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit a l l e n Jugendlichen,” 2 February 1988, p.10.

¹⁷⁵¹ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/ J IV 2/2/ 2258, “Information des Zentralrates der FDJ über Versuche des Klassenfeindes, verstärkt politisch-ideologischen Einfluß auf die Jugend zu nehmen; Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit a l l e n Jugendlichen,” 2 February 1988, pp.112-113.

¹⁷⁵² SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/ J IV 2/2/ 2258, “Information des Zentralrates der FDJ über Versuche des Klassenfeindes, verstärkt politisch-ideologischen Einfluß auf die Jugend zu nehmen; Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit a l l e n Jugendlichen,” 2 February 1988, p.114.

belief that the West was the source of opposition continued to blind the SED. Rather than confronting those beliefs that the Western media was supposedly fostering among the youth of the GDR—freedom of travel, human rights, peace—the SED convinced itself that with greater organization, education and ideological vigilance, Eastern problems manifesting in the various youth subcultures could be overcome without fundamentally reforming the GDR; a position put infamously by SED ideologue Kurt Hager when, in reference to Gorbachev’s policy of *Perestroika* and whether it would be suitable for East Germany, asked derisively, “Just because your neighbor puts up new wallpaper, does that mean you’d feel obliged to do the same?”¹⁷⁵³ Part of the explanation for 1989 thus lies in the inability of the SED to acknowledge that reform needed to be addressed and the consistent belief that these ideas were implanted by the Western media through a minority of groups such as punk.

For punk, the Politbüro decree was an important decision. As we shall see, punk bands had already begun to penetrate the radio networks and FDJ-Jugendklubs in 1986. But this progress was cautious and tenuous, reliant as they were on personal whim that made advances liable to reversal at any point in time. But the 2 February 1988 resolution legalized the previously provisional nature of punk expansion. After 2 February 1988, previously restricted musical outlets such as recording became accessible to punk bands. Whereas earlier punk bands were confined in the main to performing on church stages, now punks could play in the thousands of FDJ-Jugendklubs and even draw a state salary once officially registered. While lyrics were still the subject of censorship and punks ran into continuous difficulties with officials as we shall see, the move to integrate punk into state musical structures was the SED response to pressure from below. As we saw, the SED in the 1980s was achieving considerable success in attracting large numbers of Eastern youths to concerts featuring popular music and 2 February

¹⁷⁵³ “SED und KPD zu Gorbatschows ‘Revolution’,” *Deutschland Archiv*, Vol.20, Nr.6, (1987), p.656.

1988 represents the realization in the corridors of power that supporting punk could potentially win more popular success for the SED.

The decision to integrate punk—a complete about-face from ‘Härte gegen Punk’—should likewise not be considered a contradiction but rather as the logical outcome of SED understanding of youth. As we saw with ‘punk biographies,’ youths were considered empty vessels that could be influenced and manipulated positively or negatively. That youths could be won back to socialism with the proper education and organization was the constant belief of the SED. Arguing that many youths, “both in their outward appearances and in their behavior do not manifest [themselves] in extreme form,” ‘Information...’ suggested that “[t]here are youths who change their outward appearances only during leisure time and devote themselves only briefly and less intensely to the groupings.”¹⁷⁵⁴ The point here was clear: “The preference for individual music styles is to distinguish between political and moral behaviors in individual groupings.”¹⁷⁵⁵ To avoid any misunderstanding, ‘Information...’ underscored this belief even further: “The FDJ continues to judge every youth, above all on his attitude and his achievements for socialism and not for his appearance.”¹⁷⁵⁶ The belief that outward fashion did not dictate inner conviction underlined in ‘Information...’ represented a fundamental de-politicization of punk by the SED.

Nor were ‘Information...’ and ‘Measures...’ isolated pieces of legislation but instead represented SED youth policy going forward. Ten days later during Honecker’s address to the First Secretaries of the Districts, he highlighted the importance of leisure in SED youth policy

¹⁷⁵⁴ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/ J IV 2/2/ 2258, “Information des Zentralrates der FDJ über Versuche des Klassenfeindes, verstärkt politisch-ideologischen Einfluß auf die Jugend zu nehmen; Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit a l l e n Jugendlichen,” 2 February 1988, p.106.

¹⁷⁵⁵ SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/ J IV 2/2/ 2258, “Information des Zentralrates der FDJ über Versuche des Klassenfeindes, verstärkt politisch-ideologischen Einfluß auf die Jugend zu nehmen; Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit a l l e n Jugendlichen,” 2 February 1988, p.105.

¹⁷⁵⁶ Underline in original. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/ J IV 2/2/ 2258, “Information des Zentralrates der FDJ über Versuche des Klassenfeindes, verstärkt politisch-ideologischen Einfluß auf die Jugend zu nehmen; Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit a l l e n Jugendlichen,” 2 February 1988, p.106.

and the importance of integrating all youths. Referring to current political-ideological work, Honecker stated unequivocally that in the GDR, “[t]here is no social degradation, no ‘marginal groups’ and ‘social outcasts.’ Socialism needs everybody and has room for everyone,” a clear reference to the recent legislation.¹⁷⁵⁷ Within a year, Aurich was laughing with a trio of punks in the FDJ-Jugendklub ‘Silberhöhe,’ talking politics and music in front of the band Revanche, and the *Junge Welt* article describing the scene used almost the same words as Honecker a year prior. The mixture of politics and popular music had resulted in state and youth conflict in the GDR for nearly forty years, but the 2 February 1988 decree stood traditional SED youth policy on its head. Distinguishing between outer fashion and inner worth, the SED and FDJ were to go to enormous lengths to integrate punk. According to ‘Measures...’, “It is in accordance with the proven principles of socialist youth policy to strengthen the diverse effects among youths and on top of that, to also judge youths by their attitude to socialism and their achievements for society and not by their appearances, their specific views in matters of fashion and music.”¹⁷⁵⁸ What seemed inconceivable five years earlier now quickly became reality, though reality was often easier to accomplish in theory than in practice as we shall now explore.

“Born in the G.D.R.”: ‘die anderen Bands’ and the State Integration of Punk

Now, now I live
Now, now I live

Now, now I drink
Now, now I stink

¹⁷⁵⁷ Erich Honecker, *Mit dem Volk und für das Volk realisieren wir die Generallinie unserer Partei zum Whole der Menschen. Aus dem Referat des Generalsekretärs des ZK der SED und Vorsitzenden des Staatsrates der DDR auf der Beratung des Sekretariats des Zentralkomitees der SED mit den 1. Sekretären der Kreisleitungen am 12. Februar 1988* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1988), p.95.

¹⁷⁵⁸ SAPMO-BArch DY 30/ J IV 2/2/ 2258, “Information des Zentralrates der FDJ über Versuche des Klassenfeindes, verstärkt politisch-ideologischen Einfluß auf die Jugend zu nehmen; Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit a l l e n Jugendlichen,” 2 February 1988, p.113.

And now, now I need
Now, now I need you

We build up and won't wallpaper with you
We are very proud of Katharina Witt

Katharina
Katharina

I was born in the G.D.R.
Born in the G.D.R.

“Born in the G.D.R.,” Sandow, *Ostsamples – Systemausfall*
(Peking Records, SPV 084-62532, 1990)

The term ‘die anderen Bands’ (‘the other bands’) refers to a group of punk, alternative and experimental artists emerging out of the ashes of ‘Härte gegen Punk’ in the mid-to-late 1980s, a collective that dominated the East German musical landscape during the pre- and post-*Wende* periods. The name ‘anderen,’ a term translating to ‘other’ or ‘different,’ was an appellation used to signal alternative music to mainstream East German rock. Musically, ‘die anderen Bands’ were a mix of punk and post-punk styles, using keyboards, guitars, drums, saxophones, and other instruments to produce experimental soundscapes or fast, catchy, guitar driven fun anthems. Originating first with the East Berlin-based foursome die anderen, the name quickly spread to all non-Ostrock alternative bands after Amiga released the compilation LP *Kleeblatt Nr.23 – Die anderen Bands* in 1988, and has come to designate those punk bands who took advantage of the opportunities offered by state integration.

Playing on the radio, appearing in print and on screen, recording on Amiga and performing live in FDJ-Jugendklubs, punk surged into the East German music industry after years of exclusion. Through inclusion, the SED hoped to de-politicize the subculture while at the same time mobilize popular music to help generate support for the increasingly unpopular

regime. Studies coming to the attention of SED and FDJ youth leaders by the Leipzig Central Institute for Youth Research indicated that while youth trust in the SED was continuously declining, dances and leisure activities organized by the state remained popular.¹⁷⁵⁹ By adding the carrot to the stick, the SED leadership hoped that linking punk to the state would facilitate some measure of control over the previously independent—and unpredictable—alternative scene. Permitting punks to play in FDJ-Jugendklubs meant drawing strength away from the Churches and it was hoped that state integration would dull anti-state criticism emanating from within the punk scene. Interestingly, the move to integrate punk helped encourage a scene that following the collapse of the GDR in 1989 became crucial to Eastern identity, a subject that we will discuss in the Epilogue, but which deserves mention here. For punk bands and individuals, integration signaled unparalleled opportunities to record, play live, expand fan-bases, and, in several cases, even tour in the West. But opportunity also meant compromise: if GDR punk was inspired ideologically by a hatred of the state, its policies, norms and structures, then could East German punks remain critical while playing on state radio, performing on state stages, recording in state studios, or collecting a state salary?

The Politbüro decision signaled the official ‘discovery’ of punk in the GDR, and in the coming months, ‘die anderen Bands’ exploded onto the mainstream East German musical map. Beginning already in February 1988, *Unterhaltungskunst*, the intellectual flagship journal of the East German entertainment industry, began a year-long series called ‘die neuen Bands’ (‘the new bands’) featuring punk artists such as Mixed Pickles, die Skeptiker, Die 3 von der Tankstelle and others in monthly exposés. Critics such as Bernd Gürtler, Peter Zocher, Ronald Galenza and

¹⁷⁵⁹ In 1985, for example, 77% of approximately 910 youths between the ages 16 and 30 responded that they had visited an FDJ-Jugendklub at least once (1/3 visited between two and four times) within the previous four weeks for a disco or dance event. See BArch, DC 4/704, Jochen Hahn and Dieter Wiedemann, “Die Entwicklung musikkultureller Interessen und Verhaltensweisen Jugendlicher Anfang der 80er Jahre. Langfassung der Expertise des ZIJ zur Studie ‘Kulturelle Aktivitäten der FDJ’,” September 1985, p.46.

Jürgen Winkler all lauded the alternative bands, particularly emphasizing the scene's DIY credentials, dilettantism, experimentation, difference, and penchant for spontaneity from established East German rock. Already in the first feature on the Dresden-based DekaDANCE, Gürtler signaled this 'newness' by writing that, with the underground scene, "In the foreground is the need...not to handicraft in the traditional sense, or [cater to] popular taste. What is important for them is to *do something now*."¹⁷⁶⁰ Breezy journalism helped convey a sense of something secret, unplanned, unknown, an entity the GDR had not yet seen before. Significantly, this new scene was relevant, concerned as it was with issues deeply felt by audiences. According to Gürtner, Mixed Pickles were important because they "are committed and reflect profoundly upon the importance of our life more than many others."¹⁷⁶¹ Later features likewise sought to capture independence ("...behind them [Die 3 von der Tankstelle] stand no sponsors or producers"), the unique attachment between musicians and fans ("The strong connections between the fan clubs and the completely specific scene-sound and as well as with individuals, favorite bands shape the support from the media that amateurs or semi-professionals rarely receive.") and freshness to the stale Eastern rock scene (die Skeptiker gave "refreshing concerts that were full of energy").¹⁷⁶²

Soon *Melodie & Rhythmus*, *Neues Leben* and others began running similar features.¹⁷⁶³

Like *Unterhaltungskunst*, youth and music periodicals stressed the alternativeness of 'die anderen Bands.' The media coverage was important on two counts. For the first time, the underground scene was introduced for consumption to a mass public in full-color pictures and

¹⁷⁶⁰ Bernd Gürtler, "Die neuen Bands." *Unterhaltungskunst*, Nr.2, February 1988, p.7.

¹⁷⁶¹ Bernd Gürtler, "Die neuen Bands 3," *Unterhaltungskunst*, Nr.4, April 1988, p.10.

¹⁷⁶² Jürgen Winkler, "Die neuen Bands 4," *Unterhaltungskunst*, Nr.5, May 1988, p.12; Jürgen Winkler, "Die neuen Bands 4," *Unterhaltungskunst*, Nr.5, May 1988, p.13; and Ronald Galenza and Ebi Fischel, "Die neuen Bands 5," *Unterhaltungskunst*, Nr.6, May 1988, p.9.

¹⁷⁶³ See Ronald Galenza, "Die Neuen Bands: Teil I," *Melodie & Rhythmus*, Nr.12, December 1988, pp.4-5; Ronald Galenza, "Die Neuen Bands: Teil II," *Melodie & Rhythmus*, Nr.1, January 1989, p.4; Thomas Fuchs, "die anderen bands," *Neues Leben*, Nr.1, January 1989, pp.20-23.

descriptive prose. Second, press coverage helped craft a unity that had previously been fragmented, in the same way that Hilsberg had done in the West with his column ‘neuestes deutschland’ in *Sounds*. Whereas previously concerts and face-to-face encounters had been the principle unifying experience for GDR punk, in the late 1980s, state media and recording began to fashion new poles that attracted GDR punk musical identity and subculture.

While print was important for publicizing the scene, it was especially through radio that punk assimilation was most profound and illustrates how pressure from below forced the state to legalize an already existing situation. Already in 1986, punk began to insinuate itself subversively into GDR airwaves. For forty years, radio was a crucial medium of control for the SED who used the technology ideologically to cultivate ‘socialist personalities.’¹⁷⁶⁴ In 1977, 52.4% of workers owned a record player, 33.6% a tape recorder, and 32.6% a cassette recorder.¹⁷⁶⁵ Indeed, if one considers that 82% of youths between the ages of 15 and 23 had a transistor radio, then 97.8% of GDR households had access to a radio in the 1980s.¹⁷⁶⁶ However, radio was always a double-edged sword politically since Eastern residents could tune in to enemy Western stations. Geographic proximity meant that Western radio stations such as RIAS, NDR, AFN, RTL and others could transmit deep into East Germany and offer Easterners an alternative to the SED information monopoly. Thus GDR radio was eternally situated between a rock and a hard place: on the one hand, it needed to satisfy listener demands for popular Western music, while on the other hand, to maintain the political goals of the SED that condemned Western entertainment as subversive, what the editors of a recent collection have called ‘between

¹⁷⁶⁴ Larkey, *Rotes Rockradio*, pp.45-46, 109; Leitner, *Rockszenen DDR*, pp.24-26. See also Klaus Arnold and Christoph Classen, eds., *Zwischen Pop und Propaganda: Radio in der DDR* (Berlin: Links, 2004).

¹⁷⁶⁵ Leitner, *Rockszenen DDR*, p.181

¹⁷⁶⁶ Leitner, *Rockszenen DDR*, p.284.

pop and propaganda.¹⁷⁶⁷ Despite unpopular attempts to halt Western listening—such as sending FDJ-youth groups around to re-position Western-facing antennas—by the 1970s, the SED had tacitly abandoned attempts to stop Easterners from listening to Western broadcasts.¹⁷⁶⁸ This strategic capitulation, however, meant that under Honecker, instead of criminalizing listening to Western radio, the SED instead sought to compete for listeners with the West. To this end, a number of new radio programs were developed in the 1970s appealing especially to younger audiences. *Trend – Die populäre Musik* (Berliner Rundfunk) hosted by music critic Jürgen Balitzki, *Treff – Werkstatt für Amateurtanzmusiker* (DDR II) with Claus Strulick and Günther Wosylus (the ex-Puhdys drummer who had recorded the *DDR von unten* album in his private studio) featuring tips on constructing instruments and musical equipment as ersatz for the shortage economy, and *die Notenbude* (Stimme der DDR) on Tuesdays moderated by Alexander Jereczinsky and Wolfgang Martin (‘Alex und Wölfi’) were all broadcast with moderate success.¹⁷⁶⁹ Appearing weekly or monthly, however, these broadcasts only seemed to whet the appetite of youths who constantly demanded more varied and frequent programming.

The most important radio broadcast directed towards youth was DT 64. In 1964, the Ministry for Radio created a temporary program broadcasting popular music for five days non-stop to coincide with the youth festival ‘Deutschland Treffen 1964.’ In the weeks that followed, the Ministry was inundated with letters supporting the continuation of DT 64 which convinced authorities to broadcast the program regularly. In the 1960s and 1970s, DT 64 was broadcast Monday to Friday, between 16:00 – 19:00 on Berliner Rundfunk, and then repeated on Stimme der DDR. Opinion polls indicate that DT 64 was far and away the preferred GDR radio program among youth and could even compete favorably with Western programs such as ‘Rock over

¹⁷⁶⁷ Arnold and Classen, eds., *Zwischen Pop und Propaganda*.

¹⁷⁶⁸ See Bernd Lindner, *DDR: Rock & Pop* (Cologne: Komet Verlag, 2008), p.14.

¹⁷⁶⁹ See Larkey, *Rotes Rockradio*, pp.122-158; and Leitner, *Rockszenen DDR*, pp.276-296.

RIAS.¹⁷⁷⁰ Broadcasting for several hours daily meant that DT 64 could devote substantial airtime to interviews, debates about music trends, and commentary rather than simply rushing to play music as Trend, Treff, and die Notenbude were at times forced to do. By the late 1970s and early 1980s, popularity and desire to compete with RIAS in Berlin set in motion efforts to turn DT 64 into a radio station in its own right.¹⁷⁷¹ However, precisely at the moment when DT 64 sought to expand, Eastern youths were tuning out Eastern rock, a further reason why the SED desperately sought to tap into the emerging independent music scene.¹⁷⁷² In 1984, DT 64 became its own station, at first broadcasting 12 hours a day, but by 1987, it was broadcasting from 4 am until midnight daily with a host of youth-oriented programs. The decision to turn DT 64 into its own station was critical for punk since, as expert Edward Larkey suggests, radio was more powerful than Amiga in promoting Eastern music and the four-fold increase in airtime meant that a number of new programs—filled with new music—were quickly needed to fill the 20 hours of programming.¹⁷⁷³

DT 64's expansion inaugurated a new program moderated by Lutz Schramm called Parocktikum, featuring experimental and punk music that first broadcast on 27 March 1986. While earlier programs such as Trend had occasionally played current music, Parocktikum was on a completely different level. Singularly devoted to new music, Larkey suggests that

¹⁷⁷⁰ In 1987, in Leipzig, of the 324 students asked about their favorite radio stations, DT 64 was the second most popular station, ahead of RIAS 2, Bayern 3 and NDR 1 and only trailed NDR 2. See BArch DC 4/640, Hans-Jörg Stiehler and Holm Felber, "Ausgewählte Ergebnisse zum Hören des erweiterten Programms 'Jugendradio DT 64' bei Leipziger Schülern," January 1988, p.16.

¹⁷⁷¹ Larkey, *Rotes Rockradio*, pp.203-281.

¹⁷⁷² In a study comparing listening patterns from the years 1979, 1984 and 1985, the ZIJ discovered that Easterners were increasingly tuning out GDR music in favor of Western titles. In 1979, 49% of respondents, when asked to choose their favorite titles, chose GDR titles while 51% chose Western titles. In 1984, the figure was 31% in favor of GDR music versus 69% Western music, and by 1985, Eastern listening had dropped to a meagre 22% and Western choice rose to 71%. See BArch DC 4/705, Holm Felber, "Tendenzen der Beliebtheit von Formen populärer Musik aus dem Hitlistenvergleich 1979/1984/1985," November 1985, p.5.

¹⁷⁷³ Larkey, *Rotes Rockradio*, p.51. See also Leitner, *Rockszenen DDR*, pp.277-278.

Parocktikum was “the most path-breaking of all GDR youth radio programs.”¹⁷⁷⁴ At first on air monthly for one hour on Thursday nights at 11 pm, by December 1987, Parocktikum was broadcasting for two-hours between 10:00 pm and midnight every Saturday, a direct result of its popularity.¹⁷⁷⁵ Early playlists indicate the preponderance of Anglo-American punk and New Wave acts such as the Clash, the Dead Kennedys, the Fall, the Talking Heads, and a number of West German bands such as Einstürzende Neubauten, Fehlfarben, and the Wirtschaftswunder.¹⁷⁷⁶ From the beginning, every broadcast of Parocktikum featured at least one or two titles from GDR-punk bands. The first broadcast of Parocktikum featured Hard Pop (ex-Rosa Extra) and throughout 1986 and 1987, Aufruhr zur Liebe, Feeling B, die anderen, Teuer denn je, AG Geige, Der Expander des Fortschritts and numerous others were all played. Once Parocktikum had expanded, ‘die anderen Bands’ came to dominate the program: ironically, the 1958 Ordinance ‘necessitated’ playing ‘die anderen Bands’ in order to reach the 60% socialist music content.

Parocktikum became the platform whereby punk bands were able to reconstruct the national scene lost through ‘Härte gegen Punk.’ Well beyond the music, the interviews, news, information about up-coming concert dates, and future recordings all ensured that Schramm’s program moved Eastern punk beyond face-to-face contact for the first time. As Schramm remembered years later, “The interviews...in this context were particularly important. They signaled to both musicians and listeners that here [Parocktikum] exists a podium that could really be used.”¹⁷⁷⁷ The expanded programming gave the show plenty of time to concentrate on more

¹⁷⁷⁴ Larkey, *Rotes Rockradio*, p.175.

¹⁷⁷⁵ Lutz Schramm, “Sonderstufe mit Konzertberechtigung. Die DT 64-Indie-Nische,” in *DT 64: Das Buch zum Jugendradio 1964-1993*, eds., Andreas Ulrich and Jörg Wagner (Leipzig: Thom Verlag, 1993), pp.79.

¹⁷⁷⁶ The (almost) complete playlists can be found at: “Parocktikum.” <http://www.parocktikum.de/playlist.php> [Retrieved 8 July 2013].

¹⁷⁷⁷ Schramm, “Sonderstufe mit Konzertberechtigung,” p.81.

than simply playing music and playlists indicate the depth and breadth his program offered to listeners. As the show gained in popularity, Schramm began inviting bands onto Parocktikum to be interviewed, such as die anderen (20 January 1987), Electro Artist (17 March 1987), and die Art (12 December 1987). Interviews were the first time listeners beyond the subculture were introduced to punk ideology and personalities. Schramm began doing features on Western independent record labels and their bands such as Alternative Tentacles (14 April 1987), 4AD (9 June 1987), and SST (12 November 1988), and even interviewed the publishers of the West German fanzine Pop Noise (19 March 1988). Schramm played whole albums of hard-to-find Western artists such as the Birthday Party (16 July 1988), Lydia Lunch (6 August 1988) and the Residents (3 September 1988) for his listeners to tape at home.¹⁷⁷⁸ As Schramm has recalled, Parocktikum received considerable fan-mail that pressured the station into giving him more leeway with content, and his bosses, die Notenbude moderator Wolfgang Martin and DT 64 station chief Walter Bartel trusted him.¹⁷⁷⁹

Listeners from across the country quickly realized that Parocktikum provided a forum that until then had been non-existent, and fans and punk bands sent in their home-recorded demo cassettes to Schramm asking for airplay.¹⁷⁸⁰ The sheer popularity of Parocktikum indicates that desire among Eastern youths for alternative music in the GDR ran high and this meant that authorities gave Schramm more rope than normal. As Larkey has argued, the largest complaint received by DT 64 was that GDR radio always played the same songs and listeners wanted more

¹⁷⁷⁸ Schramm, "Sonderstufe mit Konzertberechtigung," p.78. Home-taping was a long-time accepted practice on East German radio as a compensation strategy for the shortage economy: the program 'Duett – Musik für den Recorder' broadcast weekdays between 3-4pm (and later moved to the weekend so more kids could use it) played whole albums for listeners at home to tape. See Lindner, *DDR: Rock & Pop*, pp.186-187; and Larkey, *Rotes Rockradio*, pp.150-158.

¹⁷⁷⁹ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, p.562.

¹⁷⁸⁰ Schramm, "Sonderstufe mit Konzertberechtigung," p.81.

variety.¹⁷⁸¹ Schramm claims he saw his role akin to that of John Peel; playing music that no one else had heard before and getting it into the public domain so that people could do what they wanted with it.¹⁷⁸² For many, Parocktikum was a radio program that youths had long craved. As one fan put it, after catching the 1987 New Years' show, "...shortly after midnight, as I was still at a party with a buddy, and I thought I was going crazy: Killing Joke's 'Love like blood' came over the ether and as the moderator started speaking again, came the hammer: this was youth radio."¹⁷⁸³

Importantly, Parocktikum became the crucial step boosting punk up into the recording studio. Olaf Leitner, former RIAS moderator and GDR music industry scholar, has keenly observed that the difference between the East and West German music industries was that, "A rock band in West Germany endeavors so that their records are played on the radio. A rock band in East Germany hopes that their radio recordings come out on record."¹⁷⁸⁴ In contrast to the capitalist mode of record-production, recording in the GDR was a privilege, a 'reward' for years of concerts and helping to build socialist culture. When compared to the West, the meager vinyl legacy of East German punk is staggering. While in the FRG, more than 1,000 punk *bands* released vinyl pressings between 1977 and 1989, in the GDR, Amiga released a total of six punk albums: two compilation albums, one EP by die Skeptiker, and three LPs by Feeling B, die Skeptiker and Sandow. As we saw, GDR punk bands were denied access to the state-run recording facilities. Forced to record on cassette recorders, early demo-tapes sent to Schramm were of poor quality and unsatisfying to both bands and listeners at home. But beginning in autumn 1987, Schramm was approached by youth radio chief Walter Cikan about organizing

¹⁷⁸¹ Larkey, *Rotes Rockradio*, pp.319-328.

¹⁷⁸² Schramm, "Sonderstufe mit Konzertberechtigung," p.84; Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, p.570.

¹⁷⁸³ Cited in Schramm, "Sonderstufe mit Konzertberechtigung," p.79.

¹⁷⁸⁴ Leitner, *Rockszenen DDR*, p.173. See also Larkey, *Rotes Rockradio*, pp.51 and 138-139.

recording sessions to cut quality sounding tracks for later play on Parocktikum.¹⁷⁸⁵ These sessions gave punk bands access to quality recording equipment for the very first time. AG Geige was the first band to record, and by May 1988, Schramm had recorded sessions with die anderen, Rosengarten, die Art, die Skeptiker, die Expander des Fortschritts, and Zorn.¹⁷⁸⁶ Schramm also began recording live concerts starting with die anderen in the Kreiskulturhaus Treptow in September 1987.¹⁷⁸⁷ Recording concerts meant considerably less bureaucratic hassle which was attractive. Bands could play songs containing lyrics that might not otherwise pass the censor. However live recording was never as good qualitatively as studio production and bands only had one take for each song meaning every recording could be either hit or miss.¹⁷⁸⁸

The Parocktikum-sessions were the first step towards recording albums for the state record label Amiga. As Larkey observed, recording with Amiga usually came down to the personal decision of long-time head René Büttner.¹⁷⁸⁹ But by 1988, the popularity of ‘die anderen Bands’ was forcing the hand of the state music industry. The first officially-recorded GDR punk band was a mixed compilation on Amiga’s Kleeblatt line titled simply *Nr.23 – Die anderen Bands*. Approached in 1987 by Amiga about cutting tracks for a compilation album, in January 1988, Sandow, Hard Pop, Feeling B and WK13 entered the studio.¹⁷⁹⁰ In June 1988, the long-awaited album came out to critical and public acclaim, and by July, the first pressing was sold-out.¹⁷⁹¹ Long-time commentators of the GDR-independent scene such as Jürgen Balitzki,

¹⁷⁸⁵ Schramm, “Sonderstufe mit Konzertberechtigung,” pp.82-84. See also Lutz Schramm, “Zwischenbericht eines Jungproduzenten,” *Unterhaltungskunst*, Nr.5, May 1988, p.13.

¹⁷⁸⁶ Schramm, “Sonderstufe mit Konzertberechtigung,” p.84; Lutz Schramm, “Zwischenbericht eines Jungproduzenten,” *Unterhaltungskunst*, Nr.5, May 1988, p.13.

¹⁷⁸⁷ Schramm, “Sonderstufe mit Konzertberechtigung,” p.84; and BStU, MfS, BV Chemnitz, XX 636, “Information ‘P. Thieme’ vom 27.10.1988,” n.d., p.17.

¹⁷⁸⁸ Schramm, “Sonderstufe mit Konzertberechtigung,” pp.82-84.

¹⁷⁸⁹ Larkey, *Rotes Rockradio*, p.67.

¹⁷⁹⁰ Ronald Galenza and Ebi Fischel, “Die neuen Bands 8,” *Unterhaltungskunst*, Nr.9, October 1988, p.10.

¹⁷⁹¹ Jürgen Balitzki, “die anderen Bands,” *Unterhaltungskunst*, Nr.9, September 1988, p.22. See also Simone Salefsky, “Zur Amiga-LP Kleeblatt Nr. 23 ‘die anderen bands’,” *Junge Welt*, 24-25 September 1988, p.4.

while less impressed with the actual recordings, spent the majority of his review explaining that the Kleeblatt release showed that Amiga's recording monopoly needed to end, that public demand would support independent labels and bands.¹⁷⁹² Wolfgang Martin, writing in *Neues Leben*, argued that it was clear why these bands were different from older East German rock: "Everyone can hear what is actually different from these four bands than with most of the experienced groups...vital, honest, mostly handmade rock in the post-era of punk and New Wave. And 'honest' does not only mean openness with selected problems, but above all the reflection of feelings among today's youth, of ways of life and everyday worries."¹⁷⁹³ Like Balitzki, Martin suggested that the release signaled a changing of the guard in the GDR rock music scene. Meanwhile, Ronald Galenza wondered why it had taken so long for Amiga to produce music from "the most innovative, original and interesting music in our rock scene."¹⁷⁹⁴ The success of Kleeblatt Nr.23 quickly opened the doors to further recordings. In May 1989, Amiga released the Parocktikum-sampler, a compilation of various sessions from bands that Schramm had recorded for his program, and by autumn 1989, the record label had released four more punk records by die Skeptiker, Feeling B, and Sandow.

Exposure in print, on the radio, and on turntables meant that bands such as Feeling B, die Skeptiker, and Die 3 von der Tankstelle became enormously popular and quickly started attracting huge audiences to their shows in FDJ-Jugendklubs, a key component of SED youth and leisure activity. Under Honecker, the FDJ-Jugendklubs had undergone vast expansion. When Honecker first came to power in 1971, there were 1,300 FDJ-Jugendklubs, numbers which rose to 4,000 in 1975 and ended up around 10,000 with 30,000 honorary employees at the end of the

¹⁷⁹² Jürgen Balitzki, "die anderen Bands," *Unterhaltungskunst*, Nr.9, September 1988, pp.22-23.

¹⁷⁹³ Wolfgang Martin, "Platten," *Neues Leben*, Nr.6, June 1988, p.22.

¹⁷⁹⁴ Wolfgang Martin, "Platten," *Neues Leben*, Nr.6, June 1988, p.23; Ronald Galenza, "'die anderen Bands': Kleeblatt Nr.23," *Melodie & Rhythmus*, Nr.9, September 1988, p.8.

regime.¹⁷⁹⁵ Studies conducted by the Central Institute for Youth Research suggested that 40% of youths were attending rock concerts at least four times yearly in the late 1980s while 40% were attending the FDJ-discos between two to four times weekly and twice monthly.¹⁷⁹⁶ While long-time rock band Silly, with numerous hit albums, was playing to a few hundred people during the 1988 Berlin ‘Rocksommer,’ die Skeptiker were playing in a Jugendklub to a sold-out show of 3,000.¹⁷⁹⁷ While security forces complained about the large crowds waiting to enter Jugendklubs, music critics wrote about huge masses attending ‘die anderen Bands’ shows which only introduced the groups to even more curious fans.¹⁷⁹⁸ Thus, the FDJ was able to pack their Jugendklubs with youths while the bands, with their fresh sounds and fast tempos, were finally able to break into the Eastern music mainstream.

Finally, 1988 saw the release of the DEFA-produced feature film on the GDR punk scene *flüstern & SCHREIEN*, a media-event which can be considered the crowning attempt to integrate punk into the East German state. With a 1.2 million Mark budget (more than twice as much as another successful documentary-film released that year, *Winter Adé*) and screened at 33 theaters—a level reserved for Western imports (the average number for GDR-produced films was 15 to 24)—*flüstern & SCHREIEN* was a considerable expenditure of scarce resources at a time when it could hardly afford to do so.¹⁷⁹⁹ Featuring interviews and concert footage of four GDR bands—Silly, Feeling B, Chicoreé and Sandow—the film ranges wildly over the landscape

¹⁷⁹⁵ See Lindner, *DDR: Rock & Pop*, p.136.

¹⁷⁹⁶ Holm Felber, “Musik für alle? Zum Gebrauch populärer Musik durch Jugendliche der DDR. Eine empirisch-soziologische Studie,” *Weimarer Beiträge*, Vol.35, Nr.6 (1989), pp.907-919.

¹⁷⁹⁷ Thomas Fuchs, “die anderen bands,” *Neues Leben*, Nr.1, January 1989, p.20.

¹⁷⁹⁸ See, for example, BStU, MfS, BV Chemnitz, XX 636, n.t., n.d., p.20. See Thomas Fuchs, “die anderen bands,” *Neues Leben*, Nr.1, January 1989, pp.20-23; “nl leser-post,” *Neues Leben*, Nr.4, April 1989, p.13. See also Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, p.575.

¹⁷⁹⁹ Tim Evers, “Wozu den über diese Leute einen Film?” *Staatliche Interessen und Motive im Umgang mit Jugendkultur und Rockmusik in der DDR der 80er Jahre am Beispiel des DEFA-Dokumentarfilms ‘flüstern & SCHREIEN – ein rockreport’ (1988)* (Magistersarbeit, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, 2002), p.3.

of popular music culture in East Germany and introduced the general public to attempts by groups on the margins to manufacture more authentic living.

The film captures the generational conflict taking place within the East German music industry in the late 1980s—and by extension, GDR society as a whole—by contrasting the four bands, their experiences, and their fans. As an established industry band, Silly represented the older rock tradition which by the 1980s was finding less resonance with younger listeners but whose position as a top-act supported by the SED was blocking younger bands from advancing through the labyrinthine GDR music bureaucracy. Feeling B, by contrast, was representative of the underground punk scene eschewing the norms of GDR society and rock stardom. Chicoreé and singer Dirk Zöllner represented the up-and-coming amateur outfit looking to break into the mainstream GDR music industry while Sandow, an experimental alternative group from Cottbus uninterested in popular success, is celebrated for their independence and authenticity. Through concert clips and interview segments, director Dirk Schumann celebrates the younger, more creative and daring bands. The film prompted much discussion among audiences and the FDJ reported that the film was welcomed, for example, by youths in Cottbus who urged the regional political leadership to support bands such as Sandow even further.¹⁸⁰⁰

The generational crisis gripping the East German music industry is shown on several levels. Silly, with their elaborate stage show, lights, and stacks of Western-amplifiers and keyboards, is contrasted with Feeling B's homemade instruments and broken down 'tour bus.' 'Flake,' bassist for Feeling B, at one point even plays a toy piano since the real thing is unobtainable, commentary on the deficiencies of the socialist economy and a condemnation of

¹⁸⁰⁰ See "Pro und Kontra zu Filmen und Musical," *Junge Welt*, 15 November 1988, p.5; and SAPMO-BArch DY 24/14281, "Information über dargelegte Erfahrungen und Probleme bei der Verwirklichung des Beschlusses vom 2.2.1988 – "Arbeit mit allen Jugendlichen" auf dem Lehrgang mit den 1. Sekretären an der Jugendhochschule "Wilhelm Pieck" – Nachkontrolle zur Beratung des Zentralrats vom 26. Oktober 1988," 12 January 1989, p.56. See also Evers, "*Wozu den über diese Leute einen Film?*" pp.91-95.

access to the Western market by a privileged few in a supposedly classless society. Chicoreé, with aspirations for mainstream GDR success, likewise have lights and stage show but it is difficult for them to compete with top-acts since they are disadvantaged materially from the beginning.¹⁸⁰¹ Perhaps more telling was the interaction between fans and artists. Sandow and other fans of Feeling B bicycle across the countryside to catch shows by their heroes while Silly, in concert clips, are separated from their fans by an elaborate stage show, dressing rooms, and the media. Thus while Feeling B perform on a beach surrounded by their fans and with whom they later share a meal over an open fire as the sun sets on the Baltic Sea, a teenage girl obsesses over Tamara Diaz, the glamorous lead singer of Silly, whose pictures grace the young girl's bedroom wall but who comes no closer to her idol than that.

The second major theme, and a continuation of Schumann's earlier film *Runter von der Straße* (1981), was his desire to 'normalize' the supposedly 'abnormal' alternative music scene.¹⁸⁰² Here, the fans were the key actors as Schumann used them to break down labels the state had erected to ostracize the supposedly 'negativ-dekadenter Jugendlichen' from GDR society. Of the dozens of youths interviewed, only one did not have a job and thus were economically the foundation and future of the 'Workers' and Peasants' State.' Nor were these youths an 'internal enemy' seduced by 'Western diversion,' but rather young East Germans enjoying one of the few GDR cultural products that they could take pride in. Boredom and the inability of the state to offer youth desirable leisure activities after work is the main gripe of nearly every youngster in the film. Even a policeman, interviewed while watching Feeling B set up for an outdoor show in Schwerin, laughingly indicates that he had no problem with the young

¹⁸⁰¹ The costs for equipment in the GDR was so high, that some estimate that outfitting a group could cost anywhere from 30,000 to 80,000 or even 100,000 Marks. See Martin Watson, "'Flüstern & Schreien': Punks, Rock Music and the Revolution in the GDR," *German Life and Letters*, Vol.46, Nr.2 (April 1993), p.166.

¹⁸⁰² Evers, "*Wozu den über diese Leute einen Film?*" pp.77-78.

people or their wildly colored hair, they were just having fun and besides, he claimed, village life was more boring now than when he was a lad. In depicting alternative musical experience as a celebration of indigenous East German culture, Schumann tried to normalize what the state had consistently sought to characterize as deviant and therefore dangerous.

While critics quibbled with certain statements and subject matter—Silly, most agreed, was not really given a fair shake—most believed that *flüstern & SCHREIEN* represented a major shift in depicting youth, Eastern musical culture, and ‘die anderen Bands’ in socialist society. In the succinct words of critic Lutz Pehnert, writing in the *Junge Welt*; “should I give the film a rating then it would be: IMPORTANT.”¹⁸⁰³ Many hoped that the film would help smash taboos that GDR society held against supposedly ‘asocial’ youths. Jürgen Winkler, for example, believed that “a more effective contribution to discussions regarding tolerance and dialogue” than this film could not be found.¹⁸⁰⁴ In the end, *flüstern & SCHREIEN*, along with the other measures intended to integrate punk into East German society was able to accomplish the very important task of normalizing the previously abnormal, and in so doing, grant access to an alternative East German identity to former Easterners who, after 1989, used it to help them navigate the shoals of reunification, when so much of the East German legacy was being tossed overboard.

flüstern & SHREIEN: Eastern Identity and the Limits of Punk Integration

¹⁸⁰³ Peter Claus, Waltraud Heinze and Lutz Pehnert, “Rock, Romantik, Realität,” *Junge Welt*, 1 November 1988, p.5. For critiques, see “Pro und Kontra zu Filmen und Musical,” *Junge Welt*, 15 November 1988, p.5.

¹⁸⁰⁴ Jürgen Winkler, “flüstern & SCHREIEN – ein rockreport,” *Journal für Unterhaltungskunst*, Nr.1, January 1989, p.43.

Despite the explosion of ‘die anderen Bands’ into the East German media and music industry, the decision to integrate punk into state structures did not proceed particularly smoothly and these roadblocks suggest that pressure from below was moving faster than the state could react. While avenues of promotion appeared in the print-media, radio, recording, clubs and on film, nonetheless, considerable obstacles continued to block the path of ‘die anderen Bands.’ In fact, more often than not, it was the work of punks themselves and sympathizers such as Lutz Schramm as we saw above that were able to pry open new spaces within the Eastern music industry, rather than the state itself. Under pressure, the SED started fraying at the seams as central and provincial policies often devolved into disputes over lines of authority and control, ministerial confusion that often caught punk in-between. Where state authorities did integrate punk, these efforts can only be characterized by haphazard implementation, misunderstandings, and proceeding in fits and starts. Moreover, as the economic and political crisis in the GDR worsened, the hands of the SED became increasingly tied which, even if desired, further restricted state endeavors to integrate punk. The limits of punk integration are thus a means of exploring how popular music helps explain the collapse of the GDR.

Obstacles encountered by ‘die anderen Bands’ attempting to storm state structures ran the gamut from ideological and generational to cultural and material. Although Parocktikum expanded the space for alternative music dramatically, this did not mean that Schramm was free to play whatever he pleased. Schramm was careful not to play everything sent to him and he specifically remembers not playing controversial anthems about avoiding military service by die Firma and die Fanatischen Frisöre.¹⁸⁰⁵ Certain bands such as Schleim-Keim were completely off-limit: as Schramm explained at the time, while “he could play a lot of things, if he played

¹⁸⁰⁵ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.561-564.

Schleim-Keim on his show, then that would be his last.”¹⁸⁰⁶ His caution, however, did not always save Schramm from coming under pressure. In early 1989, for example, Martin asked Schramm not to play an anti-Nazis song by the band Papierkrieg, a request probably made due to the difficult situation the regime was put in following the Zionskirche attack and court cases, as we have seen.¹⁸⁰⁷ But what is interesting is that pressure was mostly regional rather than centrally directed, a disconnect suggesting the lines of communication and authority within the SED were falling apart. In late 1988, for example, Bartel began asking Schramm about the Rostock-based band Zwecklos because regional authorities were making inquiries.¹⁸⁰⁸ In Eisenach, Stasi authorities—investigating the band die Fanatischen Frisöre as part of Operation ‘Laien’—were shocked to hear the band playing on the radio. Asking MfS headquarters to pressure Schramm, Bartel again asked him to stop.¹⁸⁰⁹

Despite access to recording, the meager vinyl output by GDR punk bands speaks volumes to the difficulties punks and recording engineers had in speaking the same musical language and how the GDR economic crisis in the late 1980s affected cultural production. Normally used to recording rock outfits, sound engineers were unprepared and skeptical of the new sounds ‘die anderen Bands’ were keen to record, a situation that Schramm suggested at the time in *Unterhaltungskunst* was generational.¹⁸¹⁰ Amateurs in every sense of the word, punk bands were not ready to work in professional studios on 16-track recording systems and superior musical

¹⁸⁰⁶ Cited in Anne Hahn and Frank Willmann, *Satan, kannst du mir noch mal verzeihen: Otze Ehrlich, Schleimkeim und der ganze Rest* (Mainz: Ventil Verlag, 2008), p.114.

¹⁸⁰⁷ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, p.562.

¹⁸⁰⁸ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, p.563.

¹⁸⁰⁹ Schramm, “Sonderstufe mit Konzertberechtigung,” pp.86-87. Schramm later said that the Fanatischen Frisöre asked him to stop playing them on the radio because it was too difficult in Eisenach. See Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.559-561. However, MfS files suggest that official pressure was also put on Schramm. See BStU, MfS, HA XX, 914, “Punk-Musikformation ‘Fanatische Frisöre,’ Ihr Fernschreiben Vom 9.12.88, Nr.156,” 24 January 1989, p.43. FDJ leaders, for example, later complained about Schramm playing Die Firma on DT 64, a band associated with the political opposition. See SAPMO-BArch DY 24/11440, “Information zur Verwirklichung des Beschlusses des Sekretariats des Zentralrates der FDJ ‘Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit allen Jugendlichen,’” 29 March 1988, p.5.

¹⁸¹⁰ Lutz Schramm, “Zwischenbericht eines Jungproduzenten,” *Unterhaltungskunst*, Nr. 5 (May 1988), pg.13.

equipment, especially (Western) Roland keyboards and Moog synthesizers. Since many bands were still experimenting with their tone and wanted to spend time testing new sounds on previously unavailable equipment, engineers were frustrated since supervisors wanted sessions recorded within two or three days on scarce GDR studio time. And with only two recording studios in the whole country, time was precious since Amiga's policy of allotting recording time in four-hour blocks meant that once set-up and take-down was factored in, not much time was left for actual recording let alone experimenting.¹⁸¹¹ Since the music of 'die anderen Bands' was evolving so quickly, the slow recording and pressing time caused by the inferior state facilities continually disappointed artistic sensibilities. Sandow were unhappy, for example, with the songs Amiga selected for the Kleeblatt compilation because they felt the songs recorded six months earlier were already outdated.¹⁸¹² In reviews of *Nr.23 – Die anderen Bands*, Balitzki, Martin and Galenza all commented on the sub-par recording quality of 'die anderen Bands,' and that while sonically Feeling B and Sandow were current, critics suggested that both Hard Pop and WK 13 sounded as though they belonged more to the early rather than late 1980s. The fact that Hard Pop had broken up before the record was even released is a testament to the inefficiency of the GDR recording industry.¹⁸¹³ For a nation priding itself on modernity and technical proficiency, the inability to produce up-to-date recordings was a disappointment.¹⁸¹⁴

While technical proficiency often proved a stumbling block, content was likewise an impediment in punk integration. Frequently lyrics were simply too political to pass the censor

¹⁸¹¹ Lutz Schramm, "Zwischenbericht eines Jungproduzenten", *Unterhaltungskunst*, Nr. 5 (May 1988), pg.13. See Leitner, *Rockszenen DDR*, p.184.

¹⁸¹² Ronald Galenza and Ebi Fischel, "Die neuen Bands 8", *Unterhaltungskunst*, Nr. 9 (October 1988), pg.10. The long delay between recording and release was a decades-old complaint in the GDR. See Leitner, *Rockszenen DDR*, p.180.

¹⁸¹³ Jürgen Balitzki, "die anderen Bands" in *Unterhaltungskunst*, Nr.9 (September 1988), pg.22-23; Wolfgang Martin, "Platten" in *Neues Leben*, Nr.6 (June 1988), pg.22-23; Ronald Galenza, "'die anderen Bands': Kleeblatt Nr.23" in *Melodie & Rhythmus*, Nr. 9 (September 1988), pg.8.

¹⁸¹⁴ Complaints about working with Amiga were long-standing. See Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, p.573; and Leitner, *Rockszenen DDR*, pp.173-192.

who charged that punk lyrics were too ‘primitive’ and ‘degenerate’ to warrant recording. To record, bands needed to submit their lyrics for authorization to a committee beforehand that either accepted the songs or demanded revision, a process that could take months.¹⁸¹⁵ The Hard Pop song “Fang an, steh auf” (‘Let’s go, get up’) was held up because the line “mute like a fish, you go early to work, deaf like a table, you drink your beer in the evening” was met with disapproval. While censor Fred Gertz claimed that he was unconvinced that a table could be “deaf,” the critique of numb everyday life in the GDR was the more probable unspoken cause.¹⁸¹⁶ Some bands such as the Dresden-based Kaltfront—Jörg Löffler’s post-Paranoia outfit—abandoned their efforts to record because their songs were considered too depressing to have originated in socialism and would have become unrecognizable with all the alterations that were demanded.¹⁸¹⁷ Appearances and art-work could also raise a red flag. Pankow was forced to change the cover of their album *Kille Kille* from the shot of the group standing around in leather jackets (singer André Herzberg had his tongue hanging out) as fingers clawed through the cover to a plain black background with simple white lettering.

The role of lyrical honesty played an important role in recording since, as resistant ‘outsiders,’ punk bands were expected to remain defiant and not compromise their artistic ideals. Asked by Amiga to alter the word ‘Bronx’ in their anthem “Paul’s Hochzeit,” die anderen balked and canceled the recording session.¹⁸¹⁸ Groups such as die Skeptiker that got on too smoothly with authorities were derided as ‘FDJ-bands,’ a term that the East Berlin-outfit has never quite lived down.¹⁸¹⁹ Principle and censorship however has meant that much GDR punk has been lost.

¹⁸¹⁵ See Larkey, *Rotes Rockradio*, pp.74-75.

¹⁸¹⁶ Schramm, “Sonderstufe mit Konzertberechtigung,” p.83.

¹⁸¹⁷ Schramm, “Sonderstufe mit Konzertberechtigung,” pp.84-85; Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, p.568.

¹⁸¹⁸ Jürgen Winkler, “Die neuen Bands 5,” *Unterhaltungskunst*, Nr.6, June 1988, p.10.

¹⁸¹⁹ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.561.

Schramm, for example, has lamented that so many original East German punk songs have vanished either because of the censor and lyrics that were changed or because many remained unrecorded.¹⁸²⁰ While certain bands and recordings proceeded smoothly, others such as those by Der Expander des Fortschritts or Kaltfront were disasters. Even at the time, Schramm admitted that working with Amiga was a trying experience for everyone involved.¹⁸²¹ However, until the end of the regime, Amiga and the radio remained the only legal means of recording in the GDR since independent cassette labels such as Trash Tape Rekords or Hinterhof Productions, despite the move to integration, remained illegal.¹⁸²²

As with recordings, allowing punk bands to play in FDJ-Jugendklubs produced mixed results. To play legally in Jugendklubs, official registration was required and prior to 1986, punk bands were flat-out denied *Einstufung* ('state classification') on account of their 'unmusical' nature, and any clandestine attempt to play in FDJ-Jugendklubs under false names or without proper credentials quickly drew the attention of the MfS.¹⁸²³ But beginning in 1986, authorities began granting punk bands *Einstufung* and also started issuing *Fördervertrag* ('sponsorship contracts') that allowed them to play legally at amateur-competitions. Sandow, for example, received a *Fördervertrag* from a Cottbus Meat Combine after winning a regional *Nachwuchs-Wettbewerb* ('amateur competition') and by autumn 1988, had played around 70 shows.¹⁸²⁴

Other bands such as Feeling B, Hard Pop and die anderen sought official state registration.

Einstufung involved playing a concert for local authorities who would judge the performance and

¹⁸²⁰ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.568-569.

¹⁸²¹ Lutz Schramm, "Zwischenbericht eines Jungproduzenten," *Unterhaltungskunst*, Nr.5, May 1988, p.13; Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.567-568, 570; and Schramm, "Sonderstufe mit Konzertberechtigung," p.85.

¹⁸²² See BStU, MfS, HA XX 6070, "Information über die Existenz eines illegalen 'Punk-Labels' mit der Bezeichnung 'Trash-Tape'Records'," 21 September 1988, pp.70-71.

¹⁸²³ BStU, MfS, BV Berlin XX 3106, "Operativ-Information über den Auftritt von Punk-Musik-Gruppen," 26 January 1987, pp.97-100.

¹⁸²⁴ Ronald Galenza and Ebi Fischel, "Die neuen Bands 8," *Unterhaltungskunst*, Nr.9, October 1988, p.9.

award the band a ranking which would allow them to perform in state-culture centers such as FDJ-Jugendklubs, draw a state-salary for concerts, receive reimbursements for expenditures, and—if proficient and politically loyal enough to attain the top-rank of *Sonderstufe* (‘special level’)—even perform in the West. Not all punk bands, however, were successful in gaining legality as the *Einstufung* committees were often inexperienced in judging experimental music and conservatism continued to rule the East German music scene. For example, the band Gefahrenzone, at their *Einstufung* concert in Saalfeld on 19 November 1988, was not granted a ranking because, according to the committee, the band performed “no real dance music,” a judgment the band rejected, arguing that the jury was not competent to judge their style of music, but to no avail.¹⁸²⁵

To pursue *Einstufung* was a difficult choice and many agonized over the decision since it necessitated deep compromises. Becoming a state-band entailed charges of ‘selling-out’ and usually meant concessions often of an artistic nature. Rosa Extra, for example, was forced to change their name to Hard Pop and toned down—according to informer ‘Paul Steinke’—their “pessimistic, dark and ideologically unclear” lyrics in order to achieve official registration.¹⁸²⁶ Die Zucht (‘discipline’—though ‘Zuchthaus’ means ‘prison’) likewise was forced to change their name to Die Art (‘style’). The decision to pursue *Einstufung* caused tremendous rancor within a Wittenberg punk band. While one member wanted legality for the band another would not countenance working with the FDJ and state.¹⁸²⁷ Some bands, such as Schleim-Keim, instantly recognized that *Einstufung* was not right for the sound and image the band cultivated, and even if their chances for success were slim, they nonetheless rejected state-sponsorship from the

¹⁸²⁵ Cited in Schramm, “Sonderstufe mit Konzertberechtigung,” p.86.

¹⁸²⁶ BStU, MfS, HA XX/9, 1730, “Bericht zum Treff mit dem IMS “Paul Steinke” am 8.10.1986 von 10.00 - 12.00 Uhr in der IMK “Nico”,” 14 October 1986, p.12; and Schramm, “Sonderstufe mit Konzertberechtigung,” p.77.

¹⁸²⁷ BStU, MfS, HA XX/AKG, 2190, “Einleitungsbericht zur Durchführung einer operative Personenkontrolle,” 20 July 1989, p.2.

outset.¹⁸²⁸ But the lure of performing at FDJ-Jugendklubs was an unparalleled opportunity for many bands. Illegal punk bands could only look forward to a couple shows a year at sympathetic Church concerts, whereas ten thousand FDJ-Jugendklubs needed to be filled several nights a week.

However, integration in FDJ-Jugendklubs only produced mixed results. The FDJ met with bands to organize space for concerts and outfit the Jugendklubs with the best technical equipment, part and parcel of the GDR's image of technical proficiency and modernism.¹⁸²⁹ In reality, however, the FDJ was never able to translate their vision fully, increasingly hindered by the deficiencies of the socialist economy. The massive expansion of the Jugendklubs in the 1970s and 1980s was accompanied with a desire to outfit the clubs with the most modern sound and video equipment possible. But in 1985 and again in 1986, FDJ leader Eberhard Aurich was told that the VEB Chemieanlagenbaukombinat in Leipzig was unable to produce the desired video equipment and import from the West was not considered feasible.¹⁸³⁰ Finally in 1987, Aurich was asked to submit orders for stereo equipment but as late as 1989, much of the equipment had still not been delivered: of the 500 sound systems 'S 3930' ordered for the FDJ Pfingsttreffen, 12-14 May 1989, only 154 had been delivered: of those systems delivered, 115 lacked cassette-decks, 112 lacked headphones, 116 lacked microphones, 67 lacked mixers and 14 lacked record players; and to make matters worse, the accompanying speaker-boxes encompassed 7 different varieties of various quality, and only 20 were complete sets.¹⁸³¹

¹⁸²⁸ Hahn and Willmann, *Satan, kannst du mir noch mal verzeihen*, p.26.

¹⁸²⁹ See BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6071, Teil 1 von 2, n.t., n.d., pp.116-117.

¹⁸³⁰ SAPMO-BArch DY 24/14295, Wachalski to Stöhr, 20 June 1985, p.78; and SAPMO-BArch DY 24/14295, Meier to Aurich, 17 June 1986, p.77.

¹⁸³¹ SAPMO-BArch DY 24/14295, Meier to Aurich, 9 July 1987, p.76; and SAPMO-BArch DY 24/14102, Aurich and Meier, n.d.. pp.1-3.

Even the large festivals, events staged for domestic ideological indoctrination and international propaganda purposes, which became populated by ‘die anderen Bands,’ suffered from confusion. At the IX FDJ-Werkstattwoche der Jugendtanzmusik in Suhl in 1988, the annual festival for new GDR music, Sandow and die Skeptiker wowed the crowd (the former played ‘Born in the G.D.R.’ for the first time while the latter won the *Förderpreis* from the jury).¹⁸³² In January 1989, die Vision, die anderen, and Tina Has Never Had A Teddybear played during the ‘Jugend im Palast’ festival in the Palast der Republik, an event attracting 66,700 visitors over ten days.¹⁸³³ As the FDJ Central Council clarified in a memorandum about the ‘Rock am Weißen See’ festival set to run in conjunction with the 12-14 May 1989 Pfingsttreffen, the goal was to use ‘die anderen Bands’ for political purposes: “The events should illustrate that our leading groups with their current program offerings are in co-ordination with our youth organization and contribute to our big political engagement for peace and social progress and can also reflect effectively the everyday lives of their audiences.”¹⁸³⁴ However, problems continually lurked just beneath the surface. At a ‘Jugend im Palast’ concert, security guards had attacked the crowd while Tina Has Never Had A Teddybear performed, and Hans-Dieter Schütt in *Junge Welt*, again arousing the ire of readers, complained that band names such as DekadANCE (‘decadence’) and Roxau (‘Rock-Sau,’ or ‘Rock-Pig’), groups appearing in Suhl, were inauthentic copies from the West that did not properly reflect the socialist political and cultural world.¹⁸³⁵ More damaging,

¹⁸³² Schramm, “Sonderstufe mit Konzertberechtigung,” p.88; and Evers, “Wozu den über diese Leute einen Film?” p.43.

¹⁸³³ SAPMO-BArch DY 24/14281, Aurich to Krenz, 23 January 1989, p.25.

¹⁸³⁴ SAPMO-BArch DY 24/11533, “Ablauf der Veranstaltungen “Rock am Weißen See” am 13. und 14. Mai 1989 anlässlich des ‘Pfingsttreffens der FDJ” (Vor. Nr.: 13/20/89),” 28 March 1989, p.3.

¹⁸³⁵ Schramm, “Sonderstufe mit Konzertberechtigung,” p.89; Hans-Dieter Schütt, “Nomen est omen – so sagten die Lateiner: Eine Randbemerkung zur IX. FDJ-Werkstattwoche Jugendtanzmusik in Suhl,” *Junge Welt*, 19 October 1988, p.5; and “Keine Randbemerkung,” *Junge Welt*, 21 October 1988, p.5.

fans were upset that some of ‘die anderen Bands’ played the Palast der Republik, the ultimate symbol of SED cultural monopoly and power, condemning the bands as traitors.¹⁸³⁶

At the political level, the effort to integrate punk into the GDR was similarly met with uneven results, especially at regional and district levels, whose leaders were not enthusiastic about dealing with punks in their personal satrapies. Two months after the Politbüro decree, the FDJ Central Council discovered that 11 of the 65 districts in the Greater Berlin-area had still not implemented any measures to win youths to the mass organization and a number of others had still not met with Jugendklub representatives.¹⁸³⁷ The feet-dragging indicates a lack of dedication for such measures. At a Central Council meeting, for example, the district leadership for Cottbus-City spoke for many when they suggested that, “it is not effective to put so much energy into 40 youths when you have to work with thousands in the district.”¹⁸³⁸ Many local leaders could not understand why so much work and scarce resources were being mobilized for ‘outsider’ youths. Interaction between authorities and youths was often tense. Authorities from all over the GDR throughout 1988 and 1989 continuously reported about the inability of FDJ members to make headway with ‘outsiders’ since, after years of repression, marginalized youths were generally fearful and unreceptive to any form of conversation with state representatives.¹⁸³⁹

¹⁸³⁶ Schramm, “Sonderstufe mit Konzertberechtigung,” pp.88-89. See also Waltraud Heinze, “Vertrauen in die Phantasie: Im Gespräch mit dem Texter Michael Sellin über Arbeitsprinzipien, Bedingungen und Perspektiven in der Rockmusik,” *Junge Welt*, 15-16 October 1988, p.5.

¹⁸³⁷ SAPMO-BArch DY 24/11440, “Information zur Verwirklichung des Beschlusses des Sekretariats des Zentralrates der FDJ “Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit allen Jugendlichen,”” 29 March 1988, pp.1-9; SAPMO-BArch DY 24/11448/I, “Information über die Verwirklichung des Beschlusses des Sekretariats des Zentralrates der FDJ “Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit allen Jugendlichen,”” 10 May 1988, p.5.

¹⁸³⁸ SAPMO-BArch DY 24/11440, “Information zur Verwirklichung des Beschlusses des Sekretariats des Zentralrates der FDJ “Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit allen Jugendlichen,”” 29 March 1988, p.5.

¹⁸³⁹ See SAPMO-BArch DY 24/14440, “Information zur Verwirklichung des Beschlusses des Sekretariats des Zentralrates der FDJ “Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit allen Jugendlichen,”” 29 March 1988, p.5; SAPMO-BArch DY 24/11448/I, “Information über die Verwirklichung des Beschlusses des Sekretariats des Zentralrates der FDJ “Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-

Some local officials became defensive when it was suggested that their city or region was a hotbed of ‘negative-dekadenten Jugendlichen,’ responses harking back to earlier efforts to ‘hide’ punks.¹⁸⁴⁰ Rivalry within government institutions, moreover, despite the explicit intent of the Politbüro decree, ensured that authorities refused to work amicable together. For example, FDJ efforts in Berlin-Hellersdorf were repeatedly stymied by police authorities’ refusal to give up names of known ‘outsider’ youths within their region so that the youth organization could better concentrate on specific individuals.¹⁸⁴¹

The lengths to which the SED sought to integrate youth groups such as punk indicates how important the policy was to authorities. And despite the difficulties, the regime claimed a number of local successes. In Treptow, for example, FDJ arguments convinced a number of youths to withdraw their applications for Western emigration.¹⁸⁴² In the suburb of Hellersdorf, despite warnings from the City Council for Culture that “people, whose appearances suggest that disturbances can be expected,” the head of the FDJ-Jugendklub ‘Cottbuser Platz’ found no problem allowing punks into his club—“I let in strange groups but with the understanding that they must pay attention to the club regulations and among themselves”—and a group of four punks became integrated seamlessly.¹⁸⁴³ Other locales registered similar achievements.¹⁸⁴⁴ In

ideologischen Arbeit mit allen Jugendlichen,” 10 May 1988, p.2. See also Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.572-573.

¹⁸⁴⁰ SAPMO-BArch DY 24/11440, “Information zur Verwirklichung des Beschlusses des Sekretariats des Zentralrates der FDJ “Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit allen Jugendlichen,”” 29 March 1988, pg.4.

¹⁸⁴¹ SAPMO-BArch DY 24/11448/I, “Information über die Verwirklichung des Beschlusses des Sekretariats des Zentralrates der FDJ “Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit allen Jugendlichen,”” 10 May 1988, p.3.

¹⁸⁴² SAPMO-BArch DY 24/11448/I, “Information über die Verwirklichung des Beschlusses des Sekretariats des Zentralrates der FDJ “Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit allen Jugendlichen,”” 10 May 1988, p.4.

¹⁸⁴³ SAPMO-BArch DY 24/11448/I, “Information über die Verwirklichung des Beschlusses des Sekretariats des Zentralrates der FDJ “Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit allen Jugendlichen,”” 10 May 1988, pp.3-4; SAPMO-BArch DY 24/11500, “Information zur Verwirklichung des Beschlusses des Politbüros des ZK der SED vom 2. 2. 1988 “Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit allen Jugendlichen,”” 22 November 1988, pp.1-10.

October 1988, during a major reassessment of the achievements of the 2 February 1988 measures, the FDJ found that eight groups had been completely “disbanded” (*aufgelöst*) and 38 youths “won back” to socialism.¹⁸⁴⁵

However, it is fair to question whether politically such victories helped the regime in the long-run. Even without challenging SED claims—what does it mean to be ‘integrated’? what does it mean to be ‘won back’ to socialism?—countless difficulties immediately arise. In Dresden-Gorbitz, the FDJ sought to convince a group of 30 youths that gathered daily in front of a restaurant to move indoors to a newly opened FDJ-Jugendklub.¹⁸⁴⁶ But did hiding a group of loitering youths indoors constitute winning them back to socialism? Did allowing punks to scream subversive lyrics ten times more often in FDJ-Jugendklubs than in Churches constitute de-politicization? The FDJ admitted that efforts to influence youths tied to the Churches and the opposition movement—in other words, precisely those youths who were most threatening to the regime—had achieved precious little in their major review of the 2 February decree.¹⁸⁴⁷ As we saw above, punks used the openings provided by the state to attain what they had long sought: to record, to play live, and to gather without fear of arrest. In September 1989, on the eve of collapse, an FDJ memorandum remarked bitterly that contact between authorities and youths were “accepted and agreed by most youths though without involving any change in their

¹⁸⁴⁴ SAPMO-BArch DY 24/11448/I, “Information über die Verwirklichung des Beschlusses des Sekretariats des Zentrates der FDJ “Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit allen Jugendlichen,” 10 May 1988, pp.3-4; SAPMO-BArch DY 24/11500, “Information zur Verwirklichung des Beschlusses des Politbüros des ZK der SED vom 2. 2. 1988 “Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit allen Jugendlichen,”” 22 November 1988, pp.1-10.

¹⁸⁴⁵ SAPMO-BArch DY 24/11500, “Information zur Verwirklichung des Beschlusses des Politbüros des ZK der SED vom 2. 2. 1988 “Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit allen Jugendlichen,”” 22 November 1988, p.3.

¹⁸⁴⁶ SAPMO-BArch DY 24/11500, “Information zur Verwirklichung des Beschlusses des Politbüros des ZK der SED vom 2. 2. 1988 “Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit allen Jugendlichen,”” 22 November 1988, p.5.

¹⁸⁴⁷ SAPMO-BArch DY 24/11500, “Information zur Verwirklichung des Beschlusses des Politbüros des ZK der SED vom 2. 2. 1988 “Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit allen Jugendlichen,”” 22 November 1988, pp.3-4.

attitudes.”¹⁸⁴⁸ Regime efforts were continually met with suspicion by youths, a legacy of viewing youths as ‘internal enemies.’ “What, are you talking to me? Anyway, I am expelled everywhere” responded one youth to FDJ overtures, while others wondered with reason, “what’s all this talking with us about. With our appearances, we don’t get into any Jugendklubs, anyway. Teachers are through with us.”¹⁸⁴⁹

Fatally, regime efforts to implement the Politbüro decree were continually sabotaged by reports in the Western media about continued youth repression by state security forces, an example of which can best be seen in the case of Dresden. The Thüringen capital had long been a difficult city for punks. Far-removed from most Western airwaves and with no church contact until very late in the 1980s and thus no place to play, the Dresden punk scene was more isolated than others.¹⁸⁵⁰ In October 1988, *Der Spiegel* ran a quarter-page article about Dresden police assaulting punks, fining others for their appearances, and banning them from the inner-city after picking up the story from the opposition samizdat *Umweltblätter*.¹⁸⁵¹ The MfS immediately opened an investigation attempting to verify the report, and even Honecker was kept apprised of the case.¹⁸⁵² As we have seen, the SED and security forces went to great lengths to ensure that ‘special incidents’ did not take place in front of Western eyes at punk concerts in the Churches.

¹⁸⁴⁸ SAPMO-BArch DY 24/11696, “Bericht über die Verwirklichung des Beschlusses des Politbüros des ZK der SED vom 02.02.1988 “Maßnahmender FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit allen Jugendlichen,” 6 September 1989, p.1.

¹⁸⁴⁹ SAPMO-BArch DY 24/14448/I, “Information über die Verwirklichung des Beschlusses des Sekretariats des Zentrarates der FDJ “Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit allen Jugendlichen,” 10 May 1988, p.3; SAPMO-BArch DY 24/11500, “Information zur Verwirklichung des Beschlusses des Politbüros des ZK der SED vom 2. 2. 1988 “Maßnahmen der FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit allen Jugendlichen,”” 22 November 1988, p.6.

¹⁸⁵⁰ Stadtmuseum Dresden, ed., *Renitenz in Elbflorenz. Punk in Dresden 1980-89* (Dresden: Stadtmuseum Dresden, 2007), pg.20; “No Reissbrett: Punk in der DDR,” *Ox-Fanzine*, Nr.72 (Haan, June/July 2007), pp.114-123; and Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, pp.271-272.

¹⁸⁵¹ MDA, PS 107/26, *Umweltblätter*, “DresdnerPolizei Will-Kür statt Pflicht,” Nr.26 (October 1988), pp.12-13; MDA, PS 107/27, *Umweltblätter*, “Protesterklärung der Kirche von Unten (DDR-weite Vollversammlung) zu den Repressionen gegen Punks in Dresden,” Nr.27 (December 1988), pp.13-14.

¹⁸⁵² BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, AKG Pi A 72/88, “Operative Einschätzung des ‘Spiegel’-Artikels vom 3. 10. 1988 ‘Vopos gegen Punks’,” 13 October 1988, pp.7-10.

But in Dresden, punks gathering along the Prägerstraße (the main drag leading to the historic city-center from the central train station) had long been a problem for municipal authorities concerned with keeping all ‘negativ-dekadent Jugendlicher’ out of the Western *and* Eastern public eye.¹⁸⁵³ A number of Western newspapers picked up the story and church officials began pressuring SED officials on behalf of victimized punks, further damaging regime efforts to reconcile the subculture and state.¹⁸⁵⁴ While the SED leadership sought to mend ties with youths, local authorities were continuing the tradition of ‘Härte gegen Punk.’ The MfS hoped long-time IM ‘Raffelt’ could staunch the information heading westwards but to no avail.¹⁸⁵⁵ In Bielefeld, punks threw a solidarity concert on 18 February 1988 at the Workers’ and Youths’ Center with all the proceeds from the performance going to help Dresden punks pay their fines, further broadcasting the event.¹⁸⁵⁶ The MfS concluded that, unfortunately, *Der Spiegel*’s allegations were true.¹⁸⁵⁷ Thus, even as the regime was making slow gains in linking youths organizationally to the state, setbacks such as those in Dresden continued to hinder any comprehensive reconciliation between the state and the formerly ‘negativ-feindlichen Jugendlichen.’

Most significantly, even with the tremendous opportunities for punk in the final years of the regime, in nearly all of the cases described—print, recordings, concerts or film—the sense of too little, too late, overwhelms. Despite the media blitz, for every article promoting ‘die anderen Bands’ in the popular GDR press, long-standing beliefs about punk remained ever-present,

¹⁸⁵³ See BStU, MfS, BV Dresden AOPK 3374/91, OV ‘Eiscafe.’

¹⁸⁵⁴ “Vopos gegen Punks,” *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 40 (3 October 1989), p.16. See also “Sächsische Synode besorgt über Vorgehen gegen Jugendliche,” *Der Tagesspiegel*, 26 October 1988, p.2. See BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, AKG Pi 261/88, “Information überdurchgeführte Überprüfungen zu Publikationen in der BRD und in Westberlin über angebliche Übergriffe der DVP in Dresden gegen Jugendliche und diesbezügliche Versuche der Einmischung in staatliche Maßnahmen durch Vertreter der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Landeskirche Sachsens,” 23 November 1988, pp.3-9.

¹⁸⁵⁵ BStU, MfS, BV Dresden AIM 254/89, Bd. II/XII, “Aktenvermerk zum Treffbericht vom 27. 12. 1988 mit IMB ‘Raffelt,’” 28 December 1988, pp.271-272.

¹⁸⁵⁶ See MDA, OWK 08, “SOLI-VERANSTALTUNG für die verurteilten Punks in Dresden”, n.d., n.p.

¹⁸⁵⁷ BStU, MfS, BV Dresden AKG Pi A 72/88, “Operative Einschätzung des ‘Spiegels’-Artikels vom 3. 10. 1988 ‘Vopos gegen Punks,’” 13 October 1988, pp.7-10.

diluting any successes of the revised state policy. So while East German music experts Peter Wicke and Wieland Ziegenrucker, in their comprehensive lexicon *Rock, Pop, Jazz, Folk: Handbuch der populären Musik* distanced punk from earlier claims that the genre could only be found in capitalist societies, Thomas Heubner, in his popular synthesis *Die Rebellion der Betrogenen* ('The Rebellion of the Deceived'), argued that Western music youth culture represented a protest against capitalism, a formulation once again relegating punk to class contradictions in capitalism and not the deficiencies of socialism in the GDR.¹⁸⁵⁸ Already on its third edition by 1988, Heubner's work was so influential that the MfS recommended its officers read it to acquaint themselves better with 'the enemy.'¹⁸⁵⁹ As we saw, recording and production was plagued with misunderstanding on both sides and while Parocktikum was successful, it nonetheless remained a solitary exception on the GDR airwaves. Even *flüstern & SCHREIEN*, despite heavy state investment and expectations, sent mixed messages. Only a week after premiering, posters decorating the Berlin film theater 'Colosseum' with quotes from the film ("We are always so well-behaved," "We cannot be satisfied with all that's happening here") and advertisements promoting the upcoming mixed media 'Rock-Film-Fete' on 27 October 1988 featuring the film and musical performances from some of the bands were seized by authorities due to "anti-state content."¹⁸⁶⁰ Years spent cultivating a *feindbild* (an 'enemy image') towards 'negativ-dekadenter Jugendlichen' and stereotyping 'outsider' youth groups as 'internal enemies' susceptible to Western diversion and propaganda made it difficult for regime institutions and citizens to suddenly accept punk with open arms. While liberalization did not mean the end of

¹⁸⁵⁸ See Peter Wicke and Wieland Ziegenrucker, eds. *Rock, Pop, Jazz, Folk: Handbuch der populären Musik* (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1985), pp.378-381; and Thomas Heubner, *Die Rebellion der Betrogenen: Rocker, Popper, Punks und Hippies – Modewellen und Protest in der westlichen Welt?* 3rd ed. (Berlin: Verlag Neues Leben, 1988).

¹⁸⁵⁹ See BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam AKG 155, VVS o007 – 123/86, pp.103-108.

¹⁸⁶⁰ See Evers, "Wozu den über diese Leute einen Film?" p.94.

repression for punks, it did mean opening numerous restricted spaces into which youths could now move. Freed from the forced seclusion of the Evangelical churches, punk re-emerged from hiding into public and began appealing to a mass audience craving an alternative to state popular culture.

But state integration meant compromise which has had a lasting legacy for Ostpunk. Ideologically constructed on regime hatred, state integration meant that the subculture faced charges of hypocrisy. As ‘die anderen Bands’ began playing to thousands, the earlier tight punk scene became diluted as the subculture transitioned to mass culture. Nor did these developments go unnoticed. Writing about the ‘1. Weißenseer Beat Inn’ concert on 31 July 1988 in East Berlin featuring Kaltfront, Big Savod, die Vision, die Skeptiker, Die 3 von der Tankstelle and die anderen, Jürgen Winkler saw that out of a crowd of three thousand, only about 50 punks were dancing at the front. Speculating that the majority of the audience was in attendance solely because the Eastern press was talking about a ‘new trend,’ Winkler wondered why, “so many people are paying 10 Marks for a ticket to hang out for six hours with strange people?”¹⁸⁶¹ As we saw in the West, commercialism and massification seemed to preclude authenticity for many punks and popularization meant Ostpunk began losing its earlier alternative quality. As the charm of something secret vanished, many youth never forgave ‘die anderen Bands’ for ‘ruining’ punk, a subject we will return to in the Epilogue.

Conclusions

For the regime, mobilizing popular music and punk to help prop up a faltering state did not in the end stave off collapse. Indeed, more than anything, punk integration highlights precisely those

¹⁸⁶¹ Jürgen Winkler, “Ernüchterung,” *Unterhaltungskunst*, Nr.10, October 1988, p.8.

cracks that had begun opening in state socialism, seams that would eventually reduce the Berlin Wall to rubble. As the 1980s came to a close, punk integration reveals just how disjointed and uneven state authority was becoming. Despite centrally mandated policy, different bodies competed with one another to solve problems, and solutions in one locale often hindered—or contradicted—actions undertaken elsewhere. After years of repression, the punk policy reversal threw many local officials into confusion and this is seen time and time again whether it was sound engineers unable to produce punk music, police unable to stop arresting punks or FDJ-leaders refusing to treat with non-conformist youths. Authorities at the regional and district levels and within different ministerial institutions jockeyed for power, eager to either shift blame for failures or alternatively take credit for local successes. And punks eagerly exploited this confusion to gain privileges that had been long denied to them. Despite forty years of centrally directed control and organization, by 1989, the inability to integrate punk into state structures indicates how much the SED was losing hold of power.

As a *Ventil* ('vent') for youth frustration and an avenue for expressing dissatisfaction, it is difficult not to conclude that endorsing punk did not help the regime decrease the level of youth dissatisfaction and, by contrast, perhaps even exacerbated it. While integration most likely did in fact de-politicize the subculture to some extent as the successes above suggest, endorsing punk created even further (both material and psychological) demands that the SED was unable to fulfill. As an FDJ report concluded pointedly precisely as the state began falling apart in early September 1989, organizational prowess never translated into love for the regime.¹⁸⁶² Moreover, violence among alternative youth subcultures—perhaps the major impetus behind the Politbüro decree—appears to have in fact *increased* because these groups could now appear in public more

¹⁸⁶² SAPMO-BArch DY 24/11696, "Bericht über die Verwirklichung des Beschlusses des Politbüros des ZK der SED vom 02.02.1988 "Maßnahmender FDJ zur Verbesserung der politisch-ideologischen Arbeit mit allen Jugendlichen", 6 September 1989, p.1.

frequently. As regime power waned, locally-organized youth-groups—Western-supported Neo-Nazis and leftwing ‘Antifa’ groups for example—increased and unable or unwilling to trust the state to deal with the ‘problems’ of daily life (be it racists or foreigners), youths began to ‘solve’ issues themselves. The spectacular violence between punks and Skinheads or by Skinheads against foreigners in the early 1990s clearly indicates that the original goal of state integration was a total failure.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to punk integration was the SED itself. As we saw, Walter Friedrichs and his colleagues at the Leipzig Central Institute for Youth Research were producing study after study throughout the 1980s indicating the declining loyalty youths of the GDR felt towards the ruling SED Party. The lack of trust felt by youths towards the SED meant that endeavors geared towards integration were often met with incredulity and cynicism. Tainted by association with the hated regime, ‘die anderen Bands’ were viewed by some as opportunists and tarred with the brush of inauthenticity. Lutz Schramm recalls being punched in the face by a fan at a Kirche von Unten concert who claimed that Schramm had “ruined everything.”¹⁸⁶³ This belief is confirmed by numerous statements made by ‘die anderen Bands’ and other GDR punks since the *Wende*. While we will explore the fractured Eastern punk memory culture more fully in the Epilogue, the fact remains that since the fall of the GDR, in the numerous exhibitions, books and LP re-issues, ‘die anderen Bands’ are almost nowhere to be found. Intent on portraying a resistant, alternative youth subculture, collaboration remains an unwelcome bedfellow in ‘official’ Ostpunk memory culture.

Fundamentally, Honecker, Krenz, and the SED overestimated the benefits state integration of punk would yield. By following the lead of the Western press and turning punk

¹⁸⁶³ Galenza and Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, p.569; and Lutz Schramm, “Sonderstufe mit Konzertberechtigung,” p.87.

into something much bigger than it ever truly was, it was logical that the SED placed high hopes on the success of punk integration—hopes ‘die anderen Bands’ were never truly able to fulfill. While in the end support for ‘die anderen Bands’ and punk integration did not save the regime, it did help save Eastern punk. By promoting an alternative East Germany across a wide range of media in the final years of the regime, authorities helped Eastern punk shed its pariah status and build a material archive of Eastern memory. By helping to normalize ‘asociality’ and GDR youth culture, SED authorities enabled former Easterners to tap a well of identity in the post-*Wende* years that assisted Easterners to overcome some of the rigors of reunification. In the 1990s, as Western critics focused on the injustices of the East German dictatorial past and the capitalist music industry quickly colonized the former territories and snuffed out an indigenous scene there, ‘die anderen Bands’ gave former Easterners access to an alternative East German identity, a subject to which we now turn.

Epilogue: “Geschichte wird gemacht”: Germany and the Contested Memory of Punk

“Ich such’ die DDR”: The collapse of East Germany and Ostpunk Memory

In the UN stands an empty chair
 where a man from Suhl once sat
 In Kenya there is now one less embassy
 this time I met a man from Jena

I’m looking for the GDR and no one knows where she is
 It is such a shame that she has forgotten me so quickly
 I’m looking for the GDR and hope she comes back to me
 (I forgive her)

In the atlas a state is missing
 a state of a quite special type
 Yes, between the FRG and Poland
 a country has been stolen

I’m looking for the GDR and no one knows where she is
 It is such a shame that she has forgotten me so quickly
 I’m looking for the GDR and hope she comes back to me
 (I forgive her)

“Ich such’ die DDR,” Feeling B, *Wir kriegen euch alle*
 (Pirat Music Productions 0002, 1991)

The fall of the Berlin Wall in late 1989 provoked a mixed reaction among East German punks.

Some had been committed participants in the mass protests that had begun in September

1989.¹⁸⁶⁴ Others were less interested in the historic events as the case of IM ‘Dominique’

suggests. Some had taken advantage of the breached Hungarian border to make their ways to

¹⁸⁶⁴ On the events surrounding the fall of the Berlin Wall, see Ilko-Sascha Kowalczyk, *Endspiel: Die Revolution von 1989 in der DDR* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2009); Steven Pfaff, *Exit-Voice Dynamics and the Collapse of East Germany: The Crisis of Leninism and the Revolution of 1989* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006); Gareth Dale, *The East German Revolution of 1989* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2006); Jonathan Grix, *The Role of the Masses in the Collapse of the GDR* (New York: St. Martin’ Press, 2000); Charles S. Maier, *Dissolution: The Crisis of Communism and the End of East Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); and Konrad H. Jarausch, *The Rush to German Unity* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

West Germany in the summer but most did not.¹⁸⁶⁵ Once the Berlin Wall had fallen, many Eastern youths adopted a wait-and-see attitude. Punk ideology was anti-capitalist as we have seen and thus musical identity perhaps blinded Ostpunks to the benefits of moving West. Quite a few considered the FRG to be similar to the GDR; different discrimination, but discrimination nonetheless. Many though crossed the previously shut border in late 1989 and early 1990, especially to receive the Begrüßungsgeld (welcome money) offered by Western authorities to newly arrived Germans that they promptly spent on records and sound-systems they had been unable to acquire in the GDR.¹⁸⁶⁶ However, these tourists almost never settled in the FRG and many punks who had travelled to West Germany in 1989 and after returned to the former Eastern states.¹⁸⁶⁷ A number felt they did not belong in the old Western portion in the now reunited Germany and believed their interests were better understood among former Easterners.¹⁸⁶⁸

Much more interesting to punks on both sides of the former Berlin Wall were the musical opportunities that unexpectedly arose with the collapse of the Eastern state. Anglo-American and West German outfits suddenly had 17 million more (potential) fans that had waited patiently to see them play for years, and Western bands poured across the (former) border; symbolic was Roger Waters' epic staging of *The Wall* on the former 'no-man's land' where the Berlin Wall had once stood between Potsdamer Platz and the Brandenburg Gate in front of close to half a million people on 21 July 1990.¹⁸⁶⁹ Eastern punk bands likewise took advantage of the dense West German touring circuit, appearing in independent youth centers, squats, and clubs in front

¹⁸⁶⁵ Anne Hahn and Frank Willmann, *Satan, kannst du mir noch mal verzeihen: Otze Ehrlich, Schleimkeim und der ganze Rest* (Mainz: Ventil Verlag, 2008), pp.100, 111-112.

¹⁸⁶⁶ See "No Reissbrett: Punk in der DDR," *Ox-Fanzine*, Nr.72 (Haan, June/July 2007), pp.121-122.

¹⁸⁶⁷ See Thomas Winkler, "Interview with Flake," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, Nr.261, 9 November 2007.

¹⁸⁶⁸ See Christian 'Flake' Lorenz, "Mir fehlt die DDR," *einestages*, 13 June 2008, n.p.

¹⁸⁶⁹ See *The Wall: Live in Berlin* (DVD, directors Ken O'Neill and Roger Waters, 1990).

of audiences that had never seen or heard Ostpunk before.¹⁸⁷⁰ A number of independent West German record labels such as HöhNIE Records (Andreas Höhn had appeared with the Pissed Spitzels at the Erlöserkirche Frühlingsfest in 1988) and Nasty Vinyl started recording Eastern punk bands such as Schleim-Keim and Müllstation.¹⁸⁷¹ An explosion of fanzines and music magazines such as *Persona Non Grata* from Leipzig and *NMI&Messitsch* in Berlin erupted in the former Eastern states long denied such freedom of expression. The confusion surrounding state and municipal authority in the immediate post-Wall period and subsequent reunification meant that squats and alternative concert spaces were set up in mass, as happened in Friedrichshain and Prenzlauer Berg in (East) Berlin or the Connewitz neighborhood in Leipzig; indeed, the Kunsthaus Tacheles on Oranienburger Straße in Mitte, Berlin (a few streets over from the Ramones Museum), is one of the few remaining alternative art centers left over from this liminal time period.¹⁸⁷²

But the East-West punk exchange was, like other East-West exchanges during this period, uneven to say the least. Backed by Western money, Western equipment, Western marketing, and Western record production, former West German outfits were able to completely dominate the former Eastern punk scene. Moreover, the collapse of the state and its services was disorienting for those Eastern bands that had relied on it. Amiga, for example, was bought by BMG along with the entire back catalogue in 1991 (now a part of Sony).¹⁸⁷³ Many Ostpunk bands broke up during the post-Wende period. Perhaps most crucial was the inability of Eastern

¹⁸⁷⁰ This situation did not sit well with former Eastern activists who were upset that these formerly helpful clubs were now looking to make a profit. See the extensive interview with Imad Abdul Majid on the Leipzig scene in *Zap*, Nr.29 (Homburg: October 1990), pp.3-8.

¹⁸⁷¹ Hahn and Willmann, *Satan, kannst du mir noch mal verzeihen*, pp.80-90.

¹⁸⁷² See Ulrich Gutmair, *Die ersten Tage von Berlin: Der Sound der Wende* (Stuttgart: Tropen Bei Klett-Cotta, 2013); and Connie Remath and Ray Schneider, *Haare auf Krawall: Jugendsubkultur in Leipzig, 1980 bis 1991* (Leipzig: Connewitzer Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1999).

¹⁸⁷³ On Amiga, see Birgit Rauhut and Michael Rauhut, *AMIGA. Die Diskographie aller Rock- und Pop-Produktionen, 1964-1990* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 1999).

bands and Western audiences to communicate with one another. The lyrical themes that Ostpunk bands had emphasized in their songs were difficult for Western audiences to relate to. In the West, for example, criticism of the SED, obviously, did not have the same resonance. And since Ostpunk bands had overwhelmingly understood themselves in opposition to the state and constructed their identity with this relationship in mind, the sudden disappearance of the state was confusing. As Christian ‘Flake’ Lorenz, keyboardist for Feeling B, has told *der Spiegel* recently, “In the years after the Wende, everything has been destroyed. With the system change, we somehow no longer had an enemy, no orientation.”¹⁸⁷⁴ This disorientation affected many former Eastern punks who could not reconcile their past identities with their present circumstances. Probably the most tragic case is that of ‘Otze’ Ehrlich from Schleim-Keim. After moving West but ultimately returning to his family farm in Stotternheim, drugs and alcohol took their toll. On 23 April 2005, ‘Otze’ suffered a fatal heart attack and died in a psychiatric clinic where he spent the previous seven years of his life after being convicted of murdering his father with an ax.¹⁸⁷⁵

Compounding these issues were the damaging revelations that began emerging in the archives of the former East German state, especially from the captured Stasi files.¹⁸⁷⁶ As a number of influential politicians, church officials and dissidents turned out to be Stasi informers, so too did their numbers include punks. As mentioned, the MfS had completely penetrated the East German punk scene and bands often contained one or two members spying on the others.

¹⁸⁷⁴ Lorenz, “Mir fehlt die DDR,” n.p.

¹⁸⁷⁵ See Hahn and Willmann, *Satan, kannst du mir noch mal verzeihen*, pp.42-43.

¹⁸⁷⁶ On the history of the Stasi files in post-unification Germany, see Alison Lewis, *Die Kunst des Verrats: Der Prenzlauer Berg und die Staatssicherheit* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2003); Matthias Wagner, *Das Stasi-Syndrom: Über den Umgang mit den Akten des MfS in den 90er Jahren* (Berlin: Edition Ost im Verlag Das Neue Berlin, 2001); Barbara Miller, *Narratives of Guilt and Compliance in Unified Germany: Stasi Informers and their Impact on Society* (London: Routledge, 1999); and Klaus Michael and Peter Böthig, eds., *MachtSpiele: Literatur und Staatssicherheit im Fokus Prenzlauer Berg* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1993). See also Andrew H. Beattie, *Playing Politics with History: The Bundestag Inquiries into East Germany* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008).

Nor were they marginal figures but individuals critical to the scene. Sascha Anderson who had helped record the *DDR von unten/eNDe* album and smuggle it West through his diplomatic connections was unmasked as a long-time informer.¹⁸⁷⁷ Singer Tatjana Besson from die Firma (a euphemism for the Stasi), the band playing with Element of Crime at the Zionskirche the night the Skinheads attacked, was reporting on the band's activities to the MfS.¹⁸⁷⁸ Harty Sachse, one of the first punks in the GDR was likewise an informer.¹⁸⁷⁹ IM 'Dominique' turned out to be Imad Abdul Majid in Leipzig, a musician in L'Attentat and other bands, and one of the most connected punks in the GDR.¹⁸⁸⁰ Even 'Otze,' on occasion, worked with the Stasi to gain money or blank cassettes in exchange for informing, as did countless others as the long list of Eastern bands with informers suggests.¹⁸⁸¹

The extensive collaboration with the MfS was a tremendous blow to the legitimacy and integrity of the East German punk scene.¹⁸⁸² Those tarnished by the brush of the Stasi were either defended by friends or ostracized by enemies but the sum total was a feeling that the subculture had been betrayed from within. As a resistant subculture that prided itself on its honesty and opposition to the state, the fraud perpetrated by those within the scene was immense and the damage seemingly irreparable. The rancor consuming the punk scene was reflective of wider uncertainty over German reunification, as former Easterners and Westerners have struggled with

¹⁸⁷⁷ See Konstantin Hanke, "Ostpunk auf Schallplatte," *Ox-Fanzine*, Nr.73 (Haan: August/September, 2007), p.120; and Sascha Anderson, "Zwitschermaschine," in *Spannung. Leistung. Widerstand: Magnetband-Kultur in der DDR, 1979-1990*, eds., Alexander Pehlemann and Ronald Galenza (Berlin: Verbrecher Verlag, 1999), pp.42-51.

¹⁸⁷⁸ Tatjana Besson was IM 'Kim' and her files can be found at BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, AIM 4310/89.

¹⁸⁷⁹ Harty Sachse was IM 'Steffen Herbst' and his files can be found at BStU, MfS, BV Halle, KD Eisleben VIII 2654/86.

¹⁸⁸⁰ Imad Abdul Majid was IM 'Dominique' and his files can be found at BStU, MfS, BV Leipzig, AIM 2017/88. The unmasking of Imad was especially contentious. See *Zap*, Nr.96 (Homburg: August 1994), pp.7-8; Interview with Bernd Stracke, *Kalpa Vriksche*, Nr.1 (n.p.: n.d.), n.p.; and *Zap*, Nr.29 (Homburg: October 1990), pp.4-7.

¹⁸⁸¹ Dieter 'Otze' Ehrlich was IM 'Richard.' See Hahn and Willmann, *Satan, kannst du mir noch mal verzeihen*, pp.134-138.

¹⁸⁸² Former Easterners are now much more understanding and forgiving of collaboration with the Stasi than they were in the 1990s. See Konstantin Hanke, "Ostpunk auf Schallplatte," pp.120-121; and "No Reissbrett: Punk in der DDR," pp.122-123.

reunification: in Peter Schneider's celebrated insight, the wall in the head will take longer to tear down than the physical barrier.¹⁸⁸³ The colonization of the Eastern scene compounded matters. Whereas Western bands had little difficulty in playing in the former East or selling their products to newly enfranchised consumers, the vice-versa was simply not the case.¹⁸⁸⁴ The feeling of quaintness and spectacle that accompanied Ostpunk bands in the West was unnerving, and they retreated to the former Eastern lands or broke up. But as the Berlin Republic reasserted control temporarily ceded during the immediate post-Wende era, specific Ostpunk sites such as the influential club der Eimer (Garbage Can) on Rosenthaler Straße in Berlin disappeared.¹⁸⁸⁵ The feeling of loss was expressed perhaps best with as a series of compilation albums featuring classics of the East German punk scene that were released by HöHNIE Records beginning in 1992. Not only the title of these records—*Sicher Gibt Es Bessere Zeiten, Doch Diese War Die Unsere* (Surely There Were Better Times, But These Were Ours)—reflects a bygone era but the fact that West German labels were needed to record Eastern punk classics (even if Höhnie was probably considered an honorary Easterner) is representative. As Feeling B's song "Ich such' die DDR" (I'm looking for the GDR) put it so well, the demise of the nation that youths and punk had called home was sudden and disorienting.

Into this context of betrayal and disappointment has emerged slowly but with ever more certainty, an energetic East German punk memory culture. As the fireworks over the Stasi

¹⁸⁸³ See Peter Schneider, *The Wall Jumper*, trans. by Leigh Hafrey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p.119. On the politics of reunification and identity, see Heinrich Senfft, *Die sogenannte Wiedervereinigung* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1999); Jennifer A. Yoder, *From East Germans to Germans? The New Postcommunist Elites* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999); Patricia Jo Smith, ed., *After the Wall: Eastern Germany since 1989* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998); and Andreas Staab, *National Identity in Eastern Germany: Inner Unification or Continued Separation?* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998).

¹⁸⁸⁴ See Imad condemning the commodification of the Eastern scene in *Zap*, Nr.29 (Homburg: October 1990), pp.3-8.

¹⁸⁸⁵ Patricia Anne Simpson, "Soundtracks: GDR Music from 'Revolution' to 'Reunification'," in *The Power of Intellectuals in Contemporary Germany*, ed., Michael Geyer (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp.227-248.

revelations from the early-to-mid-1990s died down and with many of the Ostpunk bands broken up, by the end of the decade and into the new millennium, a number of books and exhibitions have appeared seeking to rescue Ostpunk from the dustbin of history. In 1999, former GDR music journalist and DT 64 radio moderator Ronald Galenza—who had written on ‘die anderen Bands’ for East German music periodicals in the final years of the regime—and musician Heinz Havemeister edited *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, a collection on the independent alternative scene in the GDR during the 1980s.¹⁸⁸⁶ Featuring chapters written by participants (Jörg Löffler, Michael Horschig, Shanghai Drenger, Bert Papenfuß), interviews, and scholars detailing the many city scenes, the book generated significant press, and an expanded version was released several years later.¹⁸⁸⁷ *Wir wollen immer artig sein...* was the first of many books that have been published in recent years on East German punk such as biographies of individual punks such as ‘Otze’ or bands such as Feeling B, and more personal experiences in the Ostpunk scene such as those by Angela ‘China’ Kowalczyk.¹⁸⁸⁸

In the new millennium, these efforts were redoubled. In 2005, the ambitious exhibition *ostPUNK!/Too Much Future* was held in Berlin in an old factory in Prenzlauer Berg, and later iterations appeared in the city museums of Dresden (2007) and Halle (2008). Like *Wir wollen immer artig sein...*, the exhibition was visited by extraordinary numbers. At the Berlin exhibit, 2,500 people were at the opening and more than 5,000 visited over the two weeks. Organized by former Planlos singer Michael Boehlke and gallery owner and writer Henryk Gericke, the goal of the exhibition was to show the German public a glimpse of subcultural life in the GDR. The

¹⁸⁸⁶ Ronald Galenza and Heinz Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein...: Punk, New Wave, HipHop und Independent-Szene in der DDR 1980-1990* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2005).

¹⁸⁸⁷ See Edo Reents, “Die Nase blutig, der Rücken staubig,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 5/6 February 2000; and Torten Wahl, “Der Sound einer Szene,” *Berliner Zeitung*, Nr.216, 16 September 1999;

¹⁸⁸⁸ See, for example, Hahn and Willmann, *Satan, kannst du mir noch mal verzeihen*; Ronald Galenza and Heinz Havemeister, *Mix mir einen Drink. Feeling B: Das Ende einer Legende* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2002); and Angela Kowalczyk, *Punk in Pankow. Stasi-“Sieg”: 16jährige Pazifistin verhaftet!* (Berlin: Anita Tykve Verlag, 1996).

catalogue for the exhibition was sold out on the opening night prompting a revised, extended, and translated into an English version in 2007 and a French version in 2008.¹⁸⁸⁹ The next year, a cinematic version *ostPUNK!/too much future* was released to critical acclaim mixing interviews and scratchy music with photographs and rare clips from Super 8 films recorded in the 1980s.¹⁸⁹⁰ The resonance these books and exhibitions have generated has been extensive and has even convinced a number of bands from the 1980s to reform and release records such as Müllstation and Sandow.¹⁸⁹¹ Nor do these efforts appear to be slowing down: in November 2012, the Staatsgalerie Prenzlauer Berg hosted an exhibition on Eastern punk photography featuring amateurs and professionals called “East End: Punks in the GDR.”¹⁸⁹²

How to explain these confounding numbers and the widespread appeal of Eastern punk? As we have seen, the Eastern punk scene never amounted to significant numbers and yet the demand for Ostpunk is high in reunited Germany. In line with other cultural phenomenon such as films, memoirs, cooking books or fashion shows that is grouped under the rubric of “Ostalgie”—a neologism combining the words ‘Ost’ (East) and ‘nostalgia’—Ostpunk is part of a large wave of sensibilities and material culture that looks back on the former GDR with wistful longing and celebrates a way of life that is now long gone.¹⁸⁹³ The appeal of East German punk in this

¹⁸⁸⁹ Michael Boehlke and Henryk Gericke, eds., *too much future – Punk in der DDR* (Berlin: Verbrecher Verlag, 2007).

¹⁸⁹⁰ See *ostPUNK! too much future* (DVD, directors Carsten Fiebeler and Michael Boehlke, 2006).

¹⁸⁹¹ See Andreas Hartmann, “Dekadente Westerscheinung,” *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 23 September 2006; Jörn Luther, “Virulent, kraß, geladen,” *Scheinschalig. Berliner Stadtzeitung*, Nr.7, 1-29 September 2005, p.9; “Meine grundeigene Renitenz,” *Neues Deutschland*, 24/25 September 2005; Markus Ströhlein, “Genosse Punk,” *Jungle World*, Nr.38, 21 September 2005, p.22; Ingo Arend, “Aufstand gegen das Reißbrett,” *Freitag*, Nr.36, 9 September 2005, p.16; Claus Löser, “Subversion im Hier und Jetzt,” *tageszeitung*, 31 August 2005, p.25; and “Wir standen mit einem Bein im Knast,” *Der Tagesspiegel*, 26 August 2005, p.23.

¹⁸⁹² See Boris Pofalla, “Ratte heißt wieder Maik,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*, 11 November 2012.

¹⁸⁹³ The literature on Ostalgie is now quite large but see Dominic Boyer, “Ostalgie and the Politics of the Future in Eastern Germany,” in *Public Culture*, Vol.18, Nr.2 (2006), pp.361-381; Paul Cooke, *Representing East Germany since Unification: From Colonization to Nostalgia* (Oxford, UK: Berg, 2005); Paul Betts, “The Twilight of the Idols: East German Memory and Material Culture,” in *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol.72 (September 2000), pp.731-765; Martin Blum, “Remaking the East German Past: Ostalgie, Identity, and Material Culture,” in *The*

instance is that it represents a different East Germany, a resistant East Germany—a movement that remained uncorrupted and was certainly not “a footnote in world history.”¹⁸⁹⁴ Crucial here is the almost complete exclusion of ‘die anderen Bands’ from this memory culture.

Overwhelmingly focused on the pre-1983 Ostpunk generation, the exhibitions and books, by hermetically sealing the timeline of punk to the pre-‘Härte gegen Punk’ period, are able to retain an authentically pure subculture. In proclaiming the death of punk in 1983, this memory culture is able to avoid uncomfortable questions about Stasi connections or state salaries.

Fundamentally, by excluding those who compromised with the regime, Ostpunk memory culture is able to position the genre as an oppositional subculture which ‘die anderen Bands’ threaten.

The politics of authenticity are essential in this respect. After ‘Härte gegen Punk,’ ‘real punk’ died or ‘die anderen Bands’ were not ‘genuine’ East German punk since they received support from the state. It remains to be seen how long Ostpunk memory will be able to exclude ‘die anderen Bands’ from its story. But at a time when much of the GDR—its achievements, successes, experiences—is derided as rubbish in reunified Germany and the very traces of the former state are disappearing rapidly, the memory of Ostpunk as an uncorrupted subculture and alternative East Germany acts as an essential ballast for those with unsteady steps.¹⁸⁹⁵ The memory of East German punk thus tells us much about the politics of memory in the Berlin

Journal of Popular Culture, Vol.34, Nr.3 (Winter 2000), pp.229-253; and Daphne Berdahl, “‘(N)Ostalgie’ for the Present: Memory, Longing, and East German Things,” in *Ethnos*, Vol.64, Nr.2 (1999), pp.192-211.

¹⁸⁹⁴ Hans-Ulrich Wehler sparked controversy when he quoted East German dissident writer Stefan Heym from March 1990 who said that the “GDR will be nothing more than a footnote in world history” in his magisterial five volume history of Germany. See Donna Harsch, “Footnote or Footprint? The German Democratic Republic in History,” in *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute*, Vol.46 (Spring 2010), pp.9-25; and Thomas Lindenberger, “What’s in this footnote? World History!” in *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute*, Vol.46 (Spring 2010), pp.27-31.

¹⁸⁹⁵ Witness the decision to tear down the Palast der Republik and restore the former Schlossplatz in its place. See John V. Maciuika, “Whose Schlossplatz? Architecture and the ‘Materialization’ of German Identities in Berlin’s historic center, 1945-2009,” in *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute*, Supplement 7 ‘East German Material Culture and the Power of Memory’ (2011), pp.15-28.

Republic and about how former Easterners are trying to integrate elements of their past into an unforgiving present.

“Weil ich da war”: Punk and Memory in the former Federal Republic of Germany

Punk in Germany was actually only one year, summer of 1977 to the summer of 1978, in one city, on one street, and in one bar.

Peter Hein¹⁸⁹⁶

Peter Hein, the original West German punk rocker, confined punk to a “handful” of kids in high school, apprenticeships and taking the *Abitur* for a few short months in the Ratinger Hof in Düsseldorf. When asked elsewhere why Düsseldorf, he responded sarcastically (truthfully?), “[b]ecause I was there.”¹⁸⁹⁷ And yet, in the past decade, there has been an explosion of Western punk memory. Jürgen Teipel’s “documentary-novel” *Verschwende Deine Jugend* (2001) was a bestseller and the multimedia *Zurück zum Beton* exhibition in the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf (2002) celebrating the early Ruhr scene, was an enormous success.¹⁸⁹⁸ Since these events, a number of exhibitions, books, record re-issues and films celebrating German punk rock have appeared. How do we reconcile the brief moment of punk’s appearance with its mass appeal? Why does punk represent a time and place for so many when, if we are to believe Peter Hein, only a ‘handful’ of kids ever experienced it first hand? These questions return us to the beginning and the observation that punk is used as the image of crisis in the 1970s and 1980s.

¹⁸⁹⁶ Ulrike Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton: Die Anfänge von Punk und New Wave in Deutschland 1977-’82* (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2002), p.131.

¹⁸⁹⁷ Peter Glaser, “Vorwärts in die K...,” *Der Tagesspiegel*, 23 September 2004.

¹⁸⁹⁸ See Lorenz Maroldt, “Geschichte? Wird gemacht!” *Der Tagesspiegel*, 30 April 2002; and Karl Bruckmaier, “Gott sei Punk: Es ist etwas fürchterlich Neues da,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 27 October 2001.

As in the East, the memory of punk in the West tells us more about the past decade than it does about the late 1970s and early 1980s, and yet, the specific memories that are remembered suggest how the past and present are deeply imbricated. In West German punk memory, the origins of the genre are hotly contested, as is the split between Hardcores and the Kunstpunks. The tremendous experimentation with film, art and media are highlighted, and the emergence of the NDW also features heavily. The material culture of punk memory focuses on the diversity of German cultural production. But critically, the death of punk is the perhaps the most prominent theme. As in the East, Western punk memory concentrates overwhelmingly on the pre-1983 period. As we saw, 1983 was a crucial year for punk in the Federal Republic: the highpoint of the NDW and the triumph of Hardcore. But in restricting punk to the 1977-1983 era and especially the late 1970s, Western punk memory is able to seal off uncomfortable questions about commodification, the relationship between punk and the music industry, and the descent of Hardcore into a cycle of unending violence and conformity. By locating the death of punk with the NDW 'sell out' and the Chaos-Tage, Western punk memory is able to retain its early elitist nature before popularity and success killed punk.

The language of authenticity is essential here, as it was in the East. When did 'real' punk die? When was the last 'authentic' punk concert experienced or the final 'genuine' punk record released? These questions suggest a once-experienced authenticity now gone but one that once existed and thus a mobilizing force; marginality is necessary in order to confer authenticity. The record industry and its riches are the usual villain in narratives of popular music, and once again, by locating death in 1983, commodification succeeded in corrupting an authentic cultural expression and debased German punk in the form of the NDW. But looking back from the vantage point of time, we should be sceptical of such tales that punks themselves have an interest

in propagating because it removes the blame from their desires for fame and fortune, and the fundamental impossibility of making-music outside of the music industry: as we saw, figures such as the Zensor and Alfred Hilsberg were well aware that they were a part of the music industry even though they were trying to reposition or reform it from the margins along more socially just lines. By locating the death of punk around 1982 or 1983, Western punk memory is able to focus on a brief moment in time when everything was in question: How to act? How to dress? How to make music? By focusing on the questions and not the answers that quickly followed, Western punk memory is able remain pure and authentic before the rigid disciplining of subculture set in. Thus, in both the former East and West, punk memory culture works to retain the oppositional, the resistant, and the defiant nature of the genre.

The former Kunstpunks overwhelmingly control the public memory of Western punk and focus on the creative dimensions of the genre, and its contributions to expanding German culture. That many of the former Kunstpunks are now major figures throughout the culture industry of West German and Europe is important, and many of the most important bands—Einstürzende Neubauten, Fehlfarben, die Krupps—still record, perform live, and are feted as the leading cultural emissaries of a modern, multicultural and democratic Germany. And here, the importance of punk in the larger memory debates and political initiatives of the Berlin Republic is crucial. Fundamentally, the exhibitions, books, films and music all help promote a new Germany, one that is modern and democratic and has left dictatorship behind. Despite what happened in the ‘Karo’ in the early 1980s, in the new millennium, punk, in its various forms, is representative of a new Germany that celebrates differences by embracing its punk legacy. Thus the *Zurück zum Beton* exhibition sought to illustrate the diverse history of Germans in the same way that Teipel’s book uncovered a hidden past that, at the time was experienced by only a

handful as Hein as said, but is now accessible to many. In this way, the famous Rosa Luxemburg slogan ‘Freedom is always the freedom of those who think differently’ is manifested musically and culturally. And it is the work of amateur historians and cultural caretakers who work to integrate this vision: whether in awarding *Monarchie und Alltag* with the Goldene Schallplatte Preis or in the Ramones Museum, the goal is the same; punk as an expression of German liberty, independence and individuality.

Punk has always been an incredibly historical genre, both as a style and subculture since its very beginnings, and its members have been highly cognizant of the historic import of punk. Already, the early cries of ‘No Future’ signalled a total rejection of claims and impatience with tradition as a guide for the future. ‘No Future’ authorized a rush of experimentation because it denied the truths of the past, and in so doing, argued that the future was a *tabula rasa* whose only limitation was imagination—to borrow the title of a recent Joe Strummer documentary film, *The Future Is Unwritten*.¹⁸⁹⁹ And it was this presentist outlook that many believed was at the heart of the punk revolution. Holgar Czukay, former Can bassist and producer who worked with S.Y.P.H., saw this at once: “At the same time, I noticed how breathless the whole thing was. That was immediately clear. With the method ‘kiss my ass!’ you cannot become old.”¹⁹⁰⁰ That figures such as Hilsberg and others compared punk to Elvis and the Beatles shows that contemporaries understood that what was happening was important.¹⁹⁰¹ Punks knew their rock’n’roll history and frequently compared punk moments to other historic moments such as Woodstock.¹⁹⁰² The feeling of historic import saturated the genre. According to Thomas Bruske, already at the early punk shows, “this feeling was immediately with me, of being at the right

¹⁸⁹⁹ *Joe Strummer: The Future Is Unwritten* (DVD, director Julien Temple, 2007).

¹⁹⁰⁰ Jürgen Teipel, *Verschwende Deine Jugend: Ein Doku-Roman über den deutschen Punk und New Wave* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001), p.46.

¹⁹⁰¹ See Mike Flood Page, “London brennt,” *Sounds*, Nr.7 (July 1977), pp.32-35.

¹⁹⁰² *Die Heilige Schrift*, Nr.4 (Langen: 1984), n.p.

time and in the right place.”¹⁹⁰³ Another punk remembers that every time she and her band wrote a song, “I always had the feeling, to have accomplished something great.”¹⁹⁰⁴ Throughout punk recordings, fanzines, and interviews, time and again, the historical nature of punk is constantly expressed. The awareness of significance represents the historicization process whereby punks sought to record how the genre was revolutionizing daily life.

Some scholars suggest that punk is the post-modern art form *par excellence* whether by emphasizing its radical subjectivity that denies all forms of truth or in the subculture’s embrace of reality that separates it from earlier utopian thinking.¹⁹⁰⁵ The pastiche of punk style and music is often used to support these claims.¹⁹⁰⁶ But the genre’s awareness of itself as an historic entity, and the demand to document and record the triumphs and tragedies experienced by the subculture, suggests that punk exhibits some very modern sensibilities rather than postmodern.¹⁹⁰⁷ Fanzines are filled with histories of punk whether local and regional or national and international, already beginning in the early 1980s.¹⁹⁰⁸ Punks and critics search for antecedents of the genre in dada and the Situationist International, and perhaps less tangibly in

¹⁹⁰³ IG Dreck auf Papier, ed., *Keine Zukunft war Gestern: Punk in Deutschland* (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen, 2008), pp.26-27.

¹⁹⁰⁴ Günter Franzen and Boris Pentz, *Last Exist. Punk: Leben im toten Herz der Städte* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1982), p.201.

¹⁹⁰⁵ See Neil Nehring, *Popular Music, Gender, and Postmodernism: Anger is an Energy* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1997).

¹⁹⁰⁶ The classic statement—though he does not use the term post-modernism—is Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London and New York: Routledge, 1979). But even the titles of books on punk celebrate the rupturousness of the genre. See Curry Malott and Milagros Peña, *Punk Rockers’ Revolution: A Pedagogy of Race, Class, and Gender* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004); Adrian Boot and Chris Salewicz, *Punk: The Illustrated History of a Music Revolution* (New York: Penguin Studio, 1997); Tricia Henry, *Break All Rules!: Punk Rock and the Making of a Style* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1989).

¹⁹⁰⁷ For similar sentiments towards a very different rupture—the French Revolution—and its links to modernity, see Peter Fritzsche, “Specters of History: On Nostalgia, Exile, and Modernity,” in *The American Historical Review*, Vol.106, Nr.5 (December 2001), pp.1587-1618.

¹⁹⁰⁸ See *Todesangst*, Nr.15 (Duisburg: 1985), n.p.; *Der Blitz*, Nr.8 (Munich: 1982/1983), p.30; and *Ungewollt*, Nr.11 (Duisburg: 1981), p.9.

Franciscan Monks or even Ancient Greece.¹⁹⁰⁹ In 1986, a number of fanzine authors celebrated the ten-year anniversary of punk (and others did so again in 1987 since the origins of punk are disputed), and these ritual birthday celebrations continue into the new millennium.¹⁹¹⁰ Punk songs, as we have seen, were sonic documents of the present that sought to express a particular sensibility or feeling; the idea, as Hilsberg once wrote, that ‘Militurk’ tells us more about Germany in 1979 than pages of analysis.¹⁹¹¹ As a number of punks at the time and since have recognized, to be punk meant to be a part of a special fraternity that recognized its own importance and worked hard to document these efforts.

The genre of rock’n’roll is very helpful in these regards. The very materiality of popular music culture lends itself to historicization with its overflow of records, posters, ticket stubs, clothes, fanzines and photographs. Collecting is built into popular music culture which in turn gives the artifacts an aura of uniqueness and individuality: the same kind of “aura” that Walter Benjamin once talked about with regards to artwork.¹⁹¹² As Harry Rag suggested at the time, “[t]he new music will always be something for collectors, archaeologists, and researchers.”¹⁹¹³ Reviewing in “neues Deutschland” the *Guter Abzug* (Good Copy) box set (featuring fanzines, pictures, and recordings) produced for the 1982 Documenta VII Exhibition in Kassel, scene photographer ar/gee gleim suggested about the collection that “every collector will want to

¹⁹⁰⁹ See Thomas Lau, *Die heiligen Narren: Punk 1976-1986* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1992); Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); and *Sie trägt rote Pyjamas*, Nr.1 (Babenhausen: 1985), p.8.

¹⁹¹⁰ See *Inferno*, Nr.7 (Hanover: 1986), n.p.; *Der Deutsche Trottel*, Nr.2 (Neckarsulm: 1986), p.18; *Hamburger Mottenpost*, Nr.2 (Hamburg: 1986), p.36.

¹⁹¹¹ Alfred Hilsberg, “Review: Mittagspause,” *Sounds*, Nr.8, August 1979, p.52.

¹⁹¹² Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, edited with an intro. by Hannah Arendt, trans. by Harry Zohn (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968), pp.217-251.

¹⁹¹³ “Das Solinger Gefühl. Harry Rag/S.Y.P.H.,” *Sounds*, Nr.1 (January 1981), p.22.

have.”¹⁹¹⁴ Or as Michael O.R. Kröher put it, “[b]ut now that the euphoria over the Neue Deutsche Welle is over, we need archives and reference works. *Guter Abzug* completes this assignment perfectly, and truly offers a small dose of every feeling—what also appears in these pages—amid “Herrenreiter” and “Gefährlichen Clowns,” between “Computerstaat” and “Militürk.”¹⁹¹⁵ Almost immediately, punk was recognized as demanding remembrance.

But so too did the seemingly transitory nature of punk. Not transitory in the sense of a phase in which youths would grow out of as youth sociologists insisted in their attempts to ‘understand’ punk as they had earlier manifestations of rock’n’roll. But transitory in the sense that punk would or could only last a very short time. Punks continually played with the in-built obsolescence and fleetingness of the genre. As a supplement accompanying a cassette read, “this issue is rare – rip it up and it’ll be rarer.”¹⁹¹⁶ When asked to produce more copies of his first issue, the author of *Sittenskandal* refused, saying that it was a historical document recording a specific historical moment that could not be returned to.¹⁹¹⁷ The claim by Peter Hein, that punk existed “only one year...in one city, on one street, in one bar,” recognizes the momentary quality of punk.¹⁹¹⁸

Why Germany? Why Punk? Rock’n’Roll and German History

Punk of course has continued and will continue in reunited Germany as a musical genre and subculture which, as we saw in the Introduction, has penetrated deeply into the socio-cultural

¹⁹¹⁴ Alfred Hilsberg, “neuestes deutschland,” *Sounds*, Nr.10 (October 1981), p.16. See also his more recent remarks on the *Guter Abzug* collection in “ar/gee gleam. Auf ein Wort mit: Richard Gleim”, *Ox-Fanzine*, Nr.48 (Haan, September-November 2002), p.22

¹⁹¹⁵ Michael O.R. Kröher, “Review: Guter Abzug,” *Sounds*, Nr.6 (June 1982), p.59.

¹⁹¹⁶ See Frank A. Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging: Von Punk zu NDW* (Mainz: Ventil Verlag, 2007), p.25.

¹⁹¹⁷ *Sittenskandal*, Nr.2 (Wilhelmshaven: 1983), n.p.

¹⁹¹⁸ Groos et al., eds., *Zurück zum Beton*, p.131.

woodwork of the nation. In fact, numerically, German punk has never been larger in the sense that there are more bands, clubs, concerts, records and fanzines. And the technological advances of the new millennium suggest that punk might well experience an even greater resurgence since the ease of recording and production are at an all-time high, developments that lend itself nicely to a Do-It-Yourself ideology. The Internet moreover ensures that the ability of small groups to communicate with one another and others has expanded dramatically; indeed, the struggles to fit all the content on twelve double-sided photocopied sheets are now over. But punk has never been about quantity but rather quality, and as a basis for alternative identity, the time of the genre is perhaps past. Once the hard lines had been set down, it was difficult to break free. As Ralf Dorper has put it, “The climate then became nasty. The concept ‘punk’ had become worthless. Earlier, everything would have been possible with punk. But then, punk was only: leather jackets and green hair.”¹⁹¹⁹ Or Peter Hein: “Already in 1980, we were excluded from what was called the movement. With *Mittagspause* and the whole rigmarole earlier, that was of course punk in Germany—a movement. But we had already mocked them back then and also had not taken everything quite so seriously. We took what we did seriously but not the insurrection that drove our colleagues.”¹⁹²⁰

What I have endeavored to show, is how punk has contributed to the democratization of East and West Germany in the 1970s and 1980s. Youths used music to build subcultural communities and alternative identities during the Cold War, efforts which were often met with incomprehension and repressive responses by both East and West German authorities. In the East, the genre became a form of opposition to the dictatorial SED regime, while in the West, punk became a political and aesthetic platform for individual and social revolution along more

¹⁹¹⁹ Teipel, *Verschwende*, p.244.

¹⁹²⁰ Olaf Karnik, “Das Leben nach dem Buch,” in *StadtRevue* (Cologne), Nr.11 (2002), p.44.

authentic lines—endeavors sparking debates about the contentious Nazi past and the future contours of German identity, society and citizenship. Tracking West German youths travelling abroad to London to experience punk first-hand and then returning home to rearticulate the genre into the local context of the Federal Republic, I have followed the spread of popular music across state boundaries and the consequences of such transmissions. For young Germans in the West, punk was a means of expressing independence and individuality—what they called *Anderssein*—from earlier German traditions and especially the 1960s generation. Building vibrant local scenes, through the efforts of individuals such as Alfred Hilsberg, punk in the West nationalized through the institutions of alternative culture: fanzines, recording, independent shops, and concerts. Singing in German and experimenting with new sounds and tones were a means of emancipating Germanness from the taint of Nazism by rooting a more robust German national identity in a celebration of diversity that anticipated today’s multicultural state. But when punk exploded in popularity in the early 1980s as it evolved into the more commercially accessible Neue Deutsche Welle, critics lamented the commercial ‘sell-out’ that seemed to spell the end of its liberatory character while adherents argued over what still constituted ‘authentic’ punk. Moral hardliners panicked by the easy commercialization of punk, retreated into an even more exclusionary subculture—Hardcore—which sought to reaffirm the boundaries of community. But in so doing, Hardcore closed off the possibilities of difference which had been the original basis for the genre, and punk became a violent, exclusionary, and conservative musical form and subculture.

In the East the genre beaming into the GDR via Western radio waves was mobilized by youths as an oppositional soundtrack to challenge the authoritarian socialist regime. Crying ‘Too Much Future,’ Eastern punks protested the regimented and authoritarian state that organized

society and culture from the cradle to the grave, and began—along with other dissidents and oppositionalists—to carve out a fledgling alternative public space. Responding to the subculture with force after the Western press began reporting on punk as a form of grass-roots opposition, the East German government and security organs moved to crush the genre by ordering ‘Härte gegen Punk,’ and nearly destroyed the scene in 1983. But repression only drove punks further into the safety of the Protestant Churches where youths became fully socialized into the oppositional politics of alternative groups gathering there. Under increasing economic, political, and social pressure, and admitting that their policy of repression had only driven the genre into the arms of the opposition, the SED reversed their prior position on punk in 1988. Suddenly supporting a number of alternative music outfits—the so-called ‘die anderen Bands’—the regime began promoting these artists in a last, desperate attempt to use popular music to shore up their waning political legitimacy. By then, however, it was too late: forced into the Evangelical Churches to escape persecution, punks became the foot-soldiers of the opposition and helped, in the end, to bring down the Berlin Wall.

As the example of punk memory culture in the Berlin Republic suggests, increasingly, the search for democratic traditions are occupying the citizens of reunited Germany, and punk in the 1970s and 1980s is providing one such a legacy. In the German Democratic Republic, punks were part of a broad movement that worked to erode the political legitimacy of the SED regime. Popular music was essential here, and the genre of punk especially since its anti-state ideology and emphases on individuality were positions challenging the dominance of state socialism. Forcing the regime on the defensive, punk and the opposition helped created a power-vacuum through their grass-roots activities into which rushed East German citizens in the fall of 1989 and the rest, as they say, is history. In the Federal Republic, punk was a platform by which

individuals disappointed with their society could experiment with new patterns of behavior and adopt different and more fulfilling identities. The late 1970s and early 1980s were a period of incredible questioning as youths on both sides of the Berlin Wall vented their frustrations with society as it was then constituted. Punk is of course symbolic of the unrest but even more so of the attempts to rectify the situation, the impatience with the status quo and the belief that revolutionary change could be accomplished through music. There was a sense of possibility and rapid change in the air as young Germans sought to construct alternative spaces of fraternity in an effort to restore meaning and authenticity to their everyday lives. These endeavors were deeply contested but have helped contribute to the cultural basis for the more inclusive, democratic and emancipated Germany that we know today. And it was precisely this historical mission that propelled punk and its adherents: as the famous lyric to Fehlfarben's most influential song once claimed, "No time for breathe, history is being made, it goes on!"

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Antzeige 08/15 (Augsburg)

A&P (Wuppertal)

Der Arsch der Welt (Düsseldorf)

Atroma (Paris)

Die Aufklärung (Neumünster)

Banzai (Wildberg)

Bericht der U.N.-Menschenrechtskommission über Menschenrechtsverletzungen in der BRD
(Hanover)

Die Berliner Ghettoratte (West Berlin)

Bla Bla (Düsseldorf)

Der Blitz (Munich)

Bonner Perspektiven (Bonn)

Breakout! (Starnberg)

Der Chaot (Dänischenhagen)

City Indian (Kempten)

Computer-Eignungstest (Neuenkirchen)

Decontrol (Bielefeld)
Destruktiven Mythen (Wörrstadt)
Der Deutsche Trottel (Neckarsulm)
Deutschlands Ruhmeshalle (Düsseldorf)
Der Durchbruch (Hasbergen)
Eat Yourself (West Berlin)
Einige Millionen (Gelsenkirchen)
Endlösung (Bremen)
Erbrechet! (Salzgitter)
Der Ex (Hamburg)
Die Falschmelder (Düsseldorf)
Ffurs (West Berlin)
Funzine (Hamburg)
Der große Aufschwung (Rinteln)
Hackfleisch (Hanover)
Hamburger Mottenpost (Hamburg)
HCI (Düsseldorf)
Der Heilige Krieg (Hamburg)
Die Heilige Schrift (Langen)
Heimatblatt (Düsseldorf)
Herz der Sau (Kreuztal)
Heute (Hanover)
Inferno (Hanover)
Irre (Ramstein)
Kabeljau (Norderstedt)
Kahlschlag (Wilhelmshaven)
Kalpa Vriksche (n.p.)
Katastrophen Provinz (Emtinghausen)
Der Ketzer (Darmstadt)
Der Knilch (Varel)
Kruzefix (Munich)
Lebenswende (Altenhof)
Der Letzte Wille (Wuppertal)
Magazin für Verliebte (Gelsenkirchen)
Maximum RockNRoll (San Francisco)
Das M.O.B. (Mönchengladbach)
Mosender Abschaum (Wilhelmshaven)
Neuez No Fun (Hanover)
New Order (West Berlin)
N.O.E. (Frankfurt am Main)
No Fun (Hanover)
Ossessione (Frankfurt am Main)
The Ostrich (Düsseldorf)
Out of Step (Dortmund)
Ox-Fanzine (Haan)
Plastik (Hamburg)

Porree (Rinteln)
Preiserhöhung (Hamburg)
Pretty Vacant (Hamburg)
Reine Willkuer (West Berlin)
Rock Musik (Hamburg)
Rückstand (Gelsenkirchen)
Rude Boys' Late Final (Telgte)
S.A.L.V.E. (Munich)
Schandtat (Hamburg)
Scheißhaus (Oberhausen)
Seelenqual (Indersdorf)
Set for action! (Nuremberg)
Shit-Bolzen (Eckstever)
Sie trägt rote Pyjamas (Babenhausen)
Sittenskandal (Wilhelmshaven)
The Staatsfeind (Düsseldorf)
Das Statussymbol Fürth)
Der Stürmer (Bremen)
T4 (West Berlin)
Taugenix: Deutschpunk Fanzine (Celle)
Testament (West Berlin)
Tiefschlag (Siegburg)
Todesangst (Duisburg)
Total Control (Düsseldorf)
Der Trümmerhaufen (Elsheim)
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Zap (Homburg)

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Bild-Zeitung
Bild (Hamburg)
Bild am Sonntag
Blickpunkt
Braunschweiger Zeitung
Bravo
BZ

Deutsche Jugend
einestages
Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung
Frankfurter Rundschau
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