Outside the "Comfort Zone"

Rethinking the Cold War

Edited by
Kirsten Bönker and Jane Curry

Volume 5

Outside the "Comfort Zone"

Performances and Discourses of Privacy
in Late Socialist Europe

Edited by
Tatiana Klepikova and Lukas Raabe

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Introduction: Cold War Rhetoric and Privacy Discourse

On March 5, 1946, Winston Churchill arrived at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, to deliver a speech that provided narratives that would become emblematic in the history of post-war Europe and the world:

> From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and, in many cases, increasing measure of control from Moscow.[1]

Initially titled "Sinews of Peace," this powerful address also went down in history as the "Iron Curtain speech," for it furnished the metaphor to define the political shield between the liberal-democratic West and the socialist East for decades until perestroika. The "Iron Curtain" rhetoric, continuously employed by political elites and scholars from then on, underscored the "insurmountable" gap between the Communist ideology that dominated territories to the east of the divide and liberal-democratic principles that underlay state mechanisms in the Global West. Throughout the decades of its existence, this term became a robust discursive tool to construct the opposition of "us" (the progressive West) versus "them" (the failing Communist project).

This narrative strongly affected not only everyday discourses about the parts of the world "behind the curtain" but also contributed to building a counter-productive lens for academic research. From the moment that the "curtain [...] descended across the Continent," it shielded many processes that evolved behind it from western scholars by diverting researchers' approaches and arguments toward dichotomic paradigms saturated with political agenda.[2] Among the numerous concepts that were affected by these political diversions, there lies the concept of "privacy" and the related concepts of private and public spheres that this edited volume seeks to revisit.

In the decades following WWII, the debates on privacy and the separation of the private and public spheres went viral in North America and Western Europe. They were not only fueled by the genocidal politics of the Nazi regime that had stomped on the person's life and dignity but were also informed by technological developments and the transition toward an information society. Tragic experiences of the past and new contexts in the present reinforced the recognition of human rights in the Global West and reignited the discussion about privacy, private spaces, and individual responsibility that had been sparked by the essay "The Right to Privacy" by Samuel Warren and Louis Brandeis at the turn of the century.[3] Published in the *Harvard Law Review* in 1890, it offered one of the earliest conceptualizations of privacy in legal discourse and laid the foundation for debates on the protection of privacy by the state in the early modern era. It also served as a platform for postwar scholars to deliver their arguments.[4] Deeply grounded in the liberal tradition that upholds the importance of the individual in society,[5] Warren and Brandeis's text and later debates on privacy in liberal-democratic discourse came to progressively construct privacy and private

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2 See Jane L. Curry's reflections on "false dichotomies," in which she offers a similar line of argument as early as 1995 in "Cold War: False Dichotomies and Real Problems," *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 22, no. 2 (1995).

3 Samuel D. Warren and Louis D. Brandeis, "The Right to Privacy," *Harvard Law Review* 4, no. 5 (1890).

4 See, e. g., Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1962); Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1962); Alan F. Westin, *Privacy and Freedom* (New York: Atheneum, 1967); Stanley I. Benn and Gerald Gaus, eds., *Public and Private in Social Life* (London: Croom Helm, 1983); Ferdinand D. Schoeman, ed., *Philosophical Dimensions of Privacy: An Anthology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

5 See, e. g., John S. Mill, "On Liberty," in *Utilitarianism and On Liberty,* ed. Mary Warnock (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

spaces as normative retreats,[6] with strong arguments in support of the right of a person to protect herself from *societal* and/or *state* interference[7] and to have control over private spaces, information, and decisions related to oneself.[8] In this context, privacy emerged as one of the values and duties intrinsic to the states of the Global West—in stark contrast to socialist countries whose ideology relied on the utopia of socialist personalities that commit their lives to creating a better world for the collective and in doing so, forego their individual desires.[9]

In the light of these normative differences between liberal and socialist societies, privacy came to serve as "a common ideological yardstick,"[10] according to historian Paul Betts, to demarcate the liberal West from the dictatorial East. This was all the easier as the cleavage between the regions on each side of the Iron Curtain regarding the issues of privacy and the private sphere which the Cold War rhetoric portrayed already existed before WWII.

In the twentieth century, one of sources of information about the Communist East in the West were the accounts of numerous visitors who flocked to the USSR in the 1920s–1930s on the invitation of the young Soviet government that aspired to project a positive self image to the world and thereby contribute to spreading Communism around the globe. Western travelers who visited the Soviet Union,

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6 Kai von Lewinski, *Die Matrix des Datenschutzes: Besichtigung und Ordnung eines Begriffsfeldes* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 37–40.

7 These debates were not only lead by scholars. A vivid example of public participation in this discussion was the reaction to the 1983 census planned in West Germany. It was found unconstitutional by the West German Federal Constitutional Court after a plea was submitted by a group of concerned citizens who had found the depth of questions on the matters of private life unduly extreme. See BVerfG, *Verfassungsrechtliche Überprüfung des Volkszählungsgesetzes 1983* (NJW 1984), 419. See also Simon Garnett, "Informational Self-Determination and the Semantics of Personality in the Jurisprudence of the Federal Constitutional Court 1949–1983," in *Textuelle Historizität: Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven auf das historische Apriori*, eds. Heidrun Kämper, Ingo H. Warnke, and Daniel Schmidt-Brücken (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2016).

8 See Beate Rössler, *Der Wert des Privaten* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2001) for the differentiation of these three dimensions of privacy (local, informational, and decisional).

9 On the socialist "new man," see Sabine A. Haring, "Die Konstruktion eines ‚Neuen Menschen' im Sowjetkommunismus: Vom zaristischen zum stalinistischen Habitus in Design und Wirklichkeit," *LiTheS*, no. 5 (2010); Tijana Vujošević, *Modernism and the Making of the Soviet New Man* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017); Irma Hanke, "Vom neuen Menschen zur sozialistischen Persönlichkeit: Zum Menschenbild der SED," *Deutschland Archiv* 9, no. 5 (1976); Angela Brock, *The Making of the Socialist Personality: Education and Socialisation in the German Democratic Republic 1958–1978* (Ph.D. diss., University College London, 2005). See also Lukas Raabe's contribution to this volume.

10 Paul Betts, *Within Walls: Private Life in the German Democratic Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 7.

such as the German intellectual Walter Benjamin or the American writer Theodore Dreiser, were remarkably attuned to what they perceived as "the absence of privacy"—a drastic shortage of living space in the cities—and they reflected on it in their travelogues.[11] Foreign visitors were mostly shocked by a widespread solution that the Soviet state proposed for the housing problem—the creation of communal flats, i.e., the distribution of rooms in one flat between multiple families who were not related to each other. In the essay referring to his visit, Benjamin claimed that "Bolshevism ha[d] abolished private life,"[12] and thereby implied the absence of the civil separation of public and private spheres in postrevolutionary Russia. Fundamentally different ideological bases of liberal democracies and socialist societies explain the impossibility of transferring liberal concepts onto socialist contexts: unable to conceive of privacy in the absence of sufficient physical space, stunned western visitors diagnosed Soviet society as one, in which the private sphere was missing. More importantly, by publishing their accounts of the travels to the USSR in their home countries, they contributed to making this image an inseparable part of the portrait of a socialist state in the Global West.

During the Cold War era, stressing the absence of privacy in the Eastern Bloc seemed like the "stock-in-trade"[13] of Western political discourse on state socialist dictatorships. In the 1990s, a vision of state socialism and its societies shaped by Cold War rhetoric was integrated into historiographical and political discourse in the former countries of the Eastern Bloc that launched a large-scale national process of the reappraisal of their dictatorial past.[14] An integral component of the new memory politics was the reflection on totalitarianism that came from

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11 See Tatiana Klepikova, "Privacy as They Saw It: Private Spaces in the Soviet Union of the 1920–1930s in Foreign Travelogues," *Zeitschrift für Slavische Philologie* 71, no. 2 (2015).

12 Walter Benjamin, "Moscow," in *Selected Writings*, ed. Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 30. Original: "Der Bolschewismus hat das Privatleben abgeschafft." Walter Benjamin, "Moskau," *Die Kreatur*, no. 1 (1927/1928), 81.

13 David Crowley and Susan E. Reid, "Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc," in *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc*, eds. David Crowley and Susan E. Reid (Oxford/New York: Berg, 2002), 12.

14 One can think here, for example, of the establishment of so-called Institutes of National Remembrance in post-socialist counties. See Carola Lau, *Erinnerungsverwaltung, Vergangenheitspolitik und Erinnerungskultur nach 1989: Institute für nationales Gedenken im östlichen Europa im Vergleich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 2017). Martin Sabrow reflects on multiple facets of historiography, such as "historical observer and an agent within political discourse" ("historische[r] Beobachterin und geschichtspolitische[r] Akteurin" [Translations here and throughout the article are ours if not indicated differently.]) in Martin Sabrow, "Die DDR 25 Jahre danach: Historisierung als Hoffnung," in *Die DDR als Chance: Neue Perspektiven auf ein altes Thema*, ed. Ulrich Mählert (Berlin: Metropol, 2016), 186.

dissident thought, which also had often relied on binary argumentation lines in advancing its cause.[15] Michal Kopeček refers to the underlying paradigm of this rhetoric as "useable totalitarianism" and argues that the research of and discourse on Communism through the lens of totalitarianism was instrumental to the political agenda of these states, for it served to historically legitimize the new democratic systems and to delegitimize the former state socialist dictatorships, from which they wanted to distance themselves.[16] Inadvertently, these developments created additional barriers in conceiving of socialist states as places, where any of the concepts that came to symbolize liberal democracies (such as privacy, in this particular case) could be applied.[17]

Rethinking Cold War Rhetoric—Rethinking Privacy

Appeals for the considerate use of western terminology in socialist contexts were made soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall. A pioneer in this field, Svetlana Boym argued in the early 1990s that the process of modernization in socialism provided a unique scientific setting that could only be effectively grasped if research assumptions were re-contextualized, whereas a direct transfer of western con-

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15 See Michal Kopeček, "Kommunismus zwischen Geschichtspolitik und Historiographie in Ostmitteleuropa," in *Kommunismusforschung und Erinnerungskulturen in Ostmittel- und Westeuropa*, ed. Volkhard Knigge (Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 2013) on the influence of dissident discourse on reappraisal processes.
16 "nutzbare[r] Totalitarismus." *Ibid.*, 26.
17 For example, early representations of the GDR history that followed the paradigm of totalitarianism, referred to a "shut down" (*stillgelegt*) society, which was coerced into passivity, isolation, conformity, or open resistance by the state. Sigrid Meuschel, "Überlegungen zu einer Herrschafts- und Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, no. 19 (1993), 6. An illustrative example of political lenses on historiographic research are the debates and arguments on the paradigm of totalitarianism, which has been repeatedly rejected, revived, and reinterpreted. As a prominent example, see Klaus Schroeder, *Der SED-Staat: Geschichte und Strukturen der DDR 1949 – 1990* (Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 2013). For the debate on the paradigm of totalitarianism, see, e. g., Meuschel, "Überlegungen;" Pavel Kolář, "Langsamer Abschied vom Totalitarismus-Paradigma? Neue tschechische Forschungen zur Geschichte der KPTsch-Diktatur," *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 55, no. 2 (2006); Mary Fulbrook, "Reckoning with the Past: Heroes, Victims, and Villains in the History of the German Democratic Republic," in *Rewriting the German Past: History and Identity in the New Germany*, eds. Reinhard Alter and Peter Monteath (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1997); Eckhard Jesse, "Die Totalitarismusforschung im Streit der Meinungen," in *Totalitarismus im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Eckhard Jesse (Bonn: BPB, 1999).

ceptual imagery onto a socialist context would lead to misperceptions.[18] A vital part of the revision was a reconsideration of the Cold War tradition of framing the relations between socialist states and their citizens as the oppositions of rule and obedience. The latter had been nurtured by the myth of the "passive totalitarian subject" oppressed by the "almighty" state—a common trope of political discourse during and after the Cold War. Scholarly attempts to offer a more nuanced vision of the relationship between these states and their citizens by framing them as dynamic rather than static had already begun before the collapse of the Soviet empire was anywhere in sight and became particularly vociferous after the fall of the Soviet Union. Vera Dunham, Christel Lane, Karen Petrone, and Stephen Kotkin, among others, offered insightful perspectives on the Stalinist totalitarian state by revealing various dimensions of action that one could discern in that context.[19] Their influential works were accompanied by revisions of post-Stalinist authoritarian contexts across the Eastern Bloc that included research on everyday life,[20] consumption,[21] tourism,[22] youth culture,[23]

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18 Svetlana Boym, *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 2–3.

19 Vera Dunham, *In Stalin's Time: Middleclass Values in Soviet Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Christel Lane, *The Rites of Rulers: Ritual in Industrial Society—The Soviet Case* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Karen Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000); Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997). On individual dimensions of action, see also Alf Lüdtke, "Geschichte und Eigensinn," in *Alltagskultur, Subjektivität und Geschichte: Zur Theorie und Praxis von Alltagsgeschichte*, ed. Berliner Geschichtswerkstätten (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 1994); Thomas Lindenberger, "SED-Herrschaft als soziale Praxis, Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn: Problemstellung und Begriffe," in *Staatssicherheit und Gesellschaft: Studien zum Herrschaftsalltag in der DDR*, ed. Jens Gieseke (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007). On the dynamics of socialist states, see Katherine Verdery, "Theorizing Socialism: A Prologue to the Transition," *American Ethnologist* 18, no. 3 (1991); Mary Fulbrook, ed., *Power and Society in the GDR, 1961–1979: The "Normalisation of Rule"?* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009); Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Jan Palmowski, *Inventing a Socialist Nation: Heimat and the Politics of Everyday Life in the GDR, 1945–90* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

20 Choi Chatterjee et al., *Everyday Life in Russia Past and Present* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015); Katherine Pence and Paul Betts, eds., *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008); Anastasia Lakhtikova, Angela Brintlinger, and Irina Glushchenko, *Seasoned Socialism: Gender and Food in Late Soviet Everyday Life* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2019).

21 Natalya Chernyshova, *Soviet Consumer Culture in the Brezhnev Era* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Larissa Zakharova, "Soviet Fashion in the 1950s–1960s: Regimentation, Western Influences, and Consumption Strategies," in *The Thaw: Soviet Society and Culture during the 1950s and*

and samizdat practices.[24] Although these attempts of reconsideration may sometimes have endowed socialist citizens with more tenacity than they probably had,[25] they have offered fruitful lines of thinking about socialisms and opened avenues for further explorations.

One of the major achievements of these insightful approaches that is particularly resonant for the present volume is that they have drawn attention to the spheres that do not immediately qualify as purely public in the allegedly public socialist states. Researchers have applied the private lens to the postwar years, when socialist Eastern and East-Central Europe arguably witnessed the expansion of what could be viewed as the material as well as the immaterial private sphere, as well as to the times of Stalinism. Vladimir Shlapentokh, Lewis H. Siegelbaum, Deborah Field, Oleg Kharkhordin, Orlando Figes, and Marc Garcelon contributed to expanding the understanding of formations and functions of private spheres in the USSR by studying family, morality, labor, and practices of shaping the self in the conditions of surveillance and sousveillance.[26] Theoreti-

1960s, eds. Denis Kozlov and Eleonory Gilburd (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013); Anna Ivanova, "Socialist Consumption and Brezhnev's Stagnation: A Reappraisal of Late Communist Everyday Life," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 17, no. 3 (2016); Susan E. Reid, "Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and the De-Stalinization of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev," *Slavic Review* 61, no. 2 (2002).

22 Diane P. Koenker, *Club Red: Vacation Travel and the Soviet Dream* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013); Anne E. Gorsuch, *All This Is Your World: Soviet Tourism at Home and Abroad after Stalin* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Christian Noack, "Brezhnev's 'Little Freedoms': Tourism, Individuality, and Mobility in the Late Soviet Period," in *Reconsidering Stagnation in the Brezhnev Era: Ideology and Exchange*, eds. Dina Fainberg and Artemy M. Kalinovsky (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016); Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker, eds., *Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist under Capitalism and Socialism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

23 Gleb Tsipursky, *Socialist Fun: Youth, Consumption, and State-Sponsored Popular Culture in the Soviet Union, 1945–1970* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016); Amanda J. Swain, "From the Big Screen to the Streets of Kaunas: Youth Cultural Practices and Communist Party Discourse in Soviet Lithuania," *Cahiers du monde russe. Russie – Empire russe – Union soviétique et États indépendants* 54, no. 3–4 (2013).

24 See, e.g., Ina Alber and Natali Stegmann, "Samizdat und alternative Kommunikation," *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropaforschung* 65, no. 1 (2016); Ann Komaromi, *Uncensored: Samizdat Novels and the Quest for Autonomy in Soviet Dissidence* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2015).

25 Anna Krylova, "The Tenacious Liberal Subject in Soviet Studies," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 1, no. 1 (2000).

26 Vladimir Shlapentokh, *Public and Private Life of the Soviet People: Changing Values in Post-Stalin Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Lewis H. Siegelbaum, ed., *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia* (New York/Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006);

cal approaches to the conceptualization of private and public spheres in socialist states were further advanced in the work of Viktor Voronkov, Ingrid Oswald, and Elena Zdravomyslova who suggested the concept of an informal-public sphere, which they placed at the intersection of the private and public spheres.[27]

In other socialist contexts, Paulina Bren analyzed leisure time activities and policies of the normalization era while looking at weekend cottages as a popular social practice in late socialist Czechoslovakia.[28] Comparative perspectives across the Eastern Bloc have also recently been published and enriched the research in this field.[29]

These works elucidated the fictional character of the contradiction between materialistic and private tendencies and the socialist utopia that seems to emerge from the official propaganda but was never truly realized in these societies. In doing so, they inspired new understandings of the "puzzling stability"[30] of state socialisms. Bren, for example, identifies two reasons "for the regime's

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Deborah A. Field, *Private Life and Communist Morality in Khrushchev's Russia* (New York/Berlin: Peter Lang, 2007); Oleg Kharkhordin, "Reveal and Dissimulate: A Genealogy of Private Life in Soviet Russia," in *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy*, eds. Jeff Weintraub and Krishnan Kumar (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia* (London: Allen Lane, 2007); Marc Garcelon, "The Shadow of Leviathan: Public and Private in Communist and Post-Communist Society," in *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy*, eds. Jeff Alan Weintraub and Krishan Kumar (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997). For the concept of sousveillance, see, e.g., Steve Mann, "Sousveillance," in *Proceedings of the 12th Annual ACM International Conference*, eds. Henning Schulzrinne, Nevenka Dimitrova, Angela Sasse, Sue Moon, and Rainer Lienhart (New York: ACM Press, 2011).

27 Ingrid Oswald and Viktor Voronkov, "The 'Public-Private' Sphere in Soviet and Post-Soviet Society: Perception and Dynamics of 'Public' and 'Private' in Contemporary Russia," *European Societies* 6, no. 1 (2004); Elena Zdravomyslova and Viktor Voronkov, "The Informal Public in Soviet Society: Double Morality at Work," *Social Research* 69, no. 1 (2002).

28 Paulina Bren, "Weekend Getaways: The Chata, the Tramp, and the Politics of Private Life in Post-1968 Czechoslovakia," in *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc*, eds. David Crowley and Susan E. Reid (Oxford/New York: Berg, 2002); Paulina Bren, *The Greengrocer and His TV: The Culture of Communism after the 1968 Prague Spring* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010).

29 Cathleen M. Giustino, Catherine J. Plum, and Alexander Vari, eds., *Socialist Escapes: Breaking Away from Ideology and Everyday Routine in Eastern Europe, 1945–1989* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013); Christine Gölz and Alfrun Kliems, *Spielplätze der Verweigerung: Gegenkulturen im östlichen Europa nach 1956* (Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 2014); Juliane Fürst and Josie McLellan, *Dropping out of Socialism: The Creation of Alternative Spheres in the Soviet Bloc* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2017).

30 "rätselhafte Stabilität." Andrew I. Port, *Die rätselhafte Stabilität der DDR: Arbeit und Alltag im sozialistischen Deutschland* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2010).

unspoken consent"[31] with these contradictions: first, the pretense or suggestion of a higher standard of living by accepting *free* weekend activities; second, the de-politicization of the population. In her view, the state conceded possibilities for self-realization and a higher standard of living as part of its political strategy: the normalized and quiet citizen who lived within conceded retreats was a desirable outcome for the regime.[32] Such realms and retreats, which were arranged by the state in line with its objectives, could be in line with the aspirations of socialist citizens but were not necessarily informed by them. As Alexei Yurchak demonstrates, the private sphere, so benevolently tolerated by socialist states, continuously developed into an *enfant terrible* that nurtured not only stability but also disruptive forces which ultimately undermined the Socialist Bloc from within—the utopia was forever until suddenly, it was no more.[33]

In the spirit of these findings, this volume frames late socialist privacy as a figure or formation, which cannot be fixed at either side of the dichotomy that allegedly divides life in a socialist society into a public and a private sphere. Otherwise, privacy would become the "ideological yardstick" that we have rejected earlier. Subsequently, the private sphere should not be viewed as a separated sphere independent of any political influences—instead, it should be considered a social practice that manifests in the creation of some degree of subjective (private) agency in relation to a certain political context. In fact, there is a universal agreement in studies of the Soviet type of socialism that to consider the socialist "niche society" (*Nischengesellschaft*)[34] depoliticized by referring to the "retreat into privacy" in the 1950s–1980s is to misinterpret social practices because the retreat into private realms or the state arrangement of such realms should be considered a political act.[35]

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31 Bren, "Weekend Getaways," 125.

32 *Ibid.*, 126 – 127; Bren, *The Greengrocer and His TV.*

33 Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, NJ/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), see also Nada Boškovska, Angelika Strobel, and Daniel Ursprung, "Einleitung," in „*Entwickelter Sozialismus" in Osteuropa: Arbeit, Konsum und Öffentlichkeit*, eds. Nada Boškovska, Angelika Strobel, and Daniel Ursprung (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2016), 12.

34 Günter Gaus, *Wo Deutschland liegt: Eine Ortsbestimmung* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1983), 156.

35 See, e.g., Kirsten Bönker, "Depoliticisation of the Private Life? Reflections on Private Practices and the Political in the Late Soviet Union," in *Writing Political History Today*, eds. Willibald Steinmetz, Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt (Frankfurt/Main/New York: Campus Verlag, 2013), 217 – 219; Ulf Brunnbauer, "Der Mythos vom Rückzug ins Private: Arbeit, Konsum und Politik im Staatssozialismus," in „*Entwickelter Sozialismus" in Osteuropa: Arbeit, Konsum und Öffentlichkeit*, eds. Nada Boškovska, Angelika Strobel, and Daniel Ursprung (Berlin: Dunck-

Insisting on rigorously separated spheres would also mean recognizing the existence of a sharp line of division between the two. Such attempts were made in liberal research on privacy[36] and also featured in the studies of socialism. In earlier research on state socialist history, the term "border" was often used to outline places of retreat, limited range of access by the regime, and societal leeway. For example, Richard Bessel and Ralph Jessen referred to the discrepancies between social design conceived by the Party and actual realities of socialism as "borders of the dictatorship," and thereby implied that a totalitarian claim had to meet factual limits of enforceability.[37] Their intention was to offer an alternative reading of the GDR history that would overcome familiar binaries of the good and the evil and would no longer represent the GDR leadership as the sole, all-powerful, and constantly dominant agent of history. However, this theoretical idea also confronted certain "borders" in its argumentation, since their metaphor of a dictatorship with borders ultimately reaffirmed the dualism of the regime and society: the society could become the agent of history only beyond these borders.[38] A similar argument came up in response to the more recent concept of "socialist escapes,"[39] which was meant to overcome simplistic dichotomies but instead reproduced them by creating the image of escapes beyond political influences:

> However, the general trend towards reproducing dichotomies between regimes and society, as well as conformity and dissent, is particularly evident here [in the concept of escapes].

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er & Humblot, 2016). In the 1990s, Ralph Jessen already pleaded for holistic interpretations of the GDR's history and called for framing society's agency at "the intersection of construction and autonomy" (*Schnittbereich von Konstruktion und Autonomie*). Ralph Jessen, "Die Gesellschaft im Staatssozialismus: Probleme einer Sozialgeschichte der DDR," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, no. 21 (1995), 110.

36 Norberto Bobbio, *Democracy and Dictatorship* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

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

38 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/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 1999) for a detailed discussion and the term "dictatorship of borders" as an alternative to this approach. See also Serguei A. Oushakine, "The Terrifying Mimicry of Samizdat," *Public Culture* 13, no. 2 (2001) and Lewis H. Siegelbaum's contribution to this volume where he comments on his earlier concept of the "borders of socialism."

39 Giustino, Plum, and Vari, eds., *Socialist Escapes*.

> Despite all the repeated references to the diversity and complexity of social leeway in state socialism, totalitarianism theory returns through the back door.[40]

By conceptualizing privacy as a social practice within the socialist setting and not beyond it, this volume reaffirms the necessity to interpret the private sphere as a dynamic category, as a product of discourse and communication between the state and society, and as a distinction of regime and society, according to Lewis H. Siegelbaum who argues that privacy "provides evidence of symbiosis and hybridity, as well as antinomy."[41] Indeed, something as banal as vegetable patches in the suburbs of socialist cities, so beloved by their owners, may have served as a governmental instrument, but they also were sources of subjective agency and nonconformist attitudes, as people managed to create their "space [...] within place."[42] By re-embedding the originally liberal-democratic concept of privacy within the contexts of late socialist Eastern and East-Central Europe, this volume argues for continued attention to these immanent, social, and diverse micro-perspectives on private spheres behind the Iron Curtain, and thereby supports the rethinking of the Cold War rhetoric of privacy in regard to late socialist societies.

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40 "Deutlich zeigt sich hier aber vor allem der generelle Trend, Dichotomien von Regime und Gesellschaft sowie Angepasstheit und Dissens zu reproduzieren. Trotz aller wiederholten Hinweise auf die Vielfalt und Komplexität sozialer Handlungsspielräume im Staatssozialismus kommt so die Totalitarismustheorie durch die Hintertür zurück." Bianca Hoenig, "Review on 'Cathleen M. Giustino, Catherine J. Plum, and Alexander Vari, eds., *Socialist Escapes: Breaking Away from Ideology and Everyday Routine in Eastern Europe, 1945–1989* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013),'" *Bohemia* 54 (2014), 245.

41 Lewis H. Siegelbaum, "Introduction: Mapping Private Spheres in the Soviet Context," in *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia*, ed. Lewis H. Siegelbaum (New York/Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 4–5. Thus, privacy may be understood as an abstraction of what historiographic research calls "the second economy." Gregory Grossman, *Die „zweite Wirtschaft" und die sowjetische Wirtschaftsplanung* (Cologne: Bundesinstitut für Ostwissenschaften und Internationale Studien, 1984); Verdery, "Theorizing Socialism." The second economy was needed to satisfy and meet the needs of consumers due to insufficient outcomes of the command economy—privacy as a social abstraction had similar results from a societal perspective. See Ina Alber and Natali Stegmann, who interpret alternative communication (e.g., samizdat) as a cultural second economy in their "Samizdat," 9–10. In doing so, they dwell on Katherine Verdery's elaboration on the dynamics of socialism (Verdery, "Theorizing Socialism"). Both approaches argue for a stabilizing as well as destabilizing momentum of the alternative spheres. See also Boškovska, Strobel, and Ursprung, "Einleitung," 12 for a similar argumentation line, where they explore the "creation of privacy as a strategy of depoliticization" (*Herstellung von Privatheit als Strategie der Entpolitisierung*) and analyze its stabilizing and destabilizing outcomes.

42 Bren, "Weekend Getaways," 135.

In doing so, we seek to foster academic exchange between different strands of discourse on privacy that have developed autonomously but could benefit greatly from findings in the other field. The research on privacy that came to thrive in the Global West in the past sixty years has mostly operated within the context of that region, both in terms of the object of research as well as the actors who were involved in it. The framework of western liberal-democratic societies may, therefore, be viewed as a "comfort zone" of both privacy and privacy studies. As stated previously, the direct transfer of paradigms from this context to novel settings has often become a barrier that has limited the potential of the research. From western perspectives, societies living under socialism were "outside the comfort zone" of liberal values. However, rather than identifying these "missing" parts of western tenets in socialist societies, in order to understand state socialist dictatorships and their societal developments it seems to be more advantageous to ask: what are the patterns that filled this alleged "vacuum"?

Meanwhile, scholars who have attended to social and cultural histories of late socialist societies have started to provide answers to this question by suggesting a wide array of concepts and theoretical models that describe private agency, private practices, and private spaces as well as the manner in which they are constructed within socialism. This work could enrich the rich repertoire of privacy studies and open up new perspectives on our thinking about privacy in liberal-democratic contexts. By encouraging to think of privacy as a performative practice "behind the curtain [which] descended across the Continent," this volume therefore hopes not only to enrich historiographic and cultural research on Cold War and late socialisms but also to address the concept of "privacy" in a more comprehensive manner and contribute to bridging the communication gap between the research of performances and discourses of privacy in the contexts of late socialist Eastern and East-Central Europe and global privacy studies.

Outline of the Volume

The essays that follow offer explorations of highly diversified performances and discourses of privacy by various agents, which were embedded into culturally, economically, and politically specific constructions of late socialism in individual states of the Warsaw Pact. While experience of socialism varied across the Bloc, there were some practices by citizens and institutions and responses of socialist regimes to these practices—performances of privacy—that one can trace through all the states. Contributions to this volume take us across the Eastern Bloc and beyond it—from the Soviet Union into late socialist Poland, Romania,

East and West Germany. Although the chapters delve into specific countries, their perspectives build up a conversation about the strategies of construction and transformation of private spheres that overcame national borders and left an imprint across the Eastern Bloc. What were the national, group, and individual visions of late socialism? How did these visions shape everyday life and offer escapes from it in the Eastern Bloc? What were the means of participation in the socialist project with an "alternative" agenda and how did individuals and groups manage to weave their understanding of the "bright socialist future" into private and public spheres? This volume explores these and other questions and sheds light on the multi-faceted nature of late socialisms and the concepts of privacy and publicity in these contexts.

Beyond the Everyday: Social Performances of Privacy

The contributions in this section question the uniformity of the fabric of late socialist everyday life by focusing on the diversions from the "model socialist subject" that was created by the propaganda discourse. They explore paths that ordinary socialist citizens traversed to attain a better life, a "good life." This desire inspired and enabled many individuals to act on the "margins" of socialism,[43] thus contributing to a departure from socialist scenarios of life that had been envisioned by the state—a spin on socialism that fostered profound transformations in private and public spheres across the Eastern Bloc.

Lewis H. Siegelbaum starts the conversation by exploring the concepts of privacy and publicity in recent research on the USSR and countries of the Eastern Bloc. By focusing on the question of how Soviet subjects could build a decent life in conditions that appear to lack privacy, he revisits his earlier concept of "borders of socialism" and outlines a compelling framework of the *interaction* of the private and public spheres in the fields of domesticity, private ownership of cars, and migration.

The connections between mobility, private property, and privacy that lie at the core of Siegelbaum's chapter are further explored by **Jon Berndt Olsen** through leisure time activities in the GDR. He states that these activities constitute a space where a meticulous process of negotiating the boundaries of personal freedom, autonomy, and privacy took place in the East German socialist state.

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43 As already stated above, it is imperative to emphasize that when speaking about actions lying on the "margins" of socialism, we do not imply that these actions were disconnected from the system and happened outside of it—on the contrary, it is vital to see them as yet another product of the system, a piece of a larger puzzle that the socialist system represents.

He focuses on the vacation culture of camping and staying at private cottages that boomed in the 1960s–1980s to elucidate the reasons that motivated East Germans to choose this type of vacation over state-arranged retreats.

Natali Stegmann's contribution comes to grips with the idea of the "good life" in socialist Poland and explores it through the prism of advocacy that was performed by diverse actors—workers, the Party, and the clergy—via channels that were available to them at the time. She directs her gaze to the two core areas around which the debates evolved—the work and the family—and stresses the lack of distinction between them in the rhetoric of these actors. She suggests speaking of an idea of the "good life" that epitomized the balanced development of both spheres and their mutual nourishment of each other in the discourse of the era.

Agnieszka Sadecka continues the explorations of the public discourse in late socialist Poland by focusing on the work of two renowned female journalists, Małgorzata Szejnert and Hanna Krall who criticized the "good socialist life" through a subtle depiction of its drawbacks in their reportage texts. She examines the stories of the lives of ordinary workers that the two journalists published and delves into the tools that they used to craft their narratives in a manner, in which they not only responded to mainstream conventions of reporting on workers' life but also indicated certain failings of the socialist system to alert readers.

The Sounds of Youth: From Private Flats to Public Stages

While Part One explores broader attempts by citizens to organize a relatively comfortable life for themselves within late socialist systemic conditions, the second part of this edited volume delves into the transformations within the life of one specific social group—the youth. Young people who matured in the post-Stalinist era may have had a different journey of growing up and getting to know the world and themselves compared to their western peers, but, as contributions in this section demonstrate, this difference did not preclude them from actively engaging in the process of becoming an adult and crafting it to their liking through numerous channels that were not always visible to the authorities.

Andra-Octavia Cioltan–Drăghiciu lifts the curtain on the biopolitical discourse in Romania under Nicolae Ceaușescu by discussing the practices of shaping young people's sexual lives by the authorities as well as the youth themselves. She examines the constructions of norms of sexuality in Romanian legislation on abortion, late socialist press reports, as well as previously unexplored *Securitate* files, and oral interviews. This chapter sheds light on forms

and loci of practicing intimacy that young people had at their disposal. It also showcases the manner, in which they made avenues available to themselves through their own ingenuity and initiative. Finally, the chapter discusses the potential and limitations of these practices in shaping and cognizing the sexual side of the self under late socialism.

Young people often sought to develop their selves through music, clothing, and forms of socialization that involved group pastimes. Quite often, these pursuits went hand in hand with their fascination with the "forbidden other"—the West. Holes in the Iron Curtain enabled the penetration of western music into the vast territories of the Eastern Bloc, with jazz, rock, and punk music thriving there and finding their socialist "children"—those who would attempt to create similar music of their own. Declared "dangerous" one after another and even prohibited in some countries of the Eastern Bloc until a certain time,[44] these music currents uncannily found their "homes" both in private and public places.

Claudiu Oancea adds another layer to the discussion of late socialist Romania by exploring music as a field of negotiation between the state and citizens. He traces mechanisms of "normalization" and "othering" of jazz and rock music imported from the West that the Romanian state employed and demonstrates inner pluralities of the system that allowed for diversity within an allegedly homogeneous musical arena.

The discussion of the role of music in shaping the private self continues in **Xawery Stańczyk**'s chapter, where he traces the history of the punk movement in Poland in the 1980s. He does it through its relationship to public, private, and semi-private spaces that were sources of inspiration for the music and points of critique that were directed toward the state. He examines how punks shaped creative and socializing retreats and explored alternative ways of using the city and discusses new models of community that punks attempted to construct alongside systemic structures of domination and opposition that they encountered both in the public and the private spheres.

The Elusive Narrated Self: Cinematic and Literary Explorations

Just as punks in late socialist Poland used their music to criticize what they deemed to be the shortcomings of the socialist state, Soviet directors of the Brezhnev era attempted to reflect on the joys and torments of the socialist person

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44 Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Rocking the State: Rock Music and Politics in Eastern Europe and Russia* (Boulder, CO/Oxford: Westview Press, 1994).

through the cinematic lens. **Irina Souch** investigates several Soviet films of the 1970s–1980s that engage in a critical discussion of the idea of the "normal life." Unlike the objects of Natali Stegmann's study who furthered the concept of a "good life" as a demand for a better life, late Soviet film directors decided to forego explicit advocacy and turned instead to a psychological inquiry into the individual though the categories of "normality" and "self-realization." As Souch argues, in doing so, they portray a more complex reality of intertwined authoritative and private discourses than the one suggested by Alexei Yurchak in his study of late Soviet society, which she uses as a counterfoil for her analysis.

In the next chapter, **David Gillespie** shifts the focus to the literary field and delineates the trajectories of development of the concepts of "home" and "family" in the officially published texts of the 1950s–1980s. By examining their evolution within the genres of village and urban prose, he elucidates how writers used the private/public lens to reveal the tensions between History and histories that were inevitable when the State encroached on the life of an individual. His examination of portrayals of private life in the official late Soviet literature is complemented by **Christina Jüttner**'s exploration of the very same category in dissident texts. In her analysis of the life writing of Ludmilla Alexeyeva, Elena Bonner, and Tatiana Goricheva, she charts out cartographies of privacy and publicity that these female authors presented in their memoirs and reveals how amalgamated these spheres often were in the lives of women who had a strong commitment to the cause that they deemed to be of paramount importance, whether it was politics or religion. Her introspection into the world of female dissenters sheds light upon many gendered nuances of the dissident movement that rarely receive attention in this political group, dominated by men.

On Both Sides of Surveillance and Doctrine: (Re-)Claiming Agency

Among the multiple structures that undermined private realms while simultaneously strengthening a substantial sense of individual self-determination and opportunities for agency among the people, was the secret police. For instance, Paul Betts attempts to "reread the Stasi as an institution embedded in socialist society rather than hovering above it" to show that by intruding into people's private lives, "the Stasi's secret machinery of power both undermined and in

turn inadvertently created a sense of privacy among GDR citizens."[45] In doing so, he pleads for a dynamic perception of surveillance and power, since re-negotiations, arrangements, and individual strategies represent specific practices of privacy within socialism and within the range of the Stasi.[46] Secret police institutions of late socialist states may, therefore, become a constitutive distinction and an interactive partner in a performative action of what may be called *doing privacy* (inspired by the concept of *doing gender*).[47] The private as a discursive product may be seen as a performative outcome of active distinction of some individuals and groups *against* the secret police and their provocative interaction *with* the secret police. Stasi activities may have lost their secrecy and were commented on and used for provocation and dissident self-staging, which turned the Stasi into the opponent and audience of dissident agency. The surveilled subject thereby *did* publicity and privacy in active interaction with those that did the surveilling. **Mirja Lecke** pursues this line of thinking in her chapter and analyzes the representations of relations of three dissident writers—Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Aleksander Wat, and Wolf Biermann—with the secret services of their re-

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45 Betts, *Within Walls*, 23.

46 *Ibid.*, 50.

47 Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (1988); Candace West and Don H. Zimmermann, "Doing Gender," *Gender & Society* 1, no. 2 (1987). Performativity is also an important aspect of academic discourse on privacy, identity, and surveillance. Susan Gal discusses communicative, interactive construction of privacy/publicity in "A Semiotics of Public/Private Distinction," *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 13, no. 1 (2002). See also Tobias Matzner, "Beyond Data Representation: The Performativity of Big Data in Surveillance," *Surveillance & Society* 14, no. 2 (2016). For the use of the term "doing privacy" see, e. g., Hedda Bennewitz and Michael Hecht, "Doing Privacy: Kreisgespräche in der Sekundarstufe 1," in: *Konturen praxistheoretischer Erziehungswissenschaft*, eds. Jürgen Budde et al. (Weinheim/Basel: Beltz Juventa, 2017). In studies of late socialism, Natali Stegmann uses the concept of *doing gender* and posits that dissidence is the result of performative self-staging ("doing dissidence") and thus constructed by discourse in "Open Letters: Substance and Circumstances of Communication Processes," *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropaforschung* 65, no. 1 (2016), 46. See also Lukas Edeler, "Privatheit, Überwachung und die (real-)sozialistische Persönlichkeit," *Magazin des DFG-Graduiertenkollegs 'Privatheit und Digitalisierung'* no. 9 (December 2017). In the context of state surveillance in socialist dictatorships, which was often carried out extremely invasively and had devastating effects, performativity can sometimes serve as a helpful lens of studying how individuals coped with these intrusions. Marina Levina, born in socialist Odessa, wrote about her youth accordingly: "Surely the surveillance apparatus of the former Soviet Union was repressive, but it also created as much as it destroyed. Under the watchful eye of Lenin, we performed our faiths and our disobediences. We performed ourselves." Marina Levina, "Under Lenin's Watchful Eye: Growing Up in the Former Soviet Union," *Surveillance & Society* 15, no. 3/4 (2017), 534.

spective countries while focusing on the aspect of audio-taping and the opposition between the spoken and the written word that it involved.

Thomas Goldstein examines privacy from a similar perspective by referring to it as "a weapon" that Hermann Kant, President of the East German Writers Union, used to perform his discontent toward party leadership. His private retreat was examined by the Stasi, who played a crucial role in this struggle for control and agency. The latter two, however, are aspects which were not specific only to socialism's opponents. The regime itself existed in a permanent search for interpretational hegemony. Confronted by social and economic developments that existed in socialism, e.g., consumption and free time, the state tried to re-brand these tendencies of individualization as socialist by means of Marxist-Leninist discourse. **Lukas Raabe** analyzes these discursive attempts of re-claiming agency by the state by studying archival sources of the GDR social science, jurisprudence, and secret service institutions.

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Beyond the Everyday: **Social Performances of Privacy**

Lewis H. Siegelbaum
Kak u sebia doma

The Personal, the Private, and the Question of Privacy in Soviet Russia

Introduction

More than a decade has passed since the publication of *Borders of Socialism,* a volume of essays on private spheres in Soviet Russia. In the introduction to that volume, I expressed the hope that the book would contribute to what was described as the "mini-boom in private life studies in Russia."[1] Little did I suspect that in subsequent years, the mini-boom would turn into a fully-fledged one by no means limited to Soviet Russia. Susan Reid and David Crowley, Paulina Bren and Mary Neuberger, Cathleen Giustino, Catherine Plum, and Alexander Vari are among those who have edited volumes exploring dimensions of material culture and the private-public interface in Soviet-bloc countries, as did I.[2] There also have been several single-authored monographs, among which Paul Betts' *Within Walls: Private Life in the German Democratic Republic* (2010) is thus far the gold standard.[3] This edited volume is evidence of the continued interest in the exploration of new questions about privacy and private life in a part of the world where it was once thought these concepts did not exist or existed only in the shadows.[4]

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1 Lewis H. Siegelbaum, ed., *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres in Soviet Russia* (New York/Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 4.

2 Lewis H. Siegelbaum, ed., *The Socialist Car: Automobility in the Eastern Bloc* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011); Susan E. Reid and David Crowley, eds., *Pleasures in Socialism: Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern Bloc* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2010); Paulina Bren and Mary Neuberger, eds., *Communism Unwrapped: Consumption in Cold War Eastern Europe* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Cathleen M. Giustino, Catherine J. Plum, and Alexander Vari, eds. *Socialist Escapes: Breaking Away from Ideology and Everyday Routine in Eastern Europe, 1945–1989* (New York: Berghahn, 2013).

3 Paul Betts, *Within Walls: Private Life in the German Democratic Republic* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

4 One is reminded of the assertion by Walter Benjamin during his stay in Moscow during the winter of 1926/27 that "Bolshevism has abolished private life." Walter Benjamin, "Moscow," in *Selected Writings*, ed. Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 30.

Familiarizing myself with this literature has persuaded me that conceiving of privacy as lying outside socialism—beyond its borders, as it were—is not nearly as useful an approach as positing it as an inevitable part of the socialist project. Ruling Party personnel could accommodate privacy as part and parcel of a more mature socialist society, one that also exhibited improvements in the level of personal consumption and the quality of goods consumed. Indeed, something like a synergistic relationship existed between consumption and the private sphere: the greater the amount and variety of consumer goods, the more time one was inclined to spend consuming them in the privacy of one's own home. Though never sanctified to the extent it was in bourgeois societies, privacy was definitely gaining legitimacy during socialism's final decades.[5]

Borders of Socialism consisted of three parts, the first part on private enterprise and private property; the second part on domesticity and domestic space; and the third on behavior and private life. The analysis presented here similarly relates to three arenas where people engaged in intimate contact: in living spaces, while driving and maintaining personal automobiles, and (counter-intuitively, perhaps) in migration. For reasons that should become obvious, living space is given the most elaborate treatment. In each arena, I will be stressing symbiotic and hybrid connections with public life and state-sponsored or state-derived practices. As is the case with *Borders of Socialism*, my remarks are limited to Soviet Russia, but I hope they will serve as a basis for transnational comparisons. The common basis of theorization is the recognition that privacy is indeed a liberal principle, one so weakly represented in Russian and Soviet history that the Russian language notoriously lacks an equivalent word.[6] So how did people manage to find privacy outside its comfort zone?

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5 My ideas about privacy and consumption have been powerfully influenced by several essays in Zsuzsa Gille, Diana Mincyte, and Cristofer Scarboro, eds., *The Socialist Good Life: Desire, Development, and Standards of Living in Eastern Europe* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2020).

6 Proper Russian, a website about Russian language, literature, and culture, accessed May 10, 2017, http://blog.properrussian.com/2011/05/two-words-missing-in-russian.html. Eugenia Vlasova (Ottawa, Canada) writes there: "There are two English words that permanently give me a headache. They are tolerance and privacy [...] The phrase "May I have some privacy?" is normally translated into Russian like "Could you leave me alone" (Я могу побыть один/одна), which is not exactly the same."

Living Space

Forced redistribution of residential space, according to Tarik Cyril Amar, consti-
tuted "an essential practice of Soviet social transformation."[7] It was one of the
first things that Soviet authorities did along with the nationalization of banking
and large-scale industry, and, as Julia Obertreis notes in her book on living in
Leningrad between 1917 and 1937, it was the topic of the first Soviet feature
film, which debuted on the first anniversary of the October Revolution.[8] The
film was *Uplotnenie* (The Consolidation), directed by Aleksandr Panteleev with
a script co-authored by Panteleev and Anatolii Lunacharskii, the Commissar of
Enlightenment, who made a cameo appearance.[9] In the film, a metalworker
and his daughter, residing in a dank, dark subterranean room, are moved into
a professor's apartment. At first horrified, the professor comes to appreciate
the wisdom and justice of the rearrangement and is moved to give lectures at
a workers' club. Meanwhile, the professor's son falls in love with the worker's
daughter, and all ends well.

Rarely in everyday life did *uplotnenie* work out quite so happily. Quoted
below is one of many examples from the large number of ego-documents pro-
duced by those whose living spaces were *uplotnennye:*

> A band of armed Tchekists came to our house today. They walked in and out of the rooms,
> conferring with one another and paying not the slightest attention to us. "Comrade Ivantch-
> ikoff will live here," they said; "we'll put Katya and Tonya in there and Comrade Tyer-
> eshtchenko here [...]"
>
> "But that's my daughters' room," mother interposed tremulously.

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7 Tarik Cyril Amar, *The Paradox of Ukrainian Lviv: A Borderland City between Stalinists, Nazis,
and Nationalists* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 84.
8 Julia Obertreis, *Tränen des Sozialismus: Wohnen in Leningrad zwischen Alltag und Utopie 1917 –
1937* (Cologne/Weimar/Wien: Böhlau, 2004), 35. For the corresponding legislation and its ration-
ale, see Mark Meerovich, *Nakazanie zhilishchem: Zhilishchnaia politika v SSSR kak sredstvo up-
ravleniia liud'mi, 1917 – 1937* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2008), 11 – 19. For early experiences, see K. V.
Kharchenko, *Vlast' – Imushchestvo – Chelovek: peredel sobstvennosti v bol'shevistskoi Rossii
1917 – nachala 1921 gg.* (Moscow: Russkii dvor, 2000), especially 101 – 122; N. B. Lebina, *Povsed-
nevnaia zhizn' sovetskogo goroda: Normy i anomalii, 1920 – 1930 gody* (Saint-Petersburg: Letnii
Sad-Zhurnal "Neva," 1999), 178 – 202.
9 Institut istorii iskusstv Ministerstva kul'tury SSSR, *Istoriia sovetskogo kino* (Moscow: Iskusstvo,
1969), tom 1, 70 – 71. For the film, without any subtitles (captions), see Uplotnenie@Lenfilm 1918
god, accessed September 30, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kpA9RNCKS8.

> "Your young lady daughters," a Tchekist answered, "can very well sleep in the salon under the piano. And we'll put Comrades Fedka and Volodka there with them so they won't get bored."

> [...] An indescribable crew had taken possession of the rest of the house. We've had to send Dasha away now too. Only Masha is left. She cooks for us, and has to pass through all the other rooms and corridors to bring us our food. Sometimes the soldiers jump up from the beds where they lie sprawling and shout: "Well, let's see what you've cooked there for the bourgeois!" and spit in the dishes [...]. They play the "Waltz of the Dogs" on the piano all day, and the air reeks with the sharp smell of Machorka. The toilet's in a condition that defies all description, and the walls are covered with the most abominable inscriptions and drawings.[10]

The author's father, a physician taking up excessive living space in Ekaterinburg, was not as "conscious" as the movie's fictitious professor, but undoubtedly showed behavior more typical of those forced to share their apartments.[11] What about those Katyas, Tonyas, Fedkas, Volodkas, and comrades Ivantchikoffs and Tereshchenkos with whom the former bourgeoisie and nobility had to share their apartments? In Moscow alone, they numbered over half a million between 1918 and 1924.[12] It can only be imagined what their thoughts about sharing space were because their ego-documents are striking in their absence. So, we can only speculate how the workers and soldiers, whose mandated intrusion into the stereotypically large apartments in urban centers resulted in the radical shrinkage of the nobility's and bourgeoisie's "comfort zone" of privacy, felt. Were they awkward amidst a strange family and its finery? Did they resent the longer trips they had to make to factories located in the outskirts of the city or in the suburbs? Or did they savor the loss of the bourgeoisie's privacy as a marker of the end of class privilege? Maybe all three?[13]

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10 Alya Rachmanova, *Flight from Terror* (New York: John Day, 1933), 208–209. The book originally appeared in German as *Studenten, Liebe, Tscheka und Tod: Tagebuch einer russischen Studentin* (Salzburg: Verlag Anton Pustet, 1931). The author's real name was Galina Diuriagina (1898–1991). The section of the book containing the quoted material (September 1917–December 1918) is labeled "Holocaust."

11 For two other examples, see Paola Messana, *Soviet Communal Living: An Oral History of the Kommunalka* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 7–10, 13–14. Among Muscovites, see Marina Tsvetaeva's brief account in her *Earthly Signs: Moscow Diaries 1917–1922* (New York: NYRB, 2002), 75–78.

12 Milka Bliznakov, "Soviet Housing during the Experimental Years, 1918–1933," in *Russian Housing in the Modern Age, Design and Social History*, eds. William Brumfield and Blaire Ruble (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 85.

13 See Lebina, *Povsednevnaia zhizn' sovetskogo goroda*, 180–185, for observations along these lines by the writer Zinaida Gippius and economist S. G. Strumilin.

"In the Russian language," Natal'ia Lebina has observed, "'home' [*dom*] has a multitude of meanings. This includes architectural structures of almost any kind; a place where the spiritual atmosphere is of the greatest comfort for individuals (as in the expression 'like at home'—*kak u sebia doma*); the hearth and also a well-organized economic system among people related to each other—in other words, home is both a mentality and a part of material culture."[14] Most European languages need two words to convey all these meanings—"house" and "home" in English.

The thrust of Bolshevism both as an ideology and a lexical field was to replace home with living space (*zhilploshchad'*). Measured in square meters per person, living space—how it was allocated and regulated, experienced and remembered—became an arena where privacy, as it conventionally had been understood before the October Revolution, was hard to find. But it did not disappear. Consolidation did not necessarily lead to the elimination of privacy. Even in the vanguardist *bytovye kommuny* (domestic or household communes), which approximated the Bolsheviks' initial ideal of "total publicity," members "came to agree that a certain amount of privacy [...] was not necessarily 'un-comradely' in nature," particularly when it came to sexual relations.[15]

Eventually, Soviet authorities would tire of these experiments in living, regarding them as youthful excesses. Industrialization, accompanied by the military metaphors of battles, fronts, and advances, introduced military-like accommodation in barrack-dormitories for groups of former peasants. "Typically, even families lived in one of the large common rooms, hanging a cloth or a sheet for a

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14 "В русском языке понятие "дом" имеет множество смыслов. Им можно охарактеризовать архитектурное строение практически любого назначения; место, где духовная атмосфера наиболее комфортна для конкретной личности (выражение "как у себя дома"); систему хорошо организованного хозяйства и родовых связей людей. В словезнаке "дом", таким образом, закодированы и определенные признаки материальной культуры, и элементы ментальности." [Translations here and throughout the article are mine if not indicated differently.] Lebina, *Povsednevnaia zhizn' sovetskogo goroda*, 178; see also, Lynne Attwood, *Gender and Housing in Soviet Russia: Private Life in a Public Space* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 3.

15 Katerina Gerasimova, "Public Privacy in the Soviet Communal Apartment," in *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc*, eds. David Crowley and Susan E. Reid (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 209. Quotation from Andy Willimott, *Living the Revolution: Urban Communes and Soviet Socialism, 1917–1932* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 93. See also Klaus Mehnert, *Youth in Soviet Russia* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1933), and the special issue of *The Journal of Architecture* 22, no. 3 (2017) devoted to "The Social Condenser: a Century of Revolution through Architecture, 1917–2017."

modicum of privacy"[16] notes Stephen Kotkin, while describing the barracks-like accommodation in dormitories at Magnitogorsk (which set the standard for other new industrial towns). Meanwhile, in older towns, consolidation continued apace, with the communal apartment (*kommunalka*) becoming the characteristic institution. The *kommunalka*, in which different families shared bathroom and kitchen facilities, served as the spatial expression of what Katerina Gerasimova has called "public privacy," that is, "the openness of personal life to public scrutiny and the location of everyday domestic activities in collectively controlled territory."[17] In this context, tenants' own rooms, although technically not their private property, were often treated as such and called "home." To create functional zones and afford at least the illusion of privacy for parents and children or recently married couples, families demarcated sections in these condensed spaces with screens, curtains, and pieces of furniture.[18]

Yet, recounting their earlier experiences of communal life to an Italian inquirer, at least two former residents described the experience as "terrifying." Another noted the aspect of being "surrounded by stuff that does not belong to you," and a third person pointed to the "frightening lack of privacy." Others remarked that "in the *kommunalka,* I am sorry to say, it stinks," and that "kommunalka is a product of the Soviet regime, which generated a culture of hatred."[19] Little wonder that when Gerasimova's informants described the advantages of moving to a separate family apartment, they spoke of "the feeling that you are calm [and] free;" of the apartment being "all mine!;" and of having "my own toilet [and] of course my own kitchen." Family apartments in her schema were part of the "symbolic privatization of domestic space" that occurred during the Thaw years of the 1950s and remained a feature of the post-Stalin decades.[20] This echoes the view of Vladimir Shlapentokh who argued that, during the Khrushchev years, the emerging Soviet middle class was withdrawing its energy and emotion from state-led activities and public life in general in favor of in-

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16 Stephen Kotkin, "Shelter and Subjectivity in the Stalin Period: A Case Study of Magnitogorsk," in *Russian Housing in the Modern Age, Design and Social History*, eds. William Brumfield and Blaire Ruble (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 182.

17 Gerasimova, "Public Privacy," 209 – 211, 224.

18 *Ibid.*, 219 – 220. For literary allusions, see Svetlana Boym, *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 126 – 137; for a "virtual museum," see Ilya Utekhin, Alice Nakhimovsky, Slava Paperno, and Nancy Ries, "Communal Living in Russia: A Virtual Museum of Everyday Life," accessed May 22, 2017, http://kommunalka.colgate.edu/index.cfm. See also the thirty testimonies of *kommunalka* inhabitants in Messana, *Soviet Communal Living*.

19 Messana, *Soviet Communal Living*, 9, 32, 54, 78, 84 – 85, 136.

20 Gerasimova, "Public Privacy," 210, 223.

creasingly being absorbed in their private interests, especially their family and friends.[21]

This association between the family apartment and privacy remained strong, even among those who were too young to have memories of living in communal apartments as well as those who had never lived in them. Within the living space the family occupied, the sanctum sanctorum was the kitchen. There, lubricated by the prodigious consumption of vodka, conversations flowed easily and with an honesty rarely encountered anywhere else (however, see below under the discussion of garages). One might conceive of this activity as a form of "social privacy," in which the admission of extrafamilial individuals to this special space connoted a degree of intimacy normally associated with intrafamilial interaction. The diminutive size of most apartments' kitchens of the post-Stalin era contributed to the sense of intimacy.

Nevertheless, some scholars have emphasized not a greater sense of privacy afforded by family apartments but rather an increase in state surveillance. According to Victor Buchli, the post-Stalin era entailed "a liberalization of attitudes towards the domestic realm but [also] intense state and Party engagement with the terms of domestic life."[22] Inspired by Michel Foucault, Oleg Kharkhordin emphasized not so much state surveillance as mutual, "horizontal" surveillance among Soviet citizens, the ways that "the social, *sovetskoe obshchestvo*, was to allocate and regulate both the quasi-public [...] and the quasi-private [....]."[23] Part of this contrast can be attributed to the application of different axes with which to measure degrees of privacy: on the one hand, collective vs. individual; on the other, visibility vs. concealment. Differential attention to agency—the state's, apartment dwellers', neighbors' and the public's—also matters.

Susan Reid took something of a middle position. While detailing the impersonality of the *khrushchevki* (Khrushchev-era apartments, built with prefabricated large-panel components to maximize industrial methods of construction) and the intrusiveness of design professionals and technical aestheticians, she also

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21 Vladimir Shlapentokh, *Public and Private Life of the Soviet People: Changing Values in Post-Stalin Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). While not explicitly dealing with issues of privacy, Mark B. Smith sees the Khrushchev era as one in which state tenants achieved de facto ownership rights and emphasizes "citizen autonomy and initiative." See his *Property of Communists: The Urban Housing Program from Stalin to Khrushchev* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010), quotation on 180.

22 Victor Buchli, "Khrushchev, Modernism, and the Fight against Petit-Bourgeois Consciousness in the Soviet Home," *Journal of Design History* 10, no. 2 (1997), 163.

23 Oleg Kharkhordin, "Reveal and Dissimulate: A Genealogy of Private Life in Soviet Russia," in *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy*, eds. Jeff Weintraub and Krishnan Kumar (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 358.

acknowledges residents' strategies to "singularize" their standardized apartments—for example, by clustering personal items in places that enhanced their sense of ownership and privacy.[24] Though she does not cite them, Reid's insight into the dynamics of Soviet prefab apartment dwelling seems to be compatible with Michel Foucault's "little tactics of the habitat," and Michel de Certeau's distinction between the strategies of powerful institutions and the tactics of individual "consumers."[25]

However, other scholars have rejected the oppositional nature of these binaries by pointing to ways in which residents, either individually or collectively, mobilized themselves and the state to obtain and maintain accommodation that better suited them. They wrote letters to newspapers, filed formal complaints, organized residential meetings with architects and city planners, and ran housing committees, generally organizing themselves as a kind of civil society.[26] At least some of these initiatives resulted in the state enforcing tenants' right to be left undisturbed, or in other words, to enjoy more privacy.

Two things are striking about this historiography, though: first, it focuses almost exclusively on urban inhabitants and among them those residing in the capital cities of Leningrad and Moscow; second, it seems oblivious to the movement of population. Families seem permanently rooted, if not in the same apartment, then in the same city. In the interests of broadening the frame of reference and at the same time narrowing the focus, I cite an incident that occurred in the early 1970s in the mid-Volga town of Togliatti. I am adapting my account of this incident from my book on the life of the Soviet automobile in which I referred to it as "A Togliatti Marriage."[27]

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24 Susan E. Reid, "The Meaning of Home: 'The Only Bit of the World You Can Have to Yourself,'" in *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres in Soviet Russia*, ed. Lewis H. Siegelbaum (New York/Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

25 Michel Foucault, "The Eye of Power," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, ed. C. Gordon (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1980), 149; Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984).

26 See Steven E. Harris "'I Know all the Secrets of My Neighbors': The Quest for Privacy in the Era of the Separate Apartment," in *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres in Soviet Russia*, ed. Lewis H. Siegelbaum (New York/Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) as well as Steven E. Harris, *Communism on Tomorrow Street: Mass Housing and Everyday Life after Stalin* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2013); Attwood, *Gender and Housing,* 158–161; Christine Varga-Harris, *Stories of House and Home: Soviet Apartment Life during the Khrushchev Years* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015). Varga-Harris refers to "synchronizing the energies of state and society" (117).

27 Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 109–112.

Togliatti was essentially a new town built in the 1960s and '70s to accommodate more than 100,000 people who worked at the Volga Automobile Factory (VAZ), plus members of their families. Accommodation consisted of mostly two- and three-room units in buildings of 5-, 9-, 12- and 16-floors, constructed with panels according to the standardized (*tipizatsiia*) industrial method.[28] One of those two-room flats on Moskovskii Prospekt, to be precise, apartment 92 in building 100, measuring 29 sq. meters, became the object of discord. Sometime in 1972, Gennadii Ukhov, employed in the assembly and body division of VAZ, registered his marriage with Zoia Kuznetsova, who had a ten-year-old daughter from a previous marriage. No sooner did the newlyweds move in, though, then Ukhov fetched from the countryside his 81-year old mother and 62-year old sister and announced to Kuznetsova that she and her daughter should leave because he had only married her to obtain the apartment. In January 1973, the miserable Kuznetsova and her daughter took refuge in one of the factory's dormitories where she worked as a tutor.[29]

Up to this point, the fracas was entirely familial, played out in the privacy of the fifth-floor apartment. But thereafter, a bevy of public institutions intervened to try to sort things out: the tenants' board (*ZhEK*, or *zhilishchno-ekspluatatsionnaia kontora*) tried to effectuate the Solomon-like solution of subdividing the apartment or, failing that, arranging an (unspecified) exchange of apartments. A residence-based comrades' court with authority to fine malefactors heard the complaint from Ukhov's mother alleging maltreatment at the hands of her daughter-in-law. Kuznetsova for her part sent a petition to the district soviet's executive committee and requested the assistance of the trade union committee attached to her employer—VAZ's housing and communal services department. The union established a five-person commission to investigate the matter. Even the police got involved at one point when two neighbors hauled Ukhov off to the station for physically attacking Kuznetsova's daughter, causing her to cry out for help.[30]

"Always hard to define in the Soviet context," I wrote in *Cars for Comrades,* "the line between public and private seems particularly fuzzy in this instance.

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28 Lewis H. Siegelbaum, "Modernity Unbound: The New Soviet City of the Sixties," in *The Socialist Sixties: Crossing Borders in the Second World*, eds. Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), 70 – 73.

29 Togliatti State Archive (TGA), f. R-300 (Raionnyi sovet rabochikh deputatov avtomobil'nogo zavoda i ego ispolnitel'nyi komitet), op. 1, d. 50 (Protokoly zasedanii i doklady komissii po sotsialisticheskoi zakonnosti i podderzhaniiu obshchestvennogo poriadka, 1974), ll. 31 – 35.

30 *Ibid.*, ll. 40 – 41. The union's commission discovered that Ukhov had failed to have an earlier marriage to a woman with four children annulled after she had refused to change residence.

Perhaps this was because VAZ, the provider of jobs, housing, recreational facilities, and much else, served to intensify the intrusiveness of the paternalistic state."[31] Along the lines of the historiography discussed above, I now modify this top-down conclusion by suggesting that Soviet citizens themselves sought such intrusions—in effect, violating their own privacy—to achieve various ends.

Mobile Privacy?

Cars (or in Soviet parlance, "light automobiles" [*legkovye avtomobili*]) were the stepchildren of Soviet industrialization, celebrated more for the assembly-line method of production than what they offered in the way of mobility, freedom, or privacy. As late as 1965, only about one-third of the 200,000 cars produced in the country were made available for purchase by "the population," the other two-thirds either "distributed" (44%) or exported (24%).[32] Legally, cars had the same status as dachas, self-built homes, and appliances and furniture —they were "personal" (*lichnaia*) rather than "private" (*chastnaia*) property. This meant they could be used to fulfill the personal needs of the owner and his family but not for "profit, enrichment, or earnings."[33] The moral implications were obvious: personal needs were legitimate, and their expansion symbolized an increasingly sophisticated and prosperous society; private property was simply unsoviet.

Nevertheless, the distinction, especially in the case of cars, was a fiction.[34] Using one's "personally-owned" vehicle to transport foodstuffs and other items for sale, leasing it to someone else, and giving lifts for an agreed upon price as in a taxi were all illegal, but nonetheless well-known, practices. While it is true that turning cars into what Soviet law considered private property did not necessarily enhance one's privacy, one should not overlook the capacity of cars to transport people in search of greater privacy to out-of-the-way places, or to serve as makeshift bedrooms for a tryst. *Cars for Comrades* delicately alludes to this latter function in the case of one of its informants. In mentioning

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31 Siegelbaum, *Cars for Comrades,* 112.

32 See Table 6.2 in *ibid.*, 224.

33 *Izvestiia* (March 4, 1966). "His" because although the gender of Russian possessive pronouns depends on that of the object, car ownership was practically monopolized by men.

34 In the case of El'dar Riazanov's 1966 comedic film *Beregis' avtomobilia* (Beware the Automobile), the childlike hero, Detochkin, makes a different moral calculus by stealing cars from undeserving owners and with the proceeds of the (private?) sales, subsidizes orphanages and other worthy institutions.

that he earned some extra cash in the evening by charging people for rides, the informant noted that "there also were more pleasant encounters," with women he picked up.[35]

Car owners offended at least some carless citizens for several reasons. In letters to newspapers and at residents' meetings, those without cars called motorists "private persons" (*chastniki*) and "independent proprietors" (*edinolichniki*) —the latter term revived from the era of collectivization when members of collective farms could not own horses but those outside them could.[36] Such labels may betray envy, but the intrusion of cars and garages into hitherto common spaces provoked dismay as well. In the late 1950s, car owners were already demanding the inclusion of garages in plans for new dwellings. Nevertheless, to quote an American correspondent in Moscow from the early 1960s, "[a]s brand new blocks of apartments are opened they are almost immediately surrounded by a slum of patchwork garages put together by anxious owners of precious autos."[37] The most common location for these "patchwork garages" or more accurately, sheds, were the courtyards, liminal spaces, as Christine Varga-Harris describes them, "where children played and the elderly chatted during the day," while at night "young people, feeling constricted by their crowded homes, courted."[38]

Varga-Harris suggests that the very "lack of privacy that domestic space afforded [...] even in separate apartments" made "the pleasures [...] derived from these particular common spaces" even more appreciated. The appearance of the jerrybuilt garages thus not only offended aesthetic but also moral sensibilities; it privatized what had been the community's space. At the same time, however,

> [a]s the number of car owners proliferated, they became a community also: not just fathers and sons, but fellow car owners and neighborhood boys hoping to learn a thing or two about cars gravitated to the metal boxes in the evenings, on weekends, or whenever they had spare time.[39]

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35 Siegelbaum, *Cars for Comrades*, 237–238, 250. In the movie *Tri topolia na Pliushchikhe* (Three Poplars on Pliushchikha, 1967, dir. Tatiana Lioznova), a Moscow taxi becomes erotically charged when a cabbie picks up a married woman who has arrived by train from the village. By the time he drops her off, they agree to meet again later that evening—a promise the woman does not keep.

36 Harris, *Communism on Tomorrow Street,* 217–220.

37 Siegelbaum, *Cars for Comrades*, 230;

38 Varga-Harris, *Stories of House and Home*, 116.

39 Lewis H. Siegelbaum, "On the Side: Car Culture in the USSR, 1960s–1980s," *Technology and Culture* 50, no. 1 (2009), 18.

Thus, garages and sheds joined parked cars as spaces of male sociability and bonding, surrogate bars, as it were, where men could talk cars and other things, drink and smoke in the privacy of conditions of their own making.

But how *Soviet* was this? After all, Jean Baudrillard did not have the Soviet bloc countries in mind when he wrote that "the car too is an abode, but an exceptional one; [...] a closed realm of intimacy, but one released from the constraints that usually apply to the intimacy of the home."[40] Maintaining and fixing one's own car could be time-consuming, especially in a country where precision instruments, power tools, and other appurtenances were hard to come by. But when Mark Thompson described sheds as "places where men choose to define themselves by what they make and do—or perhaps plan to make and do," he was referring to sheds in Australia, not the USSR.[41] And, pointing to a row of sheds in the northern Russian city of Murmansk sixteen years *after* the end of the Soviet Union, a woman could tell a BBC reporter that "behind all these doors, inside all these garages without windows, there is so much going on, like it's a secret society."[42] As with living spaces, I suggest that cars, their maintenance, and storage, afforded—and continue to afford—opportunities for privacy regardless of the nature of the political regime or the prevailing ideology.

Privacy in Migration?

On the surface, migration does not appear to be propitious to privacy. Migration happens in public space and what distinguishes migrants from tourists, businesspeople, and other travelers is that they often travel under duress. In Soviet history, migration is typically associated with "resettlement" (*pereselenie*) which, though not necessarily coerced, did not afford migrants much legally sanctioned choice or flexibility in the way of an itinerary. Such *regimes* of migration, that is, the laws, procedures, and means governing the movement of people, served goals extraneous to those of migrants themselves. These goals might be enhanced state security, economic development, or punishment. But complimenting and often compensating for the inadequacies and harshness of regimes of migration are migrants' own *repertoires*—the practices, relationships and net-

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40 Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects* (London: Verso, 1996), 67.
41 Siegelbaum, "On the Side," 18.
42 *Ibid.*

works of contact that facilitated migrants' change of domicile.[43] Rarely if ever have people within Russian political space had the absolute freedom to migrate without taking into account the institutions and procedures governing their itineraries. Did state authorities governing migration have to adjust their regimes to accommodate migrants' capacities and dispositions? Sometimes they did, though the inequality of power generally favored regimes. In this respect, a parallel exists between repertoires of migration and the private sphere outside its comfort zone.

The question then is whether privacy can be found in migration. The most likely arena to find notions of privacy would be in deliberations about whether to migrate, by what means, and where to go. Of course, many migrants, especially during the Stalin era, did not have a choice in the matter. But especially in that period, decisions about staying or fleeing, splitting up the family or sticking together, acknowledging one's social origins or fabricating different ones were, perforce, private and often a matter of life and death. Rarely have people who engaged in such conversations left a record of them, but we can hear echoes of such decisions in interviews, memoirs, and other ego-documents. One example is Anna Dubova, who, when interviewed in 1994, "was eager to talk about her life, as if she had waited years for this opportunity." In 1929, Anna's father left his native village in Smolensk oblast for a construction site near Moscow after being labeled a kulak. While her mother and younger siblings soon joined him, Anna herself had to sign a paper renouncing her parents before she headed for Moscow where she roomed with her married sister, enrolled in a factory apprentice school, and successfully hid her family's stigma.[44]

A second and ultimately even larger outflow of people from the countryside to cities occurred from the 1950s through the 1970s. Out-migration of youth contributed significantly to the decline in rural population. The reasons for this included the practice of hard work for little compensation on collective farms and numerous educational opportunities in cities. Intra-familial discussions—for example, older women advising their daughters to avoid their experience of long working days and low pay—contributed as well. As Viktor Perevedentsev, the dean of Soviet demographers, observed toward the end of the Soviet era,

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43 Lewis H. Siegelbaum and Leslie Page Moch, *Broad Is My Native Land: Repertoires and Regimes of Migration in Russia's Twentieth Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), esp. 5–8, 17–18.
44 Barbara Alpern Engel and Anastasia Posadskaya-Vanderbeck, eds., *A Revolution of Their Own: Voices of Women in Soviet History* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 18–32. For a similar case related to a peasant family in the Urals, see T. I. Slavko, *Kulatskaia ssylka na Urale, 1930–1936* (Moscow: Mosgorarkhiv, 1995), 158–160.

"[t]he rural woman well knows that the life of her urban equivalent is easier [...] What rational mother would want her daughter to live the same life that she herself lived? That is why she 'shoves' her 15-year old daughter to the city after the eighth grade."[45] Or as the mother of a high-school graduate unceremoniously told a collective farm chairman in 1970, "Liuba did not finish high school so that she would work on the kolkhoz."[46] Plenty of rural girls did not need their parents to push them because they were only too well aware that they outnumbered men in their age cohort; if they wanted the possibility for a satisfying affective life, they needed to look elsewhere, namely, in the city.[47]

The decline in the rural population reached such high proportions that it led to reverse labor migration—city-dwellers mobilized to assist in performing seasonal tasks in the countryside. Student construction brigades sponsored by the Komsomol and analogous units consisting of soldiers fanned out across the Soviet Union during its last decades. But shadowing these state-sanctioned organizations were so-called "shabashniki," self-organized labor brigades that "fulfill[ed] construction, repair, and other work, entering into private transactions [*chastnye sdelki*] at high prices." This quotation comes from the first post-Soviet edition of the Ozhegov dictionary, the first of more than a dozen that carried an entry for "shabashnik." The private—meaning, hidden from higher authorities—nature of its operations explains its absence not only from Soviet-era editions of dictionaries but also Soviet economic and legal literature. Sometimes referred to as "wild," shabashniki were essentially a repertoire of migration mimicking and compensating for the inadequacies of state-sponsored practices.[48]

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45 V. I. Perevedentsev, *Molodezh' i sotsial'no-demograficheskie problemy SSSR* (Moscow: Nauka, 1990), 123. See also L. N. Denisova, *Zhenshchiny russkikh selenii: Trudovye budni* (Moscow: Mir istorii, 2003), 262.

46 Mikhail Osipov, "Ia smotriu na molodezh' nastoiashchuiu," *Sel'skaia molodezh'*, no. 6 (1970), 1.

47 See Lewis H. Siegelbaum, "People on the Move during the 'Era of Stagnation': The Rural Exodus in the RSFSR during the 1960s–1980s," in *Reconsidering Stagnation in the Brezhnev Era: Ideology and Exchange,* eds. Dina Fainberg and Artemy Kalinovsky (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016), esp. 46–50.

48 S. I. Ozhegov and N. Iu. Shvedova, *Tolkovyi slovar' russkogo iazyka* (Moscow: Az", 1992). For a lengthy interview with a veteran shabashnik, see "Zhitie odnogo shabashnika," *EKO*, no. 3 (1987). The term "wild" (*dikii*) also was used to describe tourists who forwent prescribed itineraries and reservations.

Conclusion

Privacy is unquestionably harder to find in Soviet-type societies where the foundational Bolshevik revolution ran counter to the liberal ideology that prized the right to be left alone. Aloofness, solitariness, personal autonomy, and other individualistic values were not easily articulated in circumstances where collectivism and (at least, political) conformity were celebrated and performed on a regular basis. Nevertheless, not only did privacy exist, albeit sometimes in the shadows, but as Betts has emphasized, precisely because it was often hard won, it probably mattered more—it could not be taken for granted. In this respect, it resembled some other historically bourgeois institutions and practices that, after being challenged or even rejected by ideological purists, made rather strong comebacks. These include the novel as an art form, professional spectator sports, Taylorist inspired wage incentive systems, and inheritable property.[49]

There is one other institution that predates the bourgeois era and was essential for the survival of privacy, namely the family.[50] The massive construction of family apartments under Khrushchev as discussed above represented an apotheosis of the family's comeback as an officially approved institution. It too had come under attack after 1917 from a variety of quarters but following the upheavals of the First Five-Year Plan (1928–1932), Soviet authorities seized upon the stabilizing attributes of the family to issue decrees limiting divorce and all but banning abortions. During the great emergency of World War II, the family served as an essential ally of the state in such crucial and massive operations as sustaining morale and in evacuation. It is in the latter aspect that I would like to conclude with a story that brings together many of the points that this article has attempted to propose. The story is Abram Tseitlin's, recounted in a memoir he deposited in the US Holocaust Memorial Museum's archive.[51] Evacuated from Ukraine's Vinnitsa oblast, Tseitlin and his family boarded a train that would take them all the way to Kagan (Kogon) in the Uzbek SSR, a journey that took about a month. The wagon to which his family was consigned had bunks around its periphery and a primitive stove in the middle. The stove gave the wagon its popular name—*teplushka* (a warm place). Such conveyances had carried dekulakized

49 On sport, see Robert Edelman, *Serious Fun: A History of Spectator Sport in the USSR* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); on inheritance, see Marcie K. Cowley, "The Right of Inheritance and the Stalin Revolution," *Kritika* 15, no. 1 (2014).

50 At least in its English translation, Homer uses the term to describe Telémakhos' desire "to ask for news about his father, gone for years." See *The Odyssey* (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1963), 5.

51 Memoirs of Abram Tseitlin, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Record Group 31.053.

peasants to special settlements and convicts to the Gulag camps in the 1930s just as they did deportees, soldiers, and evacuees during the war. Unlike "personal" automobiles used by families to take trips to the dacha or some auto tourist destination, the *teplushka* was depersonalized and as bereft of privacy as one could imagine.

Yet, Tseitlin remembers it as "a second home." "People can get accustomed to anything," he writes. "We adapted to the wagon, turning it into a sort of communal apartment, where each family had its own corner." What the conditions may have lacked in coziness or comfort was compensated by friendliness:

> After the women had woken the children and brought about some order, the free space started to fill up with people, who behaved as if they had known each other for years. Someone suggested feeding the children. In an instant, on our bench over a blanket instead of a tablecloth we laid down towels and on them put bread and butter, onions, hardboiled eggs, pickles and pieces of boiled chicken—traditional road fare that hasn't changed with the years.[52]

If one of the definitions of privacy is to behave "like at home" (*kak u sebia doma*), then Abram Tseitlin is correct—people can get accustomed to anything, even in spaces outside their comfort zones.

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52 *Ibid.*

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Jon Berndt Olsen

Opportunities and Boundaries of Personal Autonomy in East German Tourism

> From the shores of the Baltic Sea in the North with its beautiful beaches to the highlands in the South with its magnificent forests, picturesque cities, vacation spots, and reservoirs – from Kap Arkona on the Island of Rügen to the Fichtelberg in the Erz Mountains – the German Democratic Republic offers plenty of scenic beauty and cultural-historical sights.[1]

The quotation above from a 1978 travel guide produced by the East German tourist publisher *Tourist-Verlag* is an allusion to the romantic poet August Heinrich Hofmann von Fallersleben and his *Deutschlandlied*—"Von der Maas bis an die Memel, Von der Etsch bis an den Belt."[2] The East German state actively propagated this romantic vision of its natural surroundings in an effort to promote domestic tourism to its own citizens and play down the many restrictions it had placed on international travel. Tourism was an essential part of the state's assertion that East German workers had triumphed over capitalism.[3] The ruling Socialist Unity Party routinely touted its rich tourist offerings as a sign that workers were now experiencing many of the social rewards that were once reserved for the middle and upper classes.

In some respects, one could argue that the state was very successful in its efforts to cultivate a new culture of tourism in East Germany. The Socialist Unity Party (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*, SED) made great strides in the early postwar period to democratize tourism and the act of vacationing. As part of its 1949 constitution, the East German state codified a right to rest

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1 "Von der Ostseeküste im Norden mit ihrem herrlichen Strand bis zu den Mittelgebirgen im Süden mit prächtigen Wäldern, malerischen Städten und Ferienorten und Talsperren – von Kap Arkona auf der Insel Rügen bis zum Fichtelberg im Erzgebirge – birgt die Deutsche Demokratische Republik eine Fülle landschaftlicher Schönheiten und kulturhistorischer Sehenswürdigkeiten." [Translations here and throughout the article are mine if not indicated differently.] Karl-Georg Hirsch, *Reiseführer Deutsche Demokratische Republik* (Leipzig: Tourist-Verlag, 1978), 5.
2 While the third verse of Fallersleben's *Deutschlandlied* is currently the national anthem of the Federal Republic of Germany, the first verse, from which this text is taken, has a troubled past due to its use during the Nazi era. For more information 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, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002).
3 Alon Confino, "The Travels of Bettina Hempel," in *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics*, eds. Katherine Pence and Paul Betts (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 139.

and relaxation and guaranteed a minimum number of paid vacation days for its workers. As the country's economy slowly recovered in the 1950s and 1960s, the demand for vacations grew. Despite large scale confiscation of privately-owned resorts and hotels[4] combined with significant investments by the state and industry to build new facilities, East Germans increasingly demonstrated a growing desire to travel and enjoy vacations and the demand exceeded the official offerings to meet this need. While the motivations to travel were surely numerous, one plausible explanation is that vacations provided a kind of escape from everyday routines and presented a unique opportunity to reclaim a modicum of personal control over one's actions within a dictatorship.

In 1958, as West Germany experienced a boom in mass tourism, the writer and public intellectual Hans Magnus Enzensberger wrote a short piece titled "A Theory of Tourism" in which he argued that travelers were motivated by a "Fernweh nach der Freiheit von der Gesellschaft" or an urge to travel that stemmed from a desire to liberate themselves from society.[5] While his argument is embedded within a larger critique of middle-class society and the constraints imposed on the individual by an industrialized, capitalist economy, his observation about the connection between a desire to travel and the concept of freedom can also be applied to East Germany. Enzensberger's argument that tourism is a sort of escape from the realities of everyday life is a valid argument when looking at both societies, although some modifications need to be made to reflect the reality that East Germans did not enjoy the liberal democratic environment of their western neighbor.[6] While the travel experiences of East and West Germans were surely qualitatively different, the desire to regain some personal control and exercise personal choice in both societies was an important aspect of mass tourism in the postwar era.

Indeed, as the philosopher Beate Rössler has argued, the exercise of personal autonomy is a crucial component of how the meaning of privacy should be understood. According to Rössler, privacy is both physical and metaphysical—it is the "control over access by others."[7] Accordingly, Rössler argues that an important aspect of privacy is not only attaining control over a physical space such as one's home, but also over one's decisions and actions. As was the case with Enzensberger, her arguments also pertain primarily to liberal-democratic societ-

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4 Thomas Schaufuß, *Die politische Rolle des FDGB-Feriendienstes in der DDR: Sozialtourismus im SED-Staat* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2011), 37–38.

5 Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "Eine Theorie des Tourismus," in *Einzelheiten* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1962), 160–161.

6 Enzensberger, "Eine Theorie," 167.

7 Beate Rössler, *The Value of Privacy* (Cambridge/Malden, MA: Polity, 2005), 43.

ies, but can be equally applied to the experience of East Germans. Here, the state played a much more intrusive role in controlling its citizens, but this does not negate the desire by individuals to retain control over many aspects of their lives. Thus, when we apply Rössler's arguments to the realm of tourism in East Germany, some of the points of contact in which individuals had opportunities to exercise personal control and the places where some of the limits to that autonomy existed can be better understood.

These studies are rooted in the research of West German or West European societies and while many aspects of these analytical frameworks can be applied to the study of East Germany, there are other aspects where analyzing life in the GDR requires different parameters. In this case, it notably requires the work of Thomas Lindenberger and Ralph Jessen on the limits of dictatorship. Identifying the limits of a dictatorship allows us to better understand the role of individuals and groups—how they interact with each other as well as vis-à-vis the State or Party. As Lindenberger has asserted, "[s]ociety in the GDR was neither dead or silenced, it was above all limited."[8] This indicates that in contrast to western liberal societies, the desire by the State and Party to control many aspects of life in East Germany was significantly higher than in the West, and that there were limits to that power and by examining society at those points of limitation, everyday life in the GDR can be better understood.[9]

Within GDR studies, this type of personal privacy is often addressed as a part of what Günther Gaus termed the *Nischengesellschaft* or the society of niches, where individuals sought to carve out areas of one's life that were isolated from state interference. Gaus briefly mentions the role played by both camping and weekend cottages as two avenues in particular where GDR citizens were able to separate themselves from the state and reclaim a sense of personal autonomy.[10] However, Gaus's reference to these places is often primarily in terms of spatial separation and does not necessarily address the act of how or why individuals chose particular vacation options over others that were available at the time. One might argue that an act such as vacationing is not a political act, but within the context of East Germany and the SED's desire to control virtually all

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8 "Die Gesellschaft in der DDR war weder abgestorben oder stillgelegt, sie war vor allem begrenzt." 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/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 1999), 36.

9 Ralph Jessen, "Die Gesellschaft im Staatssozialismus: Probleme einer Sozialgeschichte der DDR," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, no. 21 (1995).

10 Günter Gaus, *Wo Deutschland liegt: Eine Ortsbestimmung* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1983), 164.

aspects of daily life, reclaiming the ability to vacation wherever and whenever one desired was political.

This chapter examines the growth in two forms of vacationing—camping and the use of weekend cottages—and argues that several structural and policy changes in East German society created the necessary framework that allowed East Germans to exercise greater control over planning their vacations and led to a boom in these two types of vacation as opposed to those that were officially offered by the East German state. By focusing primarily on the structural changes and the manner in which these changes affected the relationship between the act of vacationing and personal autonomy, this work differs from most of the current literature on tourism in East Germany, which tends to focus primarily on the role of the FDGB vacation service (*Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund*, the national worker's union)[11] or specific areas of interest such as ocean cruises, military vacation homes, or the transition to a market economy.[12]

Socialist Vacations

The desire by trade unions and socialist parties to provide a means for workers to enjoy paid time off and subsidized vacations was a long-term goal of the German labor movement. During the interwar period, there were numerous efforts by German trade unions to purchase, maintain, and rent out vacation homes to union members. In Jena, the Ferienheim Genossenschaft, which was founded in 1913, had built thirteen vacation homes by 1928 that were rented to over

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11 See in particular: Hasso Spode, *Goldstrand und Teutonengrill: Kultur- und Sozialgeschichte des Tourismus in Deutschland 1945 bis 1989* (Berlin: Moser, 1996); Hans Walter Hütter and Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Bonn), *Endlich Urlaub!: die Deutschen reisen: [Begleitbuch zur Ausstellung im Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn, 6. Juni bis 13. Oktober 1996]* (Cologne: DuMont, 1996); Christopher Görlich, *Urlaub vom Staat: Tourismus in der DDR* (Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 2012); Schaufuß, *Die politische Rolle*; Heike Wolter, *„Ich harre aus im Land und geh, ihm fremd": Die Geschichte des Tourismus in der DDR* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 2009); Heike Wolter, *Reisen in der DDR* (Erfurt: Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Thüringen, 2011); Ralf Pierau, *Urlaub, Klappfix, Ferienscheck: Reisen in der DDR* (Berlin: Eulenspiegel, 2003).
12 Christa Anders, *Traumreisen als Schiffsärztin auf MS „Völkerfreundschaft"* (Kückenshagen: Scheunen-Verlag, 2008); Udo Beßer, *Das Militärerholungswesen in der DDR: Erholungsheime, Ferienlager, Kureinrichtungen* (Berlin: Steffen, 2012); Heike Bähre, *Nationale Tourismuspolitik in der Systemtransformation: Eine Untersuchung zum ostdeutschen Tourismus (1989–1999) Bd. 1* (PhD. diss., TU Dresden, 2003).

18,000 workers, albeit for an average of just three days.[13] Some workers also succeeded in negotiating paid time-off within certain industries or at certain factories, but these instances did not represent a widespread phenomenon. Under national socialism, subsidized vacations were used as part of a larger propaganda effort called *Kraft durch Freude* (Strength through Joy), although in reality, only a few thousand individuals took advantage of such travel opportunities each year.[14] The "Strength through Joy" program offered a variety of excursions, weekend bus trips, and even a few cruises to Norway or along the Mediterranean. After the war, the new East German government wanted to distance itself from the Nazi Party and denied any connections between its efforts and the "Strength through Joy" program. Nonetheless, it is difficult to ignore the fact that the FDGB "Vacation Service" did take on many of the propagandistic and organizational elements of that program.[15]

After the Second World War, legislation was initiated by most European countries that guaranteed workers a basic number of paid vacation days. The East German state, however, went a step further and codified a "right to relaxation" (i. e., paid vacation) in its first constitution in 1949.[16] The number of days was extended from twelve to fifteen in 1967 and to eighteen in 1979. Moreover, youth under the age of eighteen, apprentices, mothers, and those who worked in a three-shift, 24-hour factory received additional days. At the same time, the East German state and the SED attempted to assert a high level of control over the manner in which its citizens could enjoy that time off work. The SED was keen that workers use their vacations to recuperate physically and at the same time grow intellectually and culturally—with the hope of cultivating workers who were more in tune with the ideological goals of the Party. To this end, the

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13 Hasso Spode, *Wie die Deutschen „Reiseweltmeister" wurden: Eine Einführung in die Tourismusgeschichte* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009), 108.

14 Shelley Baranowski, *Strength through Joy: Consumerism and Mass Tourism in the Third Reich* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004). While many workers participated in shorter outings and day-trips, only a few were given opportunities to go on longer trips.

15 Hasso Spode, "Tourismus in der Gesellschaft der DDR: Eine vergleichende Einführung," in *Goldstrand und Teutonengrill: Kultur- und Sozialgeschichte des Tourismus in Deutschland 1945 bis 1989*, ed. Hasso Spode (Berlin: Moser, 1996); Hasso Spode, "Fordism, Mass Tourism and the Third Reich: The 'Strength through Joy' Seaside Resort as an Index Fossil," *Journal of Social History* 38, no. 1 (2004); Gundel Fuhrmann, "Der Urlaub der DDR-Bürger in den späten 60er Jahren," in *Goldstrand und Teutonengrill: Kultur- und Sozialgeschichte des Tourismus in Deutschland 1945 bis 1989*, ed. Hasso Spode (Berlin: Moser, 1996); Görlich, *Urlaub vom Staat*.

16 "Recht auf Erholung." Art. 16 (1), Verfassung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik vom 7. Oktober 1949, documentarchiv.de, accessed July 1, 2019, http://www.documentarchiv.de/ddr.html.

GDR offered "organized" (subsidized) travel packages through a voucher system administered by the FDGB.[17] For many workers, especially early on, the opportunity to take a subsidized vacation with paid time-off was the first time they traveled for pleasure in their lives, since historically, vacations had been the preserve of the middle and upper classes.

The division of Germany and Europe into two Cold War camps restricted the scope of travel for most East Germans. While some East Germans had the pleasure of vacationing on the shores of Lake Balaton in Hungary or the Black Sea in Romania or the Soviet Union, the number of those who participated in official vacations outside of the GDR was often under 10% each year.[18] For the majority of East Germans, vacationing meant finding a place to escape *within* the borders of East Germany. This necessity of finding places to vacation within one's own country was not unique to the East German experience. As Paulina Bren has noted, private ownership of weekend cottages in Czechoslovakia was even more popular than it was in the GDR and owning a *chata* "while not comparable to a trip to Italy – promised to deliver on a regular basis the sort of rewards that communism and the communists had been promising for so long."[19] By 1989, however, the Socialist Unity Party (SED) had cut off options for traveling to neighboring Poland and Czechoslovakia as well as nearby Hungary. Both Poland and Czechoslovakia had previously been countries for which East Germans did not even need a travel visa but were now off-limits. These new restrictions added to earlier frustrations regarding the limitation of travel possibilities and led protesters in 1989 to rally behind the right to travel freely—*Reisefreiheit*.[20]

Each year, the FDGB awarded factories vacation vouchers based on the size of their workforce, their financial contribution to the economy, and the kind of work that they were engaged in. Factories in sectors that were deemed essential for the East German economy— like heavy industry, mining, and certain manufacturing sectors—often received a higher percentage of the vouchers than those

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17 Görlich, *Urlaub vom Staat.*

18 For example, even in 1978 when East German mass tourism was well established, the number of those traveling outside the GDR was just 7%. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, *Urlaub und Tourismus in beiden deutschen Staaten* (Bonn: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 1978), 21.

19 Paulina Bren, "Weekend Getaways: The Chata, the Tramp, and the Politics of Private Life in Post-1968 Czechoslovakia," in *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc*, eds. David Crowley and Susan E. Reid (Oxford/New York: Berg, 2002), 125.

20 For many people who took to the streets in protest against the East German state in the autumn of 1989, the freedom to travel (*Reisefreiheit*) was one of the most prevalent slogans alongside calls for political freedom and the freedom of the press. These issues sustained months of protest that ultimately brought down the Communist government in East Germany and paved the way for German unification in October 1990.

engaged in lighter industries or clerical work. FDGB vouchers covered only a small fraction of the entire workforce and typically one could be eligible for such an FDGB vacation every three or four years. Once the vacations were distributed to the factories, local committees decided which workers received the vouchers. The criteria for selecting people who would receive the vouchers was governed by a directive from the FDGB but allowed each local committee a great deal of control over the ultimate choice.[21]

One impetus for the voucher system was to create a degree of competition between factories and reward those that were most productive, strategic to the goals of the state, and loyal to the Party. Within each factory, there was also a tendency to use the vouchers to reward the most productive workers, but also provide relief for certain classes of workers, such as working mothers. Thus, while the FDGB voucher system was a means of control and propaganda, there were also elements of genuine social welfare involved in assigning them. Such social benefits came at a cost for the small nation-state—with up to 10% of the GDR's annual budget being spent on subsidizing vacations.[22]

The individuals who took advantage of the organized travel options surely benefited financially but at the cost of having one's vacation highly controlled by the ideological program of the SED. For example, while vacationers who spent a 13-day FDGB organized stay enjoyed traditional vacation-time activities —swimming, hiking, cycling, and the like—they were also treated to lectures from Urania and the Cultural League (*Kulturbund*) on topics ranging from local history to socialist innovations in science and technology or day-trips to national memorial sites dedicated to the anti-fascist resistance.[23] Yet, a trip to the Baltic Sea was for many the epitome of personal travel freedom, especially for those who ventured to the many nude beaches (FKK, *Freikörperkultur*), which were legalized in 1956 and inspired a cult following.[24]

These organized vacations made up only a minority of the vacations taken by East Germans each year. Increasingly, especially after the mid-1960s, East Germans organized their own vacations. Any kind of travel or vacation that was not routed through the FDGB or arranged by the state-owned companies, can be grouped together into the privately organized category. Some company-sponsored vacations could also be a part of this category, depending on the way that vacations were distributed within the institution and the type of flexibility

21 Hans Eberl, *Feriendienstkommission: Schriftenreihe Die Kommissionen der Betriebsgewerkschaftsleitung (FDGB)* (East Berlin: Tribüne, 1987), 15.

22 Pierau, *Urlaub, Klappfix, Ferienscheck*, 43.

23 Wolter, *Reisen*, 14.

24 *Ibid.*, 23.

that individual workers had over when and where they traveled. Beyond the official organized options, GDR citizens could opt to book a private room, go camping, stay with relatives, take a hitchhiking tour (something that was popular among the youth), stay at one's garden house or weekend cottage, or simply decide to stay at home and relax. Increasingly, individuals also gained access to booking rooms at state-owned hotels and could take advantage of offers by the official state travel agency, the *Reisebüro der DDR*, especially if they wished to travel abroad to the Soviet Union or some of the other socialist countries. *Jugendtourist* was a special travel agency that offered discounted travel packages exclusively for the nation's youth and was a subsidiary of the East German youth organization—the FDJ (*Freie Deutsche Jugend*).

The FDGB had worked for years to spread out the timing of vacations but struggled to fill most of the beds outside of the May to September window during the year. Companies typically used their cottages during this period too, but more often during July and August. In the case of the distribution of privately organized vacations, most of them, about two-thirds of all private vacationers booking cottages or hotels, were taken in July and August. Camping also saw the highest concentration of vacationers in July and August, with 93%.[25] A 1977 survey reflects this statistic with 74.7% of respondents indicating that they wanted to take a vacation in summer, with only 8.4% preferring spring, 7.9% desiring to travel during fall, and only .6% indicating a preference for winter. Another 8.4% indicated that their preference varied.[26]

There were several reasons for the growth of privately organized individual travel within the GDR and abroad. The declining quality of the subsidized vacations offered by the FDGB over time compared to the increasing cost of these vacations. While many still took the offer of a subsidized vacation when they received one (which was typically only every three or four years), a majority of GDR citizens desired to take a vacation every year.[27] This meant finding a means to do so without being dependent on the FDGB system. The choice that

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25 Institut für Marktforschung, Leipzig, "Analyse der Urlaubs- und Kurzreisen der DDR-Bevölkerung und Vorhersage der Bedarfsentwicklung bis 1980" (September 30, 1976), BArch, DM/1/8993, Table 25.

26 Institut für Marktforschung, Leipzig, "Durchführung und Auswertung einer Bevölkerungsbefragung zur touristischen Freizeitbeschäftigung im Jahre 1977 und über künftige Reisewünsche" (1978), 39, BArch, DM/1/8996.

27 Institut für Marktforschung, Leipzig, "Analyse der Urlaubs- und Kurzreisen der DDR-Bevölkerung und Vorhersage der Bedarfsentwicklung bis 1980" (September 30, 1976). According to this 1976 survey, 66% of the respondents indicated a desire to take a vacation every year and another 12.4% indicated they planned on taking a vacation every 2–4 years.

they had in the season they took a vacation in as well as the destination were also critical motivating factors for many East Germans to organize their own vacations. By looking at long term trends, a critical turning point in the East German vacation experience between the 1960s–1980s can be isolated. It was at this time that several structural factors, as well as certain policy decisions by the Communist Party, allowed an increasing number of people to forego the state's system of organized vacations and instead take control back into their own hands. Especially during the 1970s–1980s, we can trace an ever-expanding desire by East Germans to vacation, relax, and explore new destinations outside the official FDGB vacation system. While the vast majority of vacations that were taken were confined within the borders of the GDR, occasionally many people would also have the opportunity to travel abroad. Undoubtedly, the ability to exercise control over one's vacation and escape (at least in theory) the control and organization by the state was a motivating factor in the expansion of individually organized vacations. As Thomas Schaufuß has argued, if an individual did not receive a subsidized organized vacation from the FDGB, the workplace, or through the state tourist agency, there was no other choice but to organize a vacation for oneself. In fact, as Schaufuß points out, by the 1970s, over half of the vacations taken by East Germans followed this independent path.[28]

A likely factor that spurred this growth of individuals organizing their own vacation was the decision by the FDGB in 1963 to change the way in which it charged for its 13-day vacation vouchers. Prior to 1963, the FDGB charged a set rate of 30 Marks, regardless of the destination, season, and type of accommodation. However, from 1963 onwards, the FDGB used a variable scale based on these factors with the costs of the vacation ranging from 30 to 100 Marks.[29] One logical consequence was that families sought out alternatives that might cost less or cost the same but over which they had more control. This was especially important for families with school-age children who wanted to travel during the weeks of summer vacation. Additionally, those who continued to participate in the FDGB vacation service had increased expectations. If they were now paying more for their vacations, they also expected better quality accommodation, more control over when and where they traveled (with most preferring to travel in August and to the Baltic Sea), as well as a higher quality and quantity of food, activities, and excursions.

Over time, the increasing ability to take such "unorganized" or individually planned vacation trips allowed East Germans to reclaim a sphere of privacy and

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28 Schaufuß, *Die politische Rolle*, 129.
29 Görlich, *Urlaub vom Staat*, 75–79.

personal liberty from the state. Access to automobiles provided flexibility, and the state began developing regional recreation areas near the larger cities. Most notably, camping sites saw an increase in popularity beginning in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Additionally, a loosening of regulations regarding the leasing of property for building privately owned weekend cottages created an additional surge of families seeking to carve out a niche of privacy within an otherwise controlling state.

A New Framework for Travel

A significant change occurred during the late 1960s in the development of tourism and the practice of vacationing in East Germany that can be traced primarily to two structural changes in East German society. The first was the access to private automobiles by East German families. The second contributing factor was an increase in leisure time as the work week was shortened from six to five days. Taking time off work for a two-week vacation now meant using only ten vacation days instead of twelve, thus making the decision to go on vacation more appealing to workers who had to balance the desire to relax with other needs. These structural societal changes were mirrored in the West as well, albeit on a larger scale. Both German states saw a marked increase during the 1960s and 1970s in both consumer consumption and personal leisure time. Higher wages and increased mobility accelerated the demand for vacationing, and it quickly became a significant part of a person's life and yearly ritual. According to a 1970 survey, 50% of all adults took a vacation in East Germany for an average of 13.8 days. While this number is significant in order to analyze vacation trends in the GDR, it is also noteworthy that 20% of the respondents reported a desire to travel that was not fulfilled. Therefore, even with over half the adult population taking an extended vacation, there was still a significant section of the population that had an unsatisfied demand.[30]

While East Germany never experienced the level of automobile saturation that was prevalent in West Germany, the growth rate of automobiles in the East was quite significant, allowing East Germans to move freely throughout the country.[31] In 1960, there were just 313,000 cars registered in East Germany,

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[30] "Analyse über die Entwicklung des Erholungswesens der DDR von 1966–1970" (October 15, 1971), 2, BArch, DY/34/24944.

[31] Luminita Gatejel, "The Common Heritage of the Socialist Car Culture," in *The Socialist Car: Automobility in the Eastern Bloc,* ed. Lewis H. Siegelbaum (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011).

but this jumped to 1.17 million by 1970 and 2.68 million by 1980.[32] This upsurge in personal mobility augmented already extensive, if not robust or luxurious public transportation options—including buses, trains, and limited air travel. However, unlike these public transportation options, the use of one's private automobile allowed East Germans unprecedented flexibility in travel arrangements and the ability to set one's own schedule.[33] From the perspective of enhancing one's personal freedom, this statistic cannot be overlooked.

The Party's reaction to the growth in private vacations was split. On the one hand, the Party functionaries worried about the lack of oversight the state had on activities and excursions taken by such vacationers. On the other hand, the higher the number of families who organized their own vacations, the lower was the demand for subsidized vacations by the FDGB and factories, which was seen as a positive result. They did, however, worry that the increase in the use of private automobiles in particular was causing an additional strain on the already overstretched ability of the state to provide fuel, car care, and repairs while traveling.[34] Additionally, an analysis of vacation trends in 1971 by the FDGB emphasized the need to incorporate this trend into future state planning efforts. The report stated that an increasing number of citizens were opting to privately organize their vacations and were drawn to places that were easily accessible by automobile. This expanded the number of vacation spots, since these families would live on the outskirts of town and drive to beaches just for the day, but also created many new challenges for the state and Party planners as well as an oversaturation of people by the beaches and considerable strain on gastronomic resources. Another factor of concern for the state was the fact that those who resided outside these coastal towns were not subject to the local tourism tax (*Kurtaxe*) but took advantage of the resources in towns that charged these taxes.

According to a survey conducted by the Institute for Market Research in Leipzig in 1978, the predicted growth in the use of private automobiles had become quite significant. 48 % of the respondents reported having used a personal automobile during their vacations compared to just 40 % who traveled by train

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32 Federal Office of Statistics, *Datenreport 1992: Zahlen und Fakten über die Bundesrepublik Deutschland.* (Bonn: Federal Republic of Germany, 1992), 376 – 377.

33 Marc Dahlbeck, *So sind wir gereist: unterwegs in der DDR* (Stuttgart: Transpress-Verlag, 2012), 84 – 85. Dahlbeck notes that access to an automobile was an essential element of being able to organize one's own vacation in the GDR.

34 "Analyse über die Entwicklung des Erholungswesens der DDR von 1966 – 1970," (October 15, 1971), 6.

and 8% who traveled by bus.[35] Thus, many people even among those who were taking advantage of "organized" vacation trips, opted to travel by their own car and not use other forms of transportation, thus allowing more flexibility and control over the time spent at their destination. The percentage of those using automobiles to travel abroad (mainly to neighboring Poland and Czechoslovakia as well as Hungary) was already over 50%.[36] Indeed, with the introduction of visa-free travel to Czechoslovakia and Poland in 1972, an increasing number of families opted for vacations in and around Dresden or along the Polish border so that they could take easy day-trips to the two neighboring socialist countries. Often the purpose of such day trips was to purchase items that were cheaper in the neighboring country or to visit relatives from the west, who could often procure a visa to Czechoslovakia but not to the GDR.[37]

As the socio-economic status of some citizens increased during the 1960s–1970s in East Germany, more and more families could afford to organize their own vacations, own a weekend cottage, or rent a place at the most desired vacation destinations. Income distribution, however, did not seem to drastically affect the desire to travel privately. According to a 1976 survey, an average of 27.3% of all vacationers privately organized their vacations, while just over 10.9% more, or 38.2%, did so if earning over 1500 Marks a month or more.[38] For some, this perceived hallmark of upward mobility was seen as competition to the established system of FDGB and factory-sponsored vacations—even crowding them out of the sought-after destinations. The FDGB central office received many complaints by local union representatives complaining about how they perceived private vacationers pushing out regular workers. For instance, the local union representative at a small ceramics plant in Zwickau wrote to complain about losing a spot for a company-owned two-axel camping trailer at Seebad Bensin on the Baltic Sea:

> One can sense an increasing trend at the Baltic Sea, the Berlin lakes, in Plau and Müritz that one wants to be by oneself. This includes Mme. Professor, Mr. Doctor, the private en-

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35 Institut für Marktforschung, Leipzig, "Durchführung und Auswertung einer Bevölkerungsbefragung zur touristischen Freizeitbeschäftigung im Jahre 1977 und über künftige Reisewünsche," (1978), 18.

36 *Ibid.*, 23.

37 Author's interview with Annette and Wolfgang A., in Erfurt, Germany (November 25, 2015). Annette and Wolfgang A. of Erfurt, for instance, arranged yearly vacations in Czechoslovakia with Annette's brother, who was not allowed into the GDR after having received an emmigration visa to West Germany.

38 Institut für Marktforschung, Leipzig, "Analyse der Urlaubs- und Kurzreisen der DDR-Bevölkerung und Vorhersage der Bedarfsentwicklung bis 1980" (September 30, 1976), Table 27.

trepreneur, the tradesman, and, and, and. Put shortly, all those who year after year can afford a Wartburg de Lux. The private ownership of bungalows on the Baltic coast or the shores of the inland lakes is growing, while the proportion of workers from the People's Own Factories [VEB] shrinks. The workers still want to be allowed to take a vacation just like the [owners of a] Wartburg de Lux and also get massaged by the waves of the Baltic Sea.[39]

There was growing envy from workforce representatives toward those who were able to afford a privately organized vacation and they implored for the needs of the workers to not be forgotten. These structural shifts were not lost on the Party central planners, who observed in a 1970 report:

> The number of organized vacation packages offered [by the FDGB] has stagnated in the past few years, while other forms of individual vacations have steadily risen: private weekend cottages, bungalows, privately rented apartments. Most of all, camping has risen sharply.[40]

However, the challenge was that the GDR could not afford to build more FDGB-owned vacation homes while meeting other consumer demands that were mounting in the late 1960s till the fall of the Berlin Wall. Since it was increasingly clear that the state could not meet the needs of its citizens, they looked for non-state sponsored alternatives, such as camping and cottages of their own.

The second significant change came in the form of increase in free time. In April 1966, the East German government announced that it would move workers from a six-day to a five-day work week on alternating weeks. At the same time, overall vacation days increased from twelve to fifteen.[41] In April 1967, the government proclaimed that it would end the practice of working on alternating Satur-

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39 "Es macht sich hauptsächlich an der Ostsee und den Berliner Seen bis hinaus nach Plau und Müritz eine Tendenz immer spürbarer, daß man gerne wiederunter [sic!] sich sein will. Das ist die Frau Professor, der Herr Doktor, der Privatunternehmer, der Handwerker und, und, und. Kurz alle, die sich Jahr für Jahr immer wieder einen oder auch mehrere Wartburg de Lux leisten können. Der Privatbesitz an Bungalows Ufer Ostsee und Ufer Binnensee wird immer größer und der Anteil der Werktätigen von VE-Betrieben immer kleiner. Auch der Arbeiter möchte weiterhin Urlaub machen dürfen wie der Wartburg de Lux und sich ebenfalls von den Ostseewellen massieren lassen." Letter from VEB Hazet, Zwickau to FDGB Bundesvorstand, Abt. Feriendienst, Berlin (October 12, 1970), BArch, DY/34/17769.

40 "[...] die Zahl der angebotenen Reisen im organisierten Erholungswesen seit einigen Jahren im wesentlichen stagniert, während sich die Formen der individuellen Urlaubsgestaltung, z.B. eigene Wochenendhäuser, Bungalows, Privatvermietungen, ständig erhöht haben. In sehr starkem Maße hat sich das Campingwesen entwickelt." "Analyse über die Entwicklung des Erholungswesens der DDR von 1966 – 1970" (October 15, 1971), 232.

41 Most Christian holidays were struck—Easter Monday, Ascension Day, the Day of Repentance and Prayer, and Reformation Day were no longer celebrated.

days and move to a full five-day work week beginning at the end of August that year. This gradual transition to more recreation time meant that workers now had considerably more control over how they structured their time off. While the increase in time-off for workers was done at the initiative of the state, the SED was very concerned by this extra time and scrambled to offer additional educational and cultural offerings. The higher echelons of the Party were worried about this change and did not want the workers to waste their newly won free-time and instead commit this time toward further political education and self-improvement.[42]

One of the initiatives of the Party was to develop new regional recreation areas designed to meet the demands of increased free time on the weekends and also as a possible alternative to longer vacation stays by some workers. Recreational areas like Buckow near Frankfurt/Oder, the reservoir in Pöhl south of Gera, the small towns surrounding Berlin or Rostock on the Baltic Sea, and campsites throughout the country saw an immediate rise in weekend activity. Younger visitors were drawn to areas that offered special events, athletic activities, films, dance, and concerts. Older visitors sought to escape the hustle and bustle of the cities and desired quiet places or wanted to organize their own activities on the weekends.[43]

It was important to the top Party officials that the workers use their new time off productively and if possible, strengthen their loyalty to the socialist state. In reality, most workers used the additional time to catch up on housekeeping and relaxing at home.[44] Yet, this did not stop the state from creating opportunities for evening and weekend recreational activities. The East German press launched a campaign to promote all possible activity options for the increased leisure time. For instance, the newspaper *Neue Zeit* (The New Time) ran an article assuring people that the restaurants in the Köpenick recreation area were prepared for the surge of visitors on weekends after the introduction of the alternating Saturday work schedules began in April 1966.[45] *Neues Deutschland* (New Germany) ran an article a few days later highlighting weekend excursion opportunities both in and around Berlin.[46] Using newspapers, television, and radio programs,

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42 Komitee für Touristik und Wandern der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, "Empfehlungen der 11. Tagung des Komitees für Touristik und Wandern der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik für die weitere Entwicklung der Wochenend- und Naherholung für die Werktätigen der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik im Jahre 1967" (1967), BArch, DY/27/2618, 23 – 52.

43 *Ibid.*, 3 – 4.

44 *Ibid.*, 5.

45 "Ausflugsgaststätten sind gerüstet," *Neue Zeit* (April 6, 1966), 2.

46 Alfred Döll, "Per Bahn und Bus ins Grüne," *Neues Deutschland* (April 9, 1966), 15.

the state promoted hiking, cultural sites, and other tourist destinations in an attempt to motivate the workforce to explore the opportunities of their own land.[47] One such highlight was a large recreational fair called *Freizeit 67* at Alexanderplatz in downtown East Berlin featuring vendors from across the nation demonstrating ways that East Germans could use their newly won free time.[48] Organizations such as the *Kulturbund* (Cultural League) and the *Komitee für Touristik und Wandern* (Committee for Tourism and Hiking) were called upon to build out both the infrastructure and programmatic offerings to support this sudden upsurge in demand.

As part of its five-year plan in 1971–1976, the SED mandated the creation of an additional 8,000 vacation beds, which could support up to 100,000 additional tourists through the FDGB and factories.[49] However, even such an increase in the number of offerings could only partially cover the excess demand. The push for additional subsidized slots may have been in part a response to a steady decline in the number of private rooms contracted by the FDGB during peak vacation periods. For instance, in 1969, the FDGB lost access to 1,956 private rooms, with 750 of those being in Rostock alone. That translated into a loss of the FDGB's ability to offer about 5,000 vacations slots.[50] This decline in private rooms was attributed in part to not receiving enough income from the FDGB, but also because it was more profitable to rent to private vacationers.[51] Despite these frustrations, the FDGB claimed that on average 50 % of adults and 49 % of children were now able to take a vacation each year through its vacation service or by other means.[52] Since it was clear that the FDGB could not match the demand for vacations nor realistically expand its own offerings, citizens sought out alternatives. For many in the GDR, these alternatives included camping and increasingly by the late 1970s and 1980s, the purchase or rental of a weekend cottage.

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47 "Speech by Horst Bänninger, 'Die Aufgaben des Deutschen Kulturbundes auf den Gebieten Touristik und Wandern, besonders nach der Einführung der Fünf-Tage-Arbeitswoche,'" (n. d.), 8–9, BArch, DY/27/2618, 84–97.

48 Ilse Schuman, "Freizeit – aber wie?" *Berliner Zeitung* (April 9, 1967).

49 FDGB, "Maßnahmen zur weiteren Entwicklung des Erholungswesens der DDR durch planmäßige Erweiterung der Anzahl der Erholungsreisen und Schaffung von weiteren Möglichkeiten der Nah- und Wochenenderholung" (October 15, 1971), 217, BArch, DY/34/24944, 215–230.

50 FDGB, "Bericht über die durchgeführten Aussprachen über Verbesserung und Planung des Feriendienstes" (1969), 5, BArch, DY/34/24942.

51 "Analyse über die Entwicklung des Erholungswesens der DDR von 1966–1970" (October 15, 1971), 4.

52 *Ibid.* These numbers are not a reflection of just FDGB organized vacations, but all vacations taken by the GDR citizens.

Camping

Camping was by far the most flexible form of vacationing. While some growth was both expected and able to be met by the central planners, the pace with which the popularity of camping grew in the GDR often strained local resources (especially in the area of gastronomy, transportation, and hygiene facilities). By 1970, it was clear to Party officials that a significant change was underway, and that the popularity of camping was growing exponentially. Each year, an increasing number of individuals opted to organize their own vacations and weekend trips by taking advantage of the opportunities to camp instead of participating in the official organized vacation options. The FDGB noted an increase in the use of camping sites from 672,000 spots in 1965 to 1.5 million annually by 1970 (223%). In contrast, the FDGB only reported an increase in the use of FDGB and factory-owned vacation properties from 1.69 to 1.81 million (just 6.8%).[53] By 1975, the number of camping spots rose to 1.98 million, 2.02 million by 1980, and 2.31 million in 1985.[54]

While camping officially belonged to the "organized" category because camping spots were assigned centrally and the state held a monopoly over designated camping sites, it should not be analyzed as a part of the state system. Since it was up to the individual, family, or group of friends to book their camping spots, rent or purchase camping equipment, organize their food, and coordinate their transportation, camping should be categorized as a personally organized vacation. Additionally, a typical two-week camping stay cost more than an "organized" vacation underwritten by the FDGB or a factory.[55] The draw to camping as an alternative, albeit costlier option, demonstrates a keen desire among an increasing number of citizens to reclaim control over their free-time and forgo the intrusive nature of organized vacations with their heavy dose of ideologically charged cultural activities included in the daily schedules at most FDGB vacation homes and hotels. As Hanno Spode has noted, the GDR regime viewed camping negatively and in 1960 still perceived it as a "petit-bourgeois" activity. However, at least under Honecker after 1971, the regime realized the important social safety valve that camping offered to society.[56]

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53 FDGB, "Folgende Vorhaben des FDGB-Feriendienstes sind" (October 15, 1971), 264, BArch, DY/34/24944.

54 German Democratic Republic, "Sport, Erholung, Touristik," in *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik* (1988).

55 Institut für Marktforschung, "Analyse des Personenkreises der Camper und Meinungen zum Versorgungsniveau auf Campingplätzen" (December 1978), 8, BArch, DM/1/10491.

56 Spode, "Tourismus," 19.

As was the case with other forms of vacations, the most sought-after destination for camping trips was the Baltic Sea coast. Overall, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Baltic Sea coast accounted for 44 % of all vacations, with the mountains claiming 35 %, and the lake areas seeing about 12 % of vacationers. Between 1951 and 1970, demand for vacations at the Baltic Sea rose 500 %, yet the infrastructure to support such numbers did not keep pace.[57] The coastal city of Stralsund saw 825,000 applications for camping spots for the year 1971 but could only authorize 480,000. This left an additional 345,000 people without a camping permit.[58] The sudden uptick in camping caused some frustration and concern among government officials—especially because of the lack of hygienic facilities in the Baltic Sea region. As of 1971, out of 58 official campsites, only 33 were connected to a city water supply, and only one was connected to a city sewer system.

While the Baltic coastline of the GDR encompassed 340 kilometers, vacationers had access to only a portion of it. The East German state was worried about the ability of vacationers to use access to the sea to flee the republic and thus blocked access to around 90 kilometers of the coast, reserving it for military use or designating it as protected nature preserves. This meant that those seeking to vacation by the Baltic were confined to smaller areas along the coast. State security forces were also very active in the region, since it was a border area and the potential for escaping to the West was high. Certain types of boats were forbidden without a special permit and activities on the beach at night were closely monitored.[59]

This high concentration of tourists also caused many problems for the locals who lived in tourist destinations, such as the district of Rostock by the Baltic Sea. In a report to the central administration, FDGB leaders from Rostock complained that in 1964, there were 3.2 million tourists, but that this increased to 5.5 million the following year. The city of Warnemünde had a public beach of just 120 meters, but saw an influx of between 50,000 and 52,000 visitors each day attempting to use the beach and "if a family wanted to visit a restaurant for lunch, they would have to wait about three hours, or for a sausage or something similar at a street vendor kiosk they would have an hour's wait."[60] Unfortunately for the tou-

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57 "Analyse über die Entwicklung des Erholungswesens der DDR von 1966 – 1970" (October 15, 1971), 4.

58 Letter from Jörss, FDGB Feriendienstzentrum Ostsee, to Helmut Thiele at the FDGB Bundesvorstand (September 9, 1971), 2, BArch DY/34/17769.

59 Wolter, *Reisen in der DDR*, 20 – 21.

60 "Falls eine Familie die Absicht hat in einer Gaststätte das Mittag [sic!] einzunehmen, müssen sie ca. 3 Stunden warten, oder es besteht die Absicht am Kiosk eine Bockwurst u. a. zu kaufen,

rists, such supply shortages were commonplace. State authorities regularly received complaints about shortages of fruit, vegetables, meat, sausage, beverages, baked goods, and butter in popular tourist destinations such as the Baltic Coast.[61]

Despite such shortages and other issues related to the procurement of camping equipment, the booking of campsites long in advance as well as the necessity to organize one's own transportation, camping remained the most popular form of vacationing since its sudden surge in the late 1960s. Only with the opening of the border in November 1989 did East Germany see the first real decline in the demand for camping. Camping permits for Mecklenburg-Vorpommern dropped 40%, Sachsen dropped 30%, and Brandenburg reportedly dropped by 20% and the duration of stay by vacationers in these areas also declined. Only campsites in and around Berlin, Chemnitz, and Potsdam registered an increase, and all of the campsites along the Baltic Sea remained at full capacity.[62] The sustained popularity of camping and the freedom of movement, planning, and recreational activities that was exercised illustrates an avenue that many in the GDR used to be able to skirt around the control mechanisms of the FDGB vacation service and instead follow their own desired paths.

Vacation Cottages

While most studies about vacationing in the GDR do not deal with the use of private cottages, this option also played an important role in creating new areas of privacy and personal liberty for East Germans, especially from the mid-1960s on. Private cottages were primarily of two types—the *Gartenlaube* (garden house) and the *Bungalow* or *Wochenendhaus* (weekend cottage).[63] While the overall number of garden communities continued to grow, they could not keep up with the demand during the 1970s and 1980s. As an increasing number of new apartment complexes were built, the higher was the number of people in

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dauert die Wartezeit 1 Stunde." "Beratung mit den Sekretären für Kultur und Bildung aus allen Bezirksvorständen" FDGB (July 25, 1966), 11–12, BArch, DY/34/8023.

61 "Analyse über die Entwicklung des Erholungswesens der DDR von 1966–1970" (October 15, 1971), 5.

62 "Campingsituation in der ehemaligen DDR (Ministerium für Verkehrswesen, Abteilung Auslandstouristik)" (1990), 1, BArch, DM/1/43090.

63 Officially known in the GDR as a *Grundstück zur Freizeitgestaltung* or property for free-time use. While some documents discuss these structures as a *Datsche*, the popularity of this term seems to have really taken off as part of the GDR nostalgia boom of the 1990s.

search for a place of refuge—nature beyond the cement walls of the apartment building.[64]

The actual number of weekend cottages owned by private citizens as against those owned by factories and other organizations is difficult to differentiate, since many of the structures were built either prior to the establishment of the GDR or during the 1950s–1960s when there was a surge in the construction of such cottages without procurement of a building permit. By 1983, there were an estimated 40,000 privately owned weekend cottages.[65] In fact, so many factories, clubs, and unions built their own cottages that the Party pressured these groups to voluntarily hand over their properties to the FDGB. Party functionaries found several examples especially troubling and brought it to the attention of Walter Ulbricht since such unanticipated construction deviated resources away from projects approved by the state planers. Yet, it also demonstrates that the FDGB offerings simply could not keep up with the rising demand. One example cited the VEB Simson in Suhl, which had syphoned off materials and used company trucks to transport the supplies to the island of Hiddensee, which was over 700 kilometers away. Another company in Riesa, between Leipzig and Dresden, planned on sending its in-house maintenance crew to the Baltic Sea to build a company cottage, but was thwarted by authorities after requesting additional help from the regional construction office to cover the missing workmen.[66]

A tradition of privately-owned weekend cottages existed even before the GDR's establishment but grew in popularity during the 1970s–1980s as an alternative or an addition to the garden communities. Local governments were looking for new revenue sources and leasing unused public land was one option. In 1975, the state added paragraphs §287–289 to the Civil Law Code (*Zivilgesetzbuch*, or ZGB), which allowed for the construction of privately-owned buildings on state-owned property. Citizens could enter a long-term lease with state and local authorities and construct a small private cottage, which fell under the category of inheritable private property (a rarity in the GDR). It is plausible that the economic income from such leases were not the only motivation. As Paulina Bren's work on weekend cottages in Czechoslovakia shows, tolerating and even encouraging the construction and "ownership" of private property was also a mechanism for deflating potential political opposition.[67]

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64 Isolde Dietrich, *Hammer, Zirkel, Gartenzaun: die Politik der SED gegenüber den Kleingärtnern* (Berlin, 2003).

65 Wolter, *Ich harre aus*, 306–307.

66 Letter to Walter Ulbricht. "Probleme des Betriebserholungswesen." 1966 (n. d.), BArch, DY/34/15841.

67 Bren, "Weekend Getaways."

Many East Germans took advantage of the new regulations and began building their own weekend cottage or bungalow so that they would always have a vacation spot to visit. Most of the new cottages were not idyllic wooden summer cabins that one might imagine in Sweden or Denmark, but rather prefabricated cement structures. Purchasing such a prefabricated cottage often meant placing an order and then waiting months and often years for the order to be filled. However, once the structure was in place, it was up to the individual owner to finish the interiors and make any alterations that were necessary to the stock product. Since building materials were in short supply, this often meant working on the cottage over a long period of time until it was ready to be used for weekend getaways and vacations. But, once it was ready, families possessed a great deal of flexibility and control over how and when they spent their vacations and weekends. Of course, this came at the cost of also being controlled in a different manner by the state, as Ulf Brunnbauer has pointed out. There was a new kind of dialectic at work—by deciding to withdraw to a cottage that in part was subsidized by the state through the use of the land, while at the same time gaining a new level of personal control over one's free time.[68]

Annette and Wolfgang A. of Erfurt owned one of these weekend cabins in Alexanderdorf just to the south of Berlin. They already had access to a *Gartenlaube* on the outskirts of Erfurt as well as two other rented plots for growing vegetables and seeds, which they often then sold to the state to supplement their income. Annette's father had made yearly pilgrimages to the Alexanderdorf cloister located south of Berlin. Once the possibility of building a weekend cottage nearby became an option in the 1970s, he immediately secured a parcel of land that would hold two such cabins—one for him and one for his daughter's family. While the younger family had not originally intended to build such a cabin on its own, they jumped at the opportunity when it was presented to them.

Access to such cabins allowed the two families (one in East Berlin and the other in Erfurt) to coordinate schedules and spend multiple weekends a year together at their weekend cottages—escaping the confines of their small apartment as well as any nosy neighbors. Indeed, when asked in general about the GDR's policy for allowing what was for all practical purposes private property, Annette answered that it was a safety valve—"Yes, that was a kind of valve to, as you could say, appease the people. Since we could not travel all that much, and

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68 Ulf Brunnbauer, "Der Mythos vom Rückzug ins Private: Arbeit, Konsum und Politik im Staatssozialismus," in *„Entwickelter Sozialismus" in Osteuropa: Arbeit, Konsum und Öffentlichkeit*, eds. Nada Boškovska, Angelika Strobel, and Daniel Ursprung (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2016).

even when we could, it was only in one direction, they allowed these 'properties for free-time use.'"[69]

The use of these private cottages was part of a larger trend reflecting the increasing number of people organizing their own vacations. Other popular ways to bypass official channels included spending the vacation with relatives or friends or renting a private room near a vacationing area. Newspapers from the period were full of *Kleinanzeigen* (classified ads) promoting or searching for rental properties throughout the GDR. A few such examples from an April 1964 *Wochenpost* newspaper illustrate the straight-forward way that people sought out private quarters for the holiday season.[70] In one, an engineer is seeking a weekend cottage to rent for fourteen days in either July or August and desires to be near water.[71] Another offers to trade a two-person bedroom with a bathroom and access to a kitchen in the Erzgebirge mountain range for three to four weeks during July or August in return for a similar spot on the Baltic Sea.[72] Some did their best to play up the attractiveness of their offering like this one in Naunhof near Leipzig: "For vacation and weekend trips in a gorgeous secluded parkland (in the forest). Rooms with 1 single and 1 double bed available."[73] These are only a few examples from dozens each week that can be found in all sorts of local and regional newspapers throughout the GDR. While it is virtually impossible to track the number of individuals who rented or swapped such weekend cottages, since no one was keeping track of these home swaps, the frequency of such ads each week throughout the country indicates that it was not an insignificant number.[74]

Conclusion

Each of these examples highlights the applicability of Enzensberger's concept of travel as a desire to liberate oneself from society—something that was just as common in East Germany as it was in the West. As East Germany recovered

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69 Author's interview with Annette and Wolfgang A.

70 The following examples are all taken from "Classified Ads," *Wochenpost* (April 11, 1964).

71 "Ing. sucht Ferienaufenthalt in Wochenendhaus für 2 Pers. im Juli/August 64 (14 Tage), mögl. Wassernähe." *Ibid*.

72 "Tausche 1 Zweibettzimmer mit Badezimmer. Kochmöglichkeit., 3 – 4 Wochen, v. Juli-August, im Erzgebirge, schöne Lage. Suche ähnliches an der Ostsee." *Ibid*.

73 "Für Ferienaufenthalt u. Wochenendurlaub in herrlichem, abgelegenem Parkgrundstück (am Wald) 1 Ein- und 1 Zweibettzimmer frei (Umgebung Naunhof)." *Ibid*.

74 See also Wolter, *Ich harre aus*, 121 – 122.

from the devastation of the Second World War, the state began to focus more and more on the consumer needs of its citizens. While it was never able to completely meet those demands, providing opportunities for private vacations was an important factor in meeting some of the needs of its citizens. East Germany was also very proud of its constitutional right to rest and relaxation. It had taken away what had been a bastion of leisure by the middle and upper classes and made it accessible to all. Through its efforts in subsidizing vacations through the FDGB, the East German state set a new standard for how workers, at all levels, could spend their newfound leisure time. However, as the demand began to stretch the limited resources that the state could offer toward these vacations, East Germans increasingly found ways to organize their own travel and claimed increasing control over their leisure time. While the state took many actions through the years to influence the vacation experiences of even those who traveled privately, it could not temper the desire of East Germans to travel.

Over time, East Germans learned to maneuver through the system and find the best ways to meet their own needs. Occasionally, that still included subsidized vacations through the FDGB, taking advantage of company-owned bungalows, or utilizing offers by the official East German travel agency. However, a greater number of people simply made their own arrangements, by going camping, or procuring a weekend cottage. The fact that cottages were viewed as a type of safety valve due to the lack of vacation opportunities speaks volumes about the pursuit of many to use their vacations to carve out spaces of personal freedom from the state. Increasing access to automobiles provided greater freedom of movement, and camping allowed more GDR citizens to opt out of organized vacations and control their vacation days. The ability to rent out a weekend cottage also allowed for additional income. Trading the use of one's weekend cottage in exchange for the use of a similar property elsewhere allowed people to lower the costs of their own vacations significantly. Most importantly, however, most people cherished the ability to make use of such properties on their own schedule. Naturally, vacation days had to first be secured and once that was settled, there was no need to search for a destination.

All these measures allowed East Germans to establish personal control over when and where people spent their vacations—something that was taken for granted in the West. In fact, once the limited options for travel to Eastern Europe were removed in 1989 with the banning of travel to Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland lifted, East German citizens took to the street to demand the right to travel "Visa-Free to Hawaii!"

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Natali Stegmann
Negotiating Social Needs

Ideas of a Good Life in Late Socialist Poland

Introduction

The 21 Demands (*21 postulatów*), a famous document, was a list of demands issued by the Inter-Factory Strike Committee (*Międzyzakładowy Komitet Strajkowy*) in Polish Gdańsk. These demands were made by workers of the Lenin shipyard and their intellectual advisers during the occupation strike and accepted by the leaders of the Party bureaucracy who represented the government during the negotiations on August 31, 1980. This document led to the foundation of the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union "Solidarity" (*Niezależny Samorządny Związek Zawodowy "Solidarność"*), among other things. The document begins with several political and civil demands and includes an important section on social needs. Specifically, workers insisted on open discussions about the economic crisis, increased wages and wage guarantees, a fair distribution of food and other goods, positions to be filled according to qualification and not Party membership, the lowering of the retirement age, an increase in old-age pensions, better health care, a wider availability of nursery schools, paid maternity leave, faster access to housing, the increase of per diem allowances, and free Saturdays.[1]

In the following chapter, I will show how these conceptions related to the passionate discussions during the 1970s in Poland—the debates that dealt with economic reforms, social and family politics, as well as consumption issues and workers' self-management. I argue that a certain understanding of a good life in socialism was created through communication between different social actors, such as the workers, Party representatives, and the clergy. They obviously shared an intertwined social sphere, which placed social needs at the intersection of work and family life. Thereby, a distinction between "male" and "female" interests or between "male" and "female" spheres was not crucial. The idea of a shared and intertwined social sphere avoided the perception of conflicts from a gendered perspective—a defocus that seems to be typical of late socialist societies.

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[1] The 21 Demands put forward by the Gdansk Inter-Factory Strike Committee, accessed June 28, 2019, http://storage.osaarchivum.org/low/2d/da/2dda0228-f3f2–4898-abe2–6d53c55b3056_l.pdf.

Looking at negotiation processes within a socialist society, I re-interpret the events in Gdańsk by hinting at a close connection between statements by different actors. It is important to emphasize that these actors did not act in a social vacuum. Nevertheless, this impression is created by the later interpretation of the events as an "opposition" to socialism and a "fight for liberal democracy." This line of thinking was advanced, e. g., in the proclamation of the European Parliament on the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Solidarność* and its message to Europe. In the context of "the unification of Europe" (accession of several East-Central European countries to the European Union in 2004), the proclamation idealizes "the mass strikes led by workers which took place in many Polish cities in July and August 1980 [as] an expression of rejection of a system of totalitarian enslavement." It states, "that the '21 postulates' formulated by the shipyard workers from Gdańsk opened a new chapter in the European fight for 'bread and freedom'" and speculates that "the peaceful success of Solidarność had an influence on other movements fighting for human rights, and believ[es] that it is still a role model for countries that are deprived of freedom."[2] This is obviously an interpretation that was politically opportune at that moment. With the adoption of the "European fight for 'bread and freedom,'" it incorporates Polish and East-Central European events into the European revolutionary tradition, dating back to the French Revolution of 1789 with the most recent event being that of the unification of Europe that has begun already since the 1950s. As a precondition for this interpretation, the document calls for fighting "totalitarian enslavement," without directly mentioning socialism and instead speaking of the former opponent as a regime to be overcome. In doing so, the document defines socialism as only an obstacle to the realization of European ideas of "freedom" and "human rights."

However, if we theorize that the conflicts of the 1970s were not about an European idea, but rather were a negotiation of what a good life could mean in socialism, the interpretation expressed in this proclamation is misleading. The historical act is thereby deprived of its social substance, which means that the actors involved (the ones who revolted) are largely excluded from ex-post processes of making sense of the event. After the breakdown of socialism and the transformation to a market economy and democracy in the 1990s, not only politics but also research has been inspired by an attempt to understand the revolutionary processes of 1989 in the context of liberation and democratization. For a

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2 The Polish term *postulat* is often translated as "demand," but used here to mean "postulate"; European Parliament resolution on the 25th Anniversary of Solidarity and its message for Europe, Wednesday, 28 September 2005 – Strasbourg, accessed July 26, 2016, http://www.euro parl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P6-TA-2005-0357&language=MT.

couple of years now, anthropologists and historians have been trying to understand the history of socialism rather as a fact and an everyday reality.[3]

In an everyday, anthropological sense, socialism was not a rule to be overcome, but the context that provided a framework for people to act[4]—and this is the scenario that I am interested in. Indeed, many scholars have argued that the *Solidarność* movement was not anti-socialist.[5] Recent research has contributed to the understanding of the 1980/81 events as the starting point for the later collapse of the architecture of the socialist hegemonic system, while—paradoxically—the revolution went on somewhere else in 1989. Zygmunt Bauman insisted that the revolution of the late twentieth century was a systemic revolution, brought about by the collapse of the system. While the French revolution was a political revolution, the revolution of 1989 was not performed by a social force which would benefit from it.[6] Therefore, we must expect a divergence between the interests of the revolutionaries and the beneficiaries of the revolution. This is obvious in Poland, where the revolutionary events took place eight years

3 Barbara Falk, "Resistance and Dissent in Central and Eastern Europe: An Emerging Historiography," *East European Politics and Societies* 25 (2011); Paulina Bren and Mary Neuburger, eds., *Communism Unwrapped: Consumption in Cold War Eastern Europe* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); David Crowley and Susan E. Reid, eds., *Style and Socialism: Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe* (Oxford/New York: Berg, 2000); David Crowley and Susan E. Reid, eds., *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc* (Oxford/New York: Berg, 2002); Mark Edele, "Soviet Society, Social Structure, and Everyday Life: Major Frameworks Reconsidered," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 8, no. 2 (2007); Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Revisionism in Soviet History," *History and Theory* 46, no. 4 (2007); Mark Pittaway, *Eastern Europe 1939 – 2000* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004); Mark Pittaway, "Introduction: Workers and Socialist States in Postwar Central and Eastern Europe," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 68 (2005); Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); Alexei Yurchak, "Soviet Hegemony of Form: Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45, no. 3 (2003).
4 Katherine Verdery, "Theorizing Socialism: A Prologue to the 'Transition,'" *American Ethnologist* 18, no. 3 (1991).
5 Jerzy Holzer, "Triumf i kryzys komunizmu—1968," *Rocznik Polsko-Niemiecki / Deutsch-Polnisches Jahrbuch* 18 (2010), 49; Karol Modzelewski, *Zajeździmy kobyłę historii: Wyznania poobijanego jeźdźca* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Iskry, 2013), 120; Klaus Bachmann, "Gleichheit und Ungleichheit in der Volksrepublik Polen: Eine Untersuchung auf der Basis zeitgenössischer Meinungsumfragen," *Zeithistorische Forschungen / Studies in Contemporary History* 10 (2013), 233; Natali Stegmann, "'Für Brot und Freiheit': Zum Verhältnis von materiellen und ideellen Erwartungen im 'Langen Sommer der Solidarność,'" in *Sozialistische Staatlichkeit*, eds. Jana Osterkamp and Joachim von Puttkamer (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2012).
6 Zygmunt Bauman, "A Revolution in the Theory of Revolutions?," *International Political Science Review* 15, no. 1 (1994), 16.

before the collapse of the system. Nevertheless, the phenomenon I discuss in this article—a very specific understanding of social needs embodied in family and workplaces—is not limited to Poland but is significant in other East-Central European countries too. It is therefore imperative to connect the ideas of the actors to their historical framework and understand their demands accordingly. Their commitment to their families and workplaces indicates that the interests of the actors were grounded in their everyday lives, their needs, and their well-being. This specific late socialist idea of a good life is a very pragmatic value-oriented concept in this context.

By following this approach, this chapter argues that the proclamation of the European Parliament is far from what the workers had expressed and the manner in which they had acted when they went on strike in August 1980. The analysis demonstrates that their actions were grounded in the framework of the late socialist Polish society, proving that late socialist actors had their own ideas about a good life, which were not necessarily identical to what they experienced after 1989. Their demands before the revolution were about access to social goods and equality. They negotiated them within the conditions of the socialist regime, which resulted, among other things, in a mix of what in a liberal understanding would typically be separated as public and private issues.[7] In view of this, this chapter is not about women and men and the distribution of gender roles, but about the undermining of the dichotomy of the public and the private by various actors who treat the workplace and family life as one entity.

This article analyzes open letters, political proclamations, and other forms of communication between the socialist regime and its citizens. Primarily, material from the paperclipping archive of the Herder Institute in Marburg is examined: this Institute was one of many western institutions that collected and organized information about socialist countries during the Cold War. Much of the material comprises of printed open letters, declarations, speeches, and interviews. I also use articles from western, exile, and local newspapers and journals, as well as loose, unbound samizdat documents. This material illustrates that communication in late socialist societies was a "shared spectacle" and challenges the idea of sharply separated spheres of communication between "official" and "unofficial" or between a "monolithic" socialist public and a "completely independent" samizdat. My study reveals on the contrary that the statements given by var-

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7 Susan Moller Okin, "Gender, the Public, and the Private," in *Political Theory Today*, ed. David Held (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 67–69; Susan Gal, "A Semiotics of Public/Private Distinction," *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 13, no. 1 (2002), 80–81, 85.

ious actors are functionally and thematically related to each other.[8] The discovery that workplaces and families were predominant topics of discussion in the late socialist public sphere came from my analysis of the material. Focusing on communication processes in late socialism, the chapter examines the historical context in which the actors argued within the semantics and everyday conditions of the time. In fact, the everyday practices and demands reflected in the statements that were analyzed suggest that the actors treated socialism as a political fact, a model and an everyday reality. Nevertheless, people had specific demands to create a good life for themselves—the demands that can be viewed as an ongoing negotiation within the late socialist regime.

Consumerism, Social Politics, and Good Life

Late socialist societies have been treated as consumerist societies in recent studies.[9] Numerous scholars have argued that consumption was a promise made by late socialist regimes. In the context of competition with the West, consumption also helped to compensate the ideological vacuum after the period of de-Stalinization.[10] The fact that people provided for themselves materially not only through gainful employment, but through different types of secondary sources, also contributed to an idiosyncratic understanding of work and leisure.[11] In the context of the planned economy, the distinction between consumerist promises

8 Natali Stegmann, "Open Letters: Substance and Circumstances of Communication Processes in Late Socialist Czechoslovakia and Poland," *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 65, no. 1 (2016), 45.

9 Malgorzata Fidelis, *Women, Communism, and Industrialization in Postwar Poland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Małgorzata Mazurek and Matthew Hilton, "Consumerism, Solidarity and Communism: Consumer Protection and the Consumer Movement in Poland," *Journal of Contemporary History* 42, no. 2 (2007), 316 – 320; Luminita Gatejel, "The Common Heritage of the Socialist Car Culture," in *The Socialist Car: Automobility in the Eastern Bloc*, ed. Lewis H. Siegelbaum (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011); Katherine Verdery, "What Was Socialism, and Why Did It Fall?," in *The Revolutions of 1989*, ed. Vladimir Tismaneanu (London: Routledge, 1999).

10 Paulina Bren, "Looking West: Popular Culture and the Generation Gap in Communist Czechoslovakia, 1969 – 1989," in *Across the Atlantic: Cultural Exchanges between Europe and the United States*, ed. Luisa Passerini (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2000); Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, NJ/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006); Pavel Kolář, "The Party as a New Utopia: Reshaping Communist Identity after Stalinism," *Social History* 37 (2012).

11 Alexandra Oberländer, "Cushy Work, Backbreaking Leisure: Late Soviet Ethnic Reconsidered," *Kritika* 18, no. 3 (2017), 572.

and social politics was often uncertain. The state fixed prices and wages; it distributed cars, holiday homes, and places in kindergartens.[12] In this respect, the regime seemed to rule almost all fields of social life. However, it was obvious that the state could not fulfill all its promises and in fact, did not totally control the economy and the private life of citizens.[13] In the Polish case, this was especially obvious, since all attempts to put an end to the economic crisis of the 1970s failed (as well as attempts that had been made before and were made after Gierek's stabilization politics).[14]

Taking these facts into consideration, it would be misleading to assume that citizens were on one side and the regime on the other in this process.[15] The manner in which these interactions were framed in late socialist societies can be understood by looking closely at various actors who negotiated fundamental ideas of production, living conditions, and well-being. Social needs—specifically, within workplaces and families, the spaces of everyday socialist practices—were the focus of attention.[16] Many of fundamental discussions between the regime, its opponents, and various social actors were about organizing the ways in which basic needs at the workplace and in the family would be fulfilled. The insufficiencies of planned economy were compensated and the hardships of everyday life were balanced there.[17]

Of course, workplaces and families were also spaces where gender identities and the access to social goods was fixed. In the given context, it would be a mistake, however, to associate workplaces with males and families with females. On the contrary, examining these spaces as a researcher means paying close attention to the intersections between the various spaces, the overlap in the lines be-

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12 Susan Zimmermann, "Wohlfahrtspolitik und staatssozialistische Entwicklungsstrategie in der ‚anderen' Hälfte Europas im 20. Jahrhundert," in *Sozialpolitik in der Peripherie: Entwicklungsmuster und Wandel in Lateinamerika, Afrika, Asien und Osteuropa*, eds. Susan Zimmermann, Johannes Jäger, and Gerhard Melinz (Vienna: Brandes & Apsel, 2001), 215.

13 Verdery, "Theorizing Socialism."

14 Jerzy Kochanowski, *Jenseits der Planwirtschaft: Der „Schwarzmarkt" in Polen 1944–1989* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2013), 103–116; Jędrzej Chumiński and Krzysztof Ruchniewicz, "Arbeiter und Opposition in Polen 1945–1989," in *Arbeiter im Staatssozialismus: Ideologischer Anspruch und soziale Wirklichkeit*, eds. Peter Hübner, Christoph Kleßmann, and Klaus Tenfelde (Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 2005).

15 For the discussions on the ties between state and society concerning the Soviet Union in the Stalin era, see Edele, "Soviet Society."

16 Józef Fiszman, "Child Care Socialisation: Comments from the Polish Perspective," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 19, no. 3 (1977); Janine Wedel, *The Private Poland: An Anthropologists Look at Everyday Life* (New York: Facts on File Publications, 1986).

17 Padraic Kenney, "The Gender of Resistance in Communist Poland," *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 2 (1999), 402.

tween earning and living, and the balance between gainful employment and the management of everyday life in the family. It means rejecting the ideas of strictly separated public and private spheres, associated with presumed male and female fields of activity.[18] Obviously, the overlapping as well as balancing strategies between working and living were of great importance for the male and female family members during this time. Padraic Kenney argues that during strikes in socialist Poland, the essential division in the negotiations between workers and the regime was the line between political and social issues.[19] While male workers respected this division, female workers ignored it—and this represented a real threat to the Party elite and the factory committees.[20] This indicates that crossing the line between political and social issues and bringing the demand for basic needs into high politics was an act of subversion of the understanding shared by the (male) workers elite and the nomenclature. This understanding was undermined during the strikes, especially by women (when they extended the strikes or added demands such as child care and provision of food, at a time when they were at the centre of the political events, as with the famous example of the "forgotten" Anna Walentinowicz[21]).[22]

Another aspect, to which I would like to draw attention, is the fact that in the public discourse of the time, social needs were of great importance for a variety of different social actors. Social needs connected workplaces with families, undermining any public-private dichotomy and embraced both male and female needs. While striving for better living conditions, women and men, workers and intellectuals portrayed themselves as members of the workforce and family members, regardless of the context of the discussion. This does not mean that the discourses lacked conceptions of male and female roles, but that these roles were not discussed because they were perceived as being fixed. These public discourses—whether in the Party branches or other forums—produced a

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18 Gal, "A Semiotics," 87–89.

19 Krystyna Kersten, "The Mass Protests in People's Poland – a continuous process or single events?," *Acta Poloniae Histroica* 83 (2001); Andrzej Paczkowski, *Strajki, bunty, manifestacje jako 'polska droga' przez socialism* (Poznań: Poznańskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk, 2003).

20 Kenney, "The Gender of Resistance," 401–406.

21 Volker Schlöndorff dedicated his film *Strajk. Die Heldin von Danzig* (Strike: The Hero of Gdańsk, 2006) to the crane operator.

22 Berenika Szymanski, *Theatraler Protest und der Weg Polens zu 1989: Zum Aushandeln von Öffentlichkeit im Jahrzehnt der Solidarność* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2012), 18–23; Klaus Pumberger, *Solidarität im Streik: Politische Krise, sozialer Protest und Machtfrage in Polen 1980/81* (Frankfurt/ Main: Campus Verlag, 1989); Jan Kubik, *The Power of Symbols against the Symbols of Power: The Rise of Solidarity and the Fall of Socialism in Poland* (Pennsylvania, PA: Penn State University Press, 1994), 183–238.

peaceful picture of private life that was far removed from articulating the very real conflicts of interests between the sexes. Workplaces and families were presented as places where hierarchies had almost no meaning. Discussions about social issues were highly significant with regard to the competition for common goods and the creation of power relations. Behind the scenes, it was about the control over production and reproduction—aspects which were not negotiated in the sources I analyzed.

Building Socialism—Working for the "Well-Being of the People"?

General Secretary Edward Gierek secured his position after he had managed to calm tensions during the workers' strikes in 1970. His political strategy was to improve economic standards and living conditions with the help of western credits.[23] This was implemented along with several improvements in the social welfare system. The "new social policy" was conventionalized as a far-reaching and significant investment into socialist society. In stark contrast to the Stalinist ideas of heavy internalization and sacrifices for the Communist future (but in accordance with what happened during the same time in other socialist countries), an article in the widespread weekly *Polityka* (Politics) claimed that building socialism was about the "well-being of the people, but definitely not about such tasks as, for example, the fulfilling of production plans."[24] Jacek Maziarski, a journalist who would later belong to the advisers of *Solidarność*, argued that it was a vicious cycle to believe that, on the one hand, an improvement in living conditions would be based on economic efficiency, while, on the other hand, the economic output would not increase without an improvement in the living conditions. He argued for a fundamental change based on the unity of social and economic politics. According to him, investing in society had to be understood as an action that would also have economic benefits. He illustrated this using the example of how building houses for workers would also serve as a vehicle for the development of industrial centers. This, he declared, would be the

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23 Zygmunt Kozłowski, "Giereks mißglücktes Wirtschaftswunder," *Osteuropa*, no. 7 (1978) / *Osteuropa*, no. 8 (1978).

24 "[...] w budowie socjalizmu idzie o dobro ludzi, nie zaś o wycinkowe zadania jak np. wykonywanie planów produkcyjnych." [Translations here and throughout the article are mine if not indicated differently.] Jacek Maziarski, "Nowa polityka społeczna," *Polityka* (December 4, 1971).

foundation for a "better tomorrow."[25] While not all economists shared his point of view,[26] two events were of fundamental importance in this process: first, an open discussion of social and economic problems took place, and second, the idea of a "new social action" was enforced with significant social acceptance. At the Ninth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party in 1977, Gierek created the motto that social security was "a fundamental characteristic of socialism."[27] He also provided a clear definition of social security, as "the participation of each citizen in what has been worked out by the whole society."[28] This was a quite radical understanding of producing and sharing goods on an equal basis with everyone. The equalization of payments and especially the increase of salaries was one method that was advocated to reach this goal.[29]

The most important achievements of the early 1970s were in the fields of healthcare and family politics. From 1972 onwards, the health insurance system, which previously only supported industrial workers, was amended to also include agricultural workers. Furthermore, payments in case of illness, workplace accidents, and occupational disease were improved. Investment in the health and well-being of the population was also promoted, with benefits such as organized holidays and time off work for workers and their children. Furthermore, it was regarded as one of the most important tasks "of the current social-economic politics" to strengthen the "care and educational function of the family."[30] This primarily meant allowing mothers to stay at home for a longer time after childbirth. Maternity leave was extended to 16 weeks after the first child was born and 18 weeks for every subsequent child in 1972. If children were ill, mothers could also stay at home for longer than they were allowed to before without a reduction in their salaries. The possibility of interrupting gainful employment for childcare (in this case, without payment) was extended from one to three years after childbirth. The creation of more part-time jobs also proved to be crucial for the realization of this new policy.[31] Of course, extending these possibilities to fathers was not conceived of at all.

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25 "lepsze jutro." *Ibid.*, 5.

26 See "Jak finansować Akję Socialną? Co dyktuje życie," *Życie Gospodarcze* (November 13, 1972).

27 "fundamentalna cecha socjalizmu." Atalia Buksdorf, "Bliżej socialnego bezpieczeństwa," *Tygodnik Demokratyczny* (July 21, 1977), 6.

28 "udział każdego obywatela w tym, co jest wypracowane przez całe społeczeństwo." *Ibid.*
29 *Ibid*, 7.

30 "der aktuellen gesellschaftlich-wirtschaftlichen Politik," "Betreuungs- und Erziehungsfunktion der Familie," "Aktuelle Sozialprobleme in Polen." *Polens Gegenwart* 7, no. 1 (1973), 11; this state-official journal, which is also quoted below, provided translations for the German public.
31 *Ibid.*

Social security was also a big factor in the competition with the West. An article in the newspaper *Życie Warszawy* (Warsaw Life) quoted the UNO International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, which entered into force in 1976, and underlined that the socialist system outclassed the West in fulfilling the demands of this international agreement because it cared for families and provided housing, health care, and education to everyone and not only to the elites. Against the backdrop of the Helsinki agreement,[32] this argument also played an important role in the human rights discourse.[33] In 1977, Gierek gave a speech in the Sejm about the realization of human rights in Poland. He emphasized the government's efforts in improving the living standards for families. The speech listed social security, the right to work, numerous benefits given to young mothers mentioned previously as part of a package offered by the socialist state for the "moral-political unity" of the nation.[34] In 1977, Gierek's reforms failed because Poland could not pay back its debts, and a new economic crisis with price increases and several limitations in the distribution of social and consumer goods led to strikes. As the crisis deepened in 1980, Gierek was replaced by Stanisław Kania.[35] While it could be assumed that the reforms of the early 1970s failed for economic reasons, Polish citizens did not follow this line of thinking. Most of them believed in the necessity of improvements in social life and assumed that the reforms had failed because they had been badly handled by the government.[36] Therefore, the workers blamed the establishment for the crisis. The term "worker" was often used as a synonym for "citizen," because participation in social life was only possible through employment; this was also true for women. In the discussions about a good life, "workers" did not only struggle for material goods but also for values, such as solidarity and fairness. It was commonly understood that most of these values were to be realized within the family. Love, friendship, and non-material values were of great significance in the lives of especially the younger generation.[37]

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32 See Daniel C. Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect: International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 55–120.

33 Halina Leśnicka, "Prawa człowieka. Bezpieczeństwo socjalne," *Życie Warszawy* (April 22, 1977).

34 "moralisch-politische Einheit." "Das sozialistische Polen hat Bedingungen zur vollen Verwirklichung der Menschenrechte geschaffen," *Polens Gegenwart* 13, no. 7 (1977), 33.

35 Paczkowski, *Strajki, bunty*, 113–127.

36 Melanie Tatur, *Solidarność als Modernisierungsbewegung. Sozialstruktur und Konflikt in Polen* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 1989), 85–89.

37 Andrzej Szczypioski, "Dwudziestolatki," *Polityka,* no 1 (October 19, 1974), 6–7; Andrzej Micewski, "Skala wartości pokolenia," *Tygodnik Powszechny,* no. 5 (November, 10 1974).

Family Politics at the Intersection of Economic and Moral Values

Another factor that was significant for the organization of family life and partic‐ ipation of women in labor were demographic circumstances. After the Second World War, the Polish population had grown steadily from about 25,000,000 in 1950 to about 32,700,000 in 1970.[38] By the mid-1970s, most citizens had grown up in socialist Poland. Women especially had a better education than they did before the war.[39] Accordingly, the employment rate of women and moth‐ ers increased. The proportion of female employees in non-agricultural sectors in‐ creased from 30% in 1950 to almost 39% in 1970 and was close to 44% in 1980.[40] In 1960, while 68% of young mothers continued working after the end of their maternal leave, in 1980, only 8% did so. Those who continued working immediately did so for financial reasons or because of their high qualifications.[41] In 1977, an article in the Party organ *Trybuna Ludu* (People's Tribune) underlined that women's aspirations in the realm of education and employment had changed dramatically. It claimed that the employment of mothers made a "mod‐ ification of the working conditions" especially necessary.[42] The focus on changes in the working conditions of women took place alongside a modification in the traditional roles for mothers. The demographic and economic circumstances called for labor participation of women, while limited exemptions for young mothers from the work obligations was also possible.

In this context, the family underwent a process of reconfiguration from being viewed as a place of child care and education to also being a site of everyday life.[43] According to another article in the *Trybuna Ludu* from 1977, the family was the place where people realized their "human right [...] for a happy

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38 "Społeczeństwo i gospodarka," *Trybuna Ludu* (June 6, 1979).
39 Melanie Tatur, "Merkmale der Erwerbstätigkeit von Frauen in Polen," *Osteuropa* 29, no. 3 (1979), 220 – 223.
40 Adam Kurzynowski, "Przemiary wzorców karier zawodowych kobiet w latach 1950 – 1989," in *Kobieta i praca: Wiek XIX i XX*, eds. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (Warsaw: Wydaw‐ nictwo DiG, 2000), 193.
41 *Ibid.*, 199 – 200.
42 "modyfikacja warunków pracy." "Awans kobiet," *Trybuna Ludu* (July 13, 1977).
43 See also Natali Stegmann, "Die Aufwertung der Familie in der Volksrepublik Polen der sieb‐ ziger Jahre," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 43, no. 4 (2005); Barbara Lobodzinska-Lien, "The Family as a Factor in Social Participation in Poland," *International Journal of Sociology of the Family,* no. 6 (1976).

life."[44] Considering the milieu of state paternalism, it was also a field of expanded social policy and had high ideological significance. At the same time, the family was a place of recreation and privacy (in the sense of being happy with one another) for all its members. All the people involved pushed for the well-being of the family and for the recognition of the work that mothers do. The family was then treated as a solid unit that included the hierarchies and conflicts within it. The participation of fathers in childcare was not discussed; while everyone lobbied for benefits that would provide relief to mothers for the fulfillment of their family obligations. The understanding that women might have another idea of a good life was not conceivable at that time.

In this way, balancing employment and family life, and the overlapping boundaries of earning and living became accepted realities. When the government tried to increase prices again in 1980, this led to another round of strikes in the country, and now the workers struggled—as already illustrated—not only for an increase in living standards but also for a value-oriented social life as was promised by "the new social policy." This was the context in which predominantly male strikers and their intellectual advisers in the Gdańsk Shipyard demanded nursery schools, paid maternity leave, and faster access to houses—claims that one would expect to come from women, and not from men.

It is noteworthy that it was not only the regime and the people, or the intellectuals and the workers who negotiated the idea of a good life and the circumstances for realizing it. In Poland, the Catholic Church also had a great influence on society. In August 1980, the Church tried to de-escalate the crisis. At the climax of the strikes, Cardinal Wyszyński[45] held a sermon in Jasna Góra—an important place connected to Polish identity and Catholicism.[46] The sermon appealed to people in general and to workers in particular, to fulfill their duties to the nation. Seen in this regard, August 1980 was "the hour of an examination of conscience."[47] It is important to note that Wyszyński underlined the importance of

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44 "prawo człowieka [...] do życia szczęśliwego." "Awans rodziny," *Trybuna Ludu* (July 21, 1977).
45 Bartosz Kaliski, "Prymas Stefan Wyszyński – biskup ordynariusz archidiecezji gnieźnieńskiej: Pryczynek do historii stosunków państwo – Kościoł katolicki w PRL (1949–1975)," *Dzieje Najnowsze* 38, no. 3 (2006).
46 The historical value of this place for Poles goes back to the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) when the defeat of the Swedish troops was interpreted as being a miracle performed by the Virgin Mary. The significance of Jasna Góra was heavily cultivated by the national movement in the context of the fight against the powers of partition during the nineteenth century and was reinforced after John Paul II was elected pope in 1978. See Kubik, *The Power of Symbols,* 129–152.
47 "die Stunde der Gewissensprüfung." "Predigt von Stefan Kardinal Wyszyńki, dem Primus von Polen, gehalten am 26. August 1980 in Jasna Góra," *Polens Gegenwart* 18/19, no. 9/10 (1980), 83.

"well-ordered family life" as well as the "order of the social and professional life." Together, they create a nation with high morals and "domestic" as well as "national wealth."[48] These were patriotic arguments and in its conservative perception, the sermon imagined families and workplaces as complementary units with clearly fixed gender roles. In this sense, Wyszyński preached for a high valuation of mothers, advocated against "experiments" in the family, and pushed for a clear division of gender roles within the family.[49] Nevertheless, the idea that both workplaces and families were fundamental to the well-being of all did not differ from the arguments made by the social actors mentioned before. In Wyszyński's sermon, there is a direct relationship between family and workplace issues as both were crucial in order to overcome the crisis and both were perceived as constitutional units of the nation. Discursively, family and workplace were fixed here as solid units. But with regard to workplaces, another field of discussion concerning workers' self-management seems pivotal— the creation and the distribution of people's property, and the question of how to organize work in a "real Communist way."

The Workplace as Part of Society

De-Stalinization took place alongside ambitious discussions about how to organize enterprises better. During the 1970s, the question of who should manage social property and the manner in which it has to be done was of high relevance in several conflicts. On the one hand, the enterprise was imagined as a place of no or only temporarily fixed hierarchies. On the other hand, these conflicts grew around power relations within the enterprises and their distributive power.

Stalinism had concentrated efforts on heavy industries while enforcing production via control, pressure, wage incentives, and competition. Almost all enterprises had been nationalized. In the period of de-Stalinization (after 1956), the government turned away from "exaggerated centralism" and "bureaucracy" and looked for new ways to organize people's property. As the period was marked by the "strive for a democratization of the public and the social life," the Communist institution of workers' councils was revived.[50] Workers wanted

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48 "geordnetes Familienleben," "Ordnung des gesellschaftlichen und beruflichen Lebens," "häuslicher," "nationaler Wohlstand." *Ibid.*, 88.

49 "Experimente." *Ibid.*, 86.

50 "übertriebener Zentralismus," "Bürokratismus," "Streben nach Demokratisierung des staatlichen und gesellschaftlichen Lebens." Karol Gandor, "Das Modell der Arbeiterselbstverwaltung in den staatlichen Betrieben Polens," *Jahrbuch für Ostrecht* 17 (1976), 112.

to participate in the management of the enterprises—and this eventually led to the proclamation of the workers' self-management act in 1958. The government accommodated this demand because it regarded democratization of the enterprises as being an important step toward the improvement of effectiveness[51] and the education of people, while also speculating that it would have a certain impact on families, "working culture," and the improvement of "interpersonal relationships."[52]

According to the law, the workforce in each state-owned enterprise elected a workers' council by ballot. Apart from those who were elected, each council was complemented by a trade union member and a Party member. The councils had a normative, controlling, and evaluating authority. They created plans for the development of the enterprise, organized the distribution of work, and planned working regulations and awards. Nationwide conferences of the workers' councils were also established.[53] This type of organization of the workers' council made Poland a unique case among late socialist countries of East-Central Europe. While it can be rightly claimed that socialist legislation was too often far from reality, I argue that after the law was proclaimed, it gained a certain significance in the public discourse and for the workers. One could interpret this as a sign of weakness of the government, but in fact, the relevance of the workers' councils increased in the 1970s. In 1976, the participation of the workforce in the administration of the enterprises even found its way into the constitution.[54]

Of course, this does not mean that workers determined wages or created production plans: this was still the task of the government. But under such conditions, workers began to question what till then had been accepted as fact. In principle, the discussion about the power of workers in the production process dealt with the core elements of Marxism. In a socialist society, the problem of the alienation of the workers from the production process was of highest significance and had to be resolved on the way to communism.[55] The participation in the management of the enterprises was, in fact, an act of self-enforcement by the

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51 "Zwiększyć wpływ samorządu robotniczego na podnoszenie efektywności gospodarowania w przediębiorstwach. Referat na V Plenum Centralnej Rady Związków Zawodowych." *Głos Pracy* (May 24, 1968), 3; "Samorząd robotniczy – osiągnięcia, słabości, zadania," *Trybuna Ludu* (October 25, 1968).

52 "Arbeitskultur," "Besserung der zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen." Gandor, "Das Modell der Arbeiterselbstverwaltung," 114.

53 *Ibid.*, 115 – 118.

54 *Ibid.*, 113.

55 *Ibid.*, 108 – 109; Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski. "The Kuroń-Modzelewski, Open Letter to the Party," in *From Stalinism to Pluralism: A Documentary History of Eastern Europe since 1945*, ed. Gale Stokes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 108 – 114.

workers. In contrast to capitalism, the rule of economy as an abstract power could not be made responsible for economic hardships. In the socialist society, the Party created the rules of the economy, and so the nomenclature received the blame for the crisis. In this context, the question of workers' self-management had enormous importance for the idea of a good life, and it went far beyond problems within the enterprises. The question of workers' participation touched upon power relations in the enterprises and access to material and non-material goods. The central problem of value orientation emerged exactly at that point.

Gierek (who portrayed himself as a president of working-class origin and as a friend of the workers) built his programme with the help and authority of the working class.[56] At the national conference of the workers' councils in 1978, he spoke about the interrelation between the quality of work and the quality of the living conditions. According to him, the improvement in the effectiveness of the economy was "the issue of all Poles;" it should be realized every day at the workplace. Gierek listed all the achievements of the early 1970s and hinted at the fact that economic efficiency was the prerequisite for further development of socialist society. He claimed that the whole nation was responsible for the realization of the political program by fulfilling their work obligations in a proper manner. Moreover, Gierek expressed his conviction that the workers' councils were a transmission belt in this task. After his reform program failed, he made a positive reference to "socialist competition."[57] However, by then, the workers had come to their own conclusions. They understood that wealth had to be built through work, but they were no longer ready to follow the governmental programs. On the contrary, they surmised that power was concentrated in the hands of the wrong people. They demanded power over fundamental economic decisions for themselves. The idea of basic democracy spread from the enterprises to everywhere in the country. This was the manner in which *Solidarność* was established as an independent trade union and became a political player of enormous importance. It replaced the nomenclature while the latter tried to complete the political program of the 1970s.

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56 Kozłowski, "Giereks mißglückes Wirtschaftswunder," 624, 728.

57 "sprawa wszystkich Polaków," "rywalizacja socjalistyczna." "Krajowa Narada Przedstawicieli samorządu robotniczego. Samorząd robotniczy najszerszą formą współuczestnictwa klasy robotniczej w realizaji programu pomyślnego rozwoju kraju, Referat Biura Poltiycznego KC PZPR wygłoszony przez tow. Edwarda Gierka," *Trybuna Ludu* (July 4, 1978).

Conclusion

Gierek's "little stabilization" was a Polish event. While the economic crisis in Poland was very serious, the events that took place nevertheless illustrate the weaknesses of the late socialist system. Socialist production and distribution failed to fulfill the promises of a just consumerist society. After the hardships of the 1940s and 1950s, people in the Eastern Bloc wanted a good life for themselves and their families, based on gainful employment, job security, social insurance, the fair distribution of goods, as well as access to education, housing, a holiday home, and consumer goods. Balancing between the workplace and family life was a central task in the 1970s. This was the manner in which economic problems became interwoven with a discussion about moral standards. These discussions were furthered by certain ideas regarding equalization, while gender conflicts did not feature prominently in that discourse. People began condemning the elites when they did not get what they had been striving for. However, they did not doubt the idea of a good life based on the fair distribution of goods. Moreover, this idea became dangerous for the regime itself, because a lack of goods led to a moral crisis. Most socialist citizens wanted to realize a good life within their families and at their workplaces. In this sense, the workers at the Lenin Shipyard were not fighting for European values, as the 2006 proclamation of the European Parliament suggests; they were not against socialism, but rather they were trying to realize their claims within the late socialist society in which they lived and of which they were part. Life in the late socialist society was realized in the spaces of the everyday, workplaces, and families, and being a part of it drove people to make demands to the socialist regime. Social needs that arose at the intersection of the mentioned spaces, in the context of the basic organization of a late socialist society, connected workplaces and families. Public-private dichotomies were not engaged by the workers to define their situation or their demands, and do not make for a good tool to understand the context. But after workers were prevented from living out their aspirations, they blamed the nomenclature for this failure. This led to the fundamental legitimization of the post-Stalinist socialist order wavering, which caused a slow erosion of the system. In the Polish case, this happened earlier and became more obvious than in other socialist countries, and the main reason for this was the strong position of the Polish workers.

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Agnieszka Sadecka

The Private and The Public in Polish Reportage from Late Socialism

Late socialism in Poland was a period of unprecedented popularity of literary reportage, a genre that allowed those who used it to blur the lines between fact and fiction and thereby circumvent the limitations of censorship and write about issues that would not necessarily be covered by more conventional journalistic articles.[1] A common feature of reportage from 1970s and 1980s' Poland is that they reported on individual stories in order to paint a picture of a larger social issue. Thus, the seemingly innocent micro-perspective could acquire a politically significant role in the way it was read by the broader public, accustomed to searching for hidden meanings and veiled critique of the socialist system in literary texts.

Nonfiction, referred to as "reportage" in the Polish context, was initially a genre developed by leftist, engaged writers who attempted to draw attention to wider social problems, rather than those of the elite. In post-revolutionary USSR, the avant-garde newspaper *Novyi Lef* called upon writers to choose fact over fiction and abandon "bourgeois" prose.[2] Reportage was seen by Communist ideologues as a genre that better fit the new, socialist system. In postwar Poland, reporters were encouraged to write about the so-called "Regained Territories,"[3] about industrialization, and social change under the red banner. The Communist

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1 For further discussions about fact and fiction in relation to reportage or—more broadly—nonfiction, see Włodzimierz Bolecki, "Introduction: From the Periphery to the Center" as well as Paweł Zajas, "On the Nature of an Ordinary Bug: A New Perspective on Non-Fiction Research," both in *Teksty Drugie: English Edition, Nonfiction, Reportage, Testimony (Special issue)* 2 (2014).
2 Diana Kuprel, "Literary Reportage: Between and beyond Art and Fact," in *History of Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe*, eds. Marcel Cornis-Pope and John Neubauer (Amsterdam/Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004), 378.
3 The term "Regained Territories" or "Recovered Territories" refers to formerly German lands to the West of Poland which became Polish in the aftermath of the Yalta Treaty (1953), as a compensation for the lands in the East of pre-war Poland, annexed by the Soviet Union. Since some of these lands belonged to the Polish Kingdom in the Middle Ages, in the times of the Piast dynasty, the new Communist propaganda emphasized the fact that they had been rightfully returned to Poland after centuries of belonging to Germany. Needless to say, this led to dramatic population movements: massive expulsions of the ethnically German population from the Western territories and the re-settling there of those Poles who lost their homes in the Eastern territories, which had become part of the Soviet Union, or those from Central Poland whose homes were destroyed during the Second World War.

Party realized that reportage might serve as a great tool of propaganda. This was indeed the case in the 1950s, but as the regime loosened its grip, the reporters had more opportunities to avoid sticking to the prescribed topics. Gradually, reportage became a medium for depicting or even ridiculing the absurdities of the socialist system. Even though censorship would not allow an open critique of the authorities or the system, reporters managed to achieve that goal by writing about stories of individuals, visiting small towns and villages, observing and presenting to the reader the seemingly mundane details of everyday life in socialist Poland. Certainly, textual representations of "real life" in reportage cannot be considered reality. According to Paweł Zajas, "[f]act-based literature, for example, literary reportage, is a type of creation and construction of narration and because of this, it must include elements of fiction, even if the author's commitment to telling the truth is exceptionally strong."[4] Thus, Zajas claims that rather than searching for the line dividing fact and fiction in reportage, it is more important to define reportage by *how it is read*. More specifically, defining it by how the reader trusts the reporter to objectively and truthfully portray reality,[5] and as a result, reads the text as one actually depicting reality.[6] The readers of a reportage may assume that the text is based on real stories of individuals, even if it is actually a fact-based, albeit literary creation, that resembles reality only to some degree.

In this article, the works of reportage are viewed as a testimony to how daily life and the private sphere were portrayed in nonfiction narratives and circulated among the larger public. Specifically, I explore how the tension between the private and the public spheres was presented in two works of reportage by Małgorzata Szejnert (b. 1936) and Hanna Krall (b. 1935). These two reporters are important figures of reference for younger generations of journalists, even in present-day Poland. They are probably the best-known reporters of their era, along with Ryszard Kapuściński, Andrzej Mularczyk, and Krzysztof Kąkolewski. While Hanna Krall is more internationally famous than Małgorzata Szejnert, given that her nonfiction works were translated into several languages, both these women reporters lived through the upheavals of war and began their journalistic career in postwar Poland, sharing an interest in local issues rather than reporting on countries that were far away (like some of their colleagues, for instance, Ryszard Kapuściński or Wojciech Giełżyński). Krall, a Holocaust survivor, is most famous for her works of reportage centered on Jewish lives in war-time and post-

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4 Zajas, "On the Nature of an Ordinary Bug," 20.
5 Zajas refers to this relationship of trust between the reporter and the reader as "the referential pact." *Ibid.*
6 *Ibid.*, 20.

war Poland (e.g., *Zdążyć przed Panem Bogiem* [Shielding the Flame, 1977], *Taniec na cudzym weselu* [Dancing at Someone Else's Wedding, 1993]), and also insightful descriptions of life under communism both in Poland and in the Soviet Union (*Na wschód od Arbatu* [To the East of Arbat, 1972] and *Sublokatorka* [The Subtenant, 1985]). A journalist in *Polityka* weekly, she was part of a team of outstanding journalists and reporters who managed to remain curious and creative even in the times of Communist censorship.[7] She recollects her experience saying:

> I went somewhere, I listened, I looked around, I came back and I wrote. Except that then there was a censor who knew better—how to write, what the place that I came back from should be like. Basically: I was allowed to write and the censor was allowed to edit, ruin or block the publication of my writings.[8]

Krall's reportage analyzed in this paper, *Portret rodziny Z. we wnętrzu* (Portrait of the Z. Family in an Interior), comes from the collection of short reportage texts, *Katar sienny* (Hay Fever), written in the late 1970s which was scheduled to be published in 1981. However, the martial law censors blocked the publication and destroyed the printed copies. As a result, it was published as an underground edition.

Małgorzata Szejnert was a journalist in similar circles, working for the *Literatura* weekly as the head of the reportage section and also collaborated with *Polityka* weekly.[9] With Krall, she shared an interest in the details, in everyday life away from the spotlight. She has said:

> Despite the system's limitations, it gave us satisfaction when we managed to write something important, close to the truth, encouraging reflection. This was what we called "the school of small realism". You didn't write about the causes of certain things, because that was absolutely forbidden, but you showed the reality of life, how people lived, worked,

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7 Among them were: Janusz Rolicki, Ryszard Kapuściński, Teresa Torańska, Daniel Passent, and several other famous figures of Polish reportage.

8 Jacek Bińkowski, "Interview from the movie *The Reportage Workshop Presents: Hanna Krall / Pracownia Reportażu przedstawia: Hanna Krall, 13–14.04.1987*," quoted in: Bartosz Marzec "Hanna Krall" culture.pl, accessed October 28, 2017, http://culture.pl/en/artist/hanna-krall.

9 Szejnert wrote a reportage *Szczecin: Grudzień-Sierpień-Grudzień* (*Szczecin: December-August-December*), co-authored by Tomasz Zalewski (Warszawa: NOWA, 1984) that documents the Solidarity movement in Szczecin in 1980. After the martial law was imposed in 1981, she left Poland for several years and lived in the United States. After her return, she was one of the founders of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the popular daily newspaper famous for cultivating the best traditions of Polish reportage.

what healthcare they got, how they travelled to work. These details – dressed in good language and form – made readers draw conclusions. For me this was a very interesting time.[10]

This genre of reportage was later branded "small realism," for it reflected everyday struggles of ordinary Poles in the 1960s and 1970s. This term could be linked to the notion of "small stability," which indicates the period of 1957–1970, when the regime relaxed as a result of the Thaw and the first postwar generation was coming of age, expecting a better lifestyle than that which the stagnant (although somewhat "stable") socialist economy could provide. The frustration with the permanent lack of goods, lack of housing, and inefficient public services was characteristic of this period, and "small realism" in reportage skillfully illustrated this discrepancy between expectations and real-life conditions. Among Szejnert's works of reportage are *Wśród żywych duchów* (Among Living Ghosts, 1990), a story on political prisoners of the Communist regime in Poland, and *Wyspa-klucz* (Key Island, 2009), focused on Ellis Island and the story of migration to America. In 2013, a collection of her early works of reportage from the 1970s was published by *Znak* publishing house under the title *My, właściciele Teksasu: Reportaże z PRL-u* (We, the Owners of Texas: Reportages from the Popular Republic of Poland). The story analyzed in this paper, *Codziennie* (Every Day, 1973) is from this collection.

The two texts selected for analysis in this paper, written by Krall and Szejnert respectively, are lesser known than most reportage works published by these two authors. Much was written on Krall's Holocaust-related texts, and on Szejnert's historical reportages,[11] given that their works were—and still are—important voices in the discussion on Polish collective memory. Nevertheless, the short texts by these two authors that focus on everyday lives, while seemingly not addressing issues of life and death or relations between victims and perpetrators, are still worthy of attention to understand the perceived realities of late socialism.

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10 "Małgorzata Szejnert – reporterka spełniona," interview by Teresa Kaczorowska, *Ciechanowskie Zeszyty Literackie* (December 2010), quoted in: Bartosz Marzec, "Małgorzata Szejnert" culture.pl, accessed October 28, 2017, http://culture.pl/en/artist/malgorzata-szejnert.

11 For Krall, see Anna Dobiegała, "Rzeczy jako język dyskursu memorialnego w holokaustowych reportażach Hanny Krall," *Teksty Drugie*, no. 1–2 (2013); Alexander Höllwerth, "Andrzej Szczypiorskis Początek und Hanna Kralls Zdążyć Przed Panem Bogiem zwischen Theodizee und Kulturodizee," *Zeitschrift für Slavische Philologie* 68, no. 1 (2011). For Szejnert, see Anna Wróblewska, "Reportaż historyczny jako forma współczesnej etnografii na przykładzie czarnego ogrodu Małgorzaty Szejnert," *Roczniki Nauk Społecznych*, no. 4 (2017); Magdalena Gajek "Wyspa Klucz Małgorzaty Szejnert wobec amerykańskiego mitu równości, wolności i sukcesu," *Polonistyka. Innowacje*, no. 6 (2017); Monika Wiszniowska, "Między mitem, pamięcią i historią: literacki obraz Śląska w 'Czarnym Ogrodzie' Małgorzaty Szejnert," *Anthropos*, no. 22 (2014).

They illustrate the private sphere or the intersection between the public and private spheres, and in this manner, provide us with unique insight into the stories of individual deprivation as well as consumption. As Katherine Verdery underlines, individual consumption has a deeper, more politicized meaning in late socialism, as it provides a way to define one's identity and selfhood: "Consumption goods and objects conferred an identity that set you off from socialism, enabling you to differentiate yourself as an individual in the face of relentless pressures to homogenize everyone's capacities and tastes into an undifferentiated collectivity."[12] In this sense, the works of reportage through the stories of their protagonists also reflect on the individuals' construction of identity, subjectivity, and agency in late socialism. At the same time, the reporters' focus on everyday strategies of consumption and daily routines means that the choices made in the private sphere could be of consequence in a larger, political dimension.

Furthermore, the two texts are examples of the way in which reporters attempted to express their criticism of the Communist Party in subtle, often metaphorical ways:

> Having to outwit the authorities lead to a great literary game. One could not write about the system itself, so reporters described the fate of an individual. One could not write about the whole, so one would write about the details. One could not write about what is reflected in the mirror, so one would write about what is reflected in a sliver of a mirror. "We were saying about reportage that it is an art that allows to see the sea in a water drop" – wrote Adam Michnik. The reader knew that the seemingly banal, everyday images conceal a diagnosis of the system.[13]

This "great literary game," at which some reporters excelled, was a play with readers who learned very fast to read between the lines and to interpret signs that were hidden in the reporter's message. It was not so much a question of method such as borrowing techniques from fiction, as it was about the choice of topics, protagonists, and narratives.

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12 Katherine Verdery, "What Was Socialism, and Why Did It Fall?," in *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 29.

13 "Przechytrzanie władzy zapoczątkowało wielką literacką grę. Nie wolno było pisać o samym systemie, więc reporterzy opisywali losy indywidualnego człowieka. Nie wolno było pisać o ogóle, więc pisano o szczególe. Nie wolno było pisać o tym, co w lustrze, więc opisywano o tym, co widać w odłamku lustra. 'Mówiliśmy o reportażu, że jest sztuką, która pozwalała zobaczyć w kropli wody – morze' – napisał Adam Michnik. Czytelnik wiedział, że w banalnych z pozoru obyczajowych obrazkach kryje się diagnoza systemu." [Translations are mine here and throughout the article if not indicated differently.] Mariusz Szczygieł and Wojciech Tochman, "Reportaż prasowy," in *Biblia dziennikarstwa*, eds. Andrzej Skworz and Andrzej Niziołek (Krakow: Znak, 2010), 294.

The same strategy is adopted here in the close reading of the two texts. First, central themes and issues are identified, as well as the author's selection of people, places, and the timeframe of the reportage. The second level of analysis is focused on particularly relevant excerpts, which are examined from the point of view of vocabulary, structure, and figures of speech, to enable a deeper interpretation of the text and its hidden meanings. These short texts are thus dissected in a manner to allow a reflection on both the role of reportage as a genre in late socialism and on the manner in which reportage portrayed the lived experience of the private and public spheres in this period.

The first of these concerns is linked to the fact that Polish reportage, although rooted in the late nineteenth century tradition, experienced its "Golden Age" in the 1970s[14] and maintained its popularity ever since. While nonfiction was widely read in the broader region of Central and Eastern Europe, Polish literary reportage gained unprecedented fame, with works of Krall and Kapuściński sold to this day in almost all large bookshops across the world.[15] According to Diana Kuprel,

> [t]his intersection of journalism, belles-lettres, and politics was particularly manifest in Poland, which developed a strong tradition of reportage: the press preserved the language, provided a source of employment for the intelligentsia and the gentry, and fostered opposition to the regime during its partitioning.[16]

Kuprel points out the robust journalistic traditions in Poland and the leading role of the press in times of political upheavals all through the nineteenth to the twentieth century. Literature was an important forum of debate for a society that lost its state for over a century, and a key tool to preserve national identity.[17] The late-nineteenth-century positivism and neo-realism in fiction provided a

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14 According to Mariusz Szczygieł, editor of three volumes of the *Antologia polskiego reportażu XX wieku – 100/XX* (Wolowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2014).

15 It is not only a figure of speech—I found Kapuscinski's books of reportage in, among others, Washington DC, London, Rome, Paris, St. Petersburg, and New Delhi.

16 Kuprel, "Literary Reportage," 374 – 377.

17 The effort to preserve national identity was undertaken by writers representing different literary genres and different worldviews. Romantic poets wrote about the lost homeland and dreamt of its revival, while novelists, such as Bolesław Prus, Stefan Żeromski or Władysław Reymont, grappled with a wide array of social problems among different social strata, exacerbated by foreign domination, and professed the need for a positivist approach. Such an approach would mean an active engagement in the day-to-day, tedious work for the neediest—the poor, the sick, the marginalized—and in that manner, building a stronger and healthier society. The latter group of writers did not limit their activity to literary salons of the cultural elite, but also published their texts in the press, becoming precursors to authors of long-form journalism.

solid foundation to nonfiction writing, as authors explored social, economic, and cultural tensions of the time, becoming a model for journalists and writers of the 1920s and 1930s. Nonfiction significantly grew in strength in the interwar period, when Poland became independent again. Socially engaged writers and journalists unveiled poverty, discrimination and deprivation among the most vulnerable members of society in their texts. In her study *Historia słabych: reportaż i życie w Dwudziestoleciu (1918 – 1939)* (The History of the Weak: Reportage and Life in the Interwar Era (1918 – 1939)), Urszula Glensk gives an insightful image of the themes explored by reporters of that time. After more than a century of occupation by foreign powers, Poland was poor and mostly underdeveloped, in comparison to other European nations. The society was divided along class, ethnic, and religious lines. By depicting the lives of people who were at the bottom of the social hierarchy, reporters gave voice to the disenfranchised who would otherwise have no means of making their situation known to a broader public.[18] The sense of urgency and importance that accompanied these reporters certainly played a part in shaping the genre. The reportage often included stories of individuals, representing its protagonists with empathy and understanding and exploring bold techniques of participatory or investigative journalism.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, socialist realism became the binding doctrine in Poland, and journalists were expected to play an important role in introducing and legitimizing the socialist system. The jargon of propaganda was introduced in the Stalinist years, as part of the new aesthetics of socialist realism. At the assembly of Polish writers in 1950, the Marxist critic Melania Kierczyńska delivered a lecture outlining the main premises of the new genre. Socialist realism was supposed to portray typical people in typical conditions —in other words, characters who lived in realities that strongly mimicked its concrete model. She listed other traits, such as optimism, humanism, sharp actuality, emphasis on the "new man," builder of socialism, and Party loyalty.[19] This meant that there was no space for creativity and originality of expression any longer, and literature could only be subjugated to the goals of the Communist Party. The private should be superseded by the public, the individual by the collective—individuals could be depicted as parts of a larger entity: a state enterprise, a construction site, a May Day parade. The new protagonist, ideally a member of the proletariat, should be (stereo)typical, simplistic and should fit into the image of a new, socialist man. There was no place for multidimension-

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18 Urszula Glensk, *Historia słabych: reportaż i życie w Dwudziestoleciu (1918 – 1939)* (Krakow: Universitas, 2014), 12 – 13.

19 Anna Bikont and Joanna Szczęsna, *Lawina i kamienie: pisarze wobec komunizmu* (Warsaw: Prószyński i S-ka, 2006), 134.

ality, complexity, existential doubts, or intellectual musings. The condition of journalists' work during the Stalinist years (1949–1953) was an equally difficult one. Media policy at the time had two goals: "to win support from a hostile population for the Communist rule in Poland and to Sovietize the population."[20] Also, a journalist acted as an intermediary between the society and the Party, collecting testimonies from the "worker-peasant" correspondents, intervening with bureaucrats, as well as transmitting messages of propaganda to the society.

After Stalin's death in 1953 and various political changes in the Polish Communist Party,[21] the restrictions regarding writers and journalists relaxed, but not fully. Periods of the Thaw would be followed by more restrictive measures, that eased again after a change of the people in power. "Small stabilization" of the early 1960s under the rule of the First Secretary Władysław Gomułka (1956–1970) finished when the protests of 1968 and the ensuing anti-Semitic campaign in Poland again brought intellectual life to a halt. The brutally quelled protest of workers in 1970 marked the grim beginning of a new decade. The reigns of the Party were now in the hands of Edward Gierek (1970–1980) who promised economic reforms that would bring prosperity to everyone. This so-called initial "honeymoon phase" lasted for a very short time because soon it turned out that the foreign loans (from the same western capitalists so deplored by the Soviets) did not bring expected results. The "phony prosperity,"[22] ever-increasing debt, the unchanging prices of food, the wages and subsidies that the state could not afford, were all signs of an impending economic disaster.

While even in the Stalinist period a private sphere existed, although in a reduced and fragile form, from the Khrushchev era onwards, it was gradually growing.[23] However, the line between the public and the private is often blurred in the context of state socialism: the domestic sphere, usually the primary locus of private life, was not always completely free of the scrutiny of the public sphere. While in the Khrushchev era, there was less coercion and more space for the individual to shape and create their private sphere, Susan E. Reid explains that the state expected a voluntary acceptance of the new aesthetics of everyday life, habits, and social norms central to the project of socialist modernity.

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20 Jane Leftwich Curry, *Poland's Journalists: Professionalism and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 39.

21 In particular, the changes were the death of the General Secretary of the Communist Party Bolesław Bierut and the appointment of Edward Ochab as the new First Secretary.

22 Norman Davies, *Heart of Europe: The Past in Poland's Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 13.

23 For a more detailed analysis, see Lewis H. Siegelbaum, ed., *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia* (New York/Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

In order to achieve this, the state took an active role in promoting certain images of domesticity and began constructing a welfare state that Reid characterizes as paternal and patriarchal.[24] The home was a place of public importance where socialist values were to be transmitted and a space where gender roles were to be maintained. "Women's aesthetic task to furnish and decorate the interior of the family home in a tasteful way was no trifling, private enterprise. Rather it was a civic mission of educational and ideological importance."[25] However, because women now had a "public" mission in the private sphere and were also expected to work, they were no longer associated only with domestic life. Nevertheless, the demand for more privacy, symbolized by the space of a private home, was growing in the entire Eastern Bloc.

In Poland, the expectation to be allocated a private flat of good quality increased over time, which is why the lack of housing became one of the most pressing concerns in the late socialist period. Immediately after the Second World War till 1956, the state implemented a housing policy which regulated living spaces, forcing individuals and families to share apartments.[26] As a result of the policy of *dokwaterowanie* (literally, "adding to an apartment"), which was based on the Soviet model of communal housing, those who occupied larger apartments were forced to share them with strangers. In rural areas, on the other hand, houses were often of poor quality (lacking water and sewage systems) and usually were shared by extended families. In the late 1950s and 1960s, the state began construction of blocks of flats; however, rapid urbanization created more demand than the state could meet and periods of intensified construction would be followed by stagnation by the end of the 1960s and again in the late 1970s.[27] Since housing policy was based on central planning and the overwhelming majority of urban housing was public property, in spite of a steadily increasing number of blocks of flats that were constructed across the country,[28] the number of flats did not match the growing population.[29] The housing

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24 Susan E. Reid, "Women in the Home," in *Women in the Khrushchev Era*, eds. Melanie Ilic, Susan E. Reid, and Lynne Atwood (New York/Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 155–156.
25 *Ibid.*, 167.
26 This policy was implemented by decree of December 21, 1945 regarding public housing policy and rent control signed by Bolesław Bierut. "Dekret z dnia 21 grudnia 1945 r. o publicznej gospodarce lokalami i kontroli najmu," accessed July 22, 2019, http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU19460040027/O/D19460027.pdf.
27 Stephan Schmidt, "Poland: An Introduction," in *The Reform of Housing in Eastern Europe and Soviet Union,* eds. Jozsef Hegedus, Ivan Tosics, and Bengt Turner (London: Routledge, 1992), 144.
28 According to statistical data, the 1970s saw an increase of almost 2 million new apartments. Główny Urząd Statystyczny, *Rocznik Statystyczny* (Warsaw, 1980).

crisis deepened throughout the 1970s and reached its peak in 1980 when approximately 18 % of households did not formally have a dwelling.[30] The waiting time for an apartment could be as long as 15 years in Warsaw and 26 years in Wrocław.[31] The allocation of a flat could also be used politically—engaging in opposition activity could result in a placement far down on the waiting list (apart from blocked promotions at work and limited access to other goods, such as coupons for cars or home appliances).[32] Thus, inadequate housing was one of the main sources of popular frustration. Housing remained one of the key demands of workers during numerous waves of strikes in the 1970s and 1980s in Poland.[33]

Nevertheless, even the shift toward a single-family home did not mean that the divide between the private and the public would solidify. According to Lewis H. Siegelbaum:

> Alongside voluntary and informal institutions, an outpouring of advice through the media of magazines, radio, and television sought to intervene in the ways people set up home, fitted themselves into its standardized spaces, and lived their daily lives. It set norms of hygiene, efficiency, rational consumption, and "contemporary" taste.[34]

Clearly, the line between the public and the private sphere is blurred, and the influence of the public over the private continued to remain important, changing in its focus and intensity over the years. The two reportages analyzed in this article also illustrate the challenges linked to this shortage of living space and the fuzzy boundaries between the public and private spheres. They depict the daily life and housing conditions in 1970s, for example, with three entire generations of families cramped in the small space of a two-room flat, with the lack of basic resources such as running water or central heating, low quality or complete ab-

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29 Dariusz Jarosz, "Polaków drogi do mieszkania w PRL (szkic problemu)," Zespół Badawczy Historii Społecznej Polski XIX i XX wieku UW, accessed September 23, 2018, http://www.histor iaspoleczna.uw.edu.pl/seminarium/miasto-przestrzen-i-ludzie/polakow_drogi_do_mieszkania_ w_PRL.

30 Case study 4.6. "The Challenge of Managing Housing as an Economic Sector in Poland," in *Building Prosperity: Housing and Economic Development*, ed. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka (Abingdon/New York: Earthscan, 2009), 124–126.

31 Davies, *Heart of Europe*, xii.

32 David Ost, *Solidarity and the Politics of Anti-Politics: Opposition and Reform in Poland since 1968* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1990), 92.

33 Anthony Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism: A Cold War History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 182, 218–221, 376.

34 Lewis H. Siegelbaum, "Introduction: Mapping Private Spheres in the Soviet Context," in *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia,* ed. Lewis H. Siegelbaum (New York/Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 11.

sence of appropriate furniture (people sleeping permanently on tourist folding beds or on two armchairs put together), the need for coordination of daily routines of family members (kitchens and bathrooms became multi-purpose spaces), etc. These living conditions also caused tensions, conflicts, and everyday frustration.[35] The necessity of reconciling these feelings with the requirements of the labor market, where one was expected to be productive and disciplined, added to the problem. Furthermore, overcrowded spaces made individualism difficult: going through the day and completing daily tasks was often a collective effort for the entire family, as the reportage works analyzed here demonstrate.

Everyday Routines of a Family

In her collection of short nonfiction stories *Katar sienny,* Hanna Krall presents *Portret rodziny Z. we wnętrzu* (Portrait of the Z. Family in an Interior).[36] The Z. family's "interior" is just a small, 20 sq. meters flat. The opening sentence of the story is a description of a "most functional"[37] closet, which contains a number of items, a palm tree on top, and a knife on the side. The knife is used to switch the light on, since the electrical switch is behind the closet, "where a hand cannot reach, but a knife can."[38] These three objects, the closet, the knife, and the switch, symbolize the absurdity of life in such a tight space, requiring creative solutions to complete the simplest tasks. The family includes the grandmother (who survived the Russian Revolution in the East), the mother, the father (the story refers to him as Mr. Gutek), their son Janusz (a student), and their daughter Ela and her husband, Tomek. This family of six adults living cramped in the small flat, are called upon to engage in a high level of coordination and collaboration for daily logistics: "The right to occupy the bathroom first belongs to the father, Mr. Gutek. He wakes up before five, gets dressed, but he

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35 Juliane Fürst talks about "ineffectiveness and a general unattractiveness" of late socialism in public perceptions in her introduction to *Dropping out of Socialism:* "Introduction: To Drop or Not to Drop?," in *Dropping out of Socialism: The Creation of Alternative Spheres in the Soviet Bloc*, eds. Juliane Fürst and Josie McLellan (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2017), iBooks edition, 27.

36 The title is a direct reference to the famous film by Luchino Visconti, *Gruppo di famiglia in un interno* (1974) starring Claudia Cardinale and Burt Lancaster, known in English as *Conversation Piece*, but the literal translation of the title would be "A Family Group in an Interior."

37 "Najbardziej funkcjonalna jest szafa," in *Katar sienny*, ed. Hanna Krall (Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1981), 63.

38 "gdzie ręka nie wchodzi, ale nóż tak." *Ibid.,* 63.

does not have breakfast, because Janusz sleeps in the kitchen and one cannot reach the gas [stove]."[39] But Mr. Gutek does not complain, as he can catch the bus to his workplace from around the corner, and "the communication [transport] is really excellent. Also, the work in the company is very pleasant, and more importantly—fruitful."[40]

Already in this instance, the reader can notice a striking contrast between the inconveniences of daily life and an almost excessive enthusiasm about work and its organization. Furthermore, since the reporter does not directly quote the protagonist of the story, it seems as if the phrases with which she comments on Mr. Gutek's experiences came straight from the propaganda slogans: "the communication is really excellent," the work is "very pleasant" and "fruitful."

The daughter of the family, Ela, who works as a nurse, wakes up next. She needs to have breakfast: "[f]ortunately she is skinny and she can easily pass between Janusz's bed and the cooker."[41] She works at a hospital, where "the interpersonal relations are marvelous, and the professor [chief doctor] constantly underlines the role of the middle-level personnel in the process of medical care."[42] Here, again, the adjective "marvelous," and the stress on egalitarian attitudes in the hospital appear unnatural, as the register suddenly changes from informal to formal, seemingly imitating the propaganda newspeak. In particular, the concept of the "role of the middle-level personnel in the process of medical care" sounds artificial, as if coming from a government report. Since the healthcare system was known to be constantly overcrowded and underfunded, with hard working conditions and dissatisfied medical staff, it is difficult to believe that a young nurse would express such positive opinions about her work.[43]

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39 "Pierwszy ma prawo zająć łazienkę ojciec, pan Gutek. Wstaje przed piątą, ubiera się, ale śniadania nie je, bo w kuchni jeszcze śpi Janusz i nie można dostać się do gazu." *Ibid.*, 63.
40 "Zaraz za rogiem staje autobus, który wozi ludzi z ich zakładu do pracy, tak że komunikacja jest naprawdę znakomita. Również praca w zakładzie jest bardzo przyjemna i co ważniejsze – owocna." *Ibid.*, 64.
41 "na szczęście jest szczupła i swobodnie mieści się między łóżkiem Janusza i kuchenką." *Ibid.*, 64.
42 "stosunki są cudowne, a profesor nieustannie podkreśla rolę średniego personelu w procesie leczenia." *Ibid.*, 64.
43 The socialist public healthcare system, although well-developed and available to all, faced many pressures—problems with overcrowded hospitals and shortage of doctors, long queues and corruption. "40-lecie służby zdrowia w PRL," *Tygodnik* (July 27, 2011), accessed July 12, 2019, https://tygodnik.tvp.pl/4890935/40lecie-sluzby-zdrowia-w-prl. See also Kemp-Welch, *Poland*, 207; Ost, *Solidarity*, 157.

Other members of the family wake up at later hours and must coordinate their activities precisely:

> Tomek and Janusz get up at the same time, just after the mother leaves for work. It works incredibly efficiently: the mother closes the door behind her, Tomek is already in the bathroom, Janusz quickly folds his bed, takes it to the room, then lifts the kitchen table top, pulls in from the corridor the box with pickled vegetables, and puts two children-size chairs at the table—and now they are able to peacefully have breakfast.[44]

Thus, the family's morning routine is akin to a complicated construction in which each block must fall into place before a new one can be put on top. There is no space for irregularities; everyone must carefully follow the mechanism devised for the family to be able to complete their morning tasks and meet the expectations of their respective professions. Work or study—areas related to public life—are a priority: the grandmother, the only one not subject to the rigors of employment, occupies the lowest level on the priority scale: "Although she is awake since five, she is not allowed to get up until the others leave in a set order (How wonderful it is, actually, that everyone [in the family] starts their work at a different time!)."[45] The last sentence, again, in its fake joy, indicates the irony of such existence: even though the family members are locked in an almost punishing routine (e. g., the grandmother cannot leave her bed for four hours), things could be even worse if they all started work at the same time. Thus, it is counted as a reason for happiness—how wonderful it is that the situation is only difficult, while it could be absolutely unbearable!

Among the hardships of everyday existence, events that have different levels of significance become equally important: Krall depicts everyday life in PRL as a somewhat surreal existence, in which the priorities change: having a respectable position is as good as managing to obtain a piece of meat.

> Mother returns home in great mood, because not only she is lucky with people [helping her obtaining a position of a teacher in a renowned secondary school], but also Mr. Gutek has

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44 "Tomek i Janusz wstają jednocześnie, zaraz po mamie, która wychodzi przed ósmą. Odbywa się to nadzwyczaj sprawnie: mama zamyka za sobą drzwi, Tomek już jest w łazience, a Janusz szybko składa łóżko, wynosi do pokoju, następnie podnosi klapę stołu w kuchni, wciąga z przedpokoju karton z przetworami warzywnymi i dwa dziecinne krzesełka stawia pod ten stół – i już mogą spokojnie zjeść śniadanie." Krall, *Katar sienny,* 65.

45 "Ostatnia, po dziewiątej, wstaje babcia. Nie śpi od piątej wprawdzie, ale nie wolno jej wstać, dopóki nie wyjdą kolejno – pan Gutek, Ela, mama, Tomek i Janusz. (Jakie to wspaniałe zresztą, że każdy o innej godzinie zaczyna pracę!)." *Ibid.,* 66.

brought a piece of pork neck from somewhere, and Tomek some bacon that can be baked with marjoram.[46]

Domestic life provides shelter and respite from the struggle that awaits outside, where material things acquire a new, unexpected meaning—pork is a rare luxury in times of shortage, as special as a job promotion is. The juxtaposition of areas of work that belong to the public space, and the very domestic, private issue of living arrangements, daily routines, and dinner ingredients, shows the reader how meanings are constructed inside and outside of the home. The outside, public space emerges as an area of struggle for recognition and resources, governed by social rules, while the private space, although lacking in comfort, is a place for family life and intimacy, where the individual can exercise his or her own control and use their own resources.[47] Nevertheless, this control is limited only to material surroundings (furniture, food, appliances, sleeping arrangements) —daily routines have to adjust to the requirements of the public sphere. The daily routine of the family, dependent on the occupations and social roles of its members, is yet another demonstration of how the public governs the private: while the private sphere may provide shelter and individual spaces of freedom, it is not separate from the public sphere. In fact, its functioning is almost entirely subordinated to the requirements of public life.

In the evening, the routine begins anew: the logistics of going to bed requires as detailed planning as the morning routine did. When others prepare to sleep, the mother moves to the bathroom:

> In the bathroom, which is incredibly functional, she lays out the books on the washing machine (bought twenty years ago but working flawlessly); she sits down on the toilet, pulls the container for dirty laundry to herself (it has an ideal height in proportion to the toilet); she lays out the students' notebooks and calmly starts to check the assigned essays. Their topic is: "Honest work, knowledge, and social activism as a measure of human value in the People's Republic of Poland."[48]

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46 "[Mama] Wraca więc do domu w cudownym humorze, bo mało, że ma takie szczęście do ludzi, to jeszcze pan Gutek przyniósł skądś schab karkowy, a Tomek boczek, który można upiec z majerankiem." *Ibid.*, 68.

47 This aspect of privatization of the public space by creating a cozy, familial space in state-owned apartments, as well as the idea of private space as one where individuals can exercise their control is described by Susan E. Reid in the context of Soviet Khrushchev-era apartments, "The Meaning of Home: 'The Only Bit of the World That You Can Have to Yourself,'" in *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia*, ed. Lewis H. Siegelbaum (New York/Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

48 "W łazience, która jest niezwykle funkcjonalna, układa na pralce, kupionej dwadzieścia lat temu, ale działającej bez zarzutu, książki, sama siada na sedesie, przysuwa do siebie pojemnik

The final scene of the reportage culminates with the sense of the absurdity of everyday life, contrasting the misery of citizens' daily routines with slogans that announce widespread happiness. Although modern appliances such as TV sets or washing machines are available, everyday life is not easy or comfortable. The topic of student essays is particularly poignant given the surroundings in which these essays are read—the teacher uses a dirty laundry container as her table and a toilet as her seat. The great ideas of "human value" are thus discussed against the backdrop of the most ordinary—if not tedious—circumstances. The public sphere, with its slogans and propaganda statements, enters the most intimate and private sphere, the one of bathrooms.

Krall's story is thus not only a depiction of the private life of a family but also a subtle critique of the humiliation and everyday struggles of the inhabitants of a socialist country. The public sphere with its celebratory slogans and artificial enthusiasm is contrasted with the private sphere, where discomfort and hardships are common. The protagonists of the story do not complain. Their bodies may be tormented but on the outside, they only express appreciation: bathrooms are "functional," transport is "excellent," work is "wonderful" and social relations are "marvelous." The literary device used here by Krall who juxtaposes mundane details of daily routines and the propaganda-like enthusiasm, creates a comical effect. The readers of reportage, well-trained in detecting double meanings in texts, could easily read this as a critique of the socialist system. Through a skillful use of repetitions, enumerations of actions undertaken by family members, and hyperbole, Krall manages to depict daily routines as if through a distorted mirror, deepening the impression of unnecessary struggle. Making daily tasks of the family appear even more tedious and dreary to readers allows the reporter to contrast them with enthusiastic statements, thereby ridiculing propaganda jargon. The artificial enthusiasm with which family members describe their life reminds the reader of Gierek's empty promises of prosperous everyday existence.

Daily Routines of Factory Workers

The 1970s were a particularly intense time for journalists. While Gomułka was rather distrustful of them, Gierek attached a lot of importance to his public

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na brudną bieliznę, który ma idealną w stosunku do sedesu wysokość, rozkłada na nim zeszyty i spokojnie zabiera się do sprawdzania wypracowań. Dzisiejszy temat ich brzmi: 'Rzetelna praca, wiedza i aktywność społeczna miarą wartości człowieka w Polsce Ludowej.'" Krall, *Katar sienny*, 68.

image. He realized that his grand strategy of economic reforms[49] needed to be published in the media. Consequently, journalists who were perceived as loyal could quickly rise to the elite level, gaining privilege such as higher pay and opportunities to go abroad.[50] The other journalists—in the words of an editor interviewed at the time by Madeleine Albright—were those who wanted to have their work appear in print and tried to figure out how to write in a manner so as to pass the censorship system.[51] This clear-cut division between loyalist and oppositionist journalists may be somewhat far-fetched, since most of the media were initially supportive of Gierek's great plan of modernization. The situation changed when Gierek's strategy turned out to be catastrophic for the Polish economy and many journalists started to criticize the government and refused to participate in the "propaganda of success." Nevertheless, as Kapuściński's case demonstrates, many reporters tried to negotiate their position in a manner that allowed them to be critical and continue writing—this was especially difficult for foreign correspondents, who could easily be denied visas and participation in delegations abroad.[52] The increasingly critical voices in the press eventually led the authorities to restrict the freedom of the media once again and impose an even more stringent censorship.

Małgorzata Szejnert (as well as Hanna Krall) would certainly be part of the category of journalists searching for ways to outwit the censorship of the state. While many of their works passed through screening by the censors, some of their articles caused political turmoil. Szejnert recalls how she agreed to write a reportage on the condition of Polish aristocracy in Communism. It was an idea that her superior, Jerzy Urban, chief of *Polityka*'s domestic affairs section, had shared with her. The enterprise was risky, as it was very likely that the cen-

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49 Gierek came to power with the promise of executing large-scale reforms that would modernize the industry, import technology from the West, and bring about better living standards for everyone—he even labelled his plan as "Building a Second Poland." Kemp-Welch, *Poland*, 201. However, bringing consumer goods from the West on credit proved to be a shortsighted strategy—as Ost called it, "a great leap nowhere." Ost, *Solidarity*, 55.

50 Tomasz Goban-Klas, *Niepokorna orkiestra medialna: Dyrygenci i wykonawcy polityki informacyjnej w Polsce po 1944 roku* (Warsaw: ASPRA-JR, 2004), 200.

51 Madeleine K. Albright, *Poland, The Role of the Press in Political Change* (Washington, D.C.: Praeger, 1983), 14.

52 See Artur Domosławski's biography of the reporter, *Kapuściński Non-Fiction* (Warsaw: Świat Książki, 2010), which caused much controversy, since Domosławski revealed that the reporter traveled abroad and published his most famous works at the cost of occasionally writing reports for the Communist secret services (*Służba Bezpieczeństwa*, SB). However, it would be an exaggeration to see Kapuściński as an agent of the SB, as his reports were by and large infrequent and rather harmless.

sorship office would not let it be published. Nevertheless, Szejnert decided to attempt it: her *Mitra pod kapeluszem* (A Mitre under the Hat) was published in two parts, on Easter and May Day of 1973. Even though the censors allowed it to be published, the authorities were deeply displeased, especially given the fact that the Soviet delegate visiting the May Parade in Warsaw reprimanded the propaganda secretary for it.[53] Szejnert recalls the consequences of her article:

> When the text was criticized [by the Party], the press division [of the Party] organized a hate campaign against me. They called several journalists and instructed them to write polemical texts. And that is when more brutal texts appeared. [...] International journalists became interested in why the reportage evokes such emotions, and many foreign newspapers reprinted it. This fact shocked the Party comrades, and the authorities put my name and my article on record [a ban on publishing]. [From that time,] I was surrounded by a deep silence.[54]

Incidents such as this could push journalists out of official media, which meant that they could write only for underground publications after that—the so-called "second circle" (*drugi obieg*)—which developed rather intensively in the second half of the 1970s.[55]

This article explores Szejnert's reportage *Codziennie* (Every Day) from 1973, which is a story of intersecting daily routines of five Ursus factory employees. Ursus, a well-known agricultural machines factory, was founded in 1893 by a group of Polish engineers and entrepreneurs. After the Second World War, the company—nationalized by then—began its operations again, focusing mainly on the production of tractors. Over the years, its production grew significantly,

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53 Quoted in Mariusz Szczygieł, ed., *100/XX: Antologia polskiego reportażu XX wieku, Vol. 2* (Wolowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2014), 140.

54 "Kiedy tekst został odsądzony, wydział prasy zorganizował na mnie nagonkę. Wezwali iluś dziennikarzy i zlecili im polemikę. I zaczęły się kolejne brutalne teksty [...] Dziennikarze zagraniczni zainteresowali się, czemu reportaż wywołuje takie namiętności, przedrukowało go mnóstwo zachodnich gazet. To poruszyło towarzyszy, władze partyjne zrobiły zapis na moją nazwisko i tekst. Nastała głucha cisza." *Ibid.*, 140.

55 Initially, underground publishing involved mostly pamphlets and brochures, but after 1976, the second circle publications gained prominence, due to the creation of KOR (*Komitet Obrony Robotników*, Committee for the Defense of Workers), which issued *Komunikat KOR* and *Biuletyn informacyjny KOR*. The underground press quickly developed, and in 1977, a major publishing house NOWA (*Niezależna Oficyna Wydawnicza*, Independent Publishing Office) was established. In the early 1980s, the number of underground publishing houses grew to almost thirty, while second circulation newspapers and magazines could be counted in hundreds. For a more comprehensive study of underground press in Poland, see Siobhan Doucette, *Books Are Weapons: The Polish Opposition Press and the Overthrow of Communism* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2018).

fostered by the Communist government's attempts to modernize agriculture. As the factory grew in size, employing around 15,000 workers in the early 1970s according to Szejnert, it became a leading producer and exporter.[56] Thus, Małgorzata Szejnert's decision to interview some Ursus employees seemed understandable given the general expectation that the press should write about the industrial success of state companies. However, the reportage reveals much more than what one could find in a usual *produkcyjniak* (production novel or piece of nonfiction, typical of socialist realism).[57] Accompanying protagonists as they move between their home and the factory, showing them in their domestic as well as professional environments allows the reporter to explore the multiplicity of roles that the Ursus employees perform both in their private and public spaces. It is also significant post-factum that the Ursus factory is remembered today as one of the main sites of opposition: it was one of the main factories that began a large-scale strike in June 1976 against the increase in food prices. The strike quickly spread and was brutally quashed by the authorities.[58]

The reportage is shaped around the daily schedule of five workers. It describes them waking up and leaving the private space of their home to reach their workplace, and then it again depicts them in the evening engaging in family life or entertainment. One of the protagonists is Stanisław Fiutkowski, a 29-year-old milling machine operator, employed at Ursus for the last 11 years. His main problem is that he lives in a small village outside the city and his commute to work takes two hours each way. He gets up at 3:50 a.m., goes by bicycle to the nearest station, and then takes the suburban train to the factory. Krystyna Jarota, quality controller, a 24-year-old mother of twins, gets on the same train much later, one stop away from Ursus, so her wake up time is at 5 a.m. "Jarota does not put the light on so that she does not wake up her twins and husband

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56 See Piotr Wróblewski, "W tej fabryce rozpoczęła się polska droga do wolności," warszawa.naszemiasto.pl, accessed October 1, 2018, http://warszawa.naszemiasto.pl/magazyn/artykul/w-tej-fabryce-rozpoczela-sie-polska-droga-do-wolnosci,3682616,t,id.html; history of the URSUS company at Ursus.com, Historia Firmy, accessed October 1, 2018, https://www.ursus.com/pl/historia-firmy.

57 A "production" novel or short story, named *produkcyjniak* in Polish, was a typical propaganda genre of socialist realism of the 1930s and '50s that depicted workers in an industry or construction site. It was derided for its predictable plots, dull characters, and simplistic characterizations. Szczygieł, *Antologia Vol. 1*, 624.

58 The frustration surrounding the protests in Ursus, the ensuing beating and persecutions of the striking workers—were all factors that led to the formation of Komitet Obrony Robotników (Committee for the Defense of Workers), one of the key organizations of the anti-communist opposition. For more information, see Paweł Sasanka, *Czerwiec 1976. Geneza – przebieg – konsekwencje* (Warsaw: IPN, 2006).

(who works the second shift). In the dark, she reaches for the clothes prepared in the evening. Later, still in darkness, she adds coal to the stove."[59] The reportage clearly shows that this young family lives in precarious conditions, in a village house, with a floor made of planks put on bare soil, and with no proper heating nor running water. Szejnert describes Krystyna as a hard-working person whose mind wanders to the issue of the approaching name-day celebration[60]: she has invited her parents as well as her husband's parents to visit, but there will not be enough place for all of them to sit in the tiny room.

Another subject in the reportage, Jerzy Mikulski, is among the lucky ones: he lives in a block of flats in the *Niedźwiadek* district, built by the Ursus Workers' Housing Cooperative. He is a roller and operates complex machinery as part of the toolroom team that also includes Fiutkowski and Jarota. Their unit's boss is Bolesław Przybylski, 67, employed at Ursus for forty years, which means that he joined the company in 1933, during the "capitalist" system of the interwar era. He wakes up at 5:20 and walks to the factory: "He likes it especially since the road that was muddy and full of holes for years has been fixed."[61] He starts his work at 6 a.m., just like his workers—Fiutkowski, Jarota, and Mikulski. The fifth protagonist, Wojciech Stachura, can sleep longer than others, as his workday begins at 7 a.m. Although he is a unit boss just like the elderly Przybylski, the 37-year-old Stachura is more privileged thanks to his position as secretary of the Party organization. Stachura enjoys his daily activities: "[he] washes with pleasure in his bathroom; he has got a new apartment just recently."[62]

Following the overview of the morning routines of the five workers, the reportage crosses the boundary between the private and the public space, depicting them at their workplace. All five are lucky, according to the reporter: their assignment is the toolroom, a modernized part of the factory, where workers use sophisticated machines and benefit from better work conditions. The reporter notices that eating spaces for employees have recently been installed and right away, they have been personalized: some people brought posters with women,

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59 "Jarota nie zapala światła, bo nie chce obudzić bliźniaków i męża idącego do pracy na drugą zmianę. Sięga więc po omacku po przygotowane wieczorem ubranie. Potem, również po omacku, dorzuca węgla do żaru pod płytą." Małgorzata Szejnert, *My, właściciele Teksasu. Reportaże z PRL-u* (Krakow: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2013), Kindle Ebook, loc. 572.

60 In Poland, name-day celebrations are similar to birthday celebrations. Each first name has a specific date in the calendar associated to it. Among the older generation, the name-day is usually celebrated much more than a birthday, both among family and colleagues.

61 "Idzie spacerem. Lubi go zwłaszcza od czasu, gdy drogę, przez całe lata błotnistą i dziurawą, nareszcie uporządkowano." *Ibid.*, loc. 752.

62 "Wojciech Stachura z przyjemnością myje się w łazience; dopiero od niedawna ma nowe mieszkanie." *Ibid.*, loc. 758.

some—their stamp collections. "This improvement of the toolroom's appearance unleashed individual ideas,"[63] the reporter concludes, pointing to the contrast between the impersonal space of the factory, and the personalized eating spaces.

The toolroom section has an elevated status in the factory: its workers are "the aristocracy of Ursus," the reporter underlines and adds that "here, the worker is called a 'craftsman.'"[64] The terms describing the toolroom and its employees belong to a different, non-socialist order, reminding one of the old, *ancien régime* era. Indeed, there are other elements that seem contradictory to the collective spirit of Communist industries. For instance, some workers order soup, which is relatively costly, as "this sum includes the serving and washing of the plates, but one *should not write about it, as it is a private matter.*"[65] Szejnert's respondent gives his opinion on these somewhat snobbish attitudes of some of the workers, underlining that it is something that should not end up in the reportage: "*It also should not be written about that if someone likes to look good, they give their aprons to wash privately. They come back ironed; these people in the multifunctional drill section are particularly finicky.*"[66] The words and sentences are italicized in the original text to indicate that they are words of Szejnert's interviewees, but the reporter intentionally does not ascribe them to any particular person. It allows for the rather politically incorrect sentences like the one above to be published without any personal consequences. Here, the private acquires a negative connotation because of the expectation that the workers should leave their personal tastes and habits behind when joining the public, collective area of the factory.

The visit of the chief engineer accompanied by a delegation of English specialists is the main event of the day. The chief engineer demonstrates the toolroom with pride, since "there is nothing to be ashamed of in the toolroom if we omit the fact that the roof is leaking."[67] The narrator's irony here is evident—the ambition of the factory to be internationally acclaimed harshly contrasts with the drab reality. It was common knowledge and subject of jokes

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63 "Ta poprawa wyglądu narzędziowni wyzwoliła także indywidualne pomysły" *Ibid.,* loc. 822.
64 "Robotnicy narzędziowni to arystokracja Ursusa. Tutaj mówi się na robotnika *rzemieślnik.*" *Ibid.,* loc. 805.
65 "w tej sumie mieści się przyniesienie i umycie talerzy, o czym jednak nie należy pisać, bo to już prywatna sprawa." *Ibid.,* loc. 822.
66 "Także nie należy pisać, że jeśli ktoś lubi wyglądać, daje fartuch do prania prywatnie. Dostaje wtedy wyprasowany, a zwłaszcza na wiertarkach wieloczynnościowych ludzie są wybredni." *Ibid.,* loc. 822.
67 "w narzędziowni nie ma się czego wstydzić, jeśli pominiemy fakt, że dach przecieka." *Ibid.,* loc. 822.

that even the leading state enterprises were often underfunded and struggled with everyday problems such as broken tools or leaking roofs. However, the engineer explains his belief in the mission of the toolroom and one of his workers remarks: "everyone likes to do their job well. One's success is linked to the gratefulness for the tool. A good tool increases our self-esteem. By creating a tool, the person creates herself anew, in a way."[68] Linking the individual to the tool and celebrating work is very typical of the socialist narrative of glorification of the proletariat and the concept of creating oneself anew brings to mind the idea of the shaping of a new, socialist man. Nevertheless, the new, socialist man also must eat, sleep, and raise his family, and this is what Szejnert tries to demonstrate in her text.

In the third part of the reportage, the story shifts again to the private space: the workers leave the factory, shop for groceries on their way home, make food, take care of their children, and sometimes, there is even a moment for study or entertainment. Mikulski and his wife study to complete training at a part-time technical school. Fiutkowski and his wife watch TV, Stachura goes to the cinema, and Przybylski visits his adult son for a small family celebration. When the protagonists return to their private, domestic space, the elements of public space are still present at home—whether in the form of school coursework or media discourses that can be seen on TV. Stachura chooses to remain in the public space by visiting the cinema after work, while Przybylski and Jarota focus on family life.

The reporter highlights how factory employees make their workplaces more personal and meaningful, transforming a public space and adding private elements to it. Her story does not treat the workers as a collective, but as a group of individuals, with their yearnings, dreams, worries, and family lives. As expected, Szejnert describes the factory dynamics, but does so through the eyes of its employees, giving the story a human dimension. It is a balanced view of the socialist system: some progress is indeed made (new roads are built and housing is available for some workers), but there are challenges as well. The lives of the five protagonists are far from the ideal of universal happiness and state-sponsored benefits for all. The system is not fully equal: Party members will have certain privileges, elder workers' experience is not always valued as much as youngsters' efficiency, personal struggles are harder for some than for others. The last paragraph of the reportage, in which Szejnert concludes that "[n]obody

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68 "Każdy lubi wykonać dobrze swoją robotę. Jeśli to się uda, satysfakcja łączy się z wdzięcznością dla narzędzia. Dobre narzędzie podnosi nasze mniemanie o sobie. Człowiek, tworząc narzędzie, tworzy jak gdyby siebie na nowo [...]." *Ibid.*, loc. 839.

falls asleep before eleven"[69] is indicative of a simple physical problem that workers face: permanent sleep deprivation and the massive amount of time and effort that goes into the most basic daily chores. Many workers live in cramped spaces, without basic comforts, far from their workplace. Every day, they brave cold weather, tiredness, and overcrowded public transport, while dreaming of a better life.

The cliché of a worker, a "man of marble,"[70] a typical socialist statue of a strong, muscled worker holding a hammer,[71] acquires life, personality, emotions, worries, hopes, and dreams. Thanks to Szejnert and Krall's articles, the socialist man is revealed as a mythical creation detached from reality, possible only in the propaganda speeches, while socialist Poland is depicted as being inhabited by real, vulnerable people who face everyday challenges.

Conclusion

In both reportages, the attention shifts from the private to the public space, showing how the two are only seemingly separate, while in reality, they often overlap. As much as the protagonists may want to "privatize" their home and the workplace, escapes from the challenges of life in socialism and their daily routines to a large extent depend on the requirements of the public sphere. The complicated timetable of furniture moving and bathroom use at the Z. family flat is governed by the work schedules of the family members. The Ursus factory employees depend on public transport and availability of public housing in which they may or may not be allocated a flat. The propaganda slogans enter the domestic spaces through students' homework that Mrs. Z. is checking in the evening, through the TV that the Fiutkowski family is watching, and through the newspapers and magazines that the protagonists read.[72] Therefore, the illu-

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69 "Nikt nie zasypia przed jedenastą." *Ibid.*, loc. 840.

70 In reference to Andrzej Wajda's 1976 eponymous film *Człowiek z marmuru* about a young bricklayer of the Stalinist era—an exemplary *przodownik pracy* or Stakhanovite, who eventually gets disappointed in the Communist system.

71 For a more comprehensive overview of the main trends in socialist realism, see Irina Gutkin, *The Cultural Origins of the Socialist Realist Aesthetic, 1890–1934* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1999), Thomas Lahusen and Evgenii Dobrenko, *Socialist Realism Without Shores* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).

72 Szejnert even specifies the press titles that one of her protagonists reads: *Trybuna Ludu* (People's Tribune, the main media outlet of the Communist Party) and *Przegląd Sportowy* (Sports Review, the most popular sports newspaper), while his wife chooses a women's magazine, *Kobieta i życie* (Woman and Life).

sions of universal happiness under the socialist regime and the promises of so-
cialist modernity, heralded in the public sphere, are contrasted with everyday
hardships and discomforts experienced by the protagonists of the two texts in
the private sphere.

These small dramas of everyday life, however mundane and seemingly insig-
nificant, are typical of the "small realism" genre in reportage, championed by
both Krall and Szejnert. Unlike socialist realism, "small realism" abandoned
the ideological frame, focused on the individual and presented the human di-
mension of life in socialism in a realistic, raw manner.[73] This change could
lead in some cases to a certain legitimization, if not acceptance, of the "small
stability" of socialist Poland,[74] but in others, offered a possibility of observing
the inconsistencies between the official discourse and real life, and captured
the ruptures within the successful image put forth by propaganda. Magdalena
Piechota underlines that the protagonist of the "small realism" reportage is a fig-
ure with which readers could easily identify, since he or she acquires a symbolic,
universal dimension.[75] It is easy to empathize with a tired worker on a crowded
bus or feel for a young family fighting for better living conditions. This approach
helps in building a certain feeling of collective solidarity in everyday suffering
and struggle, transcending divisions of class, origin, profession, age, gender,
and political views. Ironically, it is in the criticism of the hardships of socialist
life that a real, collective feeling of solidarity can emerge. The readers of Szej-
nert's and Krall's reportages at the time could empathize with the workers of
Ursus or the inhabitants of the small flat, as their experiences resonated with
those described by the reporters. The recognition of collectively shared frustra-
tion with empty promises of late socialism came through personal experiences
but was also mediated through works of reportage as the ones analyzed here.
A shared disappointment in the socialist system was the foundation of the grad-
ually forming alliance between intelligentsia and workers, which turned into the
massive movement of *Solidarność* (Solidarity), eventually leading to the fall of
Communist rule in Poland.

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73 Magdalena Piechota, "The Protagonist of 'little realism': Everyman in Małgorzata Szejnert's
Reportage 'My, właściciele Teksasu,'" *Zeszyty Naukowe KUL* 58, no. 2 (2015), 77. In the English
abstract of Piechota's article, *mały realizm* is translated into "little realism" rather than to
"small realism." In my article, I chose to translate *mały realizm* as "small realism," since it is
related to the "small stability" period in Polish socialist history, which is the background against
which this genre in reportage developed.
74 Piechota quotes a critical characterization of "small realism" by Przemysław Czapliński and
Piotr Śliwiński in their *Literatura polska 1976 – 1998* (Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1999).
75 *Ibid.*, 85.

The depiction of the private sphere (intersecting with the public sphere) became a crucial argumentative tool in radically changing the political reality of the time. The topics that were deemed non-political were used to subvert the official political and propagandist message. Housing problems or daily troubles that socialist citizens faced, as described by the reporters, contradict the idealized image of socialist progress and challenged the mirage of economic prosperity. Krall's and Szejnert's use of irony was also indicative of how the use of humor and wit could destabilize the seriousness of politicians' statements, undermine the pompousness of official celebrations and strip ideological polish from reality. Simple, yet sarcastic language could serve as an antidote to the Communist newspeak full of set formulas, clichés, and empty statements. The "peculiar humor of the absurd" and "subtle irony" were characteristic of late socialism, says Alexei Yurchak, as it stood for a "refusal to accept any boundary between seriousness and humor, support and opposition, sense and nonsense."[76] Presenting the everyday as absurd or even bordering on the grotesque, contrasts with the normalized notions of Gierek-time stability. Krall's text prompts the reader to question their daily routines, as well as everyday experience of others presented by the official discourse in a positive light. Similarly, Szejnert's almost anecdotal story that juxtaposes a formal visit from abroad with a leaking roof in the factory also undermines the idealized images that usually accompany newspaper articles. Thus, in the works of the two reporters, humor and seriousness intersect, allowing the reader to interpret the text as a somewhat subversive critique of the socialist system, understandable through the codes of a "shared double-speak,"[77] but also as a rather plausible representation of the lived reality of average Poles with which readers could identify.

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The Sounds of Youth: **From Private Flats to Public Stages**

Andra-Octavia Cioltan-Drăghiciu
The Sad Butterflies of the 1980s
Sexual Intimacy among Youths in 1980s' Romania

It took for you to know the saleswoman, to be nice to her and stay in her good graces in order for her to hand you one of the few available packs of "butterflies" under the counter. Although reaching sexual maturity and unfolding it was not easy, both young men and women were looking for ways to live it as best as they could. The 1980s in Romania were notoriously scarce times and youths had to get creative and make do with what was available—and what was available were imported Chinese condoms with butterflies on the box.

Introduction

Privacy and private life in western countries are well-researched topics with compendia like *History of Private Life* discussing the development of this idea from the oldest times until the present.[1] Lewis H. Siegelbaum, Juliane Fürst, Paul Betts, or Katherine Verdery are some of many scholars who have addressed this issue in the context of socialist societies as well.[2] The conceptions of privacy in late socialist Romania have been the subject of the edited volume *Stat și viață privată în regimurile comuniste* (State and Private Life in Communist Regimes) while other works such as Luminița Dumănescu's *Familia românească în comunism* (The Romanian Family under Communism), Gail Kligman's *The Politics of Duplicity: Controlling Reproduction in Ceaușescu's Romania*, Irina Costache's articles and the recent edited volume on youth have also touched upon this subject

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1 Philippe Ariés and Paul Veyne, eds., *History of Private Life, Vol. 1–5* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987–1991).
2 Lewis H. Siegelbaum, ed., *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia* (New York/Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008); Juliane Fürst, "Love, Peace and Rock 'n' Roll on Gorky Street: The Emotional Style of the Soviet Hippie Community," *Contemporary European History* 23, no. 4 (2014); Juliane Fürst, "Where Did All the Normal People Go? Another Look at the Soviet 1970s," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 14, no. 3 (2013); Juliane Fürst, Piotr Oseka, and Chris Reynolds, "Breaking the Walls of Privacy: How Rebellion Came to the Street," *Cultural and Social History*, no. 4 (2016); Paul Betts, *Within Walls: Private Life in the German Democratic Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Katherine Verdery, *Compromis și Rezistență: Cultura Română sub Ceaușescu* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1994).

one way or another.[3] Each of these studies focuses on a particular aspect of privacy—whether it is its absence through the "etatization of time,"[4] its day-to-day dynamics in the interaction between the authorities and the people; creating "escapes" from the public sphere through music, yoga, or nudist beaches; family life, and the effects of the anti-abortion law. Despite these admirable scholarly efforts, the question of sexual intimacy (particularly among youths in Romania during late Socialism) remains unaddressed, with the exception of the 2018 catalogue *Erotism and Sexuality in the 'Golden Age*,' which explores sexuality in the visual culture of the Ceaușescu era from an anthropological and artistic point of view.[5]

According to the 2011 census,[6] contemporary Romanian society is dominated by the age group of 41–67-year-olds—women and men who were born during socialism and who reached sexual maturity in the 1970s and 1980s. Although youth is a social construct, determined not only by biological but also by cultural factors,[7] it is generally defined as the developmental stage when puberty, bodily awareness, and psychological development takes place.[8] The changes which mark the transition from childhood to youth take place on two levels: physiological and social. While the former is marked by puberty during adolescence with the formation of sexual identity, the latter unfolds through altered relationships

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3 Cosmin Budeancă and Florentin Olteanu, eds., *Stat şi Viaţă Privată în Regimurile Comuniste* (Iași: Polirom, 2009); Luminiţa Dumănescu, *Familia Românescă în Comunism* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2012); Gail Kligman, *The Politics of Duplicity: Controlling Reproduction in Ceaușescu's Romania* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998); Irina Costache, "From the Party to the Beach Party: Nudism and Artistic Expression in the People's Republic of Romania," in *Socialist Escapes: Breaking away from Ideology and Everyday Routine in Eastern Europe, 1945–1989*, eds. Cathleen M. Giustino, Catherine J. Plum, and Alexander Vari (New York: Berghahn, 2013); Irina Costache, "The Biography of a Scandal: Experimenting with Yoga during Romanian Late Socialism," in *Dropping out of Socialism: The Creation of Alternative Spheres in the Soviet Bloc*, eds. Juliane Fürst and Josie McLellan (London: Lexington Books, 2017); Cristina Pârvu, Udo Pusching, and Roger Pârvu, eds., *Jugend im Kommunismus* (Sibiu: Schiller, 2017).

4 Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 39.

5 Cosmin Năsui, Cristian Vasile, and Călin Hentea, *Erotism and Sexuality in the 'Golden Age': Ceaușescu's dictatorship 1965–1989* (Bucharest: PostModernism Museum Publishing House, 2018).

6 Recensământul populaţiei și al locuinţelor (Population and lodging census), accessed September 3, 2018, http://www.recensamantromania.ro/rezultate-2/.

7 László Kürti, *Youth and the State in Hungary: Capitalism, Communism and Class* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 4.

8 Michael Mitterauer, *Sozialgeschichte der Jugend* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), 15.

with parents, forming friendships with people of the same age, and starting sexual relationships.[9] Michael Mitterauer refers to youth as a period, when one is no longer a child, but is still not socially responsible—the leap from immaturity and dependence towards social maturity and moral responsibility.[10]

Youth as a social group became an important subject of social debate after WWII. This generation was supposed to rebuild Europe: "Youth can for the first time assume another than biological meaning, a positive social meaning, as the bearer of those pressures in the social body which pre-figure a new society instead of the reproduction of the old one."[11] Young people were portrayed as the embodiment of social change in the first decade after the war, but at the same time, they were seen as a threat to traditional values and norms at a time when "boundaries of society were being redefined, its moral contours redrawn, its fundamental relations (...) transformed."[12]

Society's hopes, fears, and insecurities were projected onto youth,[13] whereas the social, economic, and cultural post-war climate intensified the gap between the "old" and the "new" in all aspects of life.[14] The living situation and local economies impacted the structure of families, which became "less extended"[15] and followed "a more nucleated pattern,"[16] while relations between parents and their children altered,[17] mainly due to the changed cultural interests of youngsters after the war and the expansion of a specific consumer industry directed at teenagers.[18]

The passage from childhood to adolescence in Romania was marked at the age of 14 with the issuance of a personal identity card and through the accept-

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9 Karin Flaake and Vera King, "Psychosexuelle Entwicklung, Lebenssituation und Lebensentwürfe junger Frauen: Zur weiblichen Adoleszenz in soziologischen und psycho-analytischen Theorien," in *Weibliche Adoleszenz: Zur Sozialisation junger Frauen*, eds. Karin Flaake and Vera King (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 1998).

10 Mitterauer, *Sozialgeschichte*, 34.

11 Nairn and Quattrocchi, 1968: 172–173, cited in John Clarke, Stuart Hall, Tony Jefferson, and Brian Roberts, "Subcultures, Cultures and Class: A Theoretical Overview," in *Resistance through Rituals, Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*, eds. Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (London: Routledge, 2006), 57.

12 *Ibid.*

13 Christoph Hilgert, "Die unerhörte Generation: Jugend im westdeutschen und britischen Hörfunk, 1945–1963," in *Medien und Gesellschaftswandel im 20. Jahrhundert*, eds. Frank Bösch and Christoph Classen (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2015), 8.

14 Clarke et al., "Subcultures, Cultures and Class," 26.

15 *Ibid.*, 8.

16 *Ibid.*

17 *Ibid.*, 27.

18 *Ibid.*, 8.

ance into the organization of the communist youth—The Union of the Communist Youth (*Uniunea Tineretului Comunist*)—a membership that normally ended at the age of 30. For the purpose of this article, youth will be defined as boys and girls, who were between 14 and 25 years of age during the 1980s, because my research has shown that by the time they turned 30, most youths had already finished their education, settled down with a spouse, found steady jobs, and started a family.

In this article, I analyze one of the deepest forms of what we refer to today as "privacy," namely, sexual intimacy.[19] The article delves into the ways in which heterosexual intimacy was perceived and experienced by youths under the material and spiritual circumstances of the 1980s in Romania—a time of shortage and penury. This question is of utmost importance in contemporary Romania, as these are people who shape the country's politics and educate future generations in line with their own beliefs, values, and frustrations.

To this end, two main topics are addressed: the prevailing discourses on intimacy and the female body as reflected in the Romanian press and the archives of the secret police (*Securitate*), as well as sites and practices of intimacy among youths in the 1980s. The most important sources for my analysis are documents of the *Securitate*, Communist and international press, oral interviews conducted by me and other researchers, as well as letters sent by youths to the Romanian department of Radio Free Europe (RFE) from the personal archive of former RFE music producer Andrei Voiculescu.

Intimacy and the Female Body

The period before and after WWII was marked by the emergence of new means of birth control and family planning such as condoms in the 1930s, the pill in the 1960s, and IVF (in vitro fertilization) in the 1970s, which led to the separation of sexuality and reproduction. These developments affected both the actors and social structures involved in the process and changed the social structure of the family.[20] The legalization of abortion affected attitudes toward the value of life and women's rights, and brought about new values and norms,[21] but, as Isabel

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19 Beate Rössler, *The Value of Privacy* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), 5.

20 Theresia Theuke, "Introduction: Children by Choice? Changing Values, Reproduction, and Family Planning in the 20th Century," in *Children by Choice? Changing Values, Reproduction, and Family Planning in the 20th Century*, eds. Ann-Katrin Gembries, Theresia Theuke, and Isabel Heinemann (Berlin/München: DeGruyter Oldenbourg, 2018), 7.

21 *Ibid.*

Heinemann argues, this was possible precisely because of the change in values, which altered reproductive decision-making.[22] The debate about abortion during the Cold War contrasted women's rights with embryo rights; and the decision of the state regarding the legality of the procedure represented an intervention of the public into a "highly private sphere of life."[23]

Although the United Nations recognized the right to reproduction as a human right in 1968 at the Tehran conference,[24] gender roles were regarded differently in the two competing ideologies of the Cold War. Capitalist societies propagated traditional gender roles, nuclear families with the man as the breadwinner and the woman as the homemaker. In contrast, early socialist society relied on women's roles as mothers and workers and offered them the possibility of legal abortion so that they could manage both. Despite the propaganda and the legislation, traditional gender norms prevailed in Eastern European societies, as argued below in the Romanian case, and women were held solely responsible for their reproduction insofar as abortion became an inevitable social practice.[25]

Introducing the birth control pill in the 1960s represented a breakthrough in the western hemisphere, while countries of the Soviet Bloc depended on abortion due to the poor quality of the contraceptives they produced. The USSR employed the most liberal policy towards contraception and abortion before WWII except for the period between 1936 and 1955, when abortion was banned. Poland and Hungary followed suit with legalizing abortion in 1956, Czechoslovakia and Romania a year later.[26]

In the West, abortion was legalized in the 1970s as a result of women's rights movements,[27] but a revival of conservative and Christian activism criticized the measure in the 1980s even in socialist countries with a strong Catholic Church such as Poland, where the fall of Communist regimes brought back debates about it and even lead to the incrimination of abortion in 1993.[28] Isabel Heinemann divides the period between 1940 and 1990 into three phases regarding

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22 Isabel Heinemann, "From 'Children by Choice' to 'Families by Choice'? 20th-Century Reproductive Decision-Making between Social Change and Normative Transitions," in *Children by Choice? Changing Values, Reproduction, and Family Planning in the 20th Century*, eds. Ann-Katrin Gembries, Theresia Theuke, and Isabel Heinemann (Berlin/München: DeGruyter Oldenbourg, 2018), 217.

23 Theuke, "Introduction," 8.

24 Heinemann, "From 'Children by Choice' to 'Families by Choice'?" 228.

25 *Ibid.*, 233.

26 *Ibid.*, 223.

27 Isabel Heinemann counts the GDR as part of western states in this regard: GDR 1972, USA 1973, France 1975, FRG 1976, Italy 1978, *Ibid.*, 225.

28 *Ibid.*, 225.

value change towards reproduction in the Western and the Eastern bloc: "1940s/1950s: Family Planning in the West, Legal Abortion in the East; 1960s/1970s: Hormonal Contraception and Legal Abortion in the West, Paternalistic Administration of Birth Control in the East; 1980s/1990s: Assisted Reproductive Technologies and Anti-Abortion Protests in East and West," and concludes that legal abortion did not stem from liberal gender norms or recognition of women's rights. Nevertheless, women living in authoritarian regimes with traditional views on gender sought reproductive autonomy through smuggled contraceptive drugs or illegal abortion.[29]

Vincent Gérard states that people in authoritarian regimes tend to live double lives—an official and an unofficial one—within which they behave differently by officially supporting the socialist state while unofficially profiting from illegal parallel structures like the black market, nepotism, etc.[30] In the case of socialist Romania, this dichotomy has been explored to an extent by scholars mentioned in the introductory part of this article, albeit in their research, it appears under diverse names: the public versus the private, the official versus the unofficial, us versus them, or truth versus mythology.[31] Regardless of how the parts of the dichotomic pair are referred to, these spheres complement each other, draw and depend on one another; they seem to be of importance only with regard to contemporary witnesses trying to position these dichotomies retrospectively within the regime both for their own conscience and for keeping up appearances. As my research on youth in late socialist Romania has shown,[32] daily life was based on negotiations between the state and its subjects, on conscious or implicit concessions on both parts and not on a clear divide between social categories or between the people and the state.

Among all the dichotomies mentioned above, the split between "us" and "them" seems to be the most problematic as it implies a clear divide between state authorities and citizens. It is necessary to emphasize at this point that "us" and "them" are fluid terms and represent interchangeable identities: depending on the situation, "us" could turn into "them" and vice versa. Another aspect to take into account when defining the public is that the focus needs to be shifted from the state in its absolute representation onto a vision of the

29 *Ibid.*, 236.

30 Gérard Vincent, "Eine Geschichte des Geheimen," in *Band 5: Geschichte des privaten Lebens: Vom Ersten Weltkrieg zur Gegenwart*, eds. Antoine Prost and Gérard Vincent (Augsburg: Fischer, 2000), 158.

31 Lucian Boia, *Mitologia Științifică a Comunismului* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2011), 89.

32 Andra-Octavia Cioltan-Drăghiciu, *"Gut gekämmt ist halb gestutzt": Jugendliche im sozialistischen Rumänien* (Wien: LIT, 2019).

state *and* society as dominating the discourses of the public sphere. The press survey, the analysis of the *Securitate* files and the oral history interviews show that society, family, and community played significant parts in shaping public discourse and greatly influenced youth's knowledge, attitude, and feelings toward sexual intimacy.

Concerned with boosting the population, the representatives of the Romanian socialist regime under Nicolae Ceaușescu regarded reproduction as a central aspect of biopolitics; therefore, family, sexual intercourse, and the female body became issues of national importance, so the government decided to ban abortion in the mid-1960s in order to ensure an increase of the Romanian population.

Two laws were instrumental in the state's and society's control over the sexuality of young men and women in late socialist Romania: the anti-abortion decree 770/1966 (*Decret 770/1966 pentru reglementarea întreruperii cursului sarcinii*)[33] and the decree against "parasitism" 153/1970 (*Decret 153/1970 pentru stabilirea și sancționarea unor contravenții privind regulile de conviețuire socială, ordinea și liniștea publică*).[34] Nicolae Ceaușescu declared that the manner in which people behaved in their private life, especially regarding marriage, family life, and divorce, concerned society as a whole.[35] These two laws ensured that the state was free to pursue its biopolitical goal of increasing the population, while society could protect its traditional patriarchal norms and values.

Abortion had been legalized in Romania in 1957 by the government of the Romanian People's Party under Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej.[36] To stop the decrease in population numbers, the Ceaușescu government released the decree 770/1966 banning abortion. Terminating a pregnancy was legal only when the woman's life was in danger, if there were serious hereditary illnesses, in cases of rape and incest, if the pregnant woman suffered from certain disabilities, or already had four children. Obtaining permission for a legal abortion involved a painstaking legal process, since approval had to be granted by a special medical committee.[37]

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33 Decret 770/1966, accessed August 14, 2018, http://www.lege-online.ro/lr-DECRET-770%20 – 1966-(177)-(1).html.
34 Decret 153/1970, accessed August, 14, 2018, http://www.legex.ro/Decretul-153 – 1970 – 454.aspx.
35 Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Creșterea conșiinței socialiste a maselor, a spiritului revoluționar – forța motrice a progresului societății socialiste* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1984).
36 Dumănescu, *Familia românească*, 60.
37 Decret 770/1966.

Under these circumstances, young unmarried women faced the most difficulties.[38] While contraceptives were not forbidden and condoms of the brand *Vulcan* (Volcano) had been produced in Romania since the 1970s,[39] they were practically non-existent on the market by the 1980s.[40] A female interviewee remembers having smuggled birth control pills from Hungary for her friends,[41] another says that they could buy Chinese "butterflies" under the counter from the drug store (*parfumerie*).[42] Youths with fewer connections or less money, however, relied on traditional methods of birth control, which were unreliable and led to unwanted pregnancies.[43]

Women who could not afford an illegal abortion performed by a doctor turned to self-induced miscarriages. If the procedure went wrong and they had to be taken to the hospital, women were often refused treatment until they disclosed the name of the person who had performed the abortion or helped them induce the miscarriage.[44] The punishment for those who were caught having a self-induced abortion was usually correctional labor or a fine, in some cases even prison.[45] The mother of a female student who had died because of a self-induced abortion wrote an open letter to Elena Ceaușescu detailing the way in which she had lost her daughter and the tragedy that came with being a mother in socialist Romania.[46]

The other law, the decree 153/1970, dealt with deviations from the norm of socialist morals such as not making an "honest" living through work, engaging in activities such as gambling or prostitution—in short, "refusing integration" into society. These rules were very broadly formulated and arbitrarily applied to youths wearing western fashion, to those who listened to foreign radio stations, especially RFE, to young women seeking the company of foreign citizens, to adepts of religious cults, etc. Looked at closely, all these circumstances were

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[38] This is not to say that young men were not affected by this law, even if indirectly. The question of how the male partner in the relationship was affected is interesting and will be pursued in a future study.

[39] Dumănescu, *Familia românească*, 65; Prezervativele Vulcan (condoms Vulcan), accessed May 29, 2018, http://www.latrecut.ro/2006/05/prezervativele-vulcan/.

[40] Kligman, *The Politics of Duplicity*, 65; Interview with SD; Interview with LC.

[41] Interview with EA.

[42] Interview with LC; see also Năsui, Vasile, and Hentea, *Erotism and Sexuality*, 36.

[43] Kligman, *The Politics of Duplicity*, 65.

[44] *Ibid.*, 257; *The Lost World of Communism, Part 3/3: Romania*, produced by Peter Molloy and Lucy Hetherington (2009), accessed May 29, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzmmskkuKlM.

[45] Kligman, *The Politics of Duplicity*, 257.

[46] Listener's mail no. 35 (September 11, 1983) (Vlad Georgescu), HU OSA 300 – 60 – 3, Box 14.

violations not only of socialist but of social morals, prevalent in Romania irrespective of the political regime. This loosely formulated law thus allowed the punishment of those who were not guilty of penal crimes and was a tool for both society and government to control the youth. The influence of western culture through radio, music, film, and literature had become so widespread that this instrument was necessary to ensure the survival of society's traditional values and norms.[47]

An article in the magazine *Femeia* (The Woman) addressed the issue of "parasitism" among young women and regarded it as being justifiable in cases of women who came from "disorganized families" (alcoholic father, divorced parents), but unacceptable in cases of young women with honest, working parents.[48] In a society where labor (*munca*) and family were considered to be the highest virtues, a rebellion against married and working parents was deemed unacceptable. Thus, through this law, society sought to impose its ethics on the young generation fearing that it might erode long-held values in the face of "Americanization," but also to underline that the development of individualism would not be tolerated along this quest for a homogeneous society.

Information about what happens when one reaches sexual maturity was scarce in the 1980s in Romania. An interviewee recollects not knowing what was happening to her during her first menstruation and stated that everything that she later learned regarding sex and intimacy was from her older friends because she wouldn't dare to talk about it with her mother.[49] Not being able to talk to their mothers about sexuality-related topics left young girls misinformed and isolated, forced to gather scraps of information from more experienced friends, a fact which rendered the conversation about intimacy uncomfortable even some thirty years later. At the time of the interview, my female interviewees found it particularly difficult to admit to premarital sexual activity on their part. Two former yoga practitioners born in 1963 talked about the lack of communication between parents and children in the 1980s, especially when it came to sex.[50] As Gabriel Andreescu concluded, anything and everything regarding sex was private and thus not up for discussion.[51]

In her interview for the BBC documentary "The Lost World of Communism Part 3 (Romania),"[52] Daniela Drăghici remembers the fear and uneasiness that

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47 On the topic of debates on youth in postwar societies, see Hilgert, *Die unerhörte Generation*.

48 *Femeia* (October 10, 1985), HU OSA 300 – 60 – 1, Box 169.

49 Interview with LC.

50 Gabriel Andreescu, *Reprimarea mișcării yoga în anii '80* (Iași: Polirom, 2008), 125.

51 *Ibid.*, 203.

52 *The Lost World of Communism Part 3/3: Romania,* Molloy and Hetherington.

high-school girls experienced before their routine gynecological check-ups and refers to the fact that she and her peers did not know how one could get pregnant:

> We didn't really know what he wanted from us, but there were rumors going on and we knew he was looking at a certain part of our body that no one had ever looked at before. We were scared, we were afraid of what they might say, of what they might write down after that kind of examination, of what they might tell our parents. We didn't even know how one could get pregnant at that time. Maybe we had kissed, maybe you could get pregnant like that. There were rumors that if you kissed, you could get pregnant.[53]

An article in *Muncitorul Sanitar* (The Sanitary Worker) concluded in 1987 that women did not possess enough knowledge on the subject of pregnancy, having children, and family life,[54] although efforts to inform them better had been made in the second half of the 1980s.[55] The youth magazine *Scânteia Tineretului* (The Spark of Youth) had published its first edition of a column about lovesickness on October 6, 1986, but the focus of the article was on platonic love rather than on informing youths about sexual intimacy and sexual relations.[56]

The magazine *Știință și tehnică* (Science and Technology) dedicated an article to youth and sexuality in its July 1986 issue, using technical and insensitive language and thus probably alienating any young reader in search for more than just another lesson in anatomy.[57] The same applied to a *Muncitorul Sanitar* article from a 1988 November issue. The writer addressed gynecological check-ups that female students had to undergo before beginning military training. The author stated that female students received advice about hygiene and were being "prepared for life" during these check-ups.[58] Evidently, the language used to address sexual issues was impersonal and abstract.

Not only the press but also community events such as discos were used to inform youngsters about the nature of sexuality indirectly. Discos were regarded as cultural and information distribution events, where different issues were discussed.[59] One of these issues, as reported by *The Spark of Youth*, was the possibility of sexual offenses, and girls were warned to steer clear of the advances of

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53 *Ibid.*

54 *Muncitorul Sanitar* (June 2, 1987), HU OSA 300 – 60 – 1, Box 170.

55 Kligman, *The Politics of Duplicity*, 142.

56 *Scânteia Tineretului* (October 6, 1986), HU OSA 300 – 60 – 1, Box 169.

57 *Știință și tehnică* (July 1986), HU OSA 300 – 60 – 1, Box 169.

58 "pregătire pentru viață." [Translations here and throughout the article are mine if not indicated differently.] *Muncitorul Sanitar* (November 5, 1988), HU OSA 300 – 60 – 1, Box 170.

59 *Scânteia Tineretului* (October 10, 1988), HU OSA 300 – 60 – 1, Box 169.

young men who drank, didn't work, and came from "disorganized" families. Terms like rape, sexual abuse, etc., were avoided.[60] Even the German language newspaper *Neuer Weg* (The New Way) advised youths to "tame their passion" by reading a good book or poetry, going to the theatre, or listening to "good music."[61]

These examples indicate that Romanian society regarded sexual intimacy and its exploration from a religious point of view and despite the regime's attempt to secularize daily life, its representations were still rooted in a mentality dominated by the church and its religious discourse on intimacy. The body was to be tamed by the spirit, signs of sexual maturity like menstrual bleeding were regarded as "unclean" and thus veiled in silence, sexual intercourse and pregnancies outside marriage were condemned as shameful.[62]

This prudishness extended from public discourses in the media to art, as was the case with literature and film. The writer Norman Manea remembers the censoring of words such as "rape," "breasts," "whore," or "homosexual,"[63] in the attempt to "control the education that the young generation received."[64] He also states that finding bras, underwear, and condoms at a *Cenaclul Flacăra* (Circle the Flame)[65] show in 1985 after the tribune collapsed was considered scandalous and represented part of the argumentation for banning the circle altogether.[66]

The notorious Romanian journalist Cristian Tudor Popescu broached the issue of prudishness and sexual taboos in socialist movies since the 1950s in his book *Filmul surd în România mută* (Deaf Films in Mute Romania), by showing the step-by-step introduction of sexual elements from the beginning to the col-

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60 "dezorganizate." *Ibid.*

61 "die Leidenschaft zähmen." *Neuer Weg* (November 10, 1976), HU OSA 300 – 60 – 1, Box 152.

62 For the same conclusion, see Năsui, Vasile, Hentea, *Erotism and Sexuality*, 22 and 38.

63 Norman Manea, *Despre clovni: Dictatorul și artistul* (Iași: Polirom, 2013), 97.

64 "Pentru a controla educația primită de tânăra generație." *Ibid.*, 184.

65 *Cenaclul Flacăra* was a music and literature movement founded in the 1970s by the poet Adrian Păunescu with the purpose of making ideologically accepted art for youth. He gathered the most famous artists and musicians and toured the whole country with a show perceived as the "Romanian Woodstock." The musicians appeared on stage in jeans and with long hair but sang patriotic and ideologically compliant lyrics. For more information about the circle, see Caius Dobrescu, "The Phoenix that Could not Rise: Politics and Rock Culture in Romania, 1960 – 1989," *East Central Europe*, no. 38 (2011); Lucia Dragomir, "Poésie idéologique et espace de liberté en Roumanie," *Poésie et politique*, no. 41 (September 2003), accessed July 2, 2015, http://terrain.revues.org/1635; *Te salut, generație în blugi*, dir. Cornel Diaconu (2008), accessed June 1, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HnQqccjtm1I.

66 Manea, *Despre clovni,* 175.

lapse of the regime. The first kiss on the mouth in post-1947 Romania was released on screen in 1953,[67] while the first image suggesting sexual intercourse was a rape attempt released in 1957.[68] Female sexuality and sensuality appeared for the first time in 1962, through a scene where naked female legs up to the suspender belt were shown, as well as women in swimsuits and bikinis.[69] Scenes in foreign movies containing sex, conversations about birth control, or allusions to homosexuality were censored,[70] while the first sexual bed scene in a Romanian movie was shot in 1967.[71] The next big change arrived with a Romanian film from 1978 called *Rătăcire* (Confusion) that told the story of a young woman who emigrated to Western Germany but was unhappy with her life there. The movie showed scenes of the "decadent West," with youngsters smoking marijuana, having sex with same-sex partners as opposed to the girl's memories of Romania, where young people were "pure" and only kissed on the mouth. It was due to the "impurity" of the western lifestyle that the protagonist eventually decided to return to Romania.[72] However, movies from the 1980s were practically devoid of sexuality and nudity.[73]

Despite the regime's attempt to portray Romanian youth as "pure," these claims are easily refuted by reports of the secret police and even newspaper articles of the time. Young male workers were often arrested for rape, teachers were accused of engaging in intimate relations with their pupils, and young women were charged with prostitution.[74] Women who had left their hometown or village and headed to the city were intercepted by authorities and accused of prostitution or parasitism, often without reason or evidence, since they did not possess a residence permit. This limited young women's mobility and revealed the prevailing misogynistic mentality which implied that women could not get by without being accompanied by men, but also that women who found themselves in the company of men to whom they were not related or married were inherently promiscuous. The terms "prostitution" and "parasitism" were used synonymously, especially in the case of young women who socialized with foreign citizens. Some were imprisoned, others publicly shamed at work, at school, or at the uni-

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67 Cristian Tudor Popescu, *Filmul surd în România mută. Politică și propagandă în filmul românesc de ficțiune (1912–1989)* (Iași: Polirom, 2011), 85.

68 *Ibid.*, 96.

69 *Ibid.*, 143.

70 *Ibid.*, 181–182.

71 *Ibid.*, 162.

72 *Ibid.*, 228–231.

73 Năsui, Vasile, and Hentea, *Erotism and Sexuality*, 162.

74 *Scânteia Tineretului* (December 25, 1985 and June 10, 1989), ACNSAS D010947, Vol. 3, 129 r.

versity.[75] At the same time, officers of the *Securitate* recruited women as informers on foreign students and their activities in Romanian campuses.[76]

As described above, puritanism dominated public discourse on sexuality, same-sex relationships were presented as non-existent, and problems of female sexuality were not addressed publicly, not even within the family.[77] It is in this context of spiritual, verbal, and ideological prudishness that young women and men explored their sexuality in late socialist Romania. The encouragement to deny bodily instincts and tame them through the power of the mind was rooted in the religious morals of rural Romanian society which accepted sexual intercourse only within marriage. Any sign of sexuality, especially with regard to the female body, was perceived as scandalous and promiscuous. This view was integrated into the ideology of the Party, propagated through the media, and used as a tool to manipulate and control youths by accusing them of promiscuity and indecency. Society relied on shame to force youths to self-censorship and the Party institutionalized the procedure of public shaming to brand and discourage "negative" behavior.[78]

Youths of both sexes with a taste for western music, fashion, and radio programs, members of religious cults who refused military service and "promiscuous" young women were often subjected to public shaming instead of levying a fine or being imprisoned. Professors, colleagues, parents, or co-workers gathered around the accused who were pressured into confessing their "crimes," condemning their own behavior and promising not to repeat it. This strategy was used to establish ethical boundaries of unwanted behavior among those who were to become Romania's "new men and women," but also for intimidating anyone with a similar mindset. At the same time, it turned "us" into "them" and created tension and suspicion among colleagues, family members, and friends—a fact which rendered "private" actions even more problematic.

Manifestations of Sexuality

The material and spiritual living conditions of the 1980s forced people to mostly congregate in one space: the home. This is where, as Susan Gal and Gail Kligman

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75 ACNSAS D018306, Vol. 10, 37 r; Jan Richard, *Laster, Luxus und kein bisschen Lenin. Sex und Crime im Ostblock* (Munich: Wirtschaftsverlag Langen-Müller, 1984), 50 – 51.

76 Interview with TM; ACNSAS D012639, Vol. 20, 5 r.

77 Kligman, *The Politics of Duplicity,* 54.

78 ACNSAS D10947, Vol. 14, 172 r, v.

put it, production, consumption, and reproduction took place.[79] At the same time, however, the housing shortage forced sexual intimacy to move into the public sphere—into parks, forests, onto beaches, etc,[80] for more generations lived in one house or one room, and workers' and students' dormitories were overcrowded.[81]

Moreover, watching pornography was an activity in which most youngsters could only engage in groups because of the scarcity of erotic and pornographic material on the black market (with its logical absence in the official public sphere). The phenomenon of *videoteci* (videotheques) had spread widely by the late 1980s: a person with enough money and good connections, who could afford a VCR and could smuggle video cassettes from Hungary or Yugoslavia, organized a videotheque in their apartment, charging people three times the price of an ordinary cinema ticket.[82] The usual order of the movies was comedy, action or horror, and pornography at the end.[83] For most young men and women, this was the only opportunity to watch foreign, and especially erotic movies. Video nights became so popular that movies were illegally synchronized in Romanian as part of a huge underground business, which became the subject of the documentary film *Chuck Norris vs. Communism*.[84]

Linda Mizejewski, a former Fulbright lecturer in Iași, published an article in the March 1987 issue of *Harper's Magazine* about the absence of sexual energy among students in socialist Romania. She mentioned videotheques as significant places in the dating scene alongside private parties, parks, and dorm rooms and pointed out that even the smallest erotic gesture or scene triggered shame and uneasy jokes among Romanian youths. She noticed that an explosion of sexuality had taken place with the arrival of foreign students because they owned cars and had access to products of personal hygiene like body spray, soap, tampons, or birth control pills.[85] The absence of these products posed great problems in Romania, especially for young women who had reached sexual maturity. There

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79 Susan Gal and Gail Kligman, *The Politics of Gender after Socialism: A Comparative Historical Essay* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 50.

80 *Ibid.*

81 *Scânteia Tineretului* (December 25, 1985).

82 Liviu Chelcea and Puiu Lățea, "Cultura penuriei: bunuri, strategii și practici de consum în România anilor 80," in *Viața cotidiană în comunism*, ed. Adrian Neculau (Iași: Polirom, 2004), 157; *Chuck Norris vs. Communism*, dir. Ilinca Calugareanu (2015), accessed June 1, 2018, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2442080/?ref_=nv_sr_2; Interviews with SD, OC, TM, KL.

83 Chelcea and Lățea, "Cultura penuriei," 157.

84 *Chuck Norris vs. Communism*, dir. Ilinca Calugareanu.

85 *Harper's Magazine* (March 1987), HU OSA, Box 170.

were no tampons or pads available for period protection (only cotton wool),[86] and the absence of soap, deodorant, and hot water during winter complicated intimate relations between young people.[87]

Sources such as the Romanian press, *Securitate* documents, and oral interviews confirm Mizejewski's claim that foreign students brought about a boom in sexuality among Romanian youths. These students, especially those from the Middle East, the majority of whom were male, initiated two types of intimate relationships with Romanian female students: some of these relationships were genuine and often ended in marriage, while the second type were short-lived affairs, during which women had material gains such as consumer goods or money. Having a foreign boyfriend meant living in better dorms, with hot running water, and access to products like good quality soap, body spray, and birth control pills.

The *Securitate* officers filed reports on schoolgirls who entertained foreigners in exchange for jeans, cigarettes, and other goods. According to reports, foreign students were "leading them to immoral and decadent actions,"[88] a statement which implied that young Romanian women were corrupted and manipulated by foreigners into "indecent" behavior. The girls were publicly shamed, fined, or even imprisoned on charges of prostitution or parasitism. At the same time, state authorities tried to prevent marriages between Romanian women and foreign citizens by pressuring their families into convincing young women to end the relationship.[89]

Foreign students were an object of fascination not only for young women in Romania but also for young men. Some male interviewees recall having wondered at the sexual behavior displayed by students from the Middle East or Africa. One of them recounted the story of an African student masturbating in front of girls' dormitories,[90] while another recalled "Arabs" making compliments about naked body parts in the common shower and groping their behinds.[91] Although these anecdotes remain unverifiable, it is clear that foreign students challenged the taboos and virtues of young men and women in Romania by introduc-

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86 Năsui, Vasile, and Hentea, Erotism and Sexuality, 27; Ioana Pârvulescu, *Și eu am trăit în comunism* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2015), 81.

87 *Ibid.*

88 "antrenarea acestora în unele acțiuni imorale și decadente." ACNSAS D18306, Vol. 2, 54.

89 Pârvulescu, *Și eu am trăit în comunism*, 325 – 327.

90 Interview with TM.

91 Interview with SD.

ing new possibilities and alternatives in terms of sexual intimacy, thus causing both fascination and bewilderment.[92]

While some youngsters relied on the goods and privileges provided by foreigners in order to experiment and explore their sexuality, other youths found spiritual and sexual healing through yoga.[93] The Romanian guru Gregorian Bivolaru, also known as Guru Grig,[94] discovered his passion for yoga as a teenager in the 1970s.[95] A postal worker, he corresponded with international yoga organizations and smuggled literature and erotic material into the country.[96] In a letter intercepted by the *Securitate* officers and cited by Irina Costache in her article "The Biography of a Scandal: Experimenting with Yoga during Romanian Late Socialism," a 19-year-old Bivolaru complained about the prudishness of Romanian society and the lack of consideration for young peoples' needs. He wrote that youths were deprived of sexual pleasure and forced to repress as well as control their sexuality and asked for erotic material to inform youths in Romania about sexuality and intimacy.[97] This letter, as well as Bivolaru's popularity among Romanian youths, shows that at least some young men and women were searching for ways to express themselves sexually and were willing to go beyond the taboos imposed by family and society without shame or fear of the consequences.

Once he garnered followers, Bivolaru held yoga sessions in a one-bedroom apartment which was soon searched by the *Securitate*. The officers found pornographic materials and charged him with disseminating pornography, a crime punishable by Art. 325 of the Romanian Penal Code.[98] An additional accusation that was levied against Bivolaru after the change in regime, was that of immoral sexual practices with young women.[99] After he was released, Guru Grig continued to practice yoga with his followers, especially on nudist beaches at the seaside in Costineşti.[100] The group produced their own erotic material and practiced sex with multiple partners—facts which were known to and tolerated by the *Se-*

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92 Andra-Octavia Drăghiciu, "Between 'Totalitarianism' and 'Terrorism': An Introductory Study about the 'Arab' Students in the Romanian Socialist Republic (1974–1989)," *Caietele CNSAS* VI, 11–12, no. 1–2 (2013/2014), 323–332, 333.

93 For more information about the yoga movement in Romania, see Andreescu, *Reprimarea mişcării yoga*; Costache, "The Biography of a Scandal."

94 Costache, "The Biography of a Scandal," 34.

95 *Ibid.*, 28.

96 *Ibid.*

97 *Ibid.*, 30.

98 *Ibid.*, 35.

99 *Ibid.*, 31

100 *Ibid.*, 34.

curitate officers. In exploring the reason for this, Irina Costache posits that per-haps officers allowed these activities to take place because they must have been fascinated by them and also because they too suffered from lack of erotic mate-rial.[101]

The fall of the regime did not bring about a change in the mentality: Bivolaru remained under the scrutiny of the secret police, renamed Romanian Informa-tion Service (*Serviciul Român de Informații*). Together with his followers, he founded the Movement for Spiritual Integration in Absolute (*Mișcarea de Inte-grare Spirituală în Absolut,* MISA) and met at the Black Sea, where their sexual practices continued[102] until 2004, when antiterrorist units stormed Bivolaru's home and the homes of some of his followers. Bivolaru was accused of statutory rape and sexual relations with a minor but fled to Sweden, where he was granted political asylum.[103] At the moment, Bivolaru is on the EU's most wanted list.[104]

While Soviet officials tolerated and sometimes even embraced alternative practices such as yoga,[105] the Romanian authorities surveilled, harassed, and in-terrogated the guru and his young followers. In their interviews for Gabriel An-dreescu's study on yoga in the 1980s, former female students remember how sex and promiscuous behavior were used as the main instruments in the actions against them. One of Andreescu's interviewees states that the *Securitate* had found "sensual" photos while searching her house in 1987 and had accused her during the interrogations of being a "whore."[106] Two sisters born in 1963 in Bucharest were also arrested because of their interest in yoga. On their release, rumors were spread about their participation in sexual orgies and prostitution. As a result, their relatives refused to engage with them.[107]

These examples show yet again that sexual intimacy outside marriage was deemed promiscuous by Romanian society and that authorities knew and used this fact to shame and intimidate women who did not adhere to traditional values. Furthermore, this perspective remained valid after the fall of the regime, since the same people continue(d) to hold key positions within the state appa-

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101 *Ibid.*, 35.

102 *Ibid.*, 36.

103 *Ibid.*, 24.

104 EU most wanted, accessed May 24, 2018, https://eumostwanted.eu/.

105 Larisa Honey, "Pluralizing Practices in Late-Socialist Moscow: Russian Alternative Practi-tioners Reclaim and Redefine Individualism," in *Soviet Society in the Era of Late Socialism, 1964–1985*, eds. Gulnaz Sharafutdinova and Neringa Klumbytė (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013).

106 "fotografii senzuale," "curvă." Andreescu, *Reprimarea Mișcării Yoga*, 103.

107 *Ibid.*

ratus, with the exception of the Ceaușescus and their closest acolytes. As a consequence, in 2017, discussions began in the Romanian public sphere about changing the text in the Constitution which states that family is based on the marriage between spouses to the statement that family is based on the marriage between a woman and a man, thus intensifying the impression of a backward and discriminatory mentality with regard to intimate relations. Signatures had been gathered for a referendum on this issue to take place in October 2018, but the attempt failed due to the small number of participants.[108]

Sad Butterflies

In the 1980s, youths in Romania faced pressure to repress and control their sexuality, i.e., their private sphere, from the state and society, i.e., the public sphere. The state viewed the female body as a collective good, an instrument for regulating its biopolitical aims—a fact that is best reflected in the anti-abortion law and the unavailability of contraceptives on the late socialist Romanian market. The society also "profited" from the law against parasitism that was used to ensure the survival of Romanian values and traditions regarding sex, which was to take place only within marriage. The technical language of the press articles, the practice of public shaming, and the absence of communication between parents and their children reveal a society which, despite the intended progress and modernization, was stuck in prewar conservative, patriarchal, and religious mentality. Teachers, parents, state officials, and even experts had not been equipped with the communication and empathy skills necessary to address the needs of a generation which was far more educated than their parents had been.[109]

This gap and the lack of understanding that most parents displayed toward the desires of their children created a public discourse around intimacy which compelled youths to behave appropriately and control their sexual instincts through the use of reason. In this patriarchal society, women who did not appear to adhere to these principles were labeled as being promiscuous, shunned by their community, or even publicly humiliated. It was during these sessions of public shaming in school, at the university, or at the workplace that the dynam-

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108 Rezultate finale referendum pentru familie, accessed July 11, 2019, https://www.mediafax.-ro/social/rezultate-finale-referendum-pentru-familie-prezenta-la-vot-21 – 10-bec-da-91 – 56-nu-6 – 47-voturi-nule-1 – 9 – 17548777.
109 Most of my interview partners were the first in their family to attend university and speak a foreign language.

ics of "us" versus "them" shifted. Colleagues, professors, relatives, and friends turned from the trusted private circle of "us" into the official, patronizing public "them" through their presence and their tacit consent to the practice of public humiliation.

Young women were subjected to involuntary gynecological check-ups, the relationships between young lovers were affected by the fear of pregnancy, with the same angst defining the relationship of the unmarried woman with her family and the community, because of the shame connected to having a child out of wedlock. It was through these practices that the female body turned into a projection screen for society's fears. Aside from these spiritual and moral conditions, the physical and informational aspects connected to being intimate were also extremely poor: lack of hygiene products, lack of information, lack of communication with parents or teachers on sex-related topics, lack of safe spaces in which to explore one's sexuality affected youths deeply.

These were the circumstances under which the most influential generation after 1989 reached sexual maturity. They had been forced to keep details regarding intimacy to themselves, so they could not find a way to talk about it to their children. Consequently, the generation that had bought Chinese condoms under the counter and watched pornography in groups, raised their children after 1989 in "freedom," but in a no less resounding silence.

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Claudiu Oancea

Rocking Out Within Oneself

Rock and Jazz Music between the Private and the Public in Late Socialist Romania

Introduction

As Uta Poiger has shown in her book, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in Divided Germany*, jazz and rock music were "problem children" not only for East European socialist states but for western regimes as well.[1] Both genres were considered to be low-brow, popular music. Their audiences primarily consisted of the young generation. Furthermore, both genres symbolized a rupture with social and cultural norms in the societies in which they proliferated. Over time, jazz music changed from a low-brow, popular music genre to a high-brow one. As its subgenres evolved and began incorporating new musical elements and influences, jazz music acquired a wider and more diverse audience, which meant that its potential for symbolizing subversion altered drastically. The same has also been true of rock music, although to a lesser extent.

However, throughout the Cold War period, both music genres retained a considerable potential for challenging social, cultural, and political norms in the socialist regimes of Eastern Europe, where jazz and rock music were perceived as cultural products originating in the capitalist West—a fact which made them undesirable from the start, at the official level. However, their status of "forbidden fruit" was one of the main reasons why young audiences were extremely interested in the new and exciting music of the time which was being broadcast over Radio Luxembourg or Radio Free Europe.

For a long time, little was known about popular music under state socialism, both in the USSR and in Eastern Europe. Since Timothy W. Ryback's pioneering yet general book, *Rock around the Bloc* (1990),[2] numerous monographs, personal accounts, and articles have been published on this topic. Some focused on the

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1 Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in Divided Germany* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000).
2 Timothy W. Ryback, *Rock Around the Bloc: A History of Rock Music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, 1954–1988* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

particular aspects of popular music and its many subgenres.[3] Others presented the broader frameworks in which popular culture operated, at a transnational level, across ideological and geographical boundaries.[4] Thanks to these studies, it becomes clear that the prevalent attitude among the various socialist regimes toward jazz and rock music was different from state to state, as well as from one historical period to another. Thus, at the risk of over-simplifying the topic, one can state that the Yugoslav jazz and rock scene was far more developed than the ones in Bulgaria, Romania, or the GDR, for example. Hungary and Poland had significant jazz and rock music scenes throughout the Cold War period; as did Czechoslovakia. The USSR evolved from the so-called "apartment rock" scene—named so because rock musicians gathered in apartments to perform and listen to music, activities that were otherwise forbidden in a public set-

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3 See Gabor Klaniczay and Balazs Trencsenyi, "Mapping the Merry Ghetto: Musical Countercultures in East Central Europe, 1960–1989," *East Central Europe* 38, no. 2–3 (2011). This issue of *East Central Europe* is dedicated to the topic of popular music and counterculture in Eastern Europe during socialism. See also Ewa Mazierska, ed., *Popular Music in Eastern Europe: Breaking the Cold War Paradigm* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

4 See, for instance, Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture since World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), especially Chapters Nine ("Mass Culture: The European Reception") and Eleven ("The Europeanization of American Culture"). Also, for the spread of consumerism in the cultural aspects of popular music, see Sebastian M. Herrmann, Katja Kanzler, Anne Koenen, Zoe Antonia Kusmierz, and Leonard Schmieding, eds., *Ambivalent Americanizations: Popular and Consumer Culture in Central and Eastern Europe* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2008). For an analysis of consumerism behind the Iron Curtain, which also touches upon issues related to popular music, see Paulina Bren and Mary Neuburger, eds., *Communism Unwrapped: Consumption in Cold War Eastern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). Other edited works focused on popular culture in its transnational aspect, as a bridge across the East-West, capitalist-socialist divide include Rana Mitter and Patrick Major, eds., *Across the Blocs: Exploring Comparative Cold War Cultural and Social History* (London: Frank Cass, 2004); Sabrina Ramet and Gordana P. Crnkovic, eds., *Kazaaam! Splat! Ploof!: The American Impact on European Popular Culture since 1945* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003); Douglas Field, ed., *American Cold War Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005). The latter volume of essays focuses on film, literature, television, and poetry, but is, nevertheless, valuable for scholars dealing with the history of popular music during socialism, for its analysis of the broader cultural context. For a broader outlook, on the links between popular culture, everyday life, and nationalism, see Tim Edensor, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (Oxford/New York: Berg, 2002). Last, but not least, see Breda Luthar and Marusa Pusnik, eds., *Remembering Utopia: The Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Washington, D.C.: New Academia Publishing, 2010). The volume includes chapters on rock 'n' roll magazines, punk and hippie subcultures, and soundtracks. It also discusses other aspects of everyday life activities, such as holidays, photography, sports, and cooking.

ting—to one of the most developed rock and jazz music scenes behind the Iron Curtain during the age of perestroika and glasnost.

In recent years, several books covering Romanian jazz, rock, and folk music during the Cold War period have appeared.[5] Historical interest, nostalgia, as well as the actual cultural context, marked by a musical "retromania" (to quote Simon Reynolds)[6] have all contributed to the emergence of this literature, written mostly by journalists and music fans. Together with several published memoirs of jazz and rock musicians,[7] this type of literature offers a much more detailed image of what was one of the so-called "grey areas" of Romanian cultural life during Communism. However, little has been published in English,[8] and academic literature on the topic is still scarce, despite the potential of the latter to add nuance to many ideas proposed by established scholars regarding the nature of Communism in Romania or the mechanisms of state socialism.[9]

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5 See, for instance, Costin Grigoraș, *Muzică prin gaura cheii: Retrospectivă a domeniului muzical din România* (Bucharest: Editrex, 2015); Doru Ionescu, *Timpul chitarelor: Cornel Chiriac și Epoca Beat* (Bucharest: Integral, 2016) or Nelu Stratone, *Rock sub seceră și ciocan – Prima parte din cronica muzicii rock în România* (Timișoara: Ariergarda, 2016). For a review in English of these publications, see Claudiu Oancea, "Rock sub seceră și ciocan – Prima parte din cronica muzicii rock în România / Muzică prin gaura cheii: Retrospectivă a domeniului muzical din România / Timpul chitarelor: Cornel Chiriac și Epoca Beat," *Studia Politica* XVII, no. 1 (2017).
6 Simon Reynolds, *Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to Its Own Past* (London: Faber and Faber, 2011).
7 See, for instance, Johnny Răducanu, *Țara lui Johnny* (Bucharest: Editura Vivaldi, 2005); George Sbârcea, *Jazzul – o poveste cu negri* (Bucharest: Editura muzicală a Uniunii Compozitorilor, 1974); Alexandru Șipa, *Jazz, între agonie și extaz. 30 de ani de jazz & blues în Romania 1972 – 2002* (Bucharest: Paralela 45, 2002).
8 See Caius Dobrescu, "The Phoenix That Could Not Rise: Politics and Rock Culture in Romania, 1960 – 1989," *East Central Europe* 38, no. 2 – 3 (2011); Doru Pop, "Pop-Rock and Propaganda during the Ceaușescu Regime in Communist Romania," in *Popular Music in Eastern Europe: Breaking the Cold War Paradigm*, ed. Ewa Mazierska (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).
9 In particular, one envisages the totalitarian paradigm which, in the historiography of Romanian Communism is best exemplified by the Final Report of the Presidential Commission for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania. The report was initially published online on the Romanian President's website in December 2006. See Președintele României, accessed July 25, 2019, http://old.presidency.ro/static/rapoarte/Raport_final_CPADCR.pdf. Later, in 2007, it was published in printed form, as a revised version. See *Raport Final* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2007). For an analysis of the Presidential Commission and its Report, see James Mark, *The Unfinished Revolution: Making Sense of the Communist Past in Central-Eastern Europe* (New Haven, CT/London: Yale University Press, 2010), 32 – 46.

Political Context

Socialist Romania had its particularities, not just from a political or economic point of view, but also with regard to cultural life. The 1970s and 1980s were marked by an increased personality cult of the Communist leader Nicolae Ceaușescu (1965–1989), which reached gigantic and absurd proportions throughout the 1980s, particularly in political festivals, such as *Cîntarea Româ-niei* (Song of Romania). This festival included a national competition where once every two years amateur and professional artists across the country would celebrate the achievements of socialism in Romania through various genres of art.[10] In this way, the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) sought to increase its control over cultural life; in doing so, it focused on tightening its grip over the Unions of writers, visual artists, and composers.[11]

Romania's particularities do not only apply to the late socialist period. In the late 1940s, the ideology of the Romanian Workers' Party made a clear distinction between professional artists and amateur ones, as evident from the reports presented at official plenaries, congresses, and meetings of the directorate. In terms of policies, this translated into financial remuneration for professional artists and a lower status attributed to independent, self-employed artists. This meant that after 1948, actors, musicians, singers, or scriptwriters were forced to become "state artists," which meant that they would receive a fixed salary.[12] They had to perform for working and peasant audiences, but they were also paid for organizing activities with amateur artists. Nevertheless, certain artists continued to make money on the side. While this was more challenging for classical music or early jazz musicians because the number of halls and restaurants

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10 For this particular festival, see Anca Giurchescu, "The Power of Dance and Its Social and Political Uses," *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 33 (2001); Vintilă Mihăilescu, "A New Festival for the New Man: The Socialist Market of Folk Experts during the 'Singing Romania' National Festival," in *Studying Peoples in the People's Democracies (II): Socialist Era Anthropology in South-East Europe*, eds. Vintilă Mihăilescu, Ilia Iliev, and Slobodan Naumovic (Berlin: LIT-Verlag, 2008). For a more applied, case-study approach, regarding the visual arts aspect of the Festival, see Claudiu Oancea, "Claiming Art for Themselves: State Artists *versus* Amateur Artists in Art Exhibitions before and during the Song of Romania Festival (1976–1989)," in *The "State Artist" in Romania and Eastern Europe: The Role of The Creative Unions*, ed. Caterina Preda (Bucharest: University of Bucharest Press, 2017).

11 These aspects have been discussed diligently by scholars, see, e.g., Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceaușescu's Romania* (Berkeley, CA/Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1991).

12 This was regulated through numerous normative acts published in the *Buletinul Oficial al M.A.N. al R.P.R.* See, for instance, no. 6 (1948), 67–69; no. 2 (1950), 34–37; no. 9 (1953), 145–146.

with an audience for such genres was limited, it was relatively easy for folk performers who performed in the province. There was a twofold reason for this situation: on the one hand, Bucharest restaurants were strictly controlled, as their audience was more heterogeneous and included foreigners, who were mostly embassy employees in the early 1950s, and tourists, later on. The second explanation is ideological and had to do with the Party's view of so-called cosmopolitan genres, like jazz, which were viewed as being representative of western ideology. While this idea would oscillate over time, the 1950s were marked by a rigid opposition to any foreign styles that did not come from the Soviet Union or other "friendly" socialist countries.[13]

The 1960s introduced a new and popular music genre—rock music. Foreign movies as well as an increase in inbound and outbound tourism played a key role in the development of rock music in socialist Romania.[14] Initially, the genre was the prerequisite of young amateur musicians. While state officials kept a close eye on the amateur movement, they failed to consider the separation that continued to exist between the working class and those working in the educational sector, in terms of cultural and artistic tastes. Therefore, activists remained strictly focused on their own propaganda materials that prescribed ever-changing activities, without considering the everyday realities of life. However, by 1970, music bands, particularly young ones, moved to become professionals and turned the pursuit of music into a permanent activity, or sought opportunities in higher education (such as attending the Conservatory, or the Theater and Film National School). This process changed not only their tastes, but also their repertoire, while at the same time made them less malleable to influences from the propaganda apparatus. Throughout the 1960s, these amateur bands became the first professional popular music young bands in Romania, such as *Phoenix*, *Sincron*, *Entuziaștii*, *Sideral*, and *Mondial*.

Initially, they were marginalized by the regime, more tolerated than encouraged. However, by the mid–1960s, the state-owned Electrecord record company began to issue the first 7-inch records of bands such as *Entuziaștii*, *Sincron*, or *Coral*, which played beat music: either adaptations of western hits, such as *Entuziaștii*,[15] or of traditional folklore, played in a rock 'n' roll manner, such as *Sincron*. The latter band used beat rhythms, vocalist-choir duets, and electric guitar

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13 This is particularly evident in the articles published in *Îndrumătorul cultural* (The Cultural Guide) over the 1950s.

14 Ryback, *Rock around the Bloc*, 121–126.

15 See Discogs, Entuziaștii – Dynamite / A Girl Like You / Got A Funny Feeling / She Is So Sweet, accessed November 29, 2017, http://www.discogs.com/Entuzia%C8%99tii-Dynamite-A-Girl-Like-You-Got-A-Funny-Feeling-She-Is-So-Sweet/release/1736432.

solos in their adaptation of the traditional *Hăulita de la Gorj* (The Hăulita Dance from Gorj).[16] The late 1960s would bring about not just a more tolerant and liberal attitude from the state, but also the release of original beat songs, sung in Romanian, such as the debut record of the band *Phoenix*. The reason for this was purely financial: initially, Electrecord viewed the release of original Romanian beat songs as unprofitable, and focused on records either by Romanian bands singing in English, or on foreign singers and bands (from Italy, Sweden, France, the GDR) who sang primarily in English, but also in French and Italian. Recorded in 1968, the first EP record by *Phoenix* contained two adaptations of *The Beatles* and two original songs. When the record's success (and sales) turned out higher than of most other records, Electrecord allowed the band to record a second EP of original songs in Romanian.[17] This example shows that financial considerations were sometimes more important than ideology. Throughout the 1970s, an increasing number of amateur bands who started out in local houses of culture would make their way toward professionalization, while also taking part in various artistic and cultural festivals and competitions.

The case of amateur bands turning professional and opening to western influences played a significant part in the history of festivals and artistic competitions, especially in urban areas (large centers, as well as small towns) and for the young generation. Western radio stations (particularly, the ones sponsored by the USA, such as Radio Free Europe), small contraband traffic in the border areas (especially in the western part of Romania), and international tourism that allowed foreign tourists to bring in their own consumer culture to Romania—were all factors that influenced youth culture in general, and amateur artistic activities in particular.[18] A variety of sources can be used to assess the reasons why these exchanges were possible, the factors that influenced them, and more importantly, the negotiations (formal or informal) that took place between various state institutions and ordinary people. Oral history interviews serve as sources to investigate the issue, as do the *Securitate* (Romanian Department of State Security) files. These files indicate that ordinary people as well as celebrities were

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16 See Discogs, Sincron – Sincron, accessed November 29, 2017, http://www.discogs.com/Sincron-Sincron/release/4975235.

17 It is extremely difficult to provide exact figures of Electrecord's sales from the period. Most of Electrecord's archival fond from the period is missing. In its absence, one can only rely on Nicolae Covaci's autobiography, whose testimony is backed by the numerous editions that Phoenix enjoyed throughout the 1960s and 1970s. See Nicolae Covaci, *Phoenix, Însă eu...* (Bucharest, Editura Nemira, 1994), 129 – 132. See also Discogs, Phoenix (23), accessed July 24, 2019, https://www.discogs.com/artist/751538-Phoenix-23.

18 Ryback, *Rock Around the Bloc*, 122.

often under surveillance or forced to become informants. The contents of these files must be taken with a grain of salt. Despite its fearsome reputation, the *Securitate* was primarily a bureaucratic institution. It needed to maintain an ever-present image to the RCP, as an institution that could be relied on to keep things under control. In doing so, the *Securitate* maintained innumerable informative reports on various people, which in many cases were just for the sake of posturing to the Party leadership that they were engaged in laborious activity. The smallest details were recorded either by zealous *Securitate* officers or simply offered by informants who used them as evidence of their cooperation. These details, found *passim* in various such informative reports, are used to reconstruct the youth culture of the 1960s and beyond, as well as to put together a picture of everyday life activities, that would otherwise be lost or neglected in present-day memories. One of the many such interesting reports is that of Cornel Chiriac's *Securitate* file.

The Case of Cornel Chiriac

Cornel Chiriac (1941–1975) was a radio producer, journalist, and occasionally a jazz drummer. However, he is most famous for his radio broadcast for Radio Free Europe named *Metronom* (Metronome), that ran from 1969 until 1975, when he was assassinated in Munich.[19] In the early 1960s, while he was a high school student in his native town of Pitești, Chiriac came under close scrutiny of the *Securitate* for so-called "subversive actions."[20] According to the *Securitate* agents who kept him under surveillance, Chiriac had flung "insults toward and had bad mouthed our democratic, people's regime"; furthermore, he had condemned Romania's attitude and policies in relation to the promotion of jazz music.[21] He was also presented as a follower of "the surrealist abstractionist movement, which is a reactionary movement, with no materialist basis whatsoever."[22]

As a result of this, the *Securitate* infiltrated Chiriac's collaborators and close friends to know more about his habits, musical tastes, correspondence, and

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19 See Daniela Caraman-Fotea and Cristian Nicolau, *Dicționar rock, pop, folk* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1999), 89–91.

20 "activitate de agitație cu caracter dușmănos." [Translations here and throughout the article are mine if not indicated differently.] ACNSAS, Dosar I 204265, Vol. 1, 5.

21 "[...] a adus calomnii și a ponegrit regimul nostru democrat-popular." *Ibid.*, 7.

22 "[...] al curentului suprarealist-abstracționismul, curent reacționar, lipsit de bază materialistă." *Ibid.*, 4.

sources of information.[23] Chiriac openly expressed his disdain regarding the difficulties in accessing jazz music in Romania, as well as the challenges in popularizing jazz music in letters to his friends, some of which were intercepted by the *Securitate.*

In a letter to a Mr. Colan, Chiriac asserted his frustration at not having received any feedback from the *Contemporanul* magazine, after he had sent an article about the history and importance of jazz music:

> I was a bit rushed in my last letter since I was under pressure with my letter to the "Contemporanul." The sixteen pages, in which I presented my points of view and opinions on jazz, have cost me a night without rest.

> I haven't received any answer until today. I don't know what to believe. Anyway, I'll keep on waiting. I have also sent them a note on the "Electrecord" record which has kept me busy for almost a month. I have, also, put forth a proposition about an introductory class on jazz in a magazine column inside the "Contemporanul," dedicated to the topic.

> I even went as far as citing a quote from the "Bases of Marxist-Leninist Aesthetics" regarding music. Indeed, I did write in harsh terms about certain persons. Anyway, this is the last time (as it is the first time as well) when I try to write to a Romanian publication.[24]

The *Securitate* report which included the facsimile of the letter requested operative measures to keep Chiriac under surveillance on a permanent basis. A few weeks later, a report from one of the *Securitate* agents in charge of Chiriac's surveillance contained data about the latter's room and his magazine collection. The room had the word "jazz' written on the wall in letters made of fir cones. Chiriac also had a transistor radio which he used—according to the source "Rose"—to listen to Radio Free Europe. He had also written an underground fanzine called *Jazz Cool*, that he intended to post to his friends.[25]

Eventually, the *Securitate* intercepted Chiriac's fanzine collection in 1963, and even had him report to its county headquarters in Pitești, to give a full statement of his actions. Chiriac acknowledged that he had been "much blinded by

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23 *Ibid.*, 24.

24 "[...] Ultima dată am fost cam grăbit în scrisoarea mea, pentru că eram în mari focuri cu scrisoarea către 'Contemporanul'. Cele 16 pagini, în care mi-am expus punctele de vedere și opiniile în jazz, m-au costat o noapte albă. Și iată că nici azi nu primesc nici un răspuns. Nu știu ce să cred. În orice caz, aștept în continuare. Printre altele, le-am trimis acolo și o notă asupra discului 'Electrecord' cu care mă agit de-aproape o lună. Le-am propus un curs de inițiere în jazz în cadrul unei rubrici destinată acestui gen muzical în cadrul 'Contemporanului.' Am mers pînă acolo încît am citat și din 'Bazele esteticii marxism-leninismului' cu privire la muzică. E drept că am scris în termeni tari la adresa unor persoane, dar nu regret. Oricum, e ultima (de altfel și prima) încercare de a scrie unei publicații românești." *Ibid.*, 90.

25 *Ibid.*, 31 and 45–46.

my passion" in his remarks about the republic, but he defended jazz music, which he saw as the music of the oppressed, the music of those who fought capitalism around the world:[26]

> I started working on the magazine in (August) 1962, and I continued working until July 1963. I was not forced, neither was I advised by anyone when I took this initiative. I acknowledge the fact that I broke the rules of our state when I started editing an illegal magazine. Its content is purely musical, politically harmless. But a fact is a fact: I have committed a crime, by writing it and by disseminating it amongst the youth. [...] I saw the magazine as a means to straighten out certain problems of jazz: its deeply popular origins (jazz is black people's music, born in the fire of the struggle for freedom, against slavery and humiliation inflicted by the American bourgeois society, founded on the domination of the white race). I was also trying to show that there is no connection between the true jazz music and commercial productions of fashionable light music: Rock 'n' Roll, Twist, Cha-Cha-Cha, Mambo, etc.[27]

Chiriac's case is enlightening not only because it deals with a music genre that was marginalized in Romania until the 1960s,[28] but also because it shows the musical tastes and means of access to musical information for a young person who lived in the province. The authorities' attitude toward jazz is interesting

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26 *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, 131.

27 "Am început să lucrez la revistă din anul (august) 1962 și am continuat pînă în iulie 1963. N-am fost silit și nici sfătuit de cineva atunci cînd am luat această inițiativă. Recunosc că am încălcat legile statului nostru atunci cînd am purces la redactarea unei reviste ilegale. Conținutul ei este pur muzical inofensiv din punct de vedere politic. Dar faptul în sine rămîne fapt: am comis o infracțiune prin scrierea ei și mai ales prin difuzarea ei ilegală în rîndul tineretului. [...] Prin revistă căutam să lămuresc unele probleme ale jazz-ului: asupra originii profund populare a lui, (jazz-ul este muzica poporului negru american născut în focul luptei pentru libertate împotriva sclaviei și umilințelor societății burgheze americane întemeiată pe dominația rasei albe. Deasemenea căutam să arat că nu există nici o legătură între adevărata muzică de jazz și producțiile comerciale ale muzicii ușoare la modă: Rock 'n' Roll, Twist, Cha-Cha-Cha, Mambo, etc." *Ibid.*, 131.

28 Very few jazz recordings had been released by *Electrecord* in the late 1950s and early 1960s. They were mostly presented as dance music and edited on 78 rpm records with two songs, one on each side. One exception to this was a 10-inch vinyl record including world dance music and a few jazz numbers, starring the pioneer of jazz in Romania, Jancsi Kőrössy. See Discogs, Orchestra Electrecord – Muzică De Dans – Programul Nr. 2, accessed May 23, 2018, http://www.discogs.com/Orchestra-Electrecord-Dirijor-Teodor-Cosma-Iancsi-Kőrössy-Muzic%C4%83-De-Dans-Programul-Nr-2/release/4469445. Kőrössy himself would make his recorded debut on labels in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, before releasing his first album in 1965 in Romania, the first of what was to become *Seria Jazz* (The Jazz Series). See Discogs, Jancsi Körössy – Seria Jazz Nr. 1, accessed May 23, 2018, http://www.discogs.com/Jancsi-K%C3%B6r%C3%B6ssy-Jancsi-K%C3%B6r%C3%B6ssy/release/1417776.

in that while the *Securitate* agents considered it to be cosmopolitan and reactionary, by 1963, the state label Electrecord had already released a few recordings of Romanian jazz musicians, such as Teodor Cosma or Jancsi Kőrössy.[29] This indicates that the relationship between the state and jazz (or other music genres) was ambiguous and shows that it could vary according to the agency of the people involved. Furthermore, the reason why jazz or beat music was important for the amateur artistic movement was that it was rarely considered by the state to be part of professional musical activities and thus relegated to one of the amateur activities of the young generation.[30] This situation continued well into the 1970s and was particularly obvious when an attempt was made to secure a record deal with Electrecord. In an article in *Flacăra* magazine in 1971, George Stanca, a pop music reviewer, noted how challenging it was for any pop artist to release a record, as they had to pass through several levels of official acceptance.[31] The most important process was to get official approval from the Union of Composers and Musicologists in Romania, which only included professional musicians, primarily people with higher education in music. Right from the start, amateur pop bands were excluded from such membership and faced a much tougher environment, as they had to gain support from various television and radio officials, as well as from the public. Their repertoire usually was most relevant to young audiences. This happened in a system in which most amateur bands started their activity in factories and educational or mass culture institutions and had an already established repertoire that had been encouraged and approved by Party cultural activists. From this point of view, Cornel Chiriac's case study is of importance in relation to these amateur bands, whose potential the socialist state never fully realized. While further research and more case studies are necessary to fully grasp the intricacies of state policies and everyday life reactions, it nonetheless sets the framework for analyzing the negotiations that took place between the state and ordinary people.

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29 See Discogs, Teodor Cosma, accessed May 23, 2018, http://www.discogs.com/artist/Teodor +Cosma.

30 For further information, see Stratone, *Rock sub seceră și ciocan*, 337–350.

31 George Stanca, "Cât de greu se scoate la noi un disc," *Flacăra* 284, no. 7 (1971), 14.

Jazz and Rock Music Between the Private and the Public Spheres

During the 1970s and 1980s, the National Festival "Song of Romania" which was held from 1976 until 1989, was of particular importance. The festival primarily comprised of a politically determined system of national art competitions, which was held among people from varying social, professional, and age categories. It included several phases, starting at a basic en masse level, going through the county and regional phases, and ending with the republican level of competition, in which— officially it was claimed—only the selected best from the other levels could participate. Although there were various ways of competing in the artistic field, the works in the competition that praised the official regime of new socialist Romania and Nicolae Ceauşescu gained more prominence. The festival focused on amateurs, workers, peasants, and pupils, who created new works of art in their free time and whose works "chanted" the achievements of the Communist regime. For its first edition, "Song of Romania" had a little over 2,000,000 participants; for its last edition, which ended in the summer of 1989, it had more than 5,000,000. However, the increase in the number of participants did not translate to the competition becoming fiercer: more participants indicated more categories of competition, and, ultimately, more awards. This also meant the involvement of more juries and an increased bureaucratic apparatus—all this during a period when Romania was going through an economic crisis.

Taking into account this attempt of the state to control as many spheres of activity as possible and its focus on major, public events (political, cultural, or both), the concept of privacy becomes extremely useful in analyzing the interaction between jazz and rock music, on the one hand, and Romanian state socialism, on the other. Again, at the risk of over-simplifying, it can be stated that the reaction of state authorities toward various subgenres of jazz and rock music emerging throughout late socialism went through three stages: first, the rejection and condemnation of the subgenre; second, negotiation at various levels for the acceptance of the genre; and finally, attempts to appropriate the genre. Usually, the third stage was triggered by the emergence of new music subgenres which made the older ones not only obsolete, but also less dangerous. In more concrete terms, by the late 1960s while psychedelic rock and the hippie movement were generally regarded as decadent manifestations of a corrupt western, capitalist system, by the late 1970s, psychedelia, heavy rock, and blues rock were not only accepted, but even viewed in a positive light, when compared to punk rock which had then just taken on the representation of the decadent West.

Nonetheless, "Song of Romania" represented the main context within which all cultural activities would take place throughout the 1980s. Thus, the festival also influenced and shaped the evolution of popular music in the last decade of socialist Romania, with consequences leading well into the post-Communist period.

The Musicians

In the political, economic, and cultural context of socialist Romania of the 1980s, certain popular music genres not only survived but also flourished, while others struggled to just exist. The causes for these changes were manifold, and they went beyond the ideological realm, encompassing factors which sometimes had more to do with the evolution of music genre publics than with Party plenums. As already seen, festivals were the basis of official culture in the later era of the Romanian socialism. This aspect also manifests in the journey of jazz music in the country. Jazz critic Virgil Mihaiu points out that jazz festivals played a crucial role for musicians and audiences interested in the genre in Romania.[32] Furthermore, the number of jazz festivals grew throughout the 1980s: from one major festival held initially in Ploiești and later in Sibiu, to an entire framework that began to grow, with recurring performances in Brașov (during winter time) and Costinești, on the Black Sea coast (during the summer). These three festivals managed to become a regular feature, while others that were held in cities and towns such as Iași, Satu-Mare, Zalău, etc. only had a sporadic existence. These jazz festivals began during brief periods of relative liberalization.[33]

The ones which were better organized and became significant did so with the help of foreign musicians who either came from western, capitalist countries (Roberta Flack, Chick Corea) or from socialist ones (Vladimir Tarasov, Vladimir

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32 See Virgil Mihaiu, *Jazz Connections in Romania* (Bucharest: Institutul Cultural Român, 2007), 89 – 91, 105 – 116.

33 When using the term "relative liberalization," one must consider the context of the 1980s in socialist Romania, marked by Nicolae Ceaușescu's personality cult, cultural autarchy, and nationalism. Such periods were brief, and they allowed film makers, musicians, writers, and visual artists to release works which went beyond the narrow canons of official propaganda, while not going against the main principles set by the Party. In filmography, this period was during the early 1980s and included movies by Dan Pița or Mircea Danieliuc. See Cristian Tudor Popescu, *Filmul surd în România mută: Politică și propagandă în filmul românesc de ficțiune (1912 – 1989)* (Bucharest: Polirom, 2011), 235. In rock music, Electrecord released albums such as the *Club A Compilation* (1981), which featured live records of rock bands and jazz groups in concert. Until 1989, this was the only live rock album released by Electrecord.

Chekasin) and played in Romania. These musicians wrote letters to Romanian officials, in which they described the positive experiences they had enjoyed while playing to Romanian audiences.[34] Then, they would ask Romanian officials for permission to return to such jazz festivals, thus ensuring that the festivals continued to be held.

It was not only foreign musicians who played an important role. Foreign magazines, namely the Polish *Jazz Forum*, provided Romanian jazz musicians and critics with an arena, within which they could present Romanian jazz life to international audiences.[35] This latter aspect was particularly important, since Romanian jazz music was not accurately reflected in Romanian newspapers and cultural magazines at the time, as noted by Virgil Mihaiu in 1982.[36]

Jazz festivals and concerts could represent realms with a more open-minded approach to cultural issues at times. This was especially true of the Costineşti festival, which was also broadcast live on *Radio Vacanţa* (Radio Holiday), a local radio station, whose range of transmission was limited to the Costineşti holiday resort. Notwithstanding this aspect, when it came to records, jazz music found itself in a rather dire situation throughout the 1980s: less than 15 jazz records were released by Electrecord from 1980 until 1989.[37] The musicians lucky enough to have records released during this decade were already established artists who had been releasing records since the 1970s. Vocal jazz, jazz rock, and contemporary jazz were considered accessible enough by Electrecord officials to warrant a release, while more experimental subgenres, such as free jazz, were mainly left behind.

Harry Tavitian's case was symptomatic for this exclusion. Tavitian's first two records were released abroad, in the UK, by the independent label *Leo Records*, which had been set up with the purpose of disseminating East European and So-

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34 See Mihaiu, *Jazz Connections in Romania*, 89 – 91.

35 One such article, published in *Jazz Forum*, no. 100 (1986) was a review by Sorin Antohi of Virgil Mihaiu's first book on jazz music, *Cutia de rezonanţă* (Bucharest: Editura Albatros, 1985). Mihaiu's book was one of a handful published in Romania on jazz music in general during late socialism. It included a series of essays dealing with jazz music in general from a 1980s perspective. The last essay of the collection, sent to the publishing house in 1982, reflected on Romanian jazz music in the early 1980s. See Mihaiu, *Cutia de rezonanţă*, 108, 267 – 287.

36 See *Ibid.*, 269.

37 Among these were Aura Urziceanu—*Am iubit odată* (Once I Loved, 1981, Electrecord ST-EDE 01892); *Over the Rainbow* (1984, Electrecord ST-EDE 02505/02506); Marius Popp—*Nodul Gordian* (1984, Electrecord ST-EDE 02377); *Acordul fin/Fine Tuning* (1989, Electrecord ST-EDE 03503); Johnny Răducanu—*Confesiuni II/Confessions II* (1982, Electrecord ST-EDE 02079); *Confesiuni 3* (1986, Electrecord ST-EDE 02923); *Jazz Made in Romania* (1987, Electrecord ST-EDE 03140).

viet jazz music to western audiences.[38] Jazz critic Virgil Mihaiu managed to smuggle a series of tape recordings, which featured Tavitian's concerts and bring them over to the UK label, which released them as a series of long play records. However, it was not only western audiences who were intrigued by them. According to Tavitian, the *Securitate* became interested too and this indirectly led to the musician's first record being released in Romania, with the help of the Goethe Institute.[39] Released in 1988, *East-West Creative Combinations* was based on Harry Tavitian's concert of the same year with Corneliu Stroe and German musicians Reinhart Hammerschmidt and Hans Kumpf. The music features a combination of folk music themes, which form the basis for a series of free jazz improvisations, with vocals, percussion, and woodwind instruments, as well as the piano. Unlike other jazz records released in Romania throughout the 1980s that enjoyed a relatively high press run, only 200 copies of Tavitian's record were released, and most of these were headed to the West German market.[40]

In a manner, these cases reflected the situation that jazz music faced in the larger cultural context dominated by a festival such as "Song of Romania": there was little official interest, but once artists were noticed abroad, personal agency could play an important role in making the system's wheels turn.

In the 1980s, rock music in socialist Romania had already had its own history of conflict with the regime, even though most releases by Romanian rock bands had followed the ideological principles set by the Romanian Communist Party. Thus, it is quite ironic and telling of how Romanian rock music developed during Communism, that, by 1981, the leaders of Romania's two most important rock bands had fled the country. In 1977, Nicolae Covaci had made a spectacular escape, taking with him most of the band *Phoenix*, except the vocalist Mircea Baniciu.[41] In 1981, Dan Andrei Aldea, the leader of the other significant Romanian rock band, *Sfinx*, requested political asylum while on tour in Belgium, and settled in Munich. *Phoenix* had released three records during the 1970s, all of which had been subjected to official censorship, in varying degrees. The band's first LP, *Cei ce ne-au dat nume* (Those Who Have Given Us a Name,

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38 For an overview of the label, see its official webpage: Leo Records, accessed July 1, 2017, http://www.leorecords.com/ and its Discogs page: Discogs, Leo Records, accessed July 1, 2017, https://www.discogs.com/label/28723-Leo-Records. See also Virgil Mihaiu, *Jazzorelief* (Bucharest, Editura Nemira, 1993), 65.

39 See Muzici și faze, Interview with Harry Tavitian, accessed July 1st, 2017, http://www.muzicisifaze.com/interviu.php?id=21. See also Mihaiu, *Jazz Connections in Romania*, 103–104.

40 Harry Tavitian, personal communication with the author (May 2016).

41 See Covaci, *Phoenix însă eu...*, 427–432. Also, Nicolae Covaci, *Giudecata înțelepților* (Bucharest: Integral Publishing House, 2014), 9–24.

1972) was supposed to feature several songs, which never passed the scrutiny of censors, for reasons which remain unknown until today.[42] Notwithstanding this, *Cei ce ne-au dat nume* also featured an almost fifteen minutes song, titled *Negru Vodă* (Black Voivode), which told the story of a medieval prince (voivode) who defends his motherland from foreign invaders. The song's theme resonated well with the Romanian Communist Party's then ideological turn toward nationalism. It also incorporated a contemporary hard rock sound, as well as jazz improvisations, which were perfectly synchronized with the music of *Phoenix*'s western counterparts. Similarly, the LP *Zalmoxe* (1979), *Sfinx*'s second album, dealt with the theme of the Dacian deity of the same name.[43] One should stress that, by the late 1970s, the history of the Dacians was considered of particular importance for ideological rather than academic reasons.[44]

The histories of Nicolae Covaci and Dan Andrei Aldea are representative of the larger context within which rock musicians and rock music fans were constrained to operate not only in the 1970s but also in the 1980s. Classically trained musicians and those who performed light or more traditional genres of music (such as light/pop music, or *muzică populară*) benefited from official support, when it came to reaching the status of professional artist, a title which enabled them to perform, record, and be officially acknowledged for their cultural activities. This was also because the state directly sponsored the music genres mentioned above through institutions and music ensembles and provided aspiring musicians and artists with an educational framework, which served to endorse their cultural activity as an official one. Jazz and rock musicians did not benefit from such leverage. However, throughout the late socialist period, as the state changed its attitude toward western-based popular music genres, musicians could make use of the state network of houses of culture to pursue a career in music. Nevertheless, rock musicians encountered more difficulties in general. Thus, to reach the goal of securing a record deal from Electrecord, one needed to achieve success at a local level first (by playing in a house of culture, or a res-

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42 See Stratone, *Rock sub seceră si ciocan*, 179.

43 For more on how the *Zalmoxe* LP fell in line with the official ideology, see Dobrescu "The Phoenix That Could Not Rise."

44 It was not only rock music that dealt with the history and mythology of ancient Dacia. Contemporary classical musicians also wrote numerous works dedicated to the Dacians. See, e. g., Ştefan Niculescu, *Simfonia a II-a, "Opus Dacicum"* (1980), Mansi Barberis, *Itinerar Dacic* or Liviu Glodeanu, the opera *Zamolxe* (1969). For further information, see Valentina Sandu-Dediu, *Muzica românească între 1944 – 2000* (Bucharest: Editura muzicală, 2002), 245 and 236 respectively.

taurant).[45] This represented a possibility to obtain better instruments. For the musicians who lived in major cities, such as Bucharest, Cluj, or Timișoara, or near the western border, there were more opportunities to get access to better gear alongside the possibility of getting hold of the latest records, either as original copies or in a bootleg format. This latter aspect was also important for the informal education of aspiring young rock musicians. Additionally, the family background played an important role in becoming a rock musician: in most cases, young people from middle class families had better access to records and music instruments. There were also exceptions to the rule when houses of culture provided the instruments when necessary. Sometimes, at major student festivals, bands which were already established and owned better instruments agreed to lend their gear to younger performers.[46] For most bands, the crucial step was moving to one of the main cities. For those living in smaller towns, this happened as they pursued higher education, a step which usually meant the break-up of bands they were previously a part of and the formation of new ones, in the new location. Playing in a major house of culture or in a major restaurant could bring bands into the spotlight if they garnered enough attention and secured the support of journalists who worked for a central newspaper or magazine. A mention in the newspaper could open avenues for recording several songs for the national radio station. Since 1977, the radio station in question was usually *Radio 3 Tineret* (Radio 3 Youth), which had been established as a response to Radio Free Europe and its broadcasts of popular music, initiated by Cornel Chiriac.[47] Finally, if a song enjoyed popularity on the radio, then there may be a possibility to record for the state company, Electrecord.[48] For certain bands, being part of the Festival "Song of Romania" also played a role in getting the opportunity to have their recordings released by the state label. One striking example is that of the band *Accent*, from Tulcea. A progressive

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45 This was true for rock musicians since the arrival of rock music in Romania. See Stratone, *Rock sub seceră și ciocan*, 48–51.

46 *Ibid.*, 160–166.

47 Florin Silviu Ursulescu, *FSU: Florin Silviu Ursulescu în dialog cu Doru Ionescu* (Bucharest: Casa de pariuri literare, 2015), 68.

48 However, there was still a possibility of being rejected by sound editors and censors, for a variety of reasons. For instance, a band *Kappa* from Cluj, allegedly refused to pay a bribe to one of the sound editors from Electrecord and never had the chance to record a song during the 1980s. See Clujul cultural, accessed July 3, 2017, http://www.clujulcultural.ro/exclusiv-clujenii-de-la-kappa-primul-album-de-rock-progresiv-dupa-30-de-ani/ 9.

rock band with a highly experimental and inaccessible style, *Accent* won the First Prize at the 1981 Edition of "Song of Romania."[49]

The Fans

Being a rock music fan meant that one either had to form or to become part of an already established network, which combined informal connections and official institutions. Obtaining the latest western records was connected to social status: the higher the social status, the easier it was to get hold of physical copies of records, which acquired a symbolic status. Music journalist Florin-Silviu Ursulescu provides an insightful image of what it meant to become part of such networks. His sources included TAROM (Romanian state airline) air pilots and truck drivers, who traveled abroad. To make use of their services, however, he needed foreign currency, which was only available from foreign students, who had come to study in Romania, or from low-rank employees of foreign embassies.[50] Later on, after he started working for *Radio 3 Tineret*, he had to use his informal contacts again, not only to obtain the latest records of successful western rock bands such as *Led Zeppelin* or *Pink Floyd*, but also those of more obscure artists from Italy or France, who had recorded for Electrecord during the 1960s and were accepted by censorship for radio broadcasting.[51]

Censorship Between the Private and the Public Spheres

According to the musicians who lived in late socialist Romania, censorship was omnipresent. It manifested at various levels and its agency took many forms. For instance, Ursulescu recalls that radio censorship comprised of several stages: a sound engineer would verify the tape on which the music was recorded and approved it from a technical point of view. Foreign lyrics were translated. A second censor would listen to the tape while reading the lyrics. Only then would the tape be marked as "approved for broadcast" (*bun de emisie*).[52]

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49 Back cover of the LP Grupul Pro Musica/Grupul Accent—*Formații Rock 9* (1986, Romania: Electrecord ST-EDE 02918).

50 Ursulescu, *FSU*, 11–14.

51 *Ibid.*, 64.

52 *Ibid.*, 66–67.

Electrecord also had its own censors, who could decide whether the artwork, music, or lyrics for a record were inappropriate for a variety of reasons. Rodion Roșca, the leader of the band *Rodion G.A.*, recalls how lyrics were modified for no reason, or just one word was removed which was considered troublesome. For instance, for the song *Satul de rouă* (The Village Made of Dew), the lyrics "Sufletu-mi la tine vine, / Să-l purifici și să-l ierți" (My soul comes to you / So you may purify and forgive it) had the word *purifici* (purify) replaced with *întâmpini* (welcome). According to Roșca, the word *purifici* was considered mystical, and this led to its being censored. One can only wonder then why another word such as *suflet* (soul) was left unmodified.[53] In other cases, surprisingly daring lyrics managed to appear on the disc. One such case was of the song *Protest*, by the band *Metrock*, from the city of Oradea. *Protest* opened the B side of the band's sole LP, *Castelul de nisip* (The Sand Castle). Its lyrics were "Vreau să știu de ce se uită unii după mine / Fiindcă am păr lung și barbă, c-așa-mi stă mai bine" (I want to know why some people look strangely at me / Because I have long hair and a beard, 'cause this is how I look my best).[54] Furthermore, these lyrics were the opening to the song and were repeated in the second stanza, after an aggressive, hard rock style, guitar solo. One explanation for this is the fact that the song's theme dealt with peace and the fight against war, a favorite theme of official propaganda during the 1950s, which had been revived again during the 1980s. This theme also allowed *Metrock* to feature its four members on the LP cover wearing long hair and beards, a rather uncommon feature for the *Electrecord* artwork at the time.[55]

Similarly, the most famous Romanian hard rock band of the 1980s, *Iris*, used the theme of peace to feature a portrait of *AC/DC* guitar player, Angus Young, on

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53 Rodion Ladislau Roșca, personal communication (June 2017).

54 One review of the album misread the lyrics as "Vreau să știu de ce se uită unii după mine / Fiindcă am păduchi și barbă, c-așa-mi stă mai bine" (I want to know why some people look strangely at me / Because I have lice and a beard, 'cause this is how I look my best). See Muzici și faze, Mihai Plămădeală, Review Metrock – Castelul de nisip, accessed May 10, 2018, http://www.muzicisifaze.com/trupa.php?id=248&cat=1. However, *Metrock* songwriter, lyricist, guitarist, and vocalist Marius Luca denies this variant. Marius Luca, personal communication (July 2017).

55 See Metrock, *Castelul de nisip* (1982, Electrecord ST-EDE 02077). Artwork available at Discogs, Metrock – Castelul De Nisip, accessed July 4, 2017, https://www.discogs.com/Metrock-Castelul-De-Nisip/release/1490617. Also available in Traian Doru Marinescu, *Disc(RO)mania: Enciclopedia albumelor muzicale românești pop/rock/folk/jazz 1965 – 2014* (Bucharest: Act și Politon, 2017), 123.

the cover of their second LP, *Iris II*, in 1987.[56] Created by the fellow musician and illustrator Alexandru Andrieş, the front cover of *Iris II* depicted Angus Young during a live performance, dressed in his trademark schoolboy uniform. The guitarist's face cannot be seen as his head is leaning forward. Both his head and the head of the guitar are painted to indicate an explosion of energy and fire. Furthermore, the one song in the album which dealt explicitly with the theme of peace, *Lumea vrea pace* (People Want Peace), combines the musical styles of two of the most prominent hard rock/heavy metal western bands of the 1980s: *AC/DC* and *Judas Priest*. The chorus of the song is built following the *AC/DC* pattern: the backing vocalists repeat the word *pace* (peace), supporting the front vocalist. *AC/DC* would use the same type of chorus, to underline messages that in contrast dealt with hedonism, hypermasculinity, or debauchery.

Other bands enjoyed less luck. For instance, the band *Celelalte Cuvinte* (The Other Words) had the cover for their first album rejected because it depicted antique ruins and modern buildings. Allegedly, the reason behind this rejection had to do with the year of the LP release, which coincided with the tenth-year commemoration of the 1977 earthquake. One should notice that *Celelalte Cuvinte*'s music style was that of progressive rock, including numerous folk influences. By the second half of the 1980s, the genre was not only unfashionable among western audiences, but it had lost any features which the official regime might have regarded as threatening.[57] Notwithstanding this, the censorship was much more permissive when it came to live concerts in smaller venues. Audiences could express themselves: scream, shout, sing in unison with the band. Performers could play while imitating their western counterparts and role models.[58]

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56 See Iris, *Iris II* (1987, Electrecord ST-EDE 03138). Artwork available at Discogs, Iris (16)–II, accessed July 4, 2017, https://www.discogs.com/Iris-II/release/1379792. See also, Marinescu, *Disc(RO)mania,* 110.

57 For the censored artwork and official front cover, see Celelalte Cuvinte, *Celelalte Cuvinte* (2017 CD Reissue, Soft Records, SFTR-044–2) available at Discogs, Celelalte Cuvinte – Celelalte Cuvinte, accessed July 4, 2017, https://www.discogs.com/Celelalte-Cuvinte-Celelalte-Cuvinte/release/10004622. See also Marinescu, *Disc(RO)mania*, 60.

58 See, for instance, a live performance from May 1989 by the rock band *Pro Musica*, available at Pro Musica – Sala Olimpia Timisoara – 1989, accessed July 5, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ZOeuQ4iWQM. See also Radu Lupaşcu, "Interview with Florin Ochescu," in Radu Lupaşcu, *Rock Interviuri* (Bucharest: Blumenthal, 2012), 148.

The Informal Scene

The black market and informal networks played a crucial role in the history of both jazz and rock music during late socialist Romania, but as the 1980s went on, they became more important. Distribution networks were created with the purpose of disseminating popular music records among students, high-school pupils, as well as factory workers who resided either in urban or rural areas. While certain networks were facilitated by the very modernization process that the socialist state had started (such as airline or maritime transportation, access to Romanian higher education for foreign students), others depended heavily on connections that existed before the Communist period. In these latter networks, areas such as Banat (in the western part of Romania, bordering Hungary and Yugoslavia) or the cities of Brăila and Galați (both ports on the Danube, in the eastern part of the country) saw the development of black markets, centered around the distribution and manufacture of recordings, that depended on the regions' historical transnational character.

By the mid-1980s, western editions of the then-fashionable hard rock/heavy metal bands could cost as much as 800 lei per copy. By comparison, the price for one Electrecord record was 26 lei, seldom reaching 28. Most sellers made copies of the record and either sold the copies and kept the original, or vice versa.[59] The case study of the Romanian band *Phoenix* and of the *Sfinx* recordings which featured Dan Andrei Aldea[60] is special because most members of the band *Phoenix* and several from *Sfinx* had either fled or emigrated, and the 1970s records of the two bands were not accessible anymore. Furthermore, the band *Phoenix* was eliminated from the Romanian rock music guide published in two editions, 1977 and 1979.[61] The fact that Electrecord did not reissue these bands' releases did not prevent fans from purchasing them illegally, usually from official vendors in the main music magazines.[62] One worker from the Electrecord pressing plant even started printing bootlegs of the three LPs that *Phoenix* had released during the previous decade. He allegedly gave them away as presents, until one day a *Securitate* colonel asked for a copy of one such bootleg from the Electrecord director. Despite the colonel's claim that the copy was supposed to be a present for

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59 E.C., personal communication (March 2017); A.M, personal communication (April 2017).

60 Sfinx released a third record in 1984, without Dan Andrei Aldea.

61 See Daniela Caraman-Fotea and Florian Lungu, *Disco Ghid-Rock* (Bucharest: Editura muzicală, 1977), 218–220. The dictionary includes the bands *Passport*, *Pesniarî*, *Picket Wilson*, *Pink Floyd*, omitting *Phoenix*.

62 A.M., personal communication (April 2017). The price for Sfinx's *Zalmoxe* LP was 40 lei during the 1980s, compared to the official price of 26 lei.

his daughter, the director denied the whole story, started an internal investigation, and eventually fired the worker.[63]

The story was presented in one of the main Romanian newspapers in the early 2010s. The worker, who wished to remain anonymous, omitted an important part of the narrative. The bootleg records were not offered as gifts but sold for sums of money which varied from 150 to 200 lei per LP.[64] This meant, for instance, that *Phoenix*'s double LP, *Cantofabule*, sold for as much as 400 lei. The records came in generic Electrecord sleeves and had no labels. Certain buyers designed their own labels and artwork.[65] Compared to the prices of western-made records, the amount paid for unofficial copies of *Phoenix* LPs seems unusually high, given the audio quality of the bootleg and the lack of original artwork. This price is indicative of the high regard that the band still enjoyed from its audiences.

Concluding Remarks

After a flourishing period during the 1970s, jazz and rock music in socialist Romania went into a phase of survival rather than development during the 1980s—an aspect that holds especially true, when one considers the number of releases by Electrecord for each genre. While the number of rock music records was higher than that of jazz records, the two combined represented an almost insignificant number, when compared to the releases dedicated to classical music, folk, light music, or political records. However, the number of fans listening to the many sub-genres of jazz and rock music was higher throughout the entire late socialist period than the number anticipated by Electrecord officials. It is difficult to get an exact number for the people who attended rock and jazz concerts, or bought records, in the absence of relevant archival sources. This lack of information is because of extremely poor conservation of sound and written archives and it is indicative of the interest that the socialist state had in assessing the impact of western popular music, especially during the 1980s. However, the existence of a flourishing black market during the socialist period and the abun-

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63 See Paul Rogojinaru, "Cum s-au editat discuri cu Phoenix sub nasul cenzurii comuniste," *Jurnalul național* (December 4, 2012), accessed May 5, 2018, http://jurnalul.ro/special-jurnalul/interviuri/cum-s-a-editat-discuri-cu-phoenix-sub-nasul-cenzurii-comuniste-630675.html.

64 E.C., personal communication (March 2017); I.R., personal communication (December 2016). E.C. bought his bootleg copy of the record *Cei ce ne-au dat nume* for 150 lei and later sold it for the same amount. I.R. bought all three albums for 200 lei per LP, 600 lei in total.

65 *Ibid.*

dance of music magazines in the 1990s—after the fall of the Communist regime in Romania—attest to the significant number of music consumers. This discrepancy is also important for the study of the private and public spheres in a socialist society, regarding which two main conclusions could be drawn at the current stage of research.

Firstly, the socialist state itself was not a unitary, bureaucratic structure, animated by a single ideological principle.[66] In the case of rock and jazz music, the Romanian socialist state had numerous levels, from the top all the way to the bottom, including the musicians themselves, censors, and concert organizers, among others, whose use of agency and motivations were complex and eluded the narrow, rigid trappings of ideology. These levels developed over time, as the music scene became more variegated, both in socialist Romania, in other East European socialist countries, and in western countries. During the 1960s, whereas the still nascent rock scene and jazz scene were limited to certain bars and restaurants in major cities and tourist locations along the Black Sea shore, during the 1970s and the 1980s, they expanded rapidly and also included houses of culture in towns throughout the country. These houses of culture served as concert locations for major bands, ensembles, and performers, or as locations in which local bands would form and rehearse. The policy of the state to encourage festivals and to implement the National Festival "Song of Romania" in the late 1970s also had an impact on the music scene, whose members used the official rhetoric in their favor. They started their own cultural manifestations dedicated to specific musical sub-genres. The impact of these transformations is even more evident when one takes into consideration economic, demographic, and social changes in Romania during late socialism.

Secondly, the public and the private spheres were not independent, monolithic realms, just as Lewis H. Siegelbaum has argued in the case of the Soviet Union.[67] Both spheres were entangled and both comprised of several levels, depending on the activity that people undertook, or the geographic and institutional position that they had. At the same time, it is to be noted that this entanglement varied over time. Consequently, what mattered was not just the manner in

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66 This point is argued convincingly in the case of the agricultural collectivization by Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery. See Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery, *Peasants Under Siege: The Collectivization of Romanian Agriculture, 1949–1962* (Princeton, NJ/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011). Of particular relevance for our discussion is the Conclusion of the book, where the authors discuss the bureaucratic nature of the socialist state.

67 Lewis H. Siegelbaum, "Introduction: Mapping Private Spheres in the Soviet Context," in *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia*, ed. Lewis H. Siegelbaum (New York/Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 2–3.

which the state defined the private and the public spheres, but also how ordinary people formed their own views about the nature of these spheres and about the activities and attitudes that defined them. The case study of Cornel Chiriac is indicative of this latter aspect. The *Securitate* took great interest in Chiriac's letters and in the way his room was decorated, but the main reason for this was Chiriac's criticism of the socialist state for its lack of interest in a music genre which fascinated Chiriac—jazz. When confronted with his own letters, Chiriac used the state rhetoric of condemning the western capitalist world—in particular, the United States of America—for their racist policies and presented jazz and his own private activities as an attempt to adhere to the socialist ideology. Initially, Chiriac viewed music and politics as two separate entities. However, in order to defend himself to the state officials, he began to use politics to safeguard his own passion for music. He also became aware that what he considered private could be under scrutiny by the state.

When analyzing Chiriac's case of confronting the local *Securitate* officers, one must consider the historical context (the early 1960s), as well as the fact that he intended to make his criticism public outside socialist Romania. This latter aspect offers us information about how the state intended to keep certain aspects private and that the private/public dichotomy applies not only between the state and its citizens, but also between the state and other states, or other supranational organizations.

Later, during the 1970s and 1980s, there would be other such cases, when teenagers came under surveillance by the *Securitate* for seemingly innocent activities, such as listening to music programs offered by Radio Free Europe. The reason for this is the manner in which socialist Romania perceived U.S. funded organizations as a propaganda tool directed against the interests of the state. In the case of popular music, it also has to do with the fact that, from 1969 until 1975, the host of Radio Free Europe's pop music program was none other than Chiriac himself, who had fled Romania.

The interaction between teenagers, young adults, and the *Securitate* is just one aspect that must be taken into account when examining the private and public spheres in the realm of rock and jazz music. Musicians and fans interacted in other spaces with other representatives of the state. While the private sphere of a teenager was of interest to the socialist state during the early 1960s, live concerts held in houses of culture or student clubs were not censored during the 1970s and 1980s, as long as no physical damage was done to the locations and to their equipment. These venues became more "private" for people who were part of rock and jazz concerts compared to their own private rooms and apartments. In such cases, the notion of "private" was negotiated between musicians and fans, on the one hand, and cultural activists and local militia, or

even *Securitate* operatives, on the other. If the event did not gain any significance outside the physical borders of its venue, local officials treated it as a private event organized by several people with little public impact. This explains why the process of recording an album or a song was subjected to heavier censorship, despite its private physical setting: the music that was recorded would have numerous copies and be distributed throughout the country and even abroad.

In the end, privacy worked to undermine the regime as well as a way to confirm its authority. The interference of the state into private matters, such as music tastes, did catalyze political thoughts and attitudes. However, with no political alternative, these thoughts and attitudes transformed into agency that was directed at negotiation with state representatives, with the purpose of leaving both parties satisfied and unaffected.

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Xawery Stańczyk

"There's No Silence in a Block of Flats"

Fluid Borders Between the Private and Public Spheres in Representations and Practices of Punk in Socialist Poland

Introduction

The Polish rock boom of the early 1980s has been described as an ambivalent cultural form of mass resistance and dissent against the Communist government on the one hand, and of conformity with the official ideology and adjustment to the entertainment industry on the other.[1] The title of the 2010 popular documentary *Beats of Freedom–Zew wolności* clearly emphasizes the first facet: rock music in Poland served as a channel of unrestricted communication as well as a means to challenge the system.[2] This view is especially widespread in the case of punk rock and new wave genres which are perceived as being an almost open rebellion against the authoritarian state. However, it is important to keep in mind that these views regarding punk are sometimes informed by the authors' attitudes toward the socialist regime rather than by the objective characteristics of the genre in Poland.

While there were numerous political allusions and references in the lyrics and performances of Polish rock and punk rock bands of that decade, I contend that this oft-used approach is reductionist, for it is often based entirely on the analysis of the songs' texts without considering the context of the musical values and the circumstances of the rock and punk musicians in the pop-rock field (the sub-field of the field of cultural production according to Bourdieu).[3] In the case of punk—everyday styles and practices of the community of fans and friends connected to different bands are not taken into consideration. Historians explor-

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1 Anna Idzikowska-Czubaj, *Rock w PRL-u: O paradoksach współistnienia* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2011); Przemysław Zieliński, *Scena rockowa w PRL: Historia, organizacja, znaczenie* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Trio, 2005).

2 *Beats of Freedom–Zew wolności*, dir. Leszek Gnoiński and Wojciech Słota (Poland, 2010).

3 For the analysis of Polish popular music of the early 1980s within the methodological framework of Bourdieu's theory of fields, see Klaudia Rachubińska and Xawery Stańczyk, "Youth Under Construction: The Generational Shifts in Popular Music Journalism in the Poland of the 1980s," in *Popular Music in Eastern Europe: Breaking the Cold War Paradigm*, ed. Ewa Mazierska (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

ing Polish punk and new wave in the broader context of so-called "independent culture" (politically associated with the "Solidarity" movement, or *Solidarność*) also often forget about the specificities of the alternative music scene, of which punks were part.[4] The inherent ideological bias that underlies the assumption of the binary opposition between the repressive state power and (conformist, deceived, privately or openly resisting) citizens is often not noticed by authors of such undertakings. Contrary to this simplifying approach, I examine the manner in which punks perceived the division of the private and public spheres in the Polish People's Republic in the 1980s and their perception of the space that their community occupied in it. It does not ignore the question whether Polish punks were or were not anti-Communist or anti-government but attempts to understand the meaning of these abstract attitudes in the reality of late socialism in Poland. While being punk was always a political statement, the meaning of this statement changed depending on the context.

Besides narrowing political interpretations that focus on the rebellious statements in lyrics, acts of civil disobedience (e.g., the participation of punks in antigovernmental demonstrations) and problems with censorship or repression by the state,[5] Polish punk has generally been analyzed by writers and researchers in two different ways. Firstly, the popular approach among sociologists and anthropologists has portrayed punk as a youth subculture with its unique style in music and fashion, its particular rules of behavior, its slang, and modes of self-organizing.[6] The second approach has framed punk using methods of art history, as the last stage of the avant-garde art influenced by the legacy of dadaism and futurism. Punk typography, punk posters, punk fashion, punk performance, and their relationship to contemporary visual arts, theater, and philosophy, are the most preferred subjects in this field of research.[7] As opposed to this, I argue

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4 This narrative is nurtured specially by historians associated with the Polish Institute of National Remembrance (*Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*) who apply the term "independent culture" to rock music, underground press, street happenings, street art, and graffiti, e.g., Tomasz Toborek, *Niezależna muzyka rockowa* (Łódź: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2010); Krzysztof Lesiakowski, Paweł Perzyna, and Tomasz Toborek, eds., *Jarocin w obiektywie bezpieki* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2004).

5 Remigiusz Kasprzycki, *Dekada buntu: Punk w Polsce i krajach sąsiednich w latach 1977–1989* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Libron, 2013); Paweł "Koñjo" Konnak, *Gangrena: Mój punk rock song* (Warsaw: Narodowe Centrum Kultury, 2012).

6 Barbara Fatyga, *Dzicy z naszej ulicy: Antropologia kultury młodzieżowej* (Warsaw: Ośrodek Badań Młodzieży, Instytut Stosowanych Nauk Społecznych UW, 1999); Mirosław Pęczak, *Subkultury w PRL: Opór, kreacja, imiatacja* (Warsaw: Narodowe Centrum Kultury, 2013), 106–128.

7 Piotr Lisowski, ed., *Black Spring: On Wrocław's Independent Music Scene of the 1980s* (Wrocław: Muzeum Współczesne Wrocław, 2017); David Crowley and Daniel Muzyczuk, eds., *Notes*

that the motif of space and the discussion regarding the private or public character of spaces is essential for the punk movement, because if the many manifestations of punk lifestyle, such as home tape recordings, gigs in basements and garages, or just collective strolls through the city are examined, it is clear that they were breaking the rules of separation between the public and private spheres that set work apart from leisure, politics from fun, and the individual from society. Therefore, the exploration of an imagined city landscape with elements such as blocks of flats, factories, offices, streets, and garages mentioned in the punk songs, interviews, and recollections, could serve as a method to understand the way that punks perceived the public and private and dealt with these two categories. Since they felt out of place, unsafe, and choked in spaces usually depicted as private (flats, houses, etc.), punks entered the public sphere where they were met with hostility from the police and other citizens. Therefore, they had to navigate between the public and private, trying to invent their own counterpublic sphere. In my analysis of the punks' view of the private and public spheres, I use two types of sources: the original texts of punk and new wave songs as well as articles in punk fanzines from the 1980s and memoirs published in the last few years by punk musicians such as Tomasz Lipiński, Krzysztof Grabowski, Paweł "Kelner" Rozwadowski, and others.[8] I draw on the ambiguity inherent in the punks' ideas of the home and the city, domestic and political matters to investigate the socio-political reasons that motivate punks' criticism of socialist architecture, urban planning, and the standards of living. Further, I delve into the everyday and uncommon practices that helped construct alternative localities for punk crews in order to grasp the specificities of the punk attitude toward the dichotomy of the private and public spheres. Finally, I examine the punk community as a representation of a peculiar counterpublic to explore if the underground punk circuit can be justifiably depicted as an alternative public sphere. I focus on the last decade of the Polish People's Republic, so the term "late socialism" used in reference to it may seem a bit misleading because the neoliberal reforms implemented by the government in the second half of the 1980s introduced free market and encouraged the private sector under what was officially socialist rule.

from the Underground: Art and Alternative Music in Eastern Europe (Łódź: Muzeum Sztuki, Koenig Books, 2016).

8 This article is also informed by about 15 interviews that I conducted with musicians, organizers, and participants of the punk scene in Warsaw, Gdańsk, Wrocław, Tricity, and Słupsk.

Methodological Framework

The interdisciplinary research field of the studies on the public sphere contains numerous conceptions and various ways of understanding this crucial category. One of the fundamental viewpoints on the public sphere comes from the work of Jürgen Habermas, whose *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* remains one of the cornerstones of this field.[9] Habermas examines the emergence of the bourgeois public sphere and structural changes in it from the end of the seventeenth to the twentieth century in Great Britain, Germany, and France. At the beginning of the chapter "Social Structures of the Public Sphere," he defines the public sphere:

> The bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor. The medium of this political confrontation was peculiar and without historical precedent: people's public use of their reason (*öffentliches Räsonnement*).[10]

In Habermas' view, the public sphere was a space of freely expressed opinions and deliberations on public matters where every participant of the discussion was equal, and where economic and status disparities neither impacted the positions of protagonists nor their specific interests.

This conception of the public sphere was criticized in the works of Nancy Fraser, whose essay "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy" is highly relevant to my argument in this article.[11] Fraser underlines that the public sphere in the Habermasian understanding is "an institutionalised arena of discursive interaction" which

> [...] is conceptually distinct from the state; it is a site for the production and circulation of discourses that can in principle be critical of the state. The public sphere in Habermas's sense is also conceptually distinct from the official economy; it is not an arena of market relations but rather one of discursive relations, a theatre for debating and deliberating

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9 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991) [emphasis in the original].
10 *Ibid.*, 27.
11 Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy" in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996).

rather than for buying and selling. Thus this concept of the public sphere permits us to keep in view the distinctions among state apparatuses, economic markets, and democratic associations, distinctions that are essential to democratic theory.[12]

However, Fraser argues that the Habermasian bourgeois public sphere was never accessible to everyone; on the contrary, from the very beginning, it had been constructed on the basis of a series of exclusions that enabled *bourgeois men* to gain the power by subordinating lower classes and women and imposing hegemonic norms of the new dominant social strata to the whole society.[13] Furthermore, she contends that social inequalities between participants of the Habermasian public sphere were bracketed but not eliminated, so that the members of the subordinate groups only formally had the same rights as their interlocutors from the dominant strata; the social distinctions and status disparities never evaporated, resulting in the marginalization of the underprivileged.[14]

Another important point that Fraser makes is that, due to the fact that Habermas failed to recognize different (non-bourgeois) public spheres, he idealized the liberal public sphere as the only possible form, despite its deficiencies, which, in her view, is an erroneous idea:

> The bourgeois public was never *the* public. On the contrary, virtually contemporaneous with the bourgeois public there arose a host of competing counterpublics, including nationalist publics, popular peasant publics, elite women's publics, and working-class publics.[15]

The competing counterpublics had their own norms and styles of behavior, distinct from the ones imposed by a bourgeois liberal public sphere. To perceive this plurality and diversity is essential to break the rule of bourgeois privilege that makes the ideological assumption that there is only one possible public sphere. Fraser claims that the multiplicity of publics constructed by different subordinated groups are advantageous for democracy because each of these groups can deliberate in their own way and its their own arena before the confrontation with the dominant class:

> [...] members of subordinated social groups—women, workers, peoples of colour, and gays and lesbians—have repeatedly found it advantageous to constitute alternative publics. I propose to call these *subaltern counterpublics* in order to signal that they are parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-

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12 *Ibid.*, 110 – 111.
13 *Ibid.*, 114 – 115.
14 *Ibid.*, 120.
15 *Ibid.*, 116 [emphasis in the original].

discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests and needs.[16]

Moreover, Fraser critically examines different meanings embedded in the categories of "private" and "public" by illustrating that from the point of view of an outsider, there is a difference between issues of concern to participants of the public sphere and those that affect everybody.[17] Matters perceived as a part of someone's private life have often become the heart of public conflicts and discussions. Hence, the terms "private" and "public" are not simply straightforward designations of societal spheres; they are cultural classifications and rhetorical labels that serve to stifle some voices while justifying others.[18]

Fraser's argumentation was furthered by David Morley who notes, "The struggle to establish a clear division between the external world of work and community and the internal, private space of the family was crucial for nineteenth-century middle-class families in attempting to establish their respectability."[19] Morley criticises Habermas's concept of the public sphere as a "myth" and "phantasmagoria."[20] He argues that there was never a town square "in which the sovereign and omnicompetent citizens of liberal democracy were imagined to have conducted their business."[21] Building off of Fraser's argument, he states:

> [...] not only does Habermas's account idealise the liberal public sphere, but that it is because he fails to examine other non-liberal, non-bourgeois, competing public spheres—what she calls subaltern counterpublics—that he ends up idealising the uninterrogated class- and gender-based assumptions of the claim that the bourgeois public ever fully represented the public in the singular.[22]

While the critique of Habermas's concept of the public sphere is essential for my examination of Polish punk practices and representations of the borders between "private" and "public," applying Fraser's normative approach with regard to the publics and counterpublics on the research on youth culture or underground culture in the late socialist contexts of East-Central Europe would similarly be problematic.

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16 *Ibid.*, 123 [emphasis in the original].

17 *Ibid.*, 129.

18 *Ibid.*, 131.

19 David Morley, *Home Territories: Media, Mobility and Identity* (London/New York: Routledge, 2003), 23.

20 *Ibid.*, 23.

21 Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," 113.

22 *Ibid.*, 114.

Fraser's theory was conceptualized in the context of liberal democracy and as a project of furthering emancipation and equality in the North-Western countries, so it does not address many problems of social structures and power relations under the state socialist rule. The global political context of Fraser's reflections was the demise of state socialism in the Eastern Bloc in the early 1990s and the "triumphant march" of liberal democracy toward the East. Envisioning the model of socialist democracy in an egalitarian, multicultural society, Fraser does not address the realities of state socialism, besides a remark about the difference between authoritarian and democratic forms of socialism.[23] The conclusion returns to the issue regarding the adaptation of Fraser's theory to the late socialist context.

Punk: Songs and Images

The first punk wave appeared in Poland in 1978–1981, predominantly in the big cities of Warsaw, Łódź, Wrocław, and Gdańsk, but also in small towns in the countryside like Ustrzyki, Władysławowo, and Miastko. Some of the first punk bands were created by people who had been interested in the hippie movement, so-called hippie-punks (*hipopunki*), as was the case of Tomasz Lipiński and his band *Tilt*.[24] Other groups were started by teenagers who had never even played guitar before: for example, the founders of the band *Sedes* were teenagers who first created aliases and then decided who would play which instrument.[25] In Warsaw, the first punk milieu primarily included students of the Academy of Fine Arts, young artists, poets, and philosophers—in contrast to the first punks in Wrocław, most of whom had a working-class background.[26] However, special type of experiences and practices of space linked the punk community despite different geographical locations and social backgrounds. Blocks of flats, streets, and garages were favorite locations for punk activities and a popular spatial motif in the texts of their songs. The focus on these places was maintained by

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23 *Ibid.*, 110.

24 For more about "hippie-punks" and the bohemian lifestyle of the first wave of punks in Warsaw, see Mirosław Makowski and Michał Szymański, *Obok, albo ile procent Babilonu?* (Katowice: Manufaktura Legenda, 2010), 90–150.

25 Jakub Michalak, *Nie będę wisiał ukrzyżowany* (Wrocław: Oficyna Wydawnicza ATUT – Wrocławskie Wydawnictwo Oświatowe, 2007), 68.

26 For more about the working-class milieu of punks in Wrocław, see Xawery Stańczyk, "A Pitched Battle for Peace: Wrocław's Alternative Scene," accessed June 19, 2018, https://culture.pl/en/article/a-pitched-battle-for-peace-wroclaws-alternative-scene.

punks throughout the decade of the 1980s. A few examples of punk and new wave songs serve to demonstrate the specificity of punk experiences in both private and public spaces.

The black album by *Brygada Kryzys*, the cornerstone of Polish punk that was a joint venture between Robert Brylewski from *Kryzys* and Tomasz Lipiński from *Tilt*, was released in 1982 and included the song *Radioaktywny blok* (Radioactive Block). The text of the song is quite simple, constructed with a few words, which are repeatedly screamed out:

> Concrete, concrete
> Home, home
> Elevator, home
> Home, concrete
> Wall, concrete
> Concrete, home
> Shop, concrete
> Work, home
> Radioactive block!
>
> Concrete, home
> Day, concrete
> Work, concrete
> Home, home
> Elevator, shop
> Concrete, home
> Balcony, concrete
> Home, home
> Radioactive block!
>
> Concrete, concrete
> Home, home
> Concrete, concrete
> Home, home
> Concrete, concrete
> Home, home
> Concrete, concrete
> Home, home
> Radioactive block![27]

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27 "Beton, beton / Dom, dom / Winda, dom / Dom, beton / Ściana, beton / Beton, dom / Sklep, beton / Praca, dom / Radioaktywny blok! // Beton, dom / Dzień, beton / Praca, beton / Dom, dom / Winda, sklep / Beton, dom / Balkon, beton / Dom, dom / Radioaktywny blok! // Beton, beton / Dom, dom / Beton, beton / Dom, dom / Beton, beton / Dom, dom / Beton, beton / Dom, dom / Radioaktywny blok!" [Translations here and throughout the article are

The furious speed of the song and its mechanical rhythm together with multiple shouted words create the vision of a dehumanized concrete landscape free of people and other living creatures. In the last verse, there are no words except concrete and home: shop, elevator, and other elements of urban environment disappear from the minimalistic picture of a modern city district. It is unclear if the radioactivity of the block of flats is a metaphor for the dangerous social anomie brought about by contemporary high-rise architecture or if it also refers to the perils of the nuclear war, which is a possibility in the context of the increasing tensions between Eastern and Western Blocs in the early 1980s.

In the same year, *Brygada Kryzys* was depicted as one of the popular rock bands in the documentary *Koncert* (The Gig) directed by Michał Tarkowski.[28] The musicians and their friends exemplified the energy and togetherness of an authentic alternative community against the backdrop of the melancholy and alienation of a state socialist city. In this film, Warsaw was portrayed as "Babylon," a nonhuman space of emptiness, alienation, and mechanical traffic. It is worth mentioning that Lipiński, the author of the lyrics of the track "Radioactive Block," was born in 1955 and lived in the central district of Warsaw in a new monumental building from the Stalin era that epitomized "palaces for workers." Son of the prominent artist and cartoonist Eryk Lipiński, he witnessed first-hand the metamorphosis of Warsaw from the city of ruins after WWII into a contemporary capital of the working class as a young adult (although the district where he lived was categorized "working-class area" only in propaganda; in fact, most apartments had clerks, military officers, and intellectuals as tenants).[29] Lipiński did not appear to be afraid of the working class entering the city center (as official slogans put it), and instead was concerned about the scale of the new architecture and the atrophication of social bonds as a consequence of monumental urban transformations. A few years later, after a visit to Moscow, Lipiński wrote another song on the same theme, *Jeszcze będzie przepięknie* (It Will be Beautiful Once Again), where he envisioned the entire society enclosed in massive buildings, with people detached from each other, too scared to break the silence and speak about their pain.

One year after the punk strike by *Brygada Kryzys*, the well-known blues singer Martyna Jakubowicz recorded her greatest hit *W domach z betonu nie ma wolnej miłości* (There is No Free Love in Houses of Concrete) with lyrics written by

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mine if not indicated differently.] "Radioaktywny blok" by Tomasz Lipiński. Brygada Kryzys, *Brygada Kryzys* (Poland: Tonpress, 1982).

28 *Koncert*, dir. Michal Tarkowski (Poland, 1982).

29 Tomasz Lipiński and Piotr Bratkowski, *Dziwny, dziwny, dziwny* (Warsaw: The Facto, 2015), 21–59.

her then-husband, Andrzej Jakubowicz.[30] Though the melancholic ballad was far from being punk, the song conveyed a bitter farewell to both the hippie dream of unrestricted sexual relations and socialist eschatology of a peaceful, innocent, and prosperous society. The song narrates a story of an affair between neighbors from two opposite buildings, which starts when the man sees a naked girl dancing in her flat through his window. Their relationship, however, only develops through this distance—by looking at each other through the windows of their respective flats. There is no possibility of free love; there is only sex in marriage or sexual immorality, and neither of them involves love—the song unveils:

> In houses of concrete
> There is no free love
> There are marital intercourses and acts of whoredom
> Casanova never comes here to us.[31]

One could dream of an exciting romance but the reality of the "houses of concrete" gives no opportunity for a realization of such a fantasy. Martyna Jakubowicz and her husband lived in similar conditions as the characters of their song —in a relatively new block of flats in Stegny district in Warsaw at the time. But many trees and free space between the buildings in Stegny district made the story of neighbors watching each other from opposite windows almost impossible. One could not see anything in the next building from the block of flats where Jakubowicz lived—the vision in the song was pure fantasy. Despite this incongruence between the story and the living conditions of the author and the narrator, the song appealed to thousands of listeners in Poland in the 1980s and remains topical even today. There are many possible reasons why the track was so popular including the simultaneous processes of urbanization, the confusion of traditional norms, socialist ethos propagated by the Party and the new conservative turn, social anomie related to the slow entropy of state socialism and the discrediting of its values. "Houses of concrete" served as a metaphor for this process and its respective parts. A similar melancholic longing for a romantic, insane love contrasted with the reality of loss and betrayal is the theme in another great hit, the song *Lucciola* recorded by the new wave *Maanam*, with lyrics by the female lead singer Kora (Olga Jackowska) in 1984. The narrator of the song is a sex worker from a harbor city where everything is hot and salty. However, Ryszard

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30 "W domach z betonu nie ma wolnej miłości" by Andrzej Jakubowicz. Martyna Jakubowicz, *Maquillage* (Poland: Pronit, 1983).

31 "W domach z betonu / Nie ma wolnej miłości / Są stosunki małżeńskie oraz akty nierządne / Casanova tu u nas nie gości." *Ibid.*

Lenczewski who directed the video for the song chose the wintry, desolated streets and backyards of the industrial city of Łódź to shoot it. The punk image of Kora who wanders through the gloomy terrain while singing about intense, dark romance heightened the startling effect.

The negative image of the socialist city and blocks of flats was continued by other punk groups in the 1980s. A mention of the "cage of concrete" (*klatka z betonu*) appeared in 1987 in the song *To miasto umiera* (This City is Dying) by *Dezerter*, a hardcore punk band famous for its politically committed performances and a strong inclination toward anarchism.[32] The song painted a shocking image of a dangerous and decaying city full of degenerates, villains, and prostitutes, where ordinary people are desperately waiting for food and commit suicide. This is a metropolis of aggression, social anomie, and fatal incidents:

> Someone's calling for help
> But no one hears it in the cage of concrete
> Sluts mix with chicks
> For sure nobody here will help anybody
>
> This city is dying
> And you're dying with it
> This city is dying
> And you'll die with it.[33]

The sense of moral decay and social disintegration was widespread across popular culture in Poland in the 1980s. The cult TV series *07 zgłoś się* (07 Come In) presented criminal cases investigated by the Lieutenant Sławomir Borewicz, the "last" righteous hero. The aim of the series was probably to improve the reputation of the police but Borewicz was almost alone in the dangerous world of injustice and depravity. He could be a good policeman, but what happened to socialist society? *Dezerter* gave an answer: social bonds in big cities were torn apart by selfishness, debauchery, and aggression. Thus, crime was not a secret: everyone knew about it, but nobody cared about other people.

While *Dezerter* is known for its catastrophic visions of late socialist society, similar depictions of contemporary cities are also present in songs by other bands, such as *Karcer* from Słupsk, *KSU* from Ustrzyki, *Pidżama Porno* from Poznań, *Klaus Mitffoch* from Wrocław, and many other punk and new wave

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32 "To miasto umiera" by Krzysztof Grabowski. Dezerter, *Kolaboracja* (Poland: Klub Płytowy Razem, 1987).

33 "Jakiś człowiek wzywa pomocy / Lecz nikt nie słyszy w klatce z betonu / Dziwki mieszają się z podlotkami / Tu nikt na pewno nie pomoże nikomu / To miasto umiera / I Ty razem z nim / To miasto umiera / I Ty umrzesz z nim." *Ibid.*

groups. In the lofty, impressive song *Ulica miasta* (The Street of the City), post punk *Aya RL* elevated the vision of moral decay to an almost metaphysical level. Paweł Kukiz, the band's frontman, in exalted style sang about the street "in the heart of the city" where "Christ stays no more, and Satan has moved out." The absence of God and Devil resulted in beggary, alcoholism, unfaithfulness, and the slow fading away of life.[34]

An interesting exception is the song *Nowa Aleksandria* (New Alexandria) by *Siekiera*, a band that began with hardcore punk but soon combined it with a more cold, new wave style.[35] Tomasz Adamski, the composer and songwriter of *Siekiera* and the leader of the group, grew up in a relatively small town, Puławy, where he still lives. The lyrics were about Puławy, which used to be called New Alexandria under Russian rule in the nineteenth century. Puławy is an industrial town and since the 1960s, it has been the site of a huge factory that produces nitrate fertilizers and employs thousands of workers. The song was part of the eponymous album from 1986 and is furiously fast, with a broken rhythmic structure. At the same time, it is also melodic, cold, and dark because of the use of keyboards. Its lyrics portray the town landscape from the perspective of a resident looking out of his window at dawn and observing sleepy workers heading to the plant:

> When I wake up, look in the window, a short moment
> People walk there by the gate, still sleepy
> The little flame abandoned on the street
> Our houses amid the night
> Our houses close to the factories.[36]

The image of the houses near the factory, covered by both the shadows of the night and the industrial buildings, evokes emotions of bleakness and helplessness of the people against the dehumanized system of the contemporaneity. This song is different from similar punk and new wave compositions because it did not envision a city with its traffic and masses of citizens; there were only houses surrounding the massive factory and workers walking to the site before it was morning. The minimalist style of Adamski's poetry—the whole image is expressed in only five verses—is also different from the excess that is typical of

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34 "Na mojej ulicy / Nie mieszka już Chrystus / A szatan się z niej wyprowadził / [...] / Bo moja ulica / Jest w sercu miasta…" "Ulica miasta" by Aya RL, *Aya RL* (Poland: Tonpress, 1985).

35 "Nowa Aleksandria" by Tomasz Adamski. Siekiera, *Nowa Aleksandria* (Poland: Tonpresss, 1986).

36 "Kiedy wstaję, patrzę w okno, krótka chwila / Idą ludzie tam za bramą jeszcze senni / Na ulicy mały płomień porzucony / Nasze domy pośród nocy / Nasze domy obok fabryk." *Ibid.*

punk songs, such as in the case of *Dezerter*. Adamski seemed to be concerned less about aggression, moral anomie, alienation, and isolation, and more about the dehumanizing work in the industrial complex and the monotony of a worker's life. The daily routine is made of dull, repetitive work—nothing else.

It can be argued that apocalyptic images of cities and modern life are a common feature of the punk imaginary and this would be right. However, Polish punk songs had their specificities, and one of them was their perception of streets, backyards, and blocks of flats. The most significant description of the city as experienced by punks came from the band *Deuter* in 1987. Paradoxically, their song *Nie ma ciszy w bloku* (There's No Silence in a Block of Flats) was more hip-hop than punk, even though almost no one had heard about hip-hop in the mid-1980s in Poland.[37] *Deuter* was a group formed in the first punk wave in Poland in 1980 by Paweł "Kelner" Rozwadowski. A few years later, "Kelner" revived *Deuter* with new musicians and a completely new sound that was very different from classic punk. They even used a sampling technique, probably for the first time in pop music in the Polish People's Republic. The song describes everyday life in the new blocks of flats. There is no silence because of noises from other apartments: a husband punching his wife, a woman slapping her children, a man flushing his toilet. The block is full of voices starting from 5 a.m., when people get up and go to work, till the night, when some inhabitants find time for house repairs. The building is not only noisy but also stinky due to leaky drainpipes. There is also the question of privacy: in the new block of flats, almost everything is public due to strict social control, with neighbors watching one another and parents checking on their kids. "In the concrete box," as Rozwadowski sings, every noise could be easily heard, every movement could be observed, but the strict social control would not stop acts of domestic violence and hostility among citizens.[38] In contrast with the metaphorical lyrics written by Lipiński and Adamski, "Kelner" tries to be true to reality, precisely depicting the situation in his own block. The focus on the observations of everyday life without attempts to generalize them helps to grasp the specificity of the punk attitude toward matters of privacy in the new modern blocks of flats.

Beton M3 (Concrete M3), another song by *Deuter*, offers an exterior perspective on the blocks of flats in Warsaw's peripheral districts of Ursynów and Jelon-

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37 "Nie ma ciszy w bloku" by Paweł "Kelner" Rozwadowski. Deuter, *1987* (Poland: Polskie Nagrania Muza, 1988).

38 "w betonowym pudle." *Ibid.*

ki.[39] Their residents were portrayed as a mass of people confined together in large buildings without any opportunity to alter their lives:

> Riding a sultry bus through Ursynów
> Take a look at the concrete blocks
> Think of the people, they have to live there inside
> Think of the people; they live despite
> [...]
> Closed in the concrete boxes
> We wait for the sluggish rotting of our bodies
> Irradiated by the rays from the concrete walls
> We wait, wait, wait.[40]

The radiation present in the blocks was an allusion to the rumors about the radioactive materials used in the buildings; the same motif that was present in "Radioactive Block" by Brygada Kryzys. Similarly, here it is used as a metaphor for the toxicity connected to living in the newly built estates: the crowded flats and buses, the boring and draining work, as well as the depressing atmosphere of imprisonment. Rozwadowski characterized his own experience as a teenager living in a block of flats in the newly built Sadyba district in the 1970s in his 2012 autobiographical book *To zupełnie nieprawdopodobne* (It's Totally Improbable). He focuses on the noises and smells inside the building, the lack of facilities outside of it, such as pavements and bus stop shelters, but also describes his conflicts with parents who disapproved of their son's fascination with punk. Lastly, he recounts the strolls through the city and meetings in students' clubs and apartments of older colleagues.[41] The privacy of flats and houses had a little in common with the negative liberty. From the perspective of young punks, the spaces usually associated with privacy were normative places where they had to obey rules and meet the demands of those higher up in social hierarchies. Moreover, the byproducts of the sense of being stifled because of overpopulation and social control was aggression, violence, and a sense of alienation. But in the

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39 "Beton M3" by Paweł "Kelner" Rozwadowski. Dezerter, *Deuter* (Poland: Polton, 1995). The song was officially issued only once, on the album by *Dezerter* with *Deuter*'s greatest songs; the members of the two bands were colleagues and the more popular *Dezerter* wanted to bring back pieces written by "Kelner."

40 "Jadąc dusznym autobusem przez Ursynów / Popatrz na betonowe bloki / Pomyśl o ludziach, oni muszą żyć tam w środku / Pomyśl o ludziach, oni przecież są / [...] / Zamknięci w betonowych pudełkach / Czekamy na powolny rozkład naszych ciał / Naświetlani promieniami z betonowych ścian / Czekamy, czekamy, czekamy." *Ibid.*

41 Paweł "Kelner" Rozwadowski, *To zupełnie nieprawdopodobne* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2012), 7–29.

districts like Ursynów, Jelonki, and Sadyba, there were few public spaces for free expression and creativity of the youth, while on the streets, one could face the same aggression, depravity, and alienation as in the block of flats.

The Axes of Spatial Conflicts

From the punk perspective, privacy within one's own flat seems impossible because everything could be heard through thin walls. Neighbors in the blocks of flats are portrayed as knowing each other's secrets: betrayals by spouses, domestic violence, child abuse, family quarrels, etc. Thus, private existence is envisioned to be under permanent social control of neighbors, family, and the administrations of respective buildings. The contemporary house of the time seemed to be governed by a set of rules, which, if violated, would bring about aggression and clashes against one another—it was not a house representing a safe and comfortable place of interpersonal relations among the family and the local community. The types of conflicts were of three types: the material and symbolic usage of the space, the hierarchy of prestige and power in the building, and the media and communication technologies such as television, radio, records, and tapes.

The new blocks of flats constructed in Poland in the 1960s and the 1970s offered separate spaces for all members of the nuclear family. There was usually a room for the parents, a room for the children, and a living room. This division of space was envisioned to provide convenience for the whole family. However, people who had earlier lived in small flats in tenement houses, poor huts, or even temporary barracks in the first decade after the war, now had to adjust to new, unfamiliar spaces. While adolescent punks were striving to create their own world inside their rooms by changing furniture, painting walls, posting banners and posters with their favorite bands, as described in the memoirs of Rozwadowski who had repeated quarrels with his parents as a teenager over the appearance of his room—the parents attempted to maintain control over the teenagers' spaces.[42] They were often afraid of the changes in the kids, their independent lifestyles, and their efforts to isolate themselves from parental control, as in the case of young "Kelner" who cut his mother's favorite sweater and listened to punk rock albums.[43]

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42 *Ibid.*, 14.
43 *Ibid.*, 19.

The conflicts over space inside flats led to fights for power within the family and the community in the district. These fights had at least two dimensions: age and gender. The adults—parents, housekeepers, neighbors, watchmen—tried to gain control over the defiant youth and demanded respect because of their higher positions. On the contrary, the young punks sought autonomy for their music, clothing, and lifestyle preferences, showing their disdain toward the authority claimed by parents, teachers, and police officers, among others. The anarchist, anti-hierarchical attitude of many punks was regarded as an insult by the conservative older generations as well as many of their peers. In his memoir *Czas: anarchia, tryb: rewolucja. Wspomnienia warszawskiego anarchisty* (Time: Anarchy; Mode: Revolution. Memories of Warsaw's Anarchist), Tymoteusz Onyszkiewicz describes his dangerous path from home to the city when he became a punk at the age of 15:

> Just after leaving home, one would meet the older men sitting on a bench who were sending lingering, poisonous gazes with vicious remarks. For sure there was something about a social margin, a juvie, or calling the militia. The next element was the confrontation with some of the neighbors who would incidentally drop something like: "Moron!" and elaborate: "Go to the hairdresser, you slob!"[44]

It was just the beginning of his troubles. Onyszkiewicz recollects that there also were young fans of football and pop groups such as Modern Talking who frequently accosted punks, older aggressive guys with a criminal background who ruled the streets and backyards, and, finally, encounters with police officers and skinheads. These various groups would beat punks, steal their jackets, or cut their hair. Some punks even lost their lives in the district battles, Onyszkiewicz claims.[45]

Gender division is evident through the gendered division of space in which the private space was perceived as female while the public space was ascribed to males and their public activities. David Morley refers to this division in his 2000 *Home Territories: Media, Mobility and Identity*, stating:

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44 "Zaraz po wyjściu z domu trafiało się na siedzących na ławce starszych ludzi, którzy posyłali przeciągłe, jadowite spojrzenia, okraszone złośliwymi uwagami. Z pewnością było tam coś o marginesie społecznym, domu poprawczym, wzywaniu milicji. Następnym elementem była konfrontacja z którymś z sąsiadów, który rzucał mimochodem coś między krótkim: 'Debilu!', a rozwinięciem tematu: 'Do fryzjera byś poszedł brudasie!'" Tymoteusz Onyszkiewicz, *Czas: anarchia, tryb: rewolucja. Wspomnienia warszawskiego anarchisty* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Nowy Świat, 2014), 28.

45 *Ibid.*, 28 – 29.

[i]f the idea of home can only be understood as one part of binary relation, in which the private is defined by distinction from the public, the further point is that this distinction is itself gendered. Thus Janet Wolf argues that, in so far as the theoretical literature on modernity focuses so strongly on the public sphere—the life of the streets, where the (male) *flâneur* wanders—it effectively equates the modern with the public and simply fails to describe women's experience.[46]

The punk movement was highly masculine, and for this reason was even criticized by punks themselves. Piotr "Pietia" Wierzbicki, the editor and publisher of the *QQRYQ* fanzine wrote about sexism and women's discrimination within the punk scene in 1987: there was no female punk band in Poland and only two groups had female vocalists.[47] Many former punks recount how they symbolically left their homes after conflicts with parents and started their autonomous initiatives with a group of colleagues—the autobiography written by Rozwadowski is just one of numerous examples of this pattern.[48] Stories such as these fit perfectly with the cultural theme of a young man who must leave the place where he grew up to take up challenges in the world and mature as a result of the journey.

An interesting illustration of this gendered division of space is provided by the music video *Nic za nic* (Nothing for Nothing) by Izabela Trojanowska, actress and vocalist known for transgression of gender roles in the TV series *Strachy* (Fears) and her performance of the song *Wszystko, czego dziś chcę* (Everything That I Want Today) at the National Festival of Polish Song in Opole, 1980. Written by reputable lyricist Andrzej Mogielnicki, the track *Nic za nic* foretold in 1981 the economic liberalization that happened a few years later. The song is a cynical description of the contemporary world where "everything has its price and knows its value," with even an "ordinary human gesture" costing money.[49] Trojanowska, styled like David Bowie, sings these words aggressively, walking with pride and satisfaction around the skyscraper hotel Marriott in the center of Warsaw, which at the time was the paragon of modernity, prestige, and wealth. The construction of the building started in 1977 but had to stop in the early 1980s due to recession; the hotel finally opened in 1989. Thus, while economic liberalization seemed to promise women that the commodification of human relations would open the gates of affluent modernity for them, the dream of the splendid

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46 Morley, *Home Territories*, 67.

47 Piotr "Pietia" Wierzbicki, "Alkoholism, seksizm, debilizm...," *QQRYQ* 10 (1987), 17.

48 Rozwadowski, *To zupełnie nieprawdopodobne*, 28–29.

49 "Wszystko cenę ma / i wartość swoją zna / Wszystko, w co grać spróbujesz! / Najzwyklejsza rzecz, Zwyczajny ludzki gest, / Nawet ten gest kosztuje!" "Nic za nic" by Andrzej Mogielnicki, Izabela Trojanowska, *Iza* (Poland: Tonpress, 1981).

modern world was subtly called into doubt in the video. Nonetheless, the idea of the emancipation of women and their presence in public space brought up panic among males. In the frantic music video of the 1985 song *Może właśnie Sybilla* (Maybe Exactly Sibyl) by the new wave Madame, the male hero is running through the streets, parks, and hills, chased by the dogs which turn out to be women. The lyrics, meanwhile, depicted the horrifying fight to find the good in the darkness where "messages lie, deserted cities, and shadows on the walls"—the ultimate vision of what could happen if social and spatial distinctions disappeared.[50]

Media and communication technologies were a subject of rivalry between punks and other tenants of blocks of flats. Popularization of TV sets, radios, tape recorders, and telephones in the 1970s and 1980s led to the hybridization of the division between the public and private spheres. The national public sphere entered the private sphere of the home through the centralized mass media. New electronic technologies made it possible to participate in public matters without getting up from the sofa; they domesticated public affairs by including them in the everyday life of the family. When everyone became a member of the imagined national family by watching the same program on TV and listening to the same music on the radio, there was little room for otherness and diversity. This symbolic unification was consistent with the nationalist politics of the Polish United Workers' Party, which in the field of popular music resulted in the erasure of the sounds of the Other or reducing their representation to folklore-like melodies and banal exoticism, as in the case of the so-called Gypsy music.[51] According to Morley, "what was at stake here was both the nationalisation of the domestic and the domestication of the national."[52] Punk songs articulated the national (and nationalist) homogenization and erased the division between the public and the private as well as the conflicts that are mentioned above. The punk figure of the outsider served as a wedge driven into the social order.

While leaving home and joining a group of mates served as a modern rite of passage necessary to create a normative male identity, the question was where an individual could go to. In the Polish People's Republic, it is important to

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50 "Komunikaty kłamią, bezludne miasta i cienie na murach." "Może właśnie Sybilla" by Madame, *Może właśnie Sybilla* (Poland: Tonpress, 1985).

51 For more on musical folklorism and the situation of ethnic minorities in the music entertainment, see Karolina Bittner, *Partia z piosenką, piosenka z partią: PZPR wobec muzyki rozrywkowej* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2017), 111–142. For more on the banal exoticism in Polish music, see Ewa Mazierska, "From South to East: Exoticism in Polish Popular Music of the State Socialist Period," *Popular Music History* 11, no. 1 (2016).

52 Morley, *Home Territories*, 107.

note that there was a representative public sphere constructed by the ruling Polish United Workers' Party, its government and official institutions. Urban spaces where monumental public art and buildings were erected and where political spectacles like official festivals, ceremonies, marches, and military parades took place, were an important part of the façade of the representative public sphere. The ideological function of these spaces was twofold: self-representation of the new order before the citizens and the forging of a new, socialist identity in society. However, according to David Crowley and Susan E. Reid,

> [t]o explore the political character of these spaces by reference to ideology alone would seem to be a fruitless task. [...] Much as authority sought to control the meanings and uses of the space, the spatial practices of citizens were not contained by the party-state machine. But they were still made in relation to its priorities and tactics. If we can use the term 'socialist spaces' at all, it is only in relation to the shifting and multi-layered interaction between spatial organization, expression and use.[53]

In the same way, Ewa Rewers describes the division that "was made into the façade public realm—also built in the strict sense by the governing forces—and public opinion, whose constructors might have had more faces that were nevertheless not disclosed."[54] In her essay about the Orange Alternative street movement, a phenomenon of Polish alternative culture of the 1980s, Rewers notes that

> [...] back the importance to what was happening on the streets with the participation of all the users—artistic provocateurs and passers-by, police forces and workers—the Orange Alternative transgressed all the borders defined by the official discourse between the spaces of visual ceremonies, work, and everyday practices. An exceedingly important feature of the street campaigns of the Orange Alternative was this spontaneous, short-lived restitution of the connections between them. [...] focusing on the plebeian right to live on the street, the Alternative was providing a reminder of the underlying need for authenticity, eliminated by the authorities from their social action.[55]

My argument is that the practices of punks in late socialist Poland had a similar goal and meaning as those depicted by Rewers in the case of the Orange Alter-

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53 David Crowley and Susan E. Reid, "Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc," in *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc*, eds. David Crowley and Susan E. Reid (Oxford/New York: Berg, 2002), 4.
54 Ewa Rewers, "The Authograph of the Dwarf," in *Happening against Communism by the Orange Alternative*, eds. Barbara Górska and Benjamin Koschalka (Kraków: Międzynarodowe Centrum Kultury, 2011), 164.
55 *Ibid.*

native, not only because many punks were adherents and participants in the Orange movement, but also as a result of the same experiences with public spaces.

From 1976 on, it is noteworthy that there were two competing public spheres in Poland: the first, the official representative public sphere of the Party, and the second, the unofficial liberal public sphere that emerged from the activities of democratic opposition groups, committees, the press, publishers, and casual circles of the intelligentsia. Despite the fact that many punks, especially musicians, activists, and editors of fanzines, had an intelligentsia background (other punks were often from the lower social strata), the punk movement was distant from and distrustful of the democratic opposition: they perceived it as a group of politicians who wanted to take power from the hands of the authorities. As Krzysztof Grabowski from *Dezerter* said:

> They were, after all, politicians who wanted to replace one system with the other. There was too little genuine freedom in it. Besides that, to be honest, the most well-known opposition was descendant of PZPR [Polish United Workers' Party] or at least had contact with it. Just in that times they changed their minds and intended to reform something, while in our opinion, it could not be reformed. However, we trusted that something good could come of it. Mostly, we liked pure destruction of that system. We most often referred to our milieu as the third way or the third circuit. It was not formalized because the whole movement could not be put in any frames.[56]

The terms "the third circuit" and "the third way" have slightly different meanings. The informal circulation of punk cassettes and fanzines was called the third circuit and it was positioned against the official public sphere made of the state institutions, as well as the second public sphere created by the oppositional groups and organizations of the intelligentsia. "The third way" was used by punks to talk broadly about their attitude, which was very different from both the Communist Party and its anticommunist, conservative opponents. If the conformist life of the humble citizen who conforms to social norms and ideological duties was the first way, and the fate of the dissident whose whole life was centered around opposing the Party was the second, the third way differed from both these paths as an anti-structure that contested two structural but opposi-

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56 "To w końcu byli politycy, którzy jeden system chcieli zastąpić innym. Za mało w tym było prawdziwej wolności. Poza tym – nie oszukujmy się – ta najbardziej znana opozycja wywodziła się z PZPR lub przynajmniej miała z nią kontakt. Dopiero w tamtym czasie zmienili zdanie i chcieli coś reformować, a naszym zdaniem tego się reformować nie dało. Niemniej ufaliśmy, że coś dobrego może z tego wyniknąć. Najbardziej podobała się nam sama destrukcja tamtego systemu. Nasze środowisko określaliśmy najczęściej jako trzecią drogę albo trzeci obieg. Nie było to jednak w żaden sposób sformalizowane, bo cały ten ruch nie dał się zamknąć w żadne ramy." Lesiakowski, Perzyna, Toborek, *Jarocin w obiektywie bezpieki*, 58 – 59.

tional blocs. However, as an emic category, "the third way" has never been conceptualized by the punks themselves.

"The third way" metaphorically led punks and other alternative youth, after they had left their homes, as far as possible from both the official, socialist, and representative public sphere and the second realm, maintained by the "Solidarity" movement and the Catholic church. They attempted to develop a new model of community: authentic, informal, deeply democratic, and non-hierarchical. To achieve this, punks searched for relatively autonomous spaces to distance themselves from any authority: from the Party's bureaucracy, teachers, and parents. Therefore, many punk concerts and parties took place in small local culture centers, students' clubs, and schools. A small club or culture center forgotten by the city council seemed to be a perfect place for local punk crews. For example, the first punk concerts in Warsaw were held at the local culture center in Anin district, far from the downtown. Instructors and animators from these institutions had enough leeway to invite young bands of their choice and offer them a place for cultural events. In most cases, it was much more about individual attitudes of the staff members than about cultural politics of the state. Moreover, although punks were condemned by the official press, the instructors working in culture centers had an interest in inviting them for concerts because it would allow these institutions to attract a larger audience for their cultural events. Due to the ideological significance given to the socialist formation of youth, the instructors were formally obliged to work with local adolescents and their engagement with "difficult" teenagers could also be presented as being more meaningful than the organization of activities with and for their "ordinary" peers.

Abandoned places such as garages, basements, attics, and construction sites were also popular points in the punks' topography. The devastating conditions and bleak atmosphere of these places fitted well within the catastrophic imaginary of the punk movement. The images of a bleak dehumanized and threatening city that were depicted in punk songs found expression in the real spaces of forsaken industrial plants, devastated basements, and murky underground passages. These type of places also had interesting acoustic and visual features; the experimental, alternative band *Kormorany* explored such places in Wrocław for their acoustic qualities and visual appeal as a backdrop for their performances. However, probably the favorite spot for punks' activities was the street. In her 2015 book *Transnational Punk Communities in Poland: From Nihilism to Nothing Outside Punk*, Marta Marciniak emphasizes the meaning of street life in the punks' experience of the city:

> One of the most potent symbols of punk are the steel-top boots, or the Doc Martens. Why? Because punk is walking. Walking a lot. Running. Running the streets. Running with a crew. Your crew. Standing on street corners. Walking cities at night.[57]

Punks gathered at the corners of streets, on public squares and in backyards. They spent a lot of time strolling through main streets, waiting for each other in traditional meeting spots, like underpasses or pavements in front of their favorite shops and clubs. The streets were used as a preferred location for the punks' spontaneous performances and as a stage for fights between punks and skinheads. According to Kasprzycki, from 1982 to 1984, punks and skinheads were colleagues and comrades and this situation continued in some cities (for example in Jastrzębie-Zdrój) even later, but in the middle of the decade the connection was broken and in Wrocław, Gdańsk, and other cities, street battles between punks and skinheads broke out. From 1987–1988, the violence reached a climax with skins' attacks of punk concerts and parties.[58] Marciniak addresses the problem of street violence, but she focuses mostly on local punk scenes in Warsaw and Upper Silesia. She mentions pubs, bars, cafes, clubs (e.g., *Bolek*, *Mazowsze*, *Ulubiona*, *Remont*, *Hybrydy*) and other hangout spots popular among punks in Warsaw of the 1980s, meetings on the main squares, and life-long relations that started in the common backyard.[59] The case of Upper Silesia is interesting because while blues and progressive rock reigned in Katowice, the capital of the region, the alternative scene of punk, new wave, ska, and reggae was in the smaller Gliwice, a city with a strong intellectual inclination compared to the rest of the industrial, mining region. The peripheral status of Gliwice corresponds with the liminal status of punks who were represented by the mass media as a nihilist, self-destructive group in the social margins. But it was not only the geographical location and social background of Gliwice (a relatively high percentage of intelligentsia among citizens) that was important; the city's landscape was also salient:

> One example of how local architecture shaped the development of punk is the arches beneath the town hall in Gliwice's rynek (central square of the oldest part of the city). That used to be where punks hung out in the 1980s and all through the mid-1990s.[60]

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57 Marta Marciniak, *Transnational Punk Communities in Poland: From Nihilism to Nothing Outside Punk* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015), vii.

58 Kasprzycki, *Dekada buntu*, 367–369.

59 Marciniak, *Transnational Punk Communities in Poland*, 13.

60 *Ibid.*, 48.

In Katowice, there was no such obvious place in the city centre for meetings. Escaping from the monumental, socialist urban areas of great industrial cities, punks found shelter for themselves in older architecture which did not overwhelm them. Similarly, in Warsaw, punks preferred to hang out in the Old Town rather than in post-war socialist areas (despite the fact that the Old Town was completely rebuilt after the war as well). Punks loathed the Stalinist Palace of Science and Culture built in the years 1952–1955, a new architectural landmark in Warsaw's landscape at the heart of the city centre, because they saw it as an ideologically deceptive sign of brutal power and dreamed about blowing it up, as in the song *Pałac* (The Palace) by *Dezerter* from the 1990 album *Wszyscy przeciwko wszystkim* (Everybody Against Everyone).[61]

Jakub Michalak also illustrates the importance of the streets and squares for the punk community in his 2008 book *Nie będę wisiał ukrzyżowany* (I Won't be Crucified) that examines punk history in Wrocław. While the punk milieu in Warsaw was created and sustained mostly by adolescents from the intelligentsia, Michalak focuses his research on punk bands and crews from the lower social strata. He describes how punks from the working-class Krzyki district grew up in the backyards and streets, wandering and hanging out. Streets, schools, and local pubs were places where they met, collectively listened to music, formed their first bands, and got drunk after school or work.[62] Thus, despite cultural, social, and economic differences between the cities of Warsaw and Wrocław, the type of punk spatial practices remained the same. The social factors associated with the origin and education of young punks were less important than the patterns of behavior in their liminal local communities. The social network of fanzines and cassettes distribution, local alternative scenes in Warsaw, Gliwice, Łódź, Tricity (Gdańsk, Gdynia, and Sopot), Wrocław, and even medium-sized Słupsk, informal street communication via graffiti and posters, anarchist festivals and rallies organized unofficially in the countryside—all these spaces served to bring into life the dream of an alternative society shared by the punk underground community.

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61 "Pałac" by Krzysztof Grabowski, Dezerter, *Wszyscy przeciwko wszystkim* (Poland: Arston, 1990).

62 Michalak, *Nie będę wisiał ukrzyżowany.*

Conclusion

The practical critique of the spatial and structural partition into "public" and "private" that the punk community expressed in late socialist Poland seems to be close to the theoretical critique of the liberal conception of the public sphere articulated by Fraser and Morley. Nonetheless, the manner in which punks self-organized and imagined their movement does not fit the idea of an alternative public sphere, or what Fraser referred to as the counterpublic. Punks and other participants of the alternative culture had a widespread communicative network formed by practices that I describe above. They had their own styles, genres, and rhetoric. But the anti-structural character of this community made the construction of a stable counterpublic impossible. This chapter contends that punks were critical of the division between the "private" and the "public" and notoriously transgressed the border separating the two symbolically (in their songs) and practically (in their everyday performances). However, anomic, scattered, and liminal communities of punks did not offer a stable enough foundation for a durable counterpublic.

The punk movement did not represent other marginalized social groups such as workers, women, or ethnic minorities. Since the movement was open to everybody, the top positions within it were mostly occupied by people who came from privileged social backgrounds. The anti-structural mode of self-organizing *concealed* structural differences rather than *reduced* them in accordance with punk ideals of non-hierarchical relations. Moreover, the ideological direction of punks was vague; although most of them had anarchist, pacifist, and environmentalist inclinations, it is hard to say what they stood for exactly in the political sense. For sure, punks contested norms and values of the dominant culture (the ideological state apparatus) as well as the repressive state apparatuses. As one of my interviewees said, "Not every anarchist had to be punk, but every punk had to be anarchist."[63] However, without a solid social foundation in a particular social group and a clear and grounded ideological direction, the potential to construct a punk counterpublic had little chance of being created: the hidden differences and disjunctions were too strong. Some anarchists in the 1980s punctuated the intellectual chaos of the punk milieu; others sought contacts with punks, hoping that the commonality of nonconformist attitudes would make it easy to include punks into the anarchist movement. That was the aim of the so-called "Hyde Parks," secret anarchist festivals organized in the Polish coun-

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63 "Nie każdy anarchista musiał być punkiem, ale każdy punk musiał być anarchistą." Interview with T.O., Poland, January 2014.

tryside in 1985–1988 by the Alternative Society Movement (*Ruch Społeczeństwa Alternatywnego*) and later, by the Freedom and Peace movement (*Wolność i Pokój*). However, anarchist activists came back from these events disillusioned: punks were interested only in music, thievery, fights, and consumption. Even ideologically aware units such as *Dezerter* or *QQRYQ* distanced themselves from claiming the "anarchist" label and abstained from open political engagement. Many punk and new wave bands were associated with local culture centres, students' clubs, and festivals where they had rehearsals and concerts, so they were not interested in openly displaying a disapproval of the system. Kasprzycki had no doubts: "Recruiting punks to Alternative Society Movement, Freedom and Peace, or Anarchist Intercity turned out to be an illusion. After the Hyde Parks' experiences, it was clear that punk milieu would be never able to become the political background of these organizations."[64] Hence, despite the nonconformist attitude that punks in socialist Poland lived by, their position seemed to be closer to the "deterritorialized public" of *svoi* in Soviet Russia described by Alexei Yurchak than to the ideal counterpublic projected by Fraser. Yurchak emphasized that "unlike a counterpublic, the public of *svoi* was self-organized not through an oppositional counter discourse of one's 'interests and needs' but through the performative shift of authoritative discourse."[65] Though the political turmoil in Poland in 1980–1981 disrupted the ritualized reproduction of the visual and linguistic forms of authoritative discourse (for this reason I differ from Yurchak's narrative about the late socialist Soviet Union, and describe two competing public spheres in Poland in the 1980s), the punk and new wave listeners never became a public explicitly oppositional toward the state. Their position was "beside," as the title *Obok, albo ile procent Babilonu?* of the book by Mirosław Makowski and Michał Szymański suggests; they walked the "third way" separate from the ruling Party and its adversaries.

The blocks of flats built in the 1960s and 1970s in Poland were for the many citizens a strange space that engendered many problems and had to be domesticated. Young punks, often the first generation who grew up in these new buildings, focused on the disadvantages of these spaces as they were witnesses to social conflicts that broke out among the residents: from the quarrels within the nuclear family to the social control exerted by neighbors. They also witnessed the nationalization of the domestic and the domestication of the national due

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64 "Wciągnięcie punków w działalność RSA, WiP, czy MA okazało się iluzją. Po doświadczeniach Hyde Parków było jasne, że środowisko punkowe nigdy nie stanie się zapleczem politycznym tych organizacji." Kasprzycki, *Dekada buntu*, 401.

65 Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, NJ/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 117.

to the new electronic technologies and the social anomie, and the collapse of the common axiological horizon. The stifling atmosphere in the blocks of flats and similar "private" spaces pushed punks into the urban public areas where they encountered similar threats from other people and the grim atmosphere of the imposing but shabby socialist architecture decorated with the empty official slogans. Thus, searching for an alternative was the main effort made by punks in their own local scenes and communities, in the larger scale of the country and even within the transnational fanzines and cassettes circuit. However, the shrill criticism that one could find in punk songs, zines, and memoirs, while often very accurate, did not solidify into an alternative discursive arena in the sense of Nancy Fraser's normative theory of subaltern counterpublics. When political pacifist or anarchist movements endeavored to engage punks in activism, these attempts usually failed. On the other hand, youth activity and criticism of the disadvantages of the system were promoted by the system itself, though the way punks answered the call was far from what could be characterized as demands. Punk and alternative culture created a critical illustration of the everyday problems with the "public" and "private" spheres in late socialist Poland that in itself became part of tensions of the socialist formation.

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The Elusive Narrated Self: **Literary and Cinematic Explorations**

Irina Souch
Without Witness

Privacy and Normal Life in Late Soviet Cinema

As the story in Nikita Mikhalkov's film *Bez svidetelei* (Without Witness, 1983) approaches its dramatic climax, the protagonist, a middle-aged, mediocre scientist who abandoned his first wife and remarried to advance his career comes to the disconcerting realization that his understanding of the normal way of living might not be uncontested. He speculates:

> Can it be true that somewhere close there is a different life, where people live according to different rules? So trustingly and so simply! This is against the rules; this is not like normal humans live! But I am one of these others, of whom there are many, oh so many![1]

This character's perplexity provokes a question about the possible co-existence of various conceptions of normal life in late Soviet society. As a way of finding an answer to this question, in this article, I examine *Without Witness*[2] along with two other contemporary films—Gleb Panfilov's *Tema* (The Theme, 1979) and Tatiana Lioznova's *My, nizhepodpisavshiesia* (We, the Undersigned, 1981). I also revisit Alexei Yurchak's notion of normal life as elaborated in his seminal study *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (2006).[3]

My intention to consider these films as valuable representations of a specific cultural condition and as analytical touchstones for Yurchak's theory of normal life and hypernormalization is not driven solely by the formal limitations of a short article that precludes a more extensive approach. The perceived incompatibility of public and private spheres diagnosed by Yurchak in his oft-cited study is well illustrated by late Soviet cinema. At the same time, the existing cinematic corpus demonstrates a great diversity of texts in terms of the filmmakers' aesthetic and narrative choices, which in turn determine the scale and complexity of this subject's treatment. Despite their obvious stylistic differences, the selected films converge in their accounts of an intricate intersection of officially imposed

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1 "Неужели, где-то близко есть другая жизнь, где живут по другим правилам? Так доверчиво и так просто! Это не по правилам, это не по-человечески! [...] Но я один из других, каких много, ох много!" [Translations here and throughout the article are mine if not indicated differently.] *Without Witness,* dir. Nikita Mikhalkov (Mosfil'm, 1983).
2 The film's title is sometimes translated as "Private Conversation."
3 Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, NJ/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006).

and privately avowed normative systems in individual characters' psyches and as such complicate Yurchak's notion of unofficial practices of resignification and re-appropriation of socialist values.

Private life under state socialism is often theorized either as a system-stabilizing domain or as a potential locus of opposition where official ideologies could be consciously contested.[4] However, Yurchak takes issue with both approaches to argue that, from the 1970s onward, the Soviet ideological apparatus which had produced and disseminated Communist values and orientations for many years was increasingly losing its coercive power. The extent of this change allows the author to interrogate the very notion of ideology as he finds it inadequate for the sociohistorical conditions of the time. Borrowing from Mikhail Bakhtin's terminology, Yurchak replaces "ideology" with "authoritative discourse," which he understands as "a kind of discourse that employs a special script to demarcate itself from all other discourses with which it coexists; it cannot be changed by them but they must refer to it as a condition of their existence."[5] Yurchak explains that whereas under Stalin's regime, the Soviet leader was perceived as the only living carrier of the objective truth, after the denunciation of the cult of personality following Stalin's death, the bearers of "the authoritative word" could no longer rely on their status as the sole originators and agents of objective laws of societal development.[6] To compensate for this loss, they engaged in a continuous process of collective replication, verification, and reinterpretation of the available discourses of knowledge and normativity. As a result, "it became less important to read ideological representations for 'literal' (referential) meanings than to reproduce their precise structural forms."[7]

This difference between *what* was represented and *how* it was represented is central to Yurchak's notion of hypernormalization. He draws on John Austin's speech act theory to contend that under late socialism, public avowing of official authoritative discourses had a performative rather than constative (i.e., referential) quality. Only a small group of Party activists and dissidents still ascribed a constative value to official ideology. The majority of Soviet citizens accepted it only on the surface, while simultaneously developing, in private, and in the company of those considered "ours" (*svoi*), what Yurchak calls "parallel meanings"

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4 See, for instance, Vladimir Shlapentokh, *Public and Private Life of the Soviet People: Changing Values in Post-Soviet Russia* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); John Young, *Totalitarian Language: Orwell's Newspeak and Its Nazi and Communist Antecedents* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1991).

5 Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, 284.

6 *Ibid.*, 13.

7 *Ibid.*, 14.

and "parallel events" to minimize the ideology's oppressive effects and to ensure a "normal" life. Thus, despite the performative shift, "normal" everyday life in late Soviet society paradoxically continued to align against the socialist values that were deeply inculcated in the collective psyche, believed to be unshakable and expected to retain their stability even in the absence of the authoritative language's constative foundations. The existence of parallel practices further testifies that publicly performed authoritative and ethically invested private discourses were perceived as not being in opposition to each other but as mutually constitutive.[8]

Yurchak's claims are conversant with theories advanced by other contemporary scholars of late Soviet culture. Serguei A. Oushakine, for one, proposes a notion of mimetic resistance, placing the dominant and the subordinate within the same discursive field and thus contesting the binary of official and unofficial or dissident discourses. He argues:

> Contrary to the tradition of locating resistance outside of the field of power—be these "hidden" areas in the underground, background, or foreground of the dominant [...] the oppositional discourse of the dissident movement in the Soviet Union manifested itself as very much a "surface" phenomenon. The oppositional discourse in a sense shared the symbolic field with the dominant discourse: it echoed and amplified the rhetoric of the regime, rather than positioning itself outside of or underneath it.[9]

Similar to the production of parallel meanings, mimetic resistance occurs in situations when "the dominant and dominated draw on the same vocabulary of symbolic means and rhetorical devices."[10] Klavdia Smola and Mark Lipovetsky, in turn, challenge the previously assumed dichotomies between the official and non-official sociocultural spheres in the Soviet Union advocating the thorough investigation of "the zones of transition and exchange between them."[11] Another example is Tatiana Kruglova's engagement with the notion of conformism to describe the tactics of social adaptation of Soviet creative intellectuals as a continuous process of re-alignment with the official socialist realist doctrine. Kruglova emphasizes that despite the differences in terms of adroitness and willingness to conform, all Soviet authors made conscious efforts to perform their normative

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8 *Ibid.*, 282–296.

9 Sergei A. Oushakine, "The Terrifying Mimicry of Samizdat," *Public Culture* 13, no. 2 (2001), 192.

10 *Ibid.*, 207.

11 Klavdia Smola and Mark Lipovetsky, "Introduction: The Culture of (Non)Conformity in Russia from the Late Soviet Era to the Present," *Russian Literature*, no. 96–98 (2018), 2.

identities to achieve public acknowledgment of their work.[12] Finally, in their recent article on the changing perceptions of the private and public spheres in late Soviet cinema, Vadim Mikhailin and Galina Beliaeva come up with a notion of "divorced realities" (*razvod real'nostei*) to argue that the ability to routinely alternate one's behavior depending on the situation was a well-established and frequently applied rule of social conduct of the time.[13] It is clear that in the above theorists' views, late-Soviet cultural practice emerges as a non-monolithic, multivocal reproduction of authoritative discourses, which goes beyond the dichotomy of their pure acceptance or rejection.[14] Yurchak's theory is distinct because it emphasizes the "normal" life that this alternation of discourses made possible for many Soviet subjects. In what follows, I investigate the manner in which the selected films deal with such discursive fluidity and the visions of normal life that they subsequently represent.

Public Serviceability and Private Personality: *The Theme* and *Without Witness*

The split between ritualistic and constative dimensions of the authoritative discourse in many late Soviet films is often expressed through radio broadcasts and the "cheerful moronity of television"[15] embedded in the diegetic space to create

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12 Tatiana Kruglova, "Soblazny sotsrealizma, popytki 'zavisti', upoenie prichastnost'iu: o sovetskom khudozhestvennom konformizme," *Neprikosnovennyi zapas* 96, no. 4 (2014), accessed September 30, 2018, http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2014/96/14k-pr.html.

13 Vadim Mikhailin and Galina Beliaeva, "Romeo, syn Dzhul'etty: transformatsia predstavlenii o publichnom i privatnom v fil'me 'Vam i ne snilos','" *Neprikosnovennyi zapas* 113, no. 3 (2017), 209.

14 At first glance, these views are conversant with Shlapentokh's analysis of private and public life in the USSR. However, the most important distinction here is that Shlapentokh's notion of privatization (i. e., the increasing attachment of Soviet individuals to family and friends, preference for private forms of entertainment, engagement in private economic activity, and modest involvement in political counterculture) is based on the dichotomy between official values propagated by Soviet ideologists and the values people chose to avow in private. Thus, for instance, he argues that most Soviet citizens did not work mainly for moral rather than material reasons; they were not invested in the idea of the collective; and performed *obshchestvennaia rabota* (public, or community work) more to advance their careers than out of devotion to the socialist cause. Shlapentokh, *Public and Private Life of the Soviet People.*

15 Vadim Mikhailin, and Galina Beliaeva,"Esli ne budete kak deti: dekonstruktsiia 'istoricheskogo' diskursa v fil'me Alekseia Koreneva 'Bol'shaia peremena,'" *Neprikosnovennyi zapas* 90, no. 4 (2013), accessed September 30, 2018, http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2013/4/17m-pr.html.

what Roland Barthes calls "the reality effect."[16] However, when it comes to the representation of private practices through which dominant discourses are re-signified, there seems to be a lack of cinematic evidence. This may be partly explained by the Soviet film industry's restrictive policies toward the elaboration of themes considered potentially subversive or, following the logic of Kruglova's theory, by the filmmakers' perception that they needed to conform to official norms to safeguard their creative products. Another reason, to which my cases attest, might lie in the fact that the transition from performance to resignification was far from straightforward exactly because in the Soviet subjects' minds, the authoritative and the internally persuasive discourses (to use Bakhtin's terminology)[17] were not clearly separated but coexisted in a confusing way. Moreover, the constant alternation between ritualistic behavior and sincere social interaction could be detrimental to one's personal integrity and ruinous for intimate relationships.

The selected films do not depict private pastimes as conducive to meaningful parallel events. *The Theme*, for instance, sets out to demonstrate the strenuous nature of private disavowal of authoritative constructs. Produced in 1979, the film was released only after the start of perestroika in 1986. When the scriptwriter Aleksandr Chervinskii reflected on the public reception of *The Theme* in an interview, he noted that despite the long delay, the film's subject matter succeeded in retaining its contemporaneity:

> The film is about the most important thing: do we live seriously; do we take ourselves seriously? [...] These are complex times [...] when people show their true colors. To speak to each other today, we use words which, in the past, we only said to ourselves. And when all people—no matter how honest or deceitful by nature—continuously and declaratively talk about truth, this does not inspire respect, nor trust. It is even fraught with danger:

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16 Roland Barthes, "The Reality Effect," in *The Rustle of Language* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986).

17 Bakhtin distinguishes between authoritative and internally persuasive discourse. The first is defined as the indivisible, unchangeable "word of the fathers," which is "indissolubly fused with its authority—with political power, an institution, a person—and [...] stands and falls together with that authority." Mikhail Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1990), 343. Since it cannot be negotiated with, it is either completely endorsed or rejected in its totality. Internally persuasive discourse, on the contrary, is "affirmed through assimilation [and] tightly interwoven with 'one's own word.'" Bakhtin, "Discourse," 345. It penetrates one's consciousness to enter a dialogue with other acknowledged and assimilated discourses, allowing a re-signifying process to take place.

words lose their value [...] In this way, idols [of a bygone era] can be substituted for others. [...] [This film shows] truth about ourselves.[18]

The quote illuminates the generally felt confusion vis-a-vis authoritative discourses and articulates moral dilemmas caused by the situation when long-lasting private reassessment of official ideology suddenly gave way to a continuous process of its public denunciation.

The Theme features a celebrated playwright Kim Esenin (Mikhail Ul'ianov) arriving in an old Russian town Suzdal' with his friend Igor' (Evgenii Vesnik) and a young female companion Svetlana (Natal'ia Selezneva). Esenin is shown going through an existential and creative crisis and hoping to invigorate himself through restful contact with nature, fresh provincial air, and Russian Orthodox spirituality. Throughout the narrative, the protagonist's internal monologue makes the viewer privy to his thoughts and inner doubts.

Why am I going there? What is the point of changing the place to stay if I myself will never change? My God, I am so tired, and so fed up with everything! And I am not even fifty-five [...] I am a renowned dramatist, loved by the public and the bosses [...] But I am not happy [...] Life has passed for nothing.[19]

Esenin is tortured by the realization that he has betrayed true art and sold his talent out: "Why do I live? Why do I write my plays? And most importantly, why are they being put on stage?"[20]

It is important to note that by connecting the idea of happiness and a meaningful life with the collectivist notion of public serviceability, Esenin abides by

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18 "Фильм снят о самом главном: всерьез ли мы живем, всерьез ли относимся к самим себе? Наступило сложное время. Такое, когда по-разному проявляются люди. Словами, которые мы раньше говорили только самим себе, теперь мы обращаемся друг к другу. А когда все люди – и правдивые по природе своей, и лживые – беспрерывно и демонстративно говорят о правде, это не вызывает ни уважения, ни доверия. Это даже чревато опасностью: слова теряют ценность [...] Так одни кумиры могут смениться другими [...] Это правда о нас самих." Gleb Panfilov and Aleksandr Chervinskii, "Tema," *Iskusstvo kino* 12 (1986), accessed September 30, 2018, http://kinocenter.rsuh.ru/print.html?id=814639.
19 "Опять я еду куда-то, а зачем? Зачем менять место своего пребывания, если я сам не изменюсь уже никогда? [...] Господи, как я устал, как надоело все. А ведь мне еще нет и пятидесяти пяти. Известный драматург, обласкан зрителями и начальством [...] А счастья нет [...] Жизнь прошла зря." *The Theme,* dir. Gleb Panfilov (Mosfil'm, 1979).
20 "Зачем я живу? Зачем я пишу эти пьесы? И главное, зачем их ставят?" *The Theme,* dir. Panfilov.

the values produced and upheld by the authoritative discourse.[21] Although designed for rest and relaxation, Esenin does not see the Suzdal' trip as a holiday but considers it instrumental for productive inspiration. Even during moments of private contemplations, he is incapable of detaching himself from public commitments and is constantly calibrating his motivations against the Soviet rationalist logic of social organization according to which every individual continuously invests in the collective utopian striving for a Communist future. Doubts against the validity of this officially sanctioned and privately internalized idea trigger his identity crisis. Yet, deep within himself, Esenin also feels strongly attached to his celebrity status and the privileges that it brings. Informed by these alternating thoughts the writer's internal monologue: "My land—simple, pure, native ...",[22] which viewers hear at the beginning of the film as he looks out over vast plains covered with virginal snow, sounds overdramatized if not ironic. Esenin's anxieties are in contrast with his close friend's overt opportunism. The successful author of police procedural drama, Igor' admits that he produces his plays to suit the system. "Somebody needs to fabricate these masterpieces," he cynically asserts. A shared career history and long years of comradeship appear to be not enough as a basis for a like-minded take on the authoritative word nor do they engender "normal," sincere communication. The two writers' views on official normativity and socialist realist aesthetics perfectly exemplify Kruglova's notion of artistic conformism which, despite its many manifestations and degrees of intensity, always implied the conscious construction of a non-controversial artistic identity in which compliance with ideological constraints could be reconciled with the pursuit of authentic creativity.[23]

The conflicting relationship between the constative and the performative engagement with authoritative discourses in *The Theme* is vividly illustrated in the scene depicting a dinner at Igor's aunt's house, a retired literature teacher Mariia Aleksandrovna (Evgeniia Nechaeva). The party includes one more guest, a young woman named Sasha (Inna Churikova) who is a former pupil of the hostess. The informal conversation promptly turns to the subject of Esenin's oeuvre.[24] At this

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21 In his study, Yurchak also identifies the notion of public service as one of important conditions of normal life. Reflecting on their lives as Komsomol and Communist Party activists, Yurchak's respondents often claim that "being alienated from boring activities, senseless rhetoric, and corrupt bureaucracy was not necessarily in contradiction with being involved in activities designed to achieve communist goals." Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, 95.

22 "Край мой скромный, чистый, родной..." *The Theme,* dir. Panfilov.

23 Kruglova, "Soblazny sotsrealizma."

24 The topic of this private conversation again confirms individual (intellectual) labor's contribution to the social as a value central to one's fulfilment of private life.

juncture, even though all the diners represent well-educated and well-read So-
viet intelligentsia and therefore belong to the circle of insiders, or "ours," to
use Yurchak's categorization,[25] viewers witness a rather discordant exchange
of thoughts on the historical and social role of the author and his work. Consid-
ering the so-called literature-centrism of Russian culture, this is never a casual
topic. It transpires that for the old teacher, the Soviet ideological clichés have
never surpassed the constative level. Although her statement that "your plays
help us live, and labor [...]. You should know how today we need insightful, crit-
ical plays about the beauty of our Soviet reality..."[26] might sound formulaic, she
obviously believes in what she is saying. Fully internalized, the official discourse
has become persuasive for her. Surprisingly, Esenin's companion Svetlana too
passionately asserts the plays' high cultural currency and promotion of socialist
ethics. Unlike Esenin who silently acknowledges the compliments, the skeptical
Igor' proves to be more sensitive to the awkwardness of the situation, trying to
downplay it by mocking his friend's vanity. The dialogue reaches its dramatic cli-
max when Sasha finally speaks her mind and to Esenin's visible dismay, cri-
tiques his artistic merits.

I use this scene to argue that the seclusion of the private home, similar social
positions of the characters and shared cultural affinities do not necessarily en-
sure a unanimous attitude toward the official discourse. The dinner dialogue tes-
tifies to the absence of clear structural boundaries between the sphere of the re-
enactment of specific discursive units and the sphere of their conscious resignifi-
cation. Moreover, most characters are shown experiencing the authoritative dis-
course as a given and employing it as the only available repertoire of the attri-
bution of meaning and symbolization of social space. This again challenges
Yurchak's assertion of Soviet subjects' capacity to position themselves beyond
(*vnye*) the public realm of official normativity. Whereas the scholar sees this as
"a condition of being simultaneously inside and outside of some context—
such as, being within a context while remaining oblivious of it, imagining your-
self elsewhere, or being inside your own mind,"[27] viewers can observe that even
Esenin inwardly seeks to align with the established societal dogmas of official
discourse. As a result, the film calls in question the notion of "normal life," con-

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25 Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, 108–114.

26 "Ваши пьесы помогают нам жить, трудиться [...]. Если бы вы только знали, как нам
сейчас нужны острые, проблемные пьесы о том, как прекрасна наша советская
действительность." *The Theme,* dir. Panfilov.

27 Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, 128.

ceived as living in the system "enabled by the Soviet state itself, without being determined by or even visible to it."[28]

Instead, Esenin's relationship with Sasha exemplifies the corruptive power of the authoritative conception of fulfilling private existence as dependent on the (semi-)public recognition of one's professional and societal worth. The writer's initial purely romantic interest soon becomes tainted with intellectual envy. The desperation to overcome his creative impasse even prompts him to contemplate turning Sasha's research on a forgotten provincial poet into the theme of his new play. As the narrative progresses, his ostensibly sincere sharing of artistic insecurities with the young woman is exposed as a mere enactment of a "normal" human interaction outside the public realm. In these moments, it is not the authoritative discourse but the unofficial language of a meaningful private communication that the protagonist reproduces to evince authenticity and open-heartedness in order to gain Sasha's confidence. He even secretly sneaks into Sasha's apartment to get close to her private world and while doing this, accidentally eavesdrops on her dramatic parting with her lover.

To emphasize the imbrication of the characters' private desires and their public aspirations even more, the farewell scene shows how Sasha's own hopes for happiness shatter because of her lover's decision to emigrate to Israel (or alternatively, United States), provoked by his supervisor's attempt to plagiarize his research. Again, by indicating that a fulfilling private existence is dependent on the recognition of one's professional, i.e., public worth, *The Theme* demonstrates the detrimental impact of socialist dogma on the sphere of intimate relationships predicated on the feelings of mutual care, safety, and trust.

Esenin's opportunistic intrusion into Sasha's private space reverberates with the subject of Nikita Mikhalkov's 1983 film *Without Witness*. While Esenin is depicted as being slightly apprehensive and ashamed of his actions, the ex-husband[29] in this story (notably also played by Mikhail Ul'ianov) has no scruples about his unannounced visit to his ex-wife's apartment. He even uses his own key to unlock the door. Analogous to *The Theme*, *Without Witness* critically interrogates the socialist norm of public serviceability as a precondition for a thriving personal life by showing how this collectivist creed can be exercised to the point of perversion. In one of his confessions to the camera,[30] the ex-husband explains

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28 *Ibid.*

29 The characters in *Without Witness* do not have proper names. In the credits, they are referred to as "she" and "he."

30 Here, I also see an interesting parallel with *The Theme* with regard to viewers' access to private ruminations of the characters. While Panfilov takes recourse in the voice-over technique to

his private betrayal through the felt necessity to break free from the woman who, according to him, impeded his intellectual growth and failed to acknowledge the honesty of his actions, which were genuinely motivated by his "longing for real work."

Along with exposing the degenerating effects that the insidious Communist normativity can have on one's personal integrity, the film reveals how private practices of sincerity could be manipulated. It is not the nostalgic impulse to have a heart-to-heart conversation with a person he once loved that motivates the character's unexpected appearance. He is driven by a wish to find out whether his ex-wife is planning to disclose that, long ago, he secretly incriminated his friend and colleague to whom she is now engaged. This end seems to justify all possible means, since from a quiet talk at a candlelit table he proceeds to resort to physical violence and emotional blackmail. The destructive desire to safeguard what he believes to be normal existence endangers the very physicality of the private home where familiar household objects and photographs function as the memory keepers of the once happy family. The private sphere's failure to produce the conditions for sincerity is further metaphorized by sudden gusts of wind through draughty windows, echoes of a nearby railway depot, and rattling sounds of passing trains that make the apartment walls tremble violently.

The similarity between *The Theme* and *Without Witness*, which, at first glance, might escape notice because of these films' varying narrative dynamics and tone, is remarkable if one considers their almost identical endings. The unexpected, sudden realization that the key to normal (and fulfilling) life lies in the simple intimacy of personal relationships far removed from corrupting interference by official discourses, which other people seem to enjoy, affects both protagonists not only psychologically but also physically. While *The Theme* shows Esenin ride his car in the wreck and injure himself in a surge of emotions, the ex-husband in *Without Witness* suffers acute heart failure. Allowing the characters to survive, these films have open endings, leaving it to the viewers to decide the type of "normal" life that they possibly pursue in the future. Therefore in the end, the private sphere triumphs not only as a catalyst for ethical redemption, but also as a place where the abusive power of the engrained official normativity can be effectively contested. It is beyond the scope of this article to ponder the credibility of such melodramatic resolutions. Suffice to say that these resolutions obviously come short of mitigating the disruptive pervasiveness of the Communist ideology that both stories disclose.

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reveal his protagonist's thoughts, Mikhalkov makes the ex-husband speak directly to the camera in a confessional manner which later became a hallmark of reality TV.

Confusion of Public and Private Discourses: *We, the Undersigned*

The deep entrenchment of the authoritative discourse in the Soviet subjects' minds also defines the narrative line of the last film in the selection. Replacing the safe seclusion and redemptive energy of private homes with the imposed coziness of a moving train carriage, *We, the Undersigned* ventures to demonstrate how (semi-)public re-negotiation of socialist values leads to the disintegration of professional and personal loyalties and sets of beliefs.

Based on the theatre play by Alexander Gel'man, *We, the Undersigned* was directed by Tatiana Lioznova and released in 1981. The film's narrative events take place over a span of four hours in a carriage of a passenger train that is traveling along the long-distance line between Vladivostok and Moscow. One of the compartments has three members of the regional authorities' committee: Iurii Deviatov (Iurii Iakovlev), Violetta Nuikina (Klara Luchko) and Gennadii Semenov (Oleg Iankovskii). They are returning home after an inspection of a newly built bread baking factory in the small town of Kumanevo. Having identified a number of defects in the construction, the committee refused to sign the approval certificate for the completed works. The adjacent train compartment is occupied by three employees of the Kumanevo construction department: vice-director Malisov (Aristarkh Livanov), head dispatcher Shindin (Leonid Kuravlev) and Shindin's wife Alla (Irina Murav'eva). They have the task of ensuring that the committee signs the certificate before they disembark. The story starts in a vaudevillian spirit when Shindin deliberately provokes an altercation with the carriage attendant to win the unsuspecting committee members' sympathy, then casually introduces Alla as his co-worker, and invites everybody to her spontaneous birthday party. When his scheme is exposed and its true purpose is unveiled, Shindin claims that the certification of the factory was sabotaged to discredit the construction department's director, Egorov, whose uncompromising attitudes and visionary ideas are a source of permanent discontent for his predecessor and current superior, Grizheliuk. The remaining part of the film consists of a series of dialogues between the protagonist Lenia Shindin, the committee members, his wife, and his colleague.

Despite stylistic differences, *We, the Undersigned* is related to *The Theme* and *Without Witness* in the manner it problematizes the mutual dependence of authoritative and internally persuasive discourses and lays bare the disturbing intermingling of private and public domains in the characters' lives. However, in the first two films, the boundaries between the "large and small social con-

texts"[31] are blurred but remain discernible, while in the latter film, they no longer exist. The physical space that accommodates the main events makes their absence explicit. Throughout the narrative, the characters navigate between the two train compartments representing what is assumed to be opposite social realities and discursive regimes. One compartment provides a setting for the fake birthday party, the artificial domesticity of which is enhanced by various drinks and home-made foods that Alla miraculously produces from her travel bag. Yet, viewers are aware that this private occasion (as birthdays are usually enjoyed amongst family and close friends) is celebrated in a company of strangers perched uncomfortably close to one another on the narrow bunk beds covered with standard Soviet blankets. The incongruity between the ostensibly casual private gathering and its envisioned effect is further emphasized when Shindin (who has been unmasked) later eagerly asserts that he was acting not exclusively of his own accord and for his own advantage but in pursuit of collective benefits.

The adjacent compartment occupied by committee members in turn is the place where the re-negotiation of the public predicament paradoxically involves the laborious unraveling of the knot of private aspirations, desires and antagonisms. To complicate the nexus between the public and private social contexts, the characters' face-to-face confidences are constantly interrupted by fellow travelers, forcing them to leave the secluded compartments for the narrow corridor, or even the dangerously open carriage platform, where again their revelations can easily be overheard by passers-by. Although the characters do not seem to be inconvenienced by their itinerant situation, the latter is paradigmatic of their shifting positions vis-à-vis the essentially public conflict. These positions appear to be informed by individual concerns and ultimately, by what is perceived as the normal state of social hierarchies and priorities.

Analogously to *The Theme* and *Without Witness*, the dialogues in the film demonstrate varied individual degrees of internalization of official ideology. Alla and Malisov represent ordinary people whose professional loyalties depend on their bosses' willingness to recognize and intervene timely in their private needs and troubles. The committee chairman, former military lawyer Deviatov excels in his impartiality and dedication to the fair administration of authority. He is clearly invested in the constative dimensions of the authoritative discourse which he reads as "normal," i.e., as the true description of reality. At first glance, Deviatov's female colleague Violetta is on the same page with him. Following the unmasking of the fake birthday party, she passionately recites Soviet ideological clichés to reprimand Shindin for his unethical behavior: "Where did you grow

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31 Mikhailin and Beliaeva, "Romeo, syn Dzhul'etty," 208.

up, what school did you go to? [...] There exist norms of conduct [and] human interaction! If you treat [people] humanly, they will respond humanly!"[32] Only later is it revealed that she and the third member of the committee Semenov followed Grizheliuk's secret instructions to sabotage the signing of the documents and ignore the actual degree to which the project had been completed.

Within the group of committee members, Gennadii Semenov occupies a special position because he disconcertingly mirrors Lenia Shindin's stance toward authoritative language. But whereas Shindin sincerely believes in the greater Communist good in his zeal to restore his boss's reputation, Semenov appears to be a true epitome of the *svoi* (ours) or *normal'nyi chelovek* (normal person) as defined by Yurchak. The scholar explains that the term *svoi* can mean "us," "ours," or "those who belong to our circle" and does not have an exact equivalent in English: "*Svoi* was a kind of sociality that differed from those represented in authoritative discourse as the 'Soviet people,' 'Soviet toilers' and so forth."[33] Normal people in late Soviet society reproduced ideological texts ritualistically but refused to follow the written principles in practice and directed their creative energies elsewhere.[34] It is striking, in this respect, that Semenov has no difficulty navigating between forms of sociality based on opposing attitudes toward the Soviet doctrine. He seems to share an understanding with his colleagues but unlike them, he does not condemn Shindin's ruse and later even confides in him in a private conversation:

Semenov:	He [Deviatov] is a former army officer, and her [Violetta's] husband is a professor.[35] I have no problem [signing the documents] but they will tell on me, and I will be reprimanded. I understand that the unsigned certificate means no rewards...
Shindin:	No, there is a good person who risks losing his job!

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32 "Ну, где вы росли? В какой школе вы учились? [...] Существуют нормы поведения, общения между людьми! Ты к ним по-человечески, и они к тебе по-людски!" *We, the Undersigned*, dir. Tatiana Lioznova (TO "Ekran," 1981).

33 Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, 103.

34 *Ibid.*, 104.

35 It is worth noting that by referencing his colleagues' personal details, Semenov obviously perceives their uncompromising attitudes as directly related either to their professional background or to the level of material well-being that they enjoy in their lives. For him, Deviatov's belief in the constative foundations of official ideology is informed by the latter's training as an army lawyer, whereas Violetta's sincere reproduction of the authoritative word is a result of her sheltered life and social privileges. Thus, in Semenov's view, "normal" (i.e., performative) behavior is inevitably linked to one's desire to enhance one's social standing and material comfort. This rationalization of his own behavior makes this character similar to the male protagonist in Mikhalkov's *Without Witness*.

Semenov:	Maybe. But to be a good, honest person is an indulgence for the soul. Life is fair. One gets conscience and is happy, the other gets a [high] standing and is happy, so that everyone feels well.
Shindin:	You are a philosopher.
Semenov:	My bosses even invite me to share [my wisdom]. I do share it, but not too much, so that some of it remains for later. One needs to utilize one's gift cleverly.[36]

Like Esenin's confidences with Sasha in *The Theme*, what Semenov reproduces is not the authoritative discourse but the language of the "normal" private conversation. The dialogue above testifies to his well-developed ability to perform sincerity at his convenience and to his immediate advantage. The fact that Semenov dissimulates his true thoughts (as he never intends to sign the certificate) brings into question Yurchak's notion of *normal'nyi chelovek* who would be willing to acknowledge the meaningfulness of Shindin's cause and actively support it. It also complicates Mikhailin's and Beliaeva's concept of split realities by demonstrating the enormous corrupting impact that the crafty alternation between opposed discursive modes can have on one's personality and, ultimately, on the private sphere that relies on trust and mutual support.

I want to finish my analysis by zooming in on Lenia Shindin's take on normal life in its public and private manifestations. Since Lioznova's film was based on Gel'man's original play, it is useful to consider the latter's critical reception after it premiered in two leading Moscow theatres in 1979.[37] In the reviews of the time, *We, the Undersigned* was described as a text that interrogated the notions of justice, honesty, and personal integrity[38] by way of destabilizing the "es-

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36 Семенов: Он – бывший офицер, у нее муж профессор. А я – пожалуйста. Я втык получу, на меня доложат. Я понимаю, когда акт не подписан, все блага летят.
Шиндин: Нет, могут снять хорошего человека!
Семенов: Могут. Быть хорошим, честным человеком – это удовольствие для души. Жизнь справедлива. Одному совесть дает, радуйся, другому – положение, тоже радуйся! Чтобы всем было хорошо.
Шиндин: Ты – философ.
Семенов: Меня начальство приглашает. Я поделюсь, но не очень. Чтобы потом можно было поделиться. Талант надо распределять умело. *We, the Undersigned,* dir. Lioznova.
37 Gel'man's play *We, the Undersigned*, was simultaneously staged in Moscow Academic Art Theatre (*Moskovskii Khudozhestvennyi Akademicheskii Teatr*, MKhAT) and Moscow Satire Theatre (*Moskovskii Teatr Satiry*) with Aleksandr Kaliagin and Andrei Mironov in the leading roles.
38 V. Dubkov, "Udovol'stvie dlia dushi? MKhAT v Khabarovske," *Molodoi dal'nevostochnik* (June 23, 1981), accessed September 30, 2018, http://kalyagin.theatre.ru/theatre/mi_nigep/982.

tablished ideas of the normality of human relationships [presented in the play]."³⁹ To praise the play's pedagogic potential one of the reviewers observed:

> Normal real life goes on. It is not bad or good, kind or evil. It is simply life. Its taste, color, and direction are defined by the people themselves. It is possible to surround oneself by fences, carpets, furniture, connections, and books,—and enjoy it all. It is also possible to keep saying "no," and try to break the walls while injuring oneself, or, just like Don Quixote, fight for invisible human values. Choose for yourself.⁴⁰

The dichotomy between private and public domains in the quote is striking. Whereas private life implies easy consumerist escapism, personal worth is validated against the degree of self-sacrifice for a higher moral imperative.

In the view of early critics, by acting as "a knight without fear and beyond reproach,"⁴¹ the play's protagonist Lenia Shindin clearly represented the ideal citizen of the future ready to align his individual destiny with "greater" Communist issues and to give up his private ambitions for the sake of "greater" Communist goals.⁴² In the film, Malisov literally accuses the hero of indulging himself by taking on the role of a Don Quixote, since through his pursuit of the right cause, he renounces individual interests to the point of failing to care for his wife and son. At the same time, the critics intuited a controversy in Shindin's altruistic behavior because he committed a fraud while passionately defending justice:

> In the end, who is this Lenia Shindin? A hero? Of course. [He is] the main hero of the play [...] but not more than that, for now. Let us hope and believe that the lesson he learned will help him and people like him to evolve to the level of the positive hero without reservations. In other words, to the level of a life character, a true hero of our time with impeccable moral foundations of his active life stance.⁴³

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39 "Сложившиеся представления о нормальности подобных человеческих отношений." Inna Vishnevskaia, "Dve prem'ery," *Vecherniaia Moskva* (April 23, 1979), accessed September 30, 2018, http://kalyagin.theatre.ru/theatre/mi_nigep/981.

40 "Идет нормальная жизнь. Не плохая, и не хорошая, не добрая и не злая. Просто жизнь. Вкус, цвет и направление ей задают люди. Можно огородить свою жизнь заборами, коврами, мебелью, связями, книгами – и наслаждаться. Можно и «нет!» кричать, и пытаться стенки разбивать, тяжело ранясь, и по-донкихотски воевать за незримые человеческие ценности. Выбирайте." Dubkov, "Udovol'stvie dlia dushi?"

41 "Рыцарь без страха и упрека." N. Leikin, "Retsenziia. 'My, nizhepodpisavshiesia,'" (1979), accessed September 30, 2018, http://amironov.ru/?chrzdel=5&chmenu=17idsource=2322.

42 On the Soviet ideal citizen, see Vadim Mikhailin, "*Ex cinere:* proekt 'sovietskii chelovek' iz perspektivy *post factum*," *Neprikosnovennyi zapas* 108, no. 4 (2016), 139.

43 "Ну, а кто же он все-таки, этот Леня Шиндин? Герой? Конечно, герой. Главный герой пьесы [...] Пока – не более того. Будем надеяться и верить, что полученный урок поможет ему и таким, как он, подняться до уровня положительного героя без всяких оговорок. То

Apart from being a perfect example of solidified clichés inherent to the Soviet hypernormalized discourse, this quote offers an opportunity to theorize about the factors that prevented Lenia Shindin from fulfilling the role of the model citizen headed for the Communist future.[44]

This question can be answered by employing the notion of the so-called Soviet double-thinking (*dvoemyslie*), extensively discussed in contemporary Russian social theory. The renowned sociologist Iurii Levada argued that double-thinking—a nexus between the public avowal of socialist values and the private, intersubjective reformulation of these values— constituted the main characteristic of Soviet reality. Levada explains this by the high level of ideological coercion and material deprivation, as well as by the structural impossibility for ordinary people to live up to the great Communist ideal forcefully imposed on them by the Soviet regime.[45] Levada's ideas are clearly conversant with the theory of hypernormalization in the sense that double-thinking too implies pretense-based forms of social behavior which simultaneously stabilized and undermined the system. The scholar contends that double-thinking not only penetrated all social spheres but normalized both publicly simulated support of official power and its personal, non-rationalized negation in quotidian practice. Importantly, Soviet citizens and authorities alike did not perceive behavior informed by double-thinking as subversive but accepted it as a mode of situational adjustment to the unstable conditions of life.[46]

Shindin, too, views his subterfuge as a one-off practical solution for an extraordinary situation which does not impinge on the larger Communist project. This larger project is personified by his boss Egorov whose visionary designs make construction deficiencies at the bread baking factory appear insignificant.[47] To safeguard Egorov's career, the loyal Shindin does not hesitate to resort

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есть до героя жизни, подлинного героя нашего времени, у которого нравственное обеспечение активной жизненной позиции безупречно." Leikin, "Retsenziia."

44 It is worth noting that Shindin's framing as "a hero of our time" already points at the complexity of his personality. In Mikhail Lermontov's 1840 classic *Geroi nashego vremeni* (A Hero of Our Time, to which the critic apparently alludes), the notion of a hero has a satirical overtone, referencing the protagonist who belonged to the category of so-called superfluous men populating nineteenth-century Russian novels.

45 Yurii Levada, *Ot mnenii k ponimaniiu: Sotsiologicheskie ocherki 1993–2000* (Moscow: Moskovskaia shkola politicheskikh issledovanii, 2000), 425.

46 For a more detailed analysis of double-thinking as a pervasive practice of social adjustment in Soviet (and post-Soviet) society, see Irina Souch, *Popular Tropes of Identity in Contemporary Russian Television and Film* (New York/London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 87–119.

47 It needs to be said that in the film, Egorov functions as an empty signifier, which different characters invest with different, often conflicting meanings. Thus, while Shindin perceives Egor-

to a variety of questionable methods from telling lies and flattering people, to swearing, pleading, confessing, and finally scuffling with Semenov. He is determined to procure the signed certificate "at any price" and reproaches Malisov for the lack of initiative:

> In the past, we were able to secure the projects that were in a much worse condition as completed. [...] You should have invited them to a restaurant, made them stay overnight, organized a hunting and fishing expedition. Or a boat trip along the river! [...] You should have sent for me, they would have never refused![48]

Guided by the logic of double-thinking, Shindin believes his manipulative tactics to be indispensable (and therefore acceptable), without any need for justification. He does not even consider the option of honestly addressing the committee which attests to his general distrust of the official system's procedures. When Deviatov (who lives by the rules of the authoritative texts both in private and public domains) refuses to sign the fraudulent certificate arguing that "one cannot help truth by using untruth,"[49] the protagonist offhandedly replies: "All this is just a theory. The end justifies the means, or the end does not justify the means. Because of your adherence to principles you fail to see the person behind the factory!"[50] This dialogue brings to the surface the collision between state-imposed socialist values and internally persuasive ethics, and demonstrates their paradoxical co-dependency. It erases the line between declarative state ideology and "the ethical values of everyday life in socialism."[51] Shindin constantly oscillates between his sincere appeal to the authoritative claim of the utopian Communist future and the pragmatic deconstruction of the same claim's ideological foundations. His cognitive and emotional confusion exemplifies what Boris Dubin calls the "bifurcation syndrome" (*sindrom razdvoeniia*): a splitting be-

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ov as a Communist version of the ego-ideal, his wife Alla finds him a hard, insensitive person indifferent to private circumstances of his subordinates. To Alla's utter distress, her husband refuses to apply for a bigger apartment and a private telephone connection which he is entitled to have due to his exemplary employment history and services rendered. Shindin's far-reaching loyalty to his boss is also confirmed by the fact that he is the last member of the team of eight people who, two years ago, moved to the countryside to help Egorov realize his innovative vision of rural architecture.

48 "Мы сдавали объекты поважнее в гораздо худшем состоянии. Надо было пригласить в ресторан, оставить переночевать, организовать для них охоту или рыбалку. Прогулку на реке! Надо было меня найти – они б не отказались!" *We, the Undersigned*, dir. Lioznova.
49 "Неправдой правде не поможешь." *Ibid.*
50 "Все это – теория! Цель оправдывает средства, цель не оправдывает средства [...] Вы уперлись своей принципиальностью в этот хлебозавод, а человека не видите!" *Ibid.*
51 Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, 97.

tween the abstract plane of the distant social ideal and the concrete plane of private everyday life characteristic of the general condition of late Soviet society in which the authoritative cultural values and norms of conduct, long inculcated in the people's minds, did not correlate with the social and material reality that constituted their quotidian experience.[52]

Shindin's behavior not only presents an interesting example of the bifurcation syndrome. It also prompts an interrogation of the notion of "work with meaning"[53] in Yurchak's theory. The latter is inherently connected to the way most people related to Soviet socialism:

> This relationship was characterized not by the binary oppositions of "us" (common people) versus "them" (the party, the state), but by a seemingly paradoxical coexistence of affinities and alienations, belonging and estrangement, meaningful work and pure formality – the values, attitudes, and identities that were indivisible and constitutive of the forms of life that were "normal," creative, ethical, engaged, and worth being involved in.[54]

Yurchak emphasizes Soviet people's ability to consciously transcend the tediously formulaic aspects of the Soviet government's directives while still supporting their underpinnings, such as concern for the people and the common good. Accordingly, the examples of "work with meaning" include performing one's professional duties to the best of one's abilities as well as engaging in various types of community work from helping the elderly to organizing disputes about literature. In the film, Shindin too demonstrates a high degree of professional engagement. He also believes in the normality of his actions because, in his mind, they ultimately serve the higher socialist goal. Yet, it is clear that his creativity involves rather dubious strategies including fraud; all this because the material circumstances in which he operates foreclose other solutions. Thus, the film disturbingly brings in relief the structural impossibility of reconciling the abstract and the quotidian versions of reality or, as Yurchak suggests, to go beyond the limits of hypernormalization in order to live another, ethical form of socialism.[55]

Ultimately, even Deviatov's radical change of thought in favor of Shindin's cause does not secure the way out of the impasse, nor does it lead to the produc-

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52 Boris Dubin, *Intellektual'nye gruppy i simvolicheskie formy: Ocherki sovremennoi kul'tury* (Moscow: Novoe izdatel'stvo, 2004), 229.

53 Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, 93 – 98.

54 *Ibid.*, 98.

55 Another problematic point in the quote above is the notion of the normal. If official socialist normativity was performed only ritualistically, the manner as well as the framework within which "normal life" was aligned, remains unclear.

tion of alternative meanings. The authoritative discourse stays in place in both characters' minds, thereby re-establishing the benevolent intervention "from above" as the only feasible mode of the conflict's resolution.[56] In the final scene, Deviatov departs with the promise to use his personal connections to obtain justice from the higher authorities and Shindin and his wife eventually find themselves alone on the deserted train station platform. It is remarkable that, like in the films discussed earlier, the coda again revolves around a short moment of physical upset. In a state of distress, Shindin suddenly loses his footing on the dark pavement and falls into an unprotected foundation hole.[57] When Alla pulls him out, the couple bursts into uncontrollable laughter. This unexpected emotionally laden experience of togetherness that occurs in a public space and not in the seclusion of the private home has little to do with the idea of a normal human (and marital) relationship. Moreover, the corporeal experience within the "small social context" does not result in any epiphany on Shindin's side. Whether one interprets the final piercing "no" that he cries out into the night as a sign of protest or a symptom of despair, the hero remains publicly (and privately) invested in his mission for the benefit of Egorov's utopian plans for the betterment of society. As for Alla, the only option she has is to stand by her husband and to renounce her hopes for material advancement and "normal" family life predicated on mutual commitment and care.

Discussing the play during its timely appearance, Ekaterina Kesler understood the absence of a "happy ending" as an appeal to the audience to search for solutions to similar problems in real life:

> The actuality of the [...] play resides not solely in the fact that the author, the directors, and the actors put forward present-day problems and portray our contemporaries involved in an

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56 While fighting against the corrupt bureaucratic structure, Shindin still has to place his trust in the involvement of higher authorities in the conflict. This paradoxical alternation between distrust in official power and paternalistic dependency on it is a constitutive part of double-thinking. In Soviet peoples' minds, the more distant the institute of power was from ordinary life, the more it was endowed with Communist "virtues," and conversely, the closer the level of authority was to one's individual position, the more it was reviled for its dishonesty, unscrupulousness, and cynical opportunism. See, Lev Gudkov "Povest' o sovetskom cheloveke," *Levada Tsentr* (December 29, 2016), accessed September 30, 2018, https://www.levada.ru/2016/12/29/povest-o-sovetskom-cheloveke.

57 Viewers would not fail to draw a parallel between the ostensibly dismissible deficiencies at the bread-baking factory and this instance of hazardous negligence by another building company.

acute conflict. On the stage, the conflict remains unresolved [...] But [the makers'] aim is not to solve such problems on stage but to facilitate their resolution in real life.[58]

The quote shows that the represented events (and their impact on the characters' behavior) were perceived by the critic as *normal* and as something that viewers could personally experience on a daily basis in all spheres of society. Kesler's review also clearly reproduces the official postulates of public interests and responsibilities, thus obfuscating the real socioeconomic antagonisms at the core of the fictional story.[59] The tendency to replicate the authoritative language in the public discourses of printed mass media of the time is not surprising. What is surprising is that years later, in 2013, Tatiana Lioznova anticipated that many contemporary viewers would still find *We, the Undersigned* difficult to understand and accept. Despite historical changes and the high public acclaim of her oeuvre, the director chose to eschew the discussion of late Soviet society's systemic and ideological conflicts that constituted the inconvenient truth of the film. Instead, she contended: "I hold this film dear, it is full of tenderness and love for my people. I personally saw viewers laughing [at the beginning] [...] but in the end, they were crying. This was the film's intention from the start."[60] Although in the narrative, the sphere of informal human relationships and the sphere of authoritative theorizations of the Communist future undergo an obvious and unresolvable crisis, Lioznova circumvented this issue by indulging, instead, in a specific repertoire of the Soviet intelligentsia's abstract compassion with ordinary people's predicaments. I would like to suggest that apart from the emphatically melodramatic tone of the film's finale, the oscillation of viewers' emotions could have ensued from the sense of bifurcation they experienced.

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58 "Современность [...] спектакля не только в том, что драматург, режиссеры и актеры ставят сегодняшние проблемы и выводят на сцену современных людей, втянутых в острый конфликт. Этот конфликт не разрешается в спектакле [...]. Но задача [...] не в том, чтобы разрешать подобные проблемы на сцене, а в том, чтобы помочь их разрешению в жизни." Ekaterina Kesler, "Vsego chetyre chasa," *Sotsialisticheskaia industriia* (March 27, 1979), accessed September 30, 2018, http://kalyagin.theatre.ru/theatre/mi_nigep/983.
59 It is striking how Kesler's words resonate with the accolade of the old teacher addressed to the playwright Esenin in Panfilov's film *The Theme*.
60 "'Мы, нижеподписавшиеся'– картина, которую сейчас не все понимают и принимают. Хотя для меня эта картина очень дорога, она полна нежности и любви к моему народу. Я лично видела зрителей, которые смотрят её и смеются, а в конце начинают плакать. На это и рассчитан весь строй картины." Tatiana Lioznova, "5 legendarnykh fil'mov Tatiany Lioznovoi," interview by Il'ia Marshak, *Vecherniaia Gazeta* (April 29, 2013), accessed September 30, 2018, http://vm.ru/news/2013/04/29/5-legendarnih-filmov-tatyani-lioznovoj-194364.html.

The confrontation of the characters' divergent positions toward authority and collective and individual duty urged the audience to rethink the correlation between socialist ethics and everyday reality. Notably, Shindin's charismatic persona ensured the viewers' identification with him throughout the film and effectively precluded the opportunity for them to consider the deeper reasons for and alternative ways out of the impasse. As a result, both on the level of directorial intention and on the level of representation, the film falls short of "rehumanizing" late socialism failing to offer evidence of normal life built upon privately practiced resignification of the official system of values and rules of conduct.

Hypernormalization of Private Life

My analyses of *The Theme*, *Without Witness*, and *We, the Undersigned* show the unstable and constantly shifting relations between the modes of private and public behavior that complicate the distinction between reproduction, resignification, and performative re-enactment of authoritative discourses. Despite their stylistic and aesthetic differences, these films equally succeed in both reconfirming and destabilizing the normative limits of the Soviet way of living. They publicly generate parallel meanings by depicting events that could be interpreted by contemporary viewers as recognizable and incredible, funny and dramatic, ideologically secure and oppositional at the same time. Moreover, the films demonstrate how the official constructs of authority, public interests, socialist duty, and serviceability appear organically woven in the fabric of informal, personal, private everyday practices and procedures—the portrayal that problematizes Alexei Yurchak's theory of normal life and hypernormalization.

It is possible that the discrepancy between cinematic reality and ethnographic evidence is produced by the specific status of cinema in late Soviet society. Analogous to literature, it constituted an ideologically charged mode of mass cultural mediation and played an important role in guiding people's vital decisions and choices. Therefore, whereas Yurchak's findings are based on personal accounts of everyday life experiences, the films engaging with the theme of private well-being could generally be perceived (at the time of their release) not as portrayals of quotidian mores but as historically framed representations of Russian intellectuals' perennial ethical ruminations. In this sense, it is not incidental that scriptwriter Aleksandr Chervinskii insisted that *The Theme*'s narrative revolved around evergreen existential dilemmas. However, the emphat-

ically realistic depiction of late-Soviet reality in these three (and many other)[61] films makes it difficult to disregard their critical dimensions and socio-political implications.

In Yurchak's work, normal life is directly connected to privacy and thus conceptualized as a phenomenon parallel to the processes of hypernormalization that took place in the public sphere. Yurchak's original approach allows the reductive opposition between passive compliance or active resistance traditionally associated with the private domain to be superseded. The scholar's explicit analytical thrust is to prove the normality of private life under state socialism and to reclaim the humanistic values of Communist ideological constructs through their creative re-interpretation and re-appropriation by ordinary people. However, the evident risk of this approach is that by doing away with the binary between subjugation and resistance, it engenders another dichotomy—that between state hypernormalization and normal life. Yurchak's interviewees assert the normality of their existence in a manner similar to the processes of hypernormalization, which they were consciously striving to circumvent. Normal life in their memories seems to operate as a solidified discursive entity, reminiscent of the authoritative rhetorical constructions produced and disseminated by the Soviet ideological machine. In other words, hypernormalization here manifests itself as a quotidian phenomenon taking place in the private realm. The emphatic investment in the normality of their everyday reality by Yurchak's respondents can, in fact, be seen as a symptom of the deeply rooted collective feelings of anxiety caused by the overall crisis of normative standards and mechanisms of signification in late Soviet society and requires further critical examination.

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61 See, for instance, Vadim Mikhailin's insightful analysis of Roman Balaian's 1983 film *Polety vo sne i naiavu* (Flights in Dreams and Reality). Vadim Mikhailin, "Skromnoe obaianie pozdnesovetskogo intelligenta: Ob odnom iz kanonicheskikh tipazhei Olega Iankovskogo," *V mire prekrasnogo* 5 (2014).

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David Gillespie
The Overturned House

The Tension between the Public and the Private in Late Soviet Culture

Private and Public Spaces

The collectivist ethos was the bedrock of Soviet society and socialist realism posited the "great family," with its perceived unity and generational continuity, as guaranteeing stability and a secure future. Under the criteria of socialist realism, families and their home environment were to serve as models for the nuclear development of society, with the evolution and personalities of individual family members, such as in Vsevolod Kochetov's *Zhurbiny* (The Zhurbins, 1952), only important inasmuch as they serve and promote the greater good. This article demonstrates how writers during the Thaw and late Soviet period reasserted the value of private existence, thereby exposing fault lines in the collectivist ethos that became ever more evident during the late 1980s. The emphasis on individualism and personal enrichment that has become a dominant feature of post-Soviet Russia can be seen as a fierce social, political, and existential rejection of the recent past and a firm assertion of the right to privacy and personal space.

For a few years in the 1960s, there was a dynamic and relatively (in comparison with the preceding two decades) liberal period in Soviet cultural production, especially in literature and film. Khrushchev's "de-Stalinization" encouraged a franker discussion of the excesses of the Stalinist period, young people took an enthusiastic interest in the literature of the day (especially poetry), and certain young film directors emerged with a fresh and clear individual eye for topical issues. Although this "thaw" was short-lived—Brezhnev's ideological retrenchment from the mid-1960s restored the balance of power and ideological orthodoxy—areas of Soviet life and history that had now been made public became embedded in Soviet cultural practice, and there was no going back. It is possible to see the seeds of the 1991 collapse in the themes being discussed in the early 1960s. Among these, perhaps the most important theme dealt with the tensions between public discourse and private space.

By way of context, Alexandr Tvardovskii's *Novyi mir* led the way in publishing works that pushed the boundaries of censorship, in particular with the pub-

lication of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *Odin den' Ivana Denisovicha* (One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich) in November 1962 and *Matrenin dvor* (Matrena's Home) two months later in January 1963. Films by young directors such as Andrei Tarkovskii (1932–1986), Marlen Khutsiev (1925–2019) and Larisa Shepit'ko (1938–1979) explored areas of Soviet life relevant for the younger generation, which had largely been ignored by the older generation of film-makers.[1]

In addition to the publication of stories by Solzhenitsyn, one of the remarkable works published in 1965 by Tvardovskii in *Novyi mir* was Vitalii Semin's *Semero v odnom dome* (Seven Living in One House), a tale of life in a communal apartment as told by the various inhabitants in their own words as a stream-of-consciousness series of first-person narratives. Semin's short novel speaks of male working-class frustration, casual domestic violence, alcoholism, all against a background of cramped living conditions with entire families, including grandparents and children, occupying one room, where individuals battle for their own space and sense of identity. Dialogues concern material hardship, lack of money and attempted abortions, with the War and German occupation still within living memory. Semin's narrative blends the private with the national experience, where individual lives are inexorably framed by major public events. The story is very much a crystallization of the Soviet experience where history is writ large, but where this history is now seen as having importance only in so far as it has formed individual human destinies. The limits of the characters' worldview and prospects for betterment in life are revealed in the story's very first words: "They drank vodka and argued about what gets you drunk quicker: diluted spirit or vodka? Someone said that a filter-less cigarette (*papirosa*) after vodka got you more drunk than two mugs of beer."[2]

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1 Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, "Odin den' Ivana Denisovicha," *Novyi mir*, no. 11 (1962); "Matrenin dvor," *Novyi mir*, no. 1 (1963). Ground-breaking films from this period include Andrei Tarkovskii's *Ivanovo detstvo* (Ivan's Childhood, 1962), Marlen Khutsiev's *Iiul'skii dozhd'* (July Rain, 1965), and Larisa Shepit'ko's *Kryl'ia* (Wings, 1965).

2 "Они пили водку, спорили о том, что быстрее пьянит – разбавленный спирт или водка. Говорили, что папироса после водки пьянит сильнее, чем две кружки пива." [Translations here and throughout the article are mine.] Vitalii Semin, "Semero v odnom dome," *Novyi mir*, no. 6 (1965), 62. Semin (1927–1978) led a life very different from that of the "average" Soviet writer. In 1942, as a fifteen-year-old he was taken to Germany with retreating German soldiers to work as a forced mining laborer, returning to his native Rostov-on-Don in 1946. In 1948, he enrolled in Rostov Teacher Training College, only to be dismissed when his experiences in Germany were discovered by the authorities. In subsequent years he worked at several jobs and began work as a journalist in 1958. He died of a heart attack aged 50 in Koktebel'. His experiences as a forced laborer in Nazi Germany are recounted in his autobiographical novel *Nagrudnyi znak "OST"* (Badge "OST"), first published in 1976 in the journal *Druzhba*

The story begins and ends with vodka for only while drinking do the residents "come alive."[3] Semin's otherwise sobering tale of casual street violence, muggings, and even murder, against a backdrop of grinding poverty, exposes the Soviet regime's failure to improve to any real degree the daily lives of its citizens after almost 50 years of its existence. The bombast of public history is undermined by the realities of private experience.

The often-challenging actualities of living accommodation, where whole families live cheek-by-jowl, had long been a staple of Soviet literature and film. This had been satirized in short stories by Mikhail Zoshchenko (1894 – 1958), Daniil Kharms (1905 – 1942) and Panteleimon Romanov (1884 – 1938) and films by Abram Room (1894 – 1976), Fridrikh Ermler (1898 – 1967) and Boris Barnet (1902 – 1965), all in the 1920s. The problems surrounding living space were memorably lampooned by Mikhail Bulgakov in *Master i Margarita* (The Master and Margarita, 1929 – 1940), when "the Devil" Voland ruefully remarks that Muscovites over the centuries have remained essentially the same, but are now "corrupted by the accommodation issue."[4] The private realm of individual existence was always deemed secondary to the greater task of building the collectivist state.

A quarter of a century after Bulgakov completed his novel (published in the Soviet Union only in 1966 in a heavily redacted form), Soviet society was approaching the stage of its socio-political development that came to be known as "advanced socialism" (*razvitoi sotsializm*), and the individual's private life as-

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narodov, and then as a book in 1978. As an ironic coda to this footnote, "Semero v odnom dome" is sandwiched in the same issue of *Novyi mir* between the official memoir of 1945 by Marshal Ivan Konev (1897 – 1973) and the War notes of Ivan Maiskii (1884 – 1975), Soviet Ambassador to London from 1932 to 1943; Semin's harrowing private narratives effectively subvert state-sponsored triumphalism within one literary journal.

3 Semin, "Semero v odnom dome," 143.

4 Zoshchenko's stories include *Krizis* (A Crisis), where a man who has newly arrived in the city is unable to find even a corner in a room occupied by others but is offered the use of a bathroom as sleeping quarters in a communal apartment. He is eventually joined by members of his family from the countryside, he takes a wife who also moves in and they have children. Zoshchenko's tone is light and contains an element of social satire, but the grim reality of the story's actual background is plain to see. Room's 1927 film *Tret'ia Meshchanskaia* (Bed and Sofa) also takes a wryly comic look at the severe urban housing crisis, where two workers share a bed with Liuda and then the sofa in a communal apartment, in an amoral and darkly satirical tale that was criticized for its negative portraits of its working-class "heroes." Other films from these years that depicted the travails of those arriving from the countryside to look for work in the big city, and their problems in particular with accommodation, are Boris Barnet's *Dom na Trubnoi* (The House on Trubnaia, 1928) and Fridrikh Ermler's *Oblomki imperii* (A Fragment of Empire, 1929).

sumed a significance beyond that of social need. Semin's 1965 story left no doubt in readers' minds, if any remained, that after almost half a century since the October Revolution, the lives of ordinary people were still dominated by problems of living space, lack of personal privacy, aggressive self-assertion, and violence to claim and maintain a right to that space.

As censorship became less rigid, private experience, including that of the younger generation, women, War veterans, peasants, and workers, increasingly became the focus of public concern as writers and film-makers produced work that explored society and recent history from the point of view of the ordinary man and woman. In effect, late Soviet culture was now looking at history from the bottom up, having largely discarded the Stalinist top-down approach characteristic of socialist realism.

Private and Public Lives

Films by female directors such as Kira Muratova (1934–2018) and Larisa Shepit'-ko focused on one social issue that was becoming increasingly prominent in a society that had suffered a huge loss of male lives during the War: single, unmarried women struggling to find a partner as the years went by. This would be an issue further explored in literature by I. Grekova (pseudonym of Elena Ventsel', 1907–2002), perhaps the most famous female writer during *razvitoi sotsializm* (advanced socialism), in works such as *Khoziaika gostinitsy* (The Hotel Manageress, 1976) and *Vdovii parokhod* (Ship of Widows, 1981). However, it was in 1969 that new ground was broken in the discussion of "the woman question" by the publication of Natal'ia Baranskaia's *Nedelia kak nedelia* (A Week Like Any Other) in Tvardovskii's *Novyi mir*. Narrated from the woman's point of view, it is a diary-like presentation of a week in the life of an ordinary working mother weighed down by the "double burden" of earning money as an "emancipated" modern woman and at the same time being the traditional wife and mother who does the shopping, cooking, and housework (although her husband does wash the dishes). Baranskaia (1908–2004) depicts this daily round as a seemingly endless routine of standing in lines for food, running the risk of lateness at work and rushing home to prepare meals for the family. Ol'ga and her husband get by because they are a family and are able (just) to integrate their daily (public) responsibilities and private life.[5]

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5 I. Grekova, "Khoziaika gostinitsy," *Zvezda*, no. 9 (1976); "Vdovii parokhod," *Novyi mir*, no. 5 (1981); Natal'ia Baranskaia, "Nedelia kak nedelia," *Novyi mir*, no. 11 (1969).

Baranskaia's documentary-like realism showed the reality of family life, with a focus on the many roles demanded of the modern Soviet woman. Baranskaia's story revealed how real life was very different from official slogans, and that the private and public spheres seemed irreconcilable. The heroine, Ol'ga Voronkova, lists in diary form the events, tensions, and anxieties during an ordinary working week. She works at a research institute and at the beginning of the work she has just been promoted. Successful at work, she should be happy at home: she has two children, a considerate husband and a new three bedroom apartment, something of a luxury in Moscow of the 1960s. By comparison, one of her colleagues is a single mother, abandoned by her boyfriend when he discovered her pregnancy, another has a husband who drinks too much, and a third has a husband who wants her to abandon work and have a second child in order to have a "normal" family. On the surface, Ol'ga is happy, but she is also worn down by the demands of being a wife, mother, housewife, and breadwinner. She is frequently late for work and during this year has missed 78 days because of "illness." The urban environment, the pace of life and work, and family life are sources of frustration and stress, with the haven of the family offering little respite.

Late Soviet culture was able to take stock of and examine the cataclysmic history of the preceding half century in necessarily circumspect areas of investigation such as the Revolution and Civil War and Stalin's purges, and even some uncomfortable truths from the Great Patriotic War, such as issues of cowardice and collaboration of the Red Army soldiers. The "village prose" school that prospered from the early 1960s until the late 1980s clearly (and occasionally angrily) showed how "big history" encroached on the lives of individuals, families, and whole communities in its exploration of the collectivization of agriculture in the late 1920s and the destruction of the "kulaks" as a class in the early 1930s.

In the 1960s, Vasilii Belov (1932–2012) was well known as a writer of stories of village life, focusing on his home village of Timonikha in Vologda district. In his celebrated *Privychnoe delo* (That's the Way It Is, 1966) and *Plotnitskie rasskazy* (Carpenters' Tales, 1968) he portrayed wholesome peasants as saintly with a childlike innocence, living a life in harmony with the seasons and the natural cycle, in an environment where humans and animals share a common bond, and where there is no difference between the innocence of a new-born infant and a peasant who has lived his whole life on the land. *Bukhtiny vologodskie* (Tall Tales from Vologda, 1969) is a collection of Gogolian tales of village life with elements of the grotesque, absurd, and downright fantastic, often to hilarious effect, which tell of the rich folk culture and fertile creativity and imaginative powers of the Russian peasant. In 1972, he published the first instalment of what was to become an epic series of novels on collectivization initially called *Kanuny* (Eves), which beginning in 1989 became increasingly tendentious and

strident in its denunciation of those destroying the centuries-old Russian village and thereby the roots of the national character, its spiritual and moral foundations, and even Russian national identity.[6] In his ethnographic sketches published under the title *Lad: Ocherki o narodnoi estetike* (Harmony: Essays on National Aesthetics, 1979–1981), Belov describes in loving detail the everyday life of the Russian peasant of the north, stressing the "harmony" of man, his culture, and his environment with daily life, the family, and community at the heart of his narrative. Belov pays specific attention to rural trades, skills, and crafts and the manner in which they were learned and maintained, and the arts and culture of village life. In this hermetically sealed narrative, there is hardly any mention of history or politics that may have influenced and molded this life. *Lad* reads as if history has barely touched the northern Russian village, where the daily lives of villagers have been conditioned for centuries by their relationship with the natural world, and where the essential, vital concept is "rhythm," as the author states:

> Rhythm manifested itself in everything, forming a cyclical pattern. We can talk about the daily cycle and the weekly cycle, for an individual person and for an individual family, about the summer or the spring cycle, about the yearly cycle and finally about all of life: from conception to the grave...

> Everything was interconnected, and nothing could live separately, or without the other, everything had its time and place preordained. Nothing could exist outside the whole or appear out of turn. At the same time, unity and wholeness was not at variance with beauty or variety. Beauty could not be separated from use, nor use from beauty.[7]

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6 Vasilii Belov, "Privychnoe delo (iz proshlogo odnoi sem'i)," *Sever*, no. 1 (1966); "Plotnitskie rasskazy," *Novyi mir*, no. 7 (1968); "Bukhtiny vologodskie," *Novyi mir*, no. 8 (1969); "Kanuny," *Sever*, no. 4–5 (1972). It was published in an expanded book form in 1976 by the Moscow publishing house *Sovremennik*. Its continuation as *God velikogo pereloma* (The Year of Great Change) was published between 1989 and 1994 (for full publication details see the Bibliography). It was completed under the title *Chas shestyi: khronika 1932 goda* (The Sixth Hour: A Chronicle of 1932) and published in 1997–1998 (for full publication details see the Bibliography).

7 "Ритм проявлялся во всем, формируя цикличность. Можно говорить о дневном цикле и о недельном, для отдельного человека и для целой семьи, о летнем или о весеннем цикле, о годовом, наконец, о всей жизни: от зачатья до могильной травы... / Все было взаимосвязано, и ничто не могло жить отдельно или друг без друга, всему предназначалось свое место и время. Ничто не могло существовать вне целого или появиться вне очереди. При этом единство и цельность вовсе не противоречили красоте и многообразию. Красоту нельзя было отделить от пользы, пользу – от красоты." Vasilii Belov, *Lad: ocherki o narodnoi estetike* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1982), 7. The work originally appeared in the journal *Nash sovremennik* between 1979 and 1981 (see Bibliography for full publication details). The journal publication contains only text, whereas the *Molodaia gvardiia* book edition is lavish-

This is a long way from Moscow and seems even longer in the twentieth century. Belov's "harmony" is a timeless blend of human endeavor and the natural environment, beyond history, politics, and ideology.

The destruction of this age-old way of life through policies formulated in Moscow is even more pronounced and foregrounded to harrowing effect in Boris Mozhaev's novel *Muzhiki i baby* (Peasant Men and Women, 1976–1987). Mozhaev's writing bears striking resemblances to that of Belov in that his early works such as *Iz zhizni Fedora Kuz'kina* (From the Life of Fedor Kuz'kin, 1966) celebrated the resilience and resourcefulness of the Russian peasant. His history of the village of Brekhovo, with its clear references to Saltykov-Shchedrin and Dostoevskii, resonates with the comic absurdist elements of *Bukhtiny volo-godskie*. However, Mozhaev (1923–1996) goes further than Belov, in his detailed description of the travails of the peasant who is taxed to the hilt and then forcibly dispossessed of his possessions and home as a declared "kulak" and therefore a "class enemy." Whereas Belov describes collectivization as an attack on Russian national identity, for Mozhaev, the tragedy of dekulakization and collectivization lies in the appropriation by the state of the individual's home and privacy carried out on a massive scale, which clearly demonstrates the state's wish and ability to control every aspect of its citizen's lives based on its adoption of western utopian thought, refined (or, rather, distorted) and adapted for the regime's political agenda.[8]

The works of Valentin Rasputin (1937–2015) from 1967 to 1985 are widely regarded as having sounded the death-knell for "village prose," with titles containing words such as "Final," "Farewell" and "Remember." Rasputin does indeed describe the death-throes of the age-old Russian village, presenting his case in stories set in his own native region of the Angara river near Lake Baikal in Siberia, and like Belov and Mozhaev, shows the intrusion of "history" into the lives of ordinary villagers, resulting in the destruction of their homes. In his first major work, *Den'gi dlia Marii* (Money for Maria, 1967), the family and home of the eponymous heroine are threatened as she falls foul of official accounting rules and draconian laws, faced with imprisonment for irregularities in the accounts of the village shop she manages. In *Proshchanie s Materoi* (Farewell to

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ly illustrated with color photographs of north Russian villages throughout the seasons, with their inhabitants and examples of their crafts, home environment, and work routine.

8 Boris Mozhaev, "Iz zhizni Fedora Kuz'kina,"*Novyi mir*, no. 7 (1966); *Muzhiki i baby* (Moscow: Sovremennik, 1976); "Muzhiki i baby; Roman-khronika. Kniga vtoraia," *Don* (1987). "Istoria sela Brekhova, pisannaia Petrom Afanas'evichem Bulkinym" (A History of the Village of Brekhovo, as Written by Petr Afanas'evich Bulkin) was first published in his collected works printed in 4 volumes in Moscow in 1989.

Matera, 1976) Rasputin describes in great detail the death of an island settlement with the symbolic name of Matera, its history and culture dating back over 300 years, as it is to be flooded to become part of the reservoir for a hydroelectric dam. By analogy, the legacy and identity of Mother Russia are to be destroyed by the march of industrial progress, as determined by policies drafted thousands of miles away in Moscow.

Den'gi glia Marii is unusual in Rasputin's work as it is one of only a few works which shows a family united in its struggle with the modern world; in *Poslednii srok* (The Final Stage, 1970), it is irrevocably fractured as the children who have left the village to live in the city have become alienated from their rural siblings and more importantly from their mother, the 80-year-old Anna, who has lived all her life in one village. In *Zhivi i pomni* (Live and Remember, 1973), the only work of Rasputin's that is not set in the contemporary period, Andrei Gus'kov's desertion of his army unit in the final months of the War fatally undermines and then destroys his family. *Pozhar* (The Fire, 1985) is set in an urban settlement (*poselok*) that houses those who have been uprooted from Matera and depicts unflinchingly the crime and violence that besets a community with no roots or values to cling to, where people no longer have a sense of communal ethics, belonging, or identity.[9] Rasputin shows that a materialist ideology has destroyed not only a community but any sense of "home." With no values to live by, there can be no future.

The social and psychological disruption caused by the upheavals in the Soviet countryside in the 1930s were subsequently visible for decades and provided the fertile soil for much of the social tensions of "village prose" of the 1960s and 1970s. The *derevenshchiki* (village writers) were characterized by being born and raised in the village, and then moved to a town or city later in their lives for education and work. Certainly, this is true of Belov and Rasputin. The writer who most visibly symbolizes the town/country dichotomy is Vasilii Shukshin (1929–1974). He was not afraid to admit that as an adult, he was still unable to leave behind the village, nor could he fully adapt to city life:

> Thus, it turned out that by the age of 40, I was no longer neither fully a city dweller nor a villager. A terribly uncomfortable situation. It is not even between two stools, but rather like

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9 Valentin Rasputin, "Den'gi dlia Marii," *Angara*, no. 4 (1967); "Poslednii srok," *Nash sovremennik*, no. 7–8 (1970); "Zhivi i pomni," *Nash sovremennik*, no. 10–11 (1974); "Proshchanie s Materoi," *Nash sovremennik*, no. 10–11 (1976); "Pozhar," *Nash sovremennik*, no. 7 (1985).

having one foot on the river bank and the other in the boat. And it's not as if you can't sail out, it's actually a bit scary. You can't stay in this state for long, I know, you'll fall in.[10]

Shukshin's male characters have been described as *chudiki*, lovable eccentrics unsuited to the practicalities of everyday life and unwittingly causing problems for themselves and their families. However, his most durable (and beloved) creation is Egor Prokudin, the main character of *Kalina krasnaia* (Red Guelder Rose, 1973), whose enduring popularity is in no small measure indebted to the gritty but vulnerable portrayal of him on screen by Shukshin himself (the 1974 film was also directed by Shukshin).

Prokudin is a man without roots, without home, without family, separated from his mother as a teenager (nothing is known about his father) and having lived a life of petty crime, with spells in and out of prison. Yet for Shukshin, Prokudin's life is not just an individual hard-luck story, but one that is symbolic of the sufferings of Russia in the twentieth century. Both the film and the novella contain several references to the Civil War and Stalin's purges. Prokudin is a martyr, an innocent victim of the huge social processes that have formed him. His suffering is seen within a context of Russian spirituality, literature, and art. In the film, Prokudin's inner turmoil is shown several times against the background of a white-stone church. The film also includes plentiful visual references to Russian artistic culture (paintings by Ivan Shishkin and Ivan Kramskoi adorn walls and pendants), and it has also been noted that the depiction of the Russian countryside is reminiscent of landscapes by Isaak Levitan.[11] Several times the tragic fate of Prokudin is explicitly equated with that of Sergei Esenin, "the last poet of the village." At the beginning of the novella, on his release from prison, Prokudin is referred to as a "poet" by a passing old woman, and in the film his death is framed against a prison flashback as a convict puts Esenin's poem *Pis'mo materi* (A Letter to Mother, 1924) to song. Prokudin finds his place of be-

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10 "Так у меня вышло к сорока годам, что я – ни городской до конца, ни деревенский уже. Ужасно неудобное положение. Это даже – не между двух стульев, а скорее так: одна нога на берегу, другая в лодке. И не плыть нельзя, и плыть вроде как страшновато. Долго в таком состоянии пребывать нельзя, я знаю – упадешь." Vasilii Shukshin, "Monolog na lestnitse," in *Nravstvennost' est' Pravda*, ed. Vasilii Shukshin (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1979), 60.

11 I. V. Shestakova, "Izobrazitel'naia sistema v fil'me V. Shukshina 'Kalina krasnaia,'" *Vestnik Kemerovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta kul'tury i iskusstva*, no. 33 (2015), 113. In particular, she mentions the paintings *Vesna. Bol'shaia voda* (Spring. High Water, 1897) as Prokudin leaves his prison colony and *Berezovaia roshcha* (Birch Grove, 1889), when Prokudin addresses birch trees as his "brides" several times.

longing only in death, killed by his former gang just as he had begun a new life plowing the land: "There Egor lay, a Russian peasant on his land."[12]

Prokudin is a product of the tumultuous social engineering that accompanied the Soviet Union's rapid industrialization and consequent urbanization beginning in the 1930s. His story is an individual one, but it reflects the experience of millions. Official Soviet statistics show that if in 1917 the urban population was less than 18% of the total population, this figure had risen to 48% in 1959 and 56% in 1970. According to the 1970 census, towns with more than 100,000 inhabitants held more than 67 million people, just under a quarter of the population of the whole USSR.[13] In 1970, the total urban population of the USSR was 136 million, compared to 26.3 million in 1926.[14] Consequently, the rural population fell most markedly in the RSFSR, where it fell by about 24%, especially in the central and north-west areas, with the maximum exodus being that of young people from the village.[15] A leading Soviet sociological analysis of the psychological impact of such mass migration confirms that Shukshin/Prokudin would be one of millions of uprooted villagers, unable to adapt to a new urban environment. A Soviet sociologist succinctly summed up the effect on the individual of the historical process:

> The villager in the city is a question of extreme importance for our country, a major and painful question. This is because every year about *four million* people move from the village to the city, and each one of them has to go through a painful process of *resocialization,* that is, the destruction of the old village personality and the reconstruction on its wreckage of a new, urban personality. Using the language of specialists, this is the problem of the marginal (interim) person, the marginal personality. A person is torn from one social sphere and is not yet able to enter another. This is a difficult period in a person's life, usually a period of some demoralization.[16]

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12 Vasilii Shukshin, "Kalina krasnaia," *Nash sovremennik*, no. 4 (1973), 133.

13 B. Khorev, *Problemy gorodov* (Moscow: Mysl', 1975), 9, 15.

14 V. I. Perevedentsev, "Urbanizatsiia i nekotorye aspekty migratsii naseleniia v SSSR," in *Problemy sovremennoi urbanizatsii*, ed. Iu. L. Pivovarov (Moscow: Statistika, 1972), 126.

15 K. A. Orekhov et al., eds., *Itogi Vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1970 goda (v 7 tomakh)* (Moscow: Statistika, 1972–1974), tom I (1972), 9–14.

16 "Сельский человек в городе – вопрос чрезвычайно для нашей страны важный, большой и больной. Ведь ежегодно из села в город переселяется около *четырех миллионов* человек. И почти каждый из них должен пройти болезненный процесс *ресоциализации*, то есть разрушения старой сельской личности и воссоздания на ее обломках новой, городской. Говоря языком специалистов, это проблема маргинального (промежуточного) человека, маргинальной личности. Человек отрывается от одной социальной среды и не успевает еще войти в другую. Это трудный период в жизни человека, обычно период некоторой деморализации." V. I. Perevedentsev, "Nauchnyi podkhod? Neobkhodim!" *Literaturnoe obozrenie*, no. 5 (1978), 22 [emphasis in the original].

The massive social disruption of the Stalin years had a significant cultural impact in the subsequent decades, as the private (personal) costs of historical (public) change were openly displayed and explored.

One of the abiding themes of Russian cinema in the 1960s and 1970s, continuing through the 1980s until the final years of the Soviet Union, was family life. As divorce rates increased in urban areas, filmmakers focused on marital infidelities and internal tensions. Women's failure to find personal happiness continued to engage directors in the 1970s, in such films as *Lichnoe delo sud'i Ivanovoi* (The Personal Case of Judge Ivanova), directed by Il'ia Frez in 1985, *Chastnaia zhizn'* (Private Life), and *Vremia zhelanii* (A Time of Wishes), both directed by the veteran Iulii Raizman in 1982 and 1984 respectively and Gleb Panfilov's 1979 *Tema* (The Theme), to name a few.[17] These were thought-provoking, mature attempts to diagnose what could go wrong in a marriage or relationship, without any forced "happy end." Even hugely popular comedies, such as El'dar Riazanov's *Sluzhebnyi roman* (An Office Romance, 1977) and *Vokzal dlia dvoikh* (A Station for Two, 1982) and Vladimir Men'shov's celebrated, Oscar-winning *Moskva slezam ne verit* (Moscow Doesn't Believe in Tears, 1979), were predicated on the premise of the lonely woman unable to find love (though the happy ending is never in doubt when Mr. Right appears on the scene).

As Brezhnev's "stagnation" gave way to Gorbachev's glasnost, previously ignored topics such as teenage gang violence, drug abuse, alcoholism, and domestic violence, all set in a domestic environment found expression. The motif of "they lived happily ever after" is not associated with one of the key films of the glasnost period, *Malen'kaia Vera* (Little Vera, 1987). While most films released between 1985 and 1991 can be categorized as those released "from the shelf" after being banned for years and sometimes decades or providing insights and *exposé*s of the "blank spots" of Soviet history (especially Stalin's purges), there were some that offered an unsparing and occasionally harrowing view of contemporary family life. Vasilii Pichul's *Malen'kaia Vera* ticked all the boxes previously ignored or suppressed: gang violence, an us-versus-them attitude with regard to the police, illegal currency speculation, casual sex, and in the centre of it all, a dysfunctional family with an alcoholic and violent father, a drudge-like mother, and a daughter who wants to better herself. Pichul's finale offers a contrived resolution, but the picture of individual hopelessness and social decay endures. Kira Muratova's 1990 *Astenicheskii sindrom* (The Asthenic Syndrome) pulled no punches in its occasionally foul-mouthed and visually

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17 For the analysis of the cinematic portrayal of the cleavage between the private and the public spheres, see Irina Souch's contribution in this volume.

challenging depiction of disintegrating families, shattered lives, and all forms of collapsing moral, linguistic, and political authority.[18] More than any other, both these films from this period revealed the falseness of official optimism: seventy years of Soviet power, with its ideological imperative of creating a Communist society, had brought only disastrous consequences for individuals and families. The private sphere had fatally undermined the public.

Private and Public History

The writer most associated with *byt* (everyday life) and the petty tensions, betrayals, and disagreements of family life and personal relationships in the 1970s was Iurii Trifonov (1925–1981). Although viewed by most Soviet critics following his 1969 novella *Obmen* (The Exchange) as a writer interested primarily in the mundane and "small" worlds of his protagonists, Trifonov showed and analyzed the incursion of the state into the private lives of its citizens more than any other writer and gave his modern family landscapes a clear historical lineage. The fusion of the public and the private worlds in late Soviet literature is clearly demonstrated in Trifonov's work.

Trifonov's "Moscow novellas" were published between 1969 and 1978 and explored the moral and ethical dilemmas of Muscovites struggling to retain their integrity when faced with materialistic temptation. In *Obmen*, this is portrayed in Dmitriev's opportunity to move into a larger apartment but at the cost of morally betraying his own mother. In *Predvaritel'nye itogi* (Preliminary Stock-Taking, 1970), the translator Gennadii Sergeevich surveys the wreckage of his marriage from Turkmenistan, where he is translating the work of a local poet and berates himself for his constant capitulation to his wife Rita and her superficial acquisitiveness and intellectual pretensions. His son is in trouble with the police as a black marketeer, his friends and relations are self-seeking and cynical opportunists and he can find kindness and generosity only among simple folk and casual acquaintances.

Later works focus more clearly on the historical dimension of private lives. The central characters of *Dolgoe Proshchanie* (The Long Goodbye, 1971) and *Dru-*

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18 Other films from this period that explored disturbing issues such as drug addiction, crime, and alienation of youth were *Igla* (The Needle), directed in 1988 by Rashid Nugmanov, Sergei Solov'ev's trilogy *Assa* (Assa, 1987), *Chernaia roza – emblema pechali, krasnaia roza – emblema liubvi* (A Black Rose is the Emblem of Sadness, a Red Rose Is the Emblem of Love, 1989), *Dom pod zvezdnym nebom* (The House under a Starry Sky, 1991) and Karen Shakhnazarov's *Kur'er* (The Courier, 1987).

gaia zhizn' (Another Life, 1975) are both interested in Russian history to varying degrees, one is a playwright and the other a professional historian, but both are devoted to unearthing the "truth" about the past, understanding it and not bowing to "political expediency." The difficulties of discovering the truth about the past by relying on personal memory are at the heart of *Starik* (The Old Man, 1978), specifically, the role of personal responsibility during the Russian Civil War sixty years ago.[19]

"Village prose" brought history into the contemporary Russian village by exploring its consequences several decades later. Trifonov shows how the past is never far from the present in Moscow of the 1960s and 1970s, whether history is embodied by elderly relatives who were part of the Revolution and Civil War, by the personal memory of the events, or whether it is the subject of study. Trifonov was deeply interested in Russian history, and at the time of writing his Moscow stories also published a historical novel, *Neterpenie* (Impatience), in 1973. Above all, Trifonov was interested in showing the relationship of the past to the present in his work and indicating within the confines of the censorship of the time, the manner in which the moral and ethical vacuum of his Moscow residents of the 1960s and 1970s had been formed by the moral imperatives of the political forces that brought about the October Revolution and were victorious in the ensuing Civil War.[20]

Neterpenie is a long novel about the nineteenth century terrorist movement *Narodnaia volia* (The People's Will) and their preparations for the (successful) assassination of Tsar Aleksandr II in 1881. Trifonov describes in minute detail the lives and daily activities of Andrei Zheliabov, Sof'ia Perovskaia, and Sergei Nechaev, showing that the real significance of their actions would be felt only decades later; *Starik* demonstrates that the Civil War was won through recourse to terror and murder, thus suggesting that the Bolsheviks were the true heirs to The People's Will and that the Soviet Union was little more than a terrorist state.

Trifonov was not simply dissecting Soviet history with the cold, detached eye of an objective historian trying to establish historical "truth." Furthermore, in his historical inquiry, he is seeking to restore historical justice, especially for his father. For Trifonov, history and politics were a very personal matter. Valentin Trifonov (1888 – 1937), Iurii's father, was an old Bolshevik of Cossack descent, a hero of the October Revolution and Civil War who had spent almost ten years in Siberian exile under Tsar Nikolai II, and who in the 1920s and 1930s represent-

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19 Iurii Trifonov, "Obmen," *Novyi mir*, no. 12 (1969); "Predvaritel'nye itogi," *Novyi mir*, no. 12 (1970); "Dolgoe proshchanie," *Novyi mir*, no. 8 (1971); "Drugaia zhizn'," *Novyi mir*, no. 8 (1975); "Starik," *Druzhba narodov*, no. 3 (1978).

20 Iurii Trifonov, "Neterpenie," *Novyi mir*, no. 3 – 5 (1973).

ed the Soviet Union in trade missions to Finland and China. Iurii's childhood recollections of his father were published posthumously in 1981 under the evocative and meaningful title *Oprokinutyi dom* (The Overturned House). Valentin Trifonov was arrested in June 1937 and never seen alive again, when his son Iurii was 11 years old. His mother was arrested several months later and Iurii and his sister Tania were raised by their maternal grandmother. His mother returned to Moscow only in 1946. Iurii Trifonov's rehabilitation of his father began with the publication in the journal *Znamia* in 1964 of *Otblesk kostra* (Fireglow), a documentary record based on archival and secondary sources on Valentin Trifonov as a dedicated Bolshevik and his services to the Revolution and Soviet state. This was followed in 1966 by a book publication substantially expanding the original with personal testimonies from eyewitnesses to events and people who knew Valentin Trifonov and who contacted the author after the *Znamia* publication. Iurii Trifonov explained the connection of past and present, and of the personal and the historical, in the narrative of *Otblesk kostra*:

> Father has been dead a long time now. Litke also disappeared somewhere, and the old field notebooks almost perished, too, which had imprinted on them that distant, feverish life, which some of us find so difficult to comprehend these days. So why do I turn these pages now? They excite me. And not only because they are about my father and about people I knew, but also because they are about a time when everything was beginning. When we began.[21]

Valentin Trifonov is the model for the far-seeing and wise Bolshevik strategist Danilov in *Starik,* and the doomed idealist Nikolai Grigor'evich in *Ischeznovenie* (The Disappearance, 1987). Trifonov pays tribute to his father's faith in the Bolshevik cause, seeking to rehabilitate him as a true revolutionary and statesman. He also depicts a broken and fatherless childhood in *Dom na naberezhnoi* (The House on the Embankment, 1976) and his final novel *Vremia i mesto* (Time and Place, 1981), also published posthumously. In his fictional and non-fictional work from the mid-1960s, Trifonov more than any other Soviet writer attempted

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21 "Давно нет в живых отца, сгинул куда-то и Литке, и едва не погибли старые полевые книжки, в которых отпечаталась эта далекая, взбудораженная, кому-то уже непонятная сейчас жизнь. Зачем же я ворошу ее страницы? Они волнуют меня. И не только потому, что они об отце и о людях, которых я знал, но и потому, что они о времени, когда все начиналось. Когда начинались мы." Iurii Trifonov, "Otblesk kostra," in *Sobranie sochinenii v chetyrekh tomakh*, ed. Iurii Trifonov (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1985–1987), vol. IV, 97. *Otblesk kostra* was first published in *Znamia,* no. 2–3 (1965), and the larger book was published in Moscow by the *Sovetskii pisatel'* publishing house in 1966. *Oprokinutyi dom* was first published in *Novyi mir*, no. 7 (1981).

to bring together the personal and the public and to show how the upheavals and crises of "history" affected the lives of ordinary individuals in subsequent decades. By doing so, he created a vision of the world where past and present are irrevocably interlinked, where time is a continuum (*slitnost'* is the term he would use) and above all, where the perception and interpretation of history is a subjective one, informed by memory.[22] As the son of an executed Old Bolshevik subsequently branded "an enemy of the people," Trifonov was uniquely placed to explore and judge the moral foundations of Soviet society. Personal loss and the destruction of the family home provided him with insights into "historical expediency" and the values used as building blocks for a new society.

Conclusion: Private Life and Public History

Soviet culture from the death of Stalin and the demise of socialist realism as an artistic practice, was characterized by a reaffirmation of "sincerity" and more attention being paid to subjectivity and individual lives. The attention of writers and filmmakers on private lives served not only to show the realities of Soviet political and historical development in these years, half a century after the October Revolution, but also raised important philosophical questions about the relationship of the private to the public, the role of individual destiny within a society built on and devoted to collectivist values and most importantly, the meaning of history itself. If privacy is not valued, what is meant of the quality of life? If the individual is demeaned, is life simply reduced to physical existence? With the gift of hindsight, it is now commonplace to assume that the relative freedoms afforded after the death of Stalin in 1953 eventually led to the collapse of the Soviet system itself. Most of the writers and filmmakers discussed above remained loyal to that system (Solzhenitsyn is the obvious exception), but their work demonstrates that private life and human individuality are the cornerstones for building any society. It is ironic, and disconcerting to a certain extent, that post-Soviet Russia has nurtured the rise of individualism and an aggressive emphasis on personal wealth and success, seemingly to the detriment of the collective and even the concept of "society" itself.

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22 Iurii Trifonov, "Ischeznovenie," *Druzhba narodov*, no. 1 (1987); "Dom na naberezhnoi," *Druzhba narodov*, no. 1 (1976); "Vremia i mesto,"*Druzhba narodov*, no. 9 – 10 (1981).

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Christina Jüttner

The Private and the Public in the Life Writings of Dissenters in Late Socialist Russia

A Female Perspective[1]

Introduction

The production and circulation of literary, documentary, and political texts were among the main activities of dissenters in the Soviet Union. Many of them also kept diaries, notebooks, or wrote memoirs.[2] In these texts, dissent is often claimed as beginning at an individual level before it finds its expression in social engagement. Many authors describe their politically or otherwise motivated activities, thus revealing that the private and the public spheres were not static concepts in dissenters' life writing. Instead, these spheres and what they contain

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2 Important existing literature of Soviet dissident life writing includes Barbara Walker, "On Reading Soviet Memoirs: A History of the *Contemporaries* Genre as an Institution of Russian Intelligentsia Culture from the 1790s to the 1970s," *The Russian Review* 59, no. 3 (2000). Walker describes autobiographical texts of several Soviet authors in the context of the "contemporaries" tradition, highlights the value of these texts for historical research, and examines (among others) Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *Bodalsia telenok s dubom* (1975). For a highly interesting historical approach on female dissenters' life (writing) in Soviet Russia, see Anke Stephan, *Von der Küche auf den Roten Platz: Lebenswege sowjetischer Dissidentinnen* (Zurich: Pano, 2005). Benjamin Nathans analyzes a large corpus of Soviet dissident memoirs in "Talking Fish: On Soviet Dissident Memoirs," *The Journal of Modern History* 87, no. 1 (2015). He also describes the development of these memoirs over time and advocates considering the literary characteristics of these texts ("to read their memoirs specifically as memoirs, that is, as constructed narratives," 586). Mary Rytkönen does this when she primarily examines the narrative strategies in the autobiographical texts of five Soviet women, including Elena Bonner's *Dochki–materi:* Mary Rytkönen, *About the Self and the Time: On the Autobiographical Texts by È. Gerštejn, T. Petkevič, E. Bonnėr, M. Pliseckaja and M. Arbatova* (Tampere: Juvenes Print, 2004).

seem to be subject to arbitrary distinctions. I explore the boundary between these spheres and specifically these questions: In what way do the authors conceptualize the private and the public spheres? What is the relationship between them? How do the authors distinguish the public and the private spheres in complex situations (for example, when press conferences took place in private apartments and were later broadcast via foreign radio stations)?[3] And last but not least: What does the field of the private described in the texts signify for the authors' self-conceptualization?

To answer these questions, it is imperative to discuss to what extent the terms "public" and "private" can be applied to the Soviet conditions since there is neither a bourgeois public in the Habermasian sense[4] nor a private sphere that is protected against state interventions by law. In order to better understand the complex relationship between the public and the private in the Soviet context, I begin by studying private life and its realities in the early Soviet Union. This attempt has an inherent linguistic problem that is also relevant to the manner in which the authors distinguish between the private and the public: there is no uniform translation of the English words "private" and "privacy" in Russian, the native language of all authors examined here. Instead, there are two possible translations of the word "private": *lichnyi* and *chastnyi*, both of which can also be translated as "personal," depending on the context.[5]

Oleg Kharkhordin is particularly concerned with the phrases *lichnaia zhizn'* and *chastnaia zhizn'*, which are also relevant to this article. According to him, both phrases are often translated indistinctly as "private life."[6] This uniform translation obscures the fact that in post-revolutionary Russia, a clear distinction was made between them. For the Bolsheviks, the concept of *lichnost'* (Eng. "personality" or "the self") was central: to develop *lichnost'*, an individual had to be

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3 Ludmilla Alexeyeva and Paul Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation: Coming of Age in the Post-Stalin Era* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1990), 285.

4 Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1990). Habermas's explicitly normative approach was modified, e. g., by Nancy Fraser who replaced his concept of a unitary bourgeois public by a multitude of competing publics in Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social Text*, no. 25/26 (1990), 66 – 70.

5 The word "public," too, has no clear equivalent in Russian: both *gosudarstvennyi* and *obshchestvennyi* are often translated as public. Oleg Kharkhordin, "Reveal and Dissimulate: A Genealogy of Private Life in Soviet Russia," in *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy*, eds. Jeff Weintraub and Krishan Kumar (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 344.

6 *Ibid.*, 343.

willing to fully reveal himself and his deeds to the Party and the comrades, thereby identifying ideological misconduct in himself and others. Accordingly, this act of revelation is also fundamental to *lichnaia zhizn'*: all spheres of life, including those in which the individual does not directly fulfill the obligations to the state, must always be visible and open to assessment by the state and society.[7] *Lichnaia zhizn'* was organized and supported by the state because everyday life (that explicitly included *lichnaia zhizn'*) was regarded as one of the most important sites of class struggle.[8]

In contrast to *lichnyi*, the word *chastnyi* potentially implies a kind of separation (*chast'* means "part" in English) and can also be translated as *partial*, depending on the context.[9] In the same way, *chastnaia zhizn'* implies a sphere of life that is separated from and potentially inaccessible to the state. Since the basis for *chastnaya zhizn'*, namely private property, had largely been abolished by the Bolsheviks, there was no ideological justification for its existence: the state claimed to satisfy all needs of its citizens, thereby rendering non-state spheres of life neither necessary nor permitted, from its perspective. As a result, there should be no (family) life hidden from the eyes of the state or protected against its intervention: *chastnaia zhizn'* was made illegitimate by declaring citizens who regarded their time outside of work and state obligations as private (*chastnyi*) to be enemies of the people.[10] In this context, even the use of the word *chastnyi* was almost abolished,[11] and this massive fight against *chastnaia zhizn'* as the signified and the signifier alike continued to be effective long after the end of Stalinism: even in the post-Soviet period, it is customary to distinguish between public vs. personal (*lichnyi*) rather than public vs. private (*chastnyi*) in Russian.[12] Thus, the investigation of publicity and privacy in the Soviet context is complicated, not only by the fact that the concepts describing these phenomena are primarily of western origin and therefore only conditionally applicable, but also by a certain linguistic blurring. To avoid this confusion in

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7 *Ibid.*, 340.

8 *Ibid.*, 357.

9 For example, *chastnyi interes* can be translated as *partial interest*, *ibid.*, 343.

10 *Ibid.*, 356–357.

11 Kharkhordin demonstrates it with the example of dictionaries widely used in Soviet Russia at the time, whose application examples for *chastnyi* were all linked to pre-revolutionary Russia or to foreign contexts. *Ibid.*, 344.

12 Elena Zdravomyslova, "Die Konstruktion der arbeitenden Mutter und die Krise der Männlichkeit: Zur Unterscheidung von Öffentlichkeit und Privatheit im Kontext der Geschlechterkonstruktion im spätsowjetischen Rußland," *Feministische Studien*, no. 1 (1999), 24.

my analysis as much as possible, I consistently translate the word *chastnyi* as "private" and the word *lichnyi* as "personal" in the quotes below.

The gradual liberalization after Stalin's death entailed far-reaching social changes. In this context, the construction boom under Khrushchev which created individual housing on a large scale[13] was a significant factor. During Stalinism, Soviet citizens were mostly housed in communal apartments (*kommunalki*) at least in the cities, where one family often had to confine themselves to one room and had to share the kitchen and sanitary facilities with other residents. This form of living was a powerful tool of social control, for residents were encouraged to observe each other and possibly report non-conformist behavior.[14] The housing programs of the 1950s offered many people an opportunity to retreat to a comparatively sheltered space, thereby allowing a (voluntarily) opening to other people.[15] In particular, the possibility to involve friends and relatives in the formation of one's own (political) opinion enabled the emergence of an alternative public sphere.[16] This increasingly complex situation has already been studied extensively with a multitude of different approaches. In the existing research, there is a discernible development concerning the concepts of the public and the private: early works on this subject often consider the Soviet state to be an entity which completely dominates the public sphere. As a result, not only dissident activities and samizdat but also, for example, the so-called "second

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13 Henry W. Morton, "Housing in the Soviet Union," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 35, no. 3 (1984), esp. 72. Morton shows that the number of residential units that were built in the USSR increased from 1.5 million in 1956 to 2.7 million in 1959. He estimates the number of newly build residential units in the period from 1957 to the 1980s to be about 2 million per year.
14 Kharkhordin, *Reveal and Dissimulate*, 357–358. Here, Kharkhordin refers primarily to the late 1940s and early 1950s. He explains that this practice has evolved from concepts of comradely admonition among mostly equal people. Originally, higher levels of hierarchy should not be involved. For a differentiated presentation of this development see *ibid.*, 345–357.
15 It should be noted that these apartments were by no means intended to grant their residents privacy in the narrower sense, in which the individual could pursue his or her interests undisturbed by ideological questions. Instead, as Christine Varga-Harris argues, the domestic living space was dominated and reshaped by Communist moralities that regulated all activities, from sexual practices to choices in home decoration. Christine Varga-Harris, "Homemaking and the Aesthetic and Moral Perimeters of the Soviet during the Khrushchev Era," *Journal of Social History* 41, no. 3 (2008), 563–564.
16 Ingrid Oswald and Viktor Voronkov, "Licht an, Licht aus! Öffentlichkeit in der (post)sowjetischen Gesellschaft," in *Sphären von Öffentlichkeit in Gesellschaften sowjetischen Typs: Zwischen partei-staatlicher Selbstinszenierung und kirchlichen Gegenwelten*, eds. Gábor T. Rittersporn et al. (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 2003), 49.

economy"[17] are assigned to the private sphere.[18] Subsequent works explore more flexible concepts of public and private life occasionally developing a new vocabulary to describe complex situations in which the distinction between the public and the private is blurred.[19] The study by Ingrid Oswald and Viktor Voronkov cited above is of particular interest for this article, so I outline it briefly.

Oswald and Voronkov postulate a tripartite division of the communicative space into an official-public, a private-public, and a private sphere. In the official-public sphere, the laws and (communication) rules of the state were in place. During Stalinism, this sphere dominated the communication space. The space of alternative publicity that has formed since the Thaw period is called private-public; it spread at the expense of the official-public sphere.[20] The private-

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17 Since the state was unable to provide the population with enough food and consumer goods, a gigantic system of black markets, the "second economy," developed, where most of the population met their daily needs. The second economy was tolerated to a large extent to prevent riots. Juri Lewada, *Die Sowjetmenschen 1989–1991: Soziogramm eines Zerfalls* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1993), 53–55.

18 Vladimir Shlapentokh, *Public and Private Life of the Soviet People: Changing Values in Post-Stalin Russia* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 190–203.

19 The research in this area is too extensive to be fully presented here. The following edited volumes contain a variety of interesting research approaches: Gábor T. Rittersporn et al., eds., *Sphären von Öffentlichkeit in Gesellschaften sowjetischen Typs: Zwischen partei–staatlicher Selbstinszenierung und kirchlichen Gegenwelten* (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 2003) and Lewis H. Siegelbaum, ed., *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia* (New York/Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). The contribution by Gábor T. Rittersporn, Jan Behrends, and Malte Rolf, "Öffentliche Räume und Öffentlichkeit in Gesellschaften sowjetischen Typs: Ein erster Blick aus komparativer Perspektive (Einleitung)," in *Sphären von Öffentlichkeit in Gesellschaften sowjetischen Typs: Zwischen partei–staatlicher Selbstinszenierung und kirchlichen Gegenwelten*, eds. Gábor T. Rittersporn et al. (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 2003), offers a wide range of possible research questions. Katerina Gerasimova uses the terms "public privacy" or "semi-private" to describe the specific situation in communal apartments. Katerina Gerasimova, "Public Spaces in the Communal Apartment," in *Sphären von Öffentlichkeit in Gesellschaften sowjetischen Typs: Zwischen partei–staatlicher Selbstinszenierung und kirchlichen Gegenwelten*, eds. Gábor T. Rittersporn et al. (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 2003), in particular 170–171. Among other aspects, Gerasimova examines strategies used by residents to mark private spaces within public places such as the kitchen or the bathroom. *Ibid.*, 174–175. Based on memoirs, interviews, and newspaper clippings, the article by Juliane Fürst examines the phenomenon of *kompanii* in Moscow and Saint Petersburg and deals with identification mechanisms within these groups, the blurring of public and private space caused by the meetings, and the strategies to conquer public space for one's own interests. Juliane Fürst, "Friends in Private, Friends in Public: The Phenomenon of the *kompaniia* Among Soviet Youth in the 1950s and 1960s," in *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia*, ed. Lewis H. Siegelbaum (New York/Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 235, 240, 241–244.

20 Oswald and Voronkov, "Licht an, Licht aus!," 49.

public sphere contained the everyday life of the Soviet citizens, in which alternative norms and communication structures developed—a kind of common law that often contradicted the established law. Oswald and Voronkov emphasize that this sphere was not reserved for dissidents and instead, every Soviet citizen learned to behave according to the norms of the public-private realm.[21] Oswald and Voronkov describe the boundaries of the private-public sphere as follows: there is a sharp border between the official-public and the private-public spheres; they are not only separated by the discrepancy between state ideology and everyday reality, but also by two (directly contradictory) legal concepts (established law and common law). According to Oswald and Voronkov, Soviet citizens usually did not cross this border voluntarily.[22] In contrast, the boundary between the private-public and the private spheres is much more permeable because legal concepts that could have separated the spheres from each other were missing.[23] The authors emphasize that they regard the spheres of communication in the Soviet Union as a continuum, in which unambiguous assignments may be difficult. This is especially true regarding the transition between the private-public and private spheres.[24] Since their approach is not normative, it is, therefore, suitable for describing subjective perspectives on the ideas of privacy and publicity as I intend in this article.

There are valid reasons to assume that the family was an integral part of the private sphere in Soviet Russia after the end of Stalinism. Many Soviet citizens appreciated the family as a retreat, where they felt free to express their genuine opinion on everyday life, including political events.[25] In most cases, the family was an area of primary concern to women. This understanding of roles was supported, for example, by print media publications primarily aimed at women who were considered potential consumers.[26] Also, due to the general shortage of consumer goods, instructions for do-it-yourself projects that were mainly directed at women were published, suggesting self-made alternatives for the products that were hard or impossible to obtain.[27] This indicates that the family, household

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21 *Ibid.*, 49–50.

22 *Ibid.*, 46.

23 For more about the lack of an institutional, legal framework for this area of life, see Marc Garcelon, "The Shadow of the Leviathan: Public and Private in Communist and Post-Communist Society," in *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy*, eds. Jeff Weintraub and Krishan Kumar (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 323–324.

24 Oswald and Voronkov, "Licht an, Licht aus!," 56–57.

25 Shlapentokh, *Public and Private Life*, 164–166.

26 Susan E. Reid, "Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and the De-Stalinization of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev," *Slavic Review* 61, no. 2 (2002), 213–215.

27 Varga-Harris, "Homemaking," 575–576.

management, and above all, its regulation were part of the public discourse. Yet, many women managed to resist socialist norms in shaping family life and created some privacy[28] to some extent: for example, the widespread kitsch in family and communal apartments can be interpreted as a resistance to a system, in which the design of housing (interior) should be guided by ideological considerations.[29]

Now that an outline of the relationship between the public and the private under Soviet conditions has been established, I return to the subject of this article: autobiographical texts. It should be noted that Soviet autobiographical practice[30] set certain limitations on possible topics, especially concerning the private life of the authors: during Stalinism, ordinary citizens were compelled on a large scale to write autobiographies, which instead of being authentic descriptions of life were supposed to revise the authors' biographies according to ideological patterns.[31] Thus, autobiographical writing did not serve the self-affirmation of an individual via reflection, but instead was dedicated to a transformation of the self via the writing process, virtually a self-realization in the meaning of ideology. The individual narrative was supposed to be absorbed in the hegemonic discourse of ideology.[32] It is probable that this function of autobiographical writing continued to be in effect even after the end of Stalinism: there is strong evidence that private life in Soviet autobiographical writing, whether by men or

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28 Zdravomyslova, "Die Konstruktion der arbeitenden Mutter," 29.

29 Svetlana Boym, *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 150–151; Reid, "Cold War in the Kitchen," 249–251. It is important to mention that privacy was not just reserved for women: through the liberalization during the Thaw, men were also able to create their own spaces of retreat (for example, from the family through automobiles and garages), see Lewis H. Siegelbaum, "On the Side: Car Culture in the USSR, 1960s–1980s," *Technology and Culture* 50, no. 1 (2009), 13–14.

30 On the importance of autobiographical practices in (Soviet) Russia, see Jochen Hellbeck, "Russian Autobiographical Practice," in *Autobiographical Practices in Russia*, eds. Jochen Hellbeck and Klaus Heller (Göttingen: V & R Unipress, 2004). He attests to a high autobiographical consciousness within Soviet society, which is why, despite the ubiquitous fear of espionage and repression, many people wrote personal letters or kept diaries (*ibid.*, 294). See also Irina Paperno, who examines the textual strategies and narrative patterns of about 200 texts from this period in *Stories of the Soviet Experience: Memoirs, Diaries, Dreams* (Ithaca, NY/London: Cornell University Press, 2009).

31 Katerina Clark, "'The History of the Factories' as a Factory of History: A Case Study on the Role of Soviet Literature in Subject Formation," in *Autobiographical Practices in Russia*, eds. Jochen Hellbeck and Klaus Heller (Göttingen: V & R Unipress, 2004), 254–256.

32 *Ibid.*, 276.

women, dissenters or "normal" citizens, is clearly subordinated to the working or political life of the authors.[33]

Therefore, the object of this study requires to extend the communication model of Oswald and Voronkov by another sphere, namely *the untold*. Of course, no autobiographical text can describe the entire life of an author. Rather, it is the result of a process of selection and construction. Some things can be perceived as being too intimate or too banal to be written down. Also, we should assume that the authors usually strive to influence their own image in the eyes of the reader to a certain extent. Omissions can easily serve this purpose.[34] The analyzed texts were written with a particular communication situation in mind, depending on the subject, the intention of the authors, and the implied reader. Therefore, the author usually decides the extent to which he or she offers insight into his or her private life and which part of it remains hidden to the reader. Consequently, to determine the limits of communication with the reader, I take these omissions into account.

The mere fact that women are often more involved in the family than men and thus are more engaged in the area that can be attributed to private life[35] does not yet allow us to conclude that women's life writing is particularly suited to examine the differentiation between the public and the private spheres. However, when we read the memoirs of men from this perspective, it is noticeable that the area of privacy tends to be significantly underrepresented in their texts, which I illustrate with three examples.

In his memoirs *Bodalsia telenok s dubom* (The Oak and the Calf, 1975),[36] Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn describes the private life (or rather, personal life, since

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33 Beth Holmgren, "For the Good of the Cause: Russian Women's Autobiography in the Twentieth Century," in *Women Writers in Russian Literature*, eds. Toby Clyman and Diana Greene (Westport, CT/London: Praeger, 1994), 129–130; Marianne Liljeström, *Useful Selves: Russian Women's Autobiographical Texts from the Postwar Period* (Saarijärvi: Kikimora Publications, 2004), 59–60; Stephan, *Von der Küche*, 50–51.

34 On the importance of omissions in autobiographical writing, see Ulrich Schmid, *Ich-Entwürfe: Russische Autobiographien zwischen Avvakum und Gercen* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2003), 384–385.

35 By stating that Soviet-Russian women were more concerned with the private sphere than men, I do not suggest that they were thereby excluded from (alternative) public spheres. The biographies of women and their memoirs examined here prove the opposite. Especially under Soviet conditions, this is not the fact: according to Oswald and Voronkov, the emergence of alternative public spheres was made possible by the opportunity to retreat into private life. Oswald and Voronkov, "Licht an, Licht aus!," 49–50, 56.

36 Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *Bodalsia telenok s dubom: Ocherki literaturnoi zhizni* (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1975).

he uses the term *lichnaia zhizn'*) in general as a neglected, secondary realm of life.[37] Accordingly, he describes his life as almost completely dominated by his writing and assigns more importance to this aspect of his life than to his wife and children, who are rarely mentioned.[38] In *Zapiski dissidenta* (The Notes of a Dissident, 1982),[39] Andrei Amal'rik refers to private life (he uses the term *chastnaia zhizn'*) in the Soviet Union as a niche. He describes his attempt to retreat into this niche and find his own way of neutral co-existence with the regime. As he points out, this attempt failed because the state did not tolerate such co-existing.[40] As a result, Amal'rik tells the reader hardly anything about his private life but focuses more on his activities in the Moscow human rights movement. Indeed, he often writes about his wife Giuzel', but usually in the context of joint dissident activities or actions against encroachments of state institutions. Finally, I consider the case of Andrei Sakharov, who wrote the most personal memoirs among the authors mentioned here—*Vospominaniia* (Memories, 1990).[41] But he, too, focuses more on his professional activities and his social engagement as a dissident than on personal matters. Although he describes in detail how his second wife Elena Bonner took part in these activities, he largely leaves out any mention of their private family life. Elena Bonner presents her own vision of the past in *Do dnevnikov* (Before the Diaries, 2006),[42] where she explicitly tries to focus on Sakharov's personal life and hers. This text is part of this analysis.

Whereas the lives of these men took place predominantly in the private-public or official-public spheres, at least on the textual level, female dissenters tend to engage more intensively with personal matters and family life in their texts, as the current analysis will show. Therefore, it is vital to consider the female perspective in examining the private and its differentiation from the public.[43]

In this article, I focus on life writings of three female dissenters: Elena Bonner (1923–2011), Ludmilla Alexeyeva (1927–2018), and Tatiana Goricheva (b. 1947). Bonner was an important member of the human rights movement in Mos-

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37 *Ibid.*, 394.

38 E. g., *ibid.*, 388.

39 Andrei Amal'rik, *Zapiski dissidenta* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1982).

40 *Ibid.*, 12.

41 Andrei Sakharov, *Vospominaniia* (New York: Izdatel'stvo im. Chekhova, 1990).

42 Elena Bonner, "Do dnevnikov," in *Dnevniki: Roman-dokument*, eds. Andrei Sakharov and Elena Bonner (Moscow: Vremia, 2006).

43 I am aware that no general conclusions can be drawn based on these examples or those of the texts that I examine here. However, there is a clear pattern that I have considered in the text selection for this analysis.

cow in the 1970s–1980s. She edited the diaries of her husband, Andrei Sakharov (1921–1989), who was one of the key figures of the Soviet human rights movement. She prefaced the edition with her own chapter, *Do dnevnikov*, which I mentioned earlier. While Sakharov started to keep diaries in 1977, Bonner's notes deal with the years 1970–1976 and she strives to depict her life with Sakharov in a more personal way than he did in his memoirs.

Another female author who is important for this article is Ludmilla Alexeyeva and her memoirs *The Thaw Generation* (1990),[44] written while in exile in the US in cooperation with the journalist Paul Goldberg.[45] It is a coming-of-age-story that talks about Alexeyeva's discovery of herself. Simultaneously, it takes a personal look at the history of the human rights movement in Moscow, which played an immense role in the development of Alexeyeva's personality. The book is primarily aimed at American readers and contains many explanatory elements that familiarize the reader with the (allegedly) largely unknown Soviet-Russian society. The Russian translation appeared in 2006, supplemented with Alexeyeva's foreword to the Russian edition.

Finally, I analyze some writings by Tatiana Goricheva, an Orthodox Christian. She converted to Christianity at the age of 26 even though she grew up in an atheist household. She was one of the first members of the "independent feminist movement" in Leningrad.[46] In her writings, she develops her particular brand of feminism that is closely connected to her Orthodox beliefs. She criticizes the fact that the official claim of gender equality is not mirrored in the everyday distribution of childcare and household duties.[47] The central motivation of her texts is the problematic situation of women in Soviet Russia, who were particularly burdened by their extensive responsibilities for childcare and household. Here I focus on three of her works: *Rettung der Verlorenen* (Salvation of

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44 Alexeyeva and Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation*.

45 They used their cooperation "to push the other out of the bounds dictated by his culture and language" (*ibid.*, ix). The consequences of this cooperation for the current paper will be discussed below.

46 Goricheva's conversion was not unique. From the 1970s, young intellectuals founded numerous Christian circles. Initially, these groups remained largely unaffected by the state. However, from 1979 onward, they were intensively persecuted. Thomas Bremer, *Kreuz und Kreml: Geschichten der orthodoxen Kirche in Russland* (Freiburg/Breisgau: Herder, 2016), 254–255. For further information, see *ibid.*, 253–258; Nadezhda Beliakova, Thomas Bremer, and Katharina Kunter, *"Es gibt keinen Gott!" Kirchen und Kommunismus: Eine Konfliktgeschichte* (Freiburg/Breisgau: Herder, 2016), 179–185 (the book also provides information on the situation in other socialist countries).

47 E. g., Tatiana Goricheva, *Hiobs Töchter* (Freiburg/Breisgau: Herder, 1988), 15, 127.

the Lost, 1982),[48] *Von Gott zu reden ist gefährlich* (Talking about God is Danger-ous, 1984),[49] and *Hiobs Töchter* (Daughters of Job, 1988), all of them written and published in exile.[50] *Salvation of the Lost* and *Talking about God Is Dangerous* are more of a personal account of her own beliefs and her life as a woman in Soviet Russia. *Daughters of Job*, on the other hand, describes the living conditions of Soviet women not as a personal, but as a social problem. Goricheva's works are not just a personal testimony but are supposed to offer guidance to (religious) women who are overwhelmed by Soviet living conditions and are searching for an alternative way of life.

In order to answer the research questions on the representations of the pri-vate and public spheres in the life writing of female dissenters, I proceed as fol-lows: first, I examine the authors' perspectives on privacy and publicity[51] (in-cluding their personal use of language) and on the distinction between public and private spheres. In my analysis, I use the terminology proposed by Oswald and Voronkov to provide a clear conceptual distinction between the descriptive and the analytical levels of this study. Second, I examine closely the areas of au-thors' lives that can be perceived as private, to determine how the description of the private affects self-conceptualization by the authors. Finally, I explore the limits of what the authors reveal to the reader, for omissions, too, are relevant for the self-conceptualization of the authors.

Distinctions between the Spheres

This section deals with the distinction between the public and the private that the authors themselves present in the texts, including their individual use of lan-guage. Elena Bonner's *Do dnevnikov* is the only text among those examined in this article whose original language is Russian and thus the only one for

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48 Tatiana Goricheva, *Rettung der Verlorenen* (Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus, 1982).

49 Tatiana Goricheva, *Von Gott zu reden ist gefährlich* (Freiburg/Breisgau: Herder, 1984). This volume was also translated into English: Tatiana Goricheva, *Talking about God is Dangerous* (London: SCM Press, 1986).

50 The books were published in German. While the original language is Russian, no Russian editions are currently available.

51 The aforementioned article by Juliane Fürst ("Friends in Private, Friends in Public") is an important example for a similar approach. She pays special attention to the subjective perspec-tive of the individual: in Soviet society, she explains, utopian fiction, propaganda, and factual reality were blurred, so that the only way to further define the reality of an individual was by considering his subjective experience: "For a critical Soviet subject there is no objectivity except one's own." Fürst, "Friends in Private," 231.

which the distinction between *lichnyi* and *chastnyi* is directly relevant. However, since Russian is the native language of all authors, at least for Tatiana Goricheva's texts, it can be reasonably assumed that this language use is also reflected in the translations. In Ludmilla Alexeyeva's case, the situation is more complicated: since *The Thaw Generation* was co-authored by Paul Goldberg, it is not just her own language use that is available for analysis. It is noteworthy that the issues and omissions that I examine were also influenced by Goldberg, in particular with regard to the public-private complex discussed here, since from a western perspective, the lack of privacy in the Soviet Union is striking. However, his influence may have helped address the issue. There is also a translation into Russian by Zoia Samoilova, which Alexeyeva closely monitored (*Pokolenie ottepeli*, 2006).[52] I compare passages, in which the words *private* or *privacy* are explicitly used in the original English edition with the Russian translation to determine to what extent the handling of the topic is altered by the use of English or Russian.

Elena Bonner

When looking for the word *chastnyi* in Bonner's *Do dnevnikov*, it quickly becomes apparent that the use of this word does not allow making the distinction of whether situations are perceived as public or private. Apart from quotations (e.g., letters, poems, or telegrams, which are cited frequently in *Do dnevnikov* and Sakharov's diaries),[53] she only uses it twice: in the context of private property ("[*dom*] *v chastnom vladenii*," Eng.: [a house] in private ownership [of an acquaintance]) and regarding Andrei Sakharov's documents of private nature ("*svoikh* [Andrei's] *bumag chastnogo kharaktera*").[54]

The phrase *lichnaia zhizn'* (Eng. "personal life") is used by Bonner only once (see quotation below); instead, she prefers *(nasha) semeinaia zhizn'* (Eng. "(our) family life").[55] The following example illustrates the difficulties that Bonner faces in fulfilling her self-imposed task, a personal account of her life with Sakharov:

> [...] I wanted, as far as I could imagine, to reflect our personal, family life, our worldview within it, but it is almost impossible to tear this [area of life] from what is commonly called

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52 Liudmila Alekseeva and Pol Goldberg, *Pokolenie ottepeli* (Moscow: Zakharov, 2006).
53 Bonner, "Do dnevnikov," 15.
54 *Ibid.*, 234, resp. 79–80.
55 *Ibid.*, 14, 71, 101, 131, 178. Alternatively, she uses the phrase *(nasha) sovmestnaia zhizn'* (our life together). *Ibid.*, 7, 9, 85.

socio-political activities. Everything was intertwined, and all our attempts to differentiate [literary: of differentiation] were illusory.[56]

In Bonner's mind, family life and socio-political engagement are, in principle, different areas of life that can be assigned to private or public-private spheres in the terminology of Oswald and Voronkov. However, these areas are so intertwined that a separation hardly seems possible. Nevertheless, on the textual level of *Do dnevnikov*, she tries to achieve this separation by using literary strategies. These strategies can be explained by the following passage:

> Our life ran against the backdrop of arrests, investigations, and court sessions, and almost daily [exchange of] papers concerning Andrei's commitment to human rights [...]. Our domestic and family life, however, kept on going, as if it did not interact with these matters.[57]

Here, she divides her life into a background that corresponds to the official-public and private-public spheres and a foreground that corresponds to the private sphere. In doing so, she ensures the separation of the spheres on the one hand, and puts her family life at the center of attention on the other. For the most part, Bonner describes episodes from both spheres separately, even when they take place almost at the same time. The distinction between them is so strict that, according to Bonner, even serious illnesses which have enormous implications for the family life cannot influence her social activities.[58]

In another situation, Bonner writes about an interview with a foreign correspondent in Sakharov's and her private apartment. The interview is (as Bonner suspects) simultaneously monitored by the KGB. Bonner reacts to this invasion of her privacy by explaining that she and Sakharov would not hide their activities anyway: "But we basically were not underground activists, and in fact, al-

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56 "[...] я хотела, насколько мне это представлялось возможным, отразить нашу личную, семейную жизнь, наше мироощущение внутри нее, хотя оторвать это от того, что принято называть общественно-политической деятельностью, почти невозможно. Все переплеталось, и результаты наших попыток разграничения были иллюзорны." [Translations here and throughout the article are mine if not indicated differently. A general note about the translation: the quotes were translated as literally as possible. They are, however, primarily supposed to reflect the meaning, sometimes even to the detriment of the grammatical structure of the original, if this was necessary.] *Ibid.*, 14.

57 "Фоном жизни были аресты, следствия и суды, чуть ли не ежедневные правозащитные документы Андрея [...]. Однако домашняя, семейная жизнь шла, как бы не пересекаясь с этими делами." *Ibid.*, 178.

58 *Ibid.*, 223.

most everything that was done in the public sphere, everything that is called dissident activity, was done openly."[59]

Bonner refers here to the principle of *glasnost'* (Eng. "openness," "transparency"). The word which was originally used by human rights activists to demand openness for political trials quickly evolved into a political slogan.[60] One of their main principles was that the openness which they demanded from the state should also be reflected in their own behavior. It was also a way to distinguish themselves from underground movements.[61] Many members of the human rights movement claimed that their activities, even those that caused persecution, were completely legal with regard to Soviet law and therefore, they had nothing to hide. Consequently, they demanded that the state follows the law and the Soviet constitution. In their perception, they exercised their constitutional rights by behaving as if they were living in a free society.[62] Bonner's statement reflects this self-confidence by accepting the opening up of her private sphere to the private-public or official-public sphere, which emerges as a consequence of her social commitment.

Ludmilla Alexeyeva

In *The Thaw Generation*, the words "private" and even "privacy" are used comparatively frequently, which is presumably due to Goldberg's influence. Right at the beginning, a passage not only gives insight into Alexeyeva's approach to the subject but also elaborates on the concept of privacy in Soviet Russia:

> There is no word for "privacy" in the Russian language, but we stumbled upon the concept the word defines: we ceased to be cogs in the machine of state; we ceased to be faceless members of the "collective"; each of us was unique, and all of us had a right to uniqueness.[63]

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59 "Но мы принципиально не были подпольщиками, и фактически почти все, что делалось в общественном плане, все то, что называется диссидентской деятельностью, делалось открыто." *Ibid.,* 178.

60 Ludmilla Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent: Contemporary Movements for National, Religious, and Human Rights* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1985), 274–275; Alexeyeva and Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation*, 108–109, 122.

61 Aleksandr Daniel', "Wie freie Menschen. Ursprung und Wurzeln des Dissens in der Sowjetunion," in *Samizdat: Alternative Kultur in Zentral- und Osteuropa: Die 60er bis 80er Jahre,* eds. Wolfgang Eichwede et al. (Bremen: Ed. Temmen, 2000), 38.

62 Amal'rik, *Zapiski dissidenta*, 39.

63 Alexeyeva and Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation*, 4.

In Alexeyeva's understanding, this "right to uniqueness" leads to the freedom of speech and is thus closely related to the freedom of writers or readers to write or read books that they like without risking censorship or other repressions. Alexeyeva remarks that there is neither a word for privacy nor a defined concept of privacy in Russian. In the Russian translation, the word "privacy" is avoided: instead of "stumbling upon the concept of privacy," they "free themselves from the Stalinist doctrine of collectivism."[64] Besides this amendment, the context of the passage remains the same.

In another passage, Alexeyeva describes the confrontation with acquaintances who refuse to sign a petition demanding the right to an open trial for Aleksandr Ginzburg and Iurii Galanskov:

> "We don't want to do that [to get into politics]; we are private people." I [Alexeyeva], too, was a private person. And I wasn't eager to get into politics. But defending samizdat was not politics. We were defending our [...] way of life.[65]

In this passage, all three spheres postulated by Oswald and Voronkov can be identified: the official-public (politics), the private-public (represented by the petition for open trials), and finally, the private sphere, namely the individuals, who would not only step out into the private-public sphere by signing the petition, but would also be challenging the official-public sphere. It is most likely the fear of this very confrontation with the state that prevents Alexeyeva's acquaintances from signing the petition, a fear that Alexeyeva overcomes to defend her chosen lifestyle. In the corresponding passage of the Russian translation, the terms "private people" or "private person" have been replaced by "just people" or "just a person" (*prosto liudi* and *prosto chelovek*),[66] but this does not change the fundamental constellation of the spheres.

The following passage sheds light on the meaning of Alexeyeva's family life within this constellation of spheres:

> Meanwhile, my family lived knowing that we no longer had any privacy. Our apartment had become a gigantic listening device. We were onstage, with the folks in the van listening, or even watching. Foreign reporters and domestic supplicants trekked to my door by the dozen.[67]

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64 Alekseeva and Goldberg, *Pokolenie ottepeli*, 14.
65 Alexeyeva and Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation*, 169.
66 Alekseeva and Goldberg, *Pokolenie ottepeli*, 177.
67 Alexeyeva and Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation*, 285.

The scene is reminiscent of the interview scene in *Do dnevnikov* mentioned above, but despite this similarity, Alexeyeva's perception is completely different: she experiences a total loss of her privacy due to the surveillance by the authorities on the one hand and her exposed position caused by her social engagement on the other. In this context, the wording *being onstage* is interesting: according to Alexeyeva, her private apartment becomes a stage for two different audiences. It implies that she and her family could no longer be themselves in this situation but rather had specific roles to play. Furthermore, the description of the situation suggests that this opening for state and oppositional observers did not happen voluntarily, but there was simply no place other than her private apartment in Soviet society, where Alexeyeva's social activities could have taken place. Like Bonner, Alexeyeva establishes a clear separation between the private sphere and the private-public and the official-public spheres using language. The description suggests that in Alexeyeva's mind her family life should be a separate area (at least potentially). This assumption is supported by the fact that in the corresponding passage of the Russian translation, "private life" has been translated as *chastnaia zhizn'*, which also implies a separation.[68] But the passage above also shows that this separation is hardly practicable in everyday life. In contrast to Bonner, Alexeyeva does not strive to separate the two spheres from each other on the textual level—on the contrary, they are closely interwoven. The demarcation between family life and dissident activity seems to be of little relevance to Alexeyeva. In her view, her dissent is rooted in her upbringing: the education by her grandmother and the associated influence of pre-revolutionary norms serves as justification for her inability to fit into the Soviet system: "A child brought up subject to the undivided attention of Anetta Marietta Rozalia Yanovna Sinberg [her grandmother] could never grow up to become a cog in the machine of state."[69] In Alexeyeva's writing, her later family life is inseparable from her dissent, as another section shows.

Tatiana Goricheva

Tatiana Goricheva rarely uses the word "private" in the texts examined here (as the texts are in German, I looked for the term *privat*); we can find corresponding passages only in *Salvation of the Lost*. In one instance, she mentions that she

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68 Alekseeva and Goldberg, *Pokolenie ottepeli*, 297.

69 Alexeyeva and Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation*, 12.

read out loud existential philosophical texts in "private apartments" as a part of her involvement in the unofficial culture of Leningrad.[70]

There are two passages that are more meaningful with respect to Goricheva's approach regarding the subject. According to her description, she experiences a blatant lack of privacy in Soviet Russian society: there were "no prerequisites for something 'private,' for a quiet existence and (creative) work."[71] According to Goricheva's description, neither she nor other like-minded people had a possibility to retreat from the eyes of the society and were forced to write poems in streetcars and discuss, e.g., Spinoza's writings in hallways.[72] Here, she perceives the private primarily as a retreat where the individual can pursue his or her interests undisturbed and unobserved. In the absence of such a place of retreat, Goricheva and others used public spaces for their own purposes.[73] Unlike in the first example, the word "private" in the quotation above is emphasized by Goricheva, which implies a distancing from the word and the connotation of separation that it contains. Potentially, this is a long-term effect of the fight against *chastnaia zhizn'* during Stalinism. However, the very use of the word and the context suggests that Goricheva considers this potential separation desirable.

After her conversion to Christianity, Goricheva's approach to the private seems to have changed significantly, as can be deduced from the description of her daily routine during a stay in a monastery:

> In this way, the Lord created my destiny so that I do not have a minute left for empty desires and senseless deeds [...] Sometimes, the last words of my prayer are the last flashes of my consciousness [before falling asleep]. [...] And just like that it is right, to educate myself, to make myself useful; there must not be a free minute, not a "private" second. I am in the house of my Father and repeat with the psalm-singer: "And in the house of the Lord I may dwell forever...."[74]

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70 Goricheva, *Rettung der Verlorenen*, 19.

71 "keine Voraussetzungen für ein 'Privates', für ruhiges Sein und Schaffen." [emphasis by the author] *Ibid.*, 16.

72 *Ibid.*, 16.

73 Claiming public space for one's own interests was a common practice in the Soviet Union, not only in subcultural milieus. See, e.g., Gerasimova, "Public Spaces," 174–175 about privately marked public spaces in communal apartments; Juliane Fürst, Piotr Osęka, and Chris Reynolds, "Breaking the Walls of Privacy: How Rebellion Came to the Street," *The Journal of the Social History Society* 8, no. 4 (2016), 505–506, about the hippie movement in Kaunas (Lithuania) and how they used public places to become visible to state and society.

74 "So schuf der Herrscher mein Schicksal, daß mir keine Minute für leere Wünsche und sinnlose Taten verbleibt [...]. Manchmal sind die letzten Worte meines Gebetes auch das letzte Aufblitzen meines Bewußtseins [sic!]. [...] Und gerade so ist es richtig, mich zu erziehen, mich nützlich zu machen; es darf keine Minute frei sein, keine Sekunde 'privat'. Ich bin im Hause meines

In this example, too, the connotation of separation that the word *chastnyi* has may well be intended. However, in this context, it does not imply distancing oneself from Soviet society, but from religious duties, and Goricheva tries hard to avoid that: according to her text, she is so busy practicing her belief that she has no time for even slightest distractions.[75] According to Goricheva's understanding, her lifestyle does not come from her own choice but is determined by God. Therefore, the impression arises (and examples given later will confirm it) that this loss of autonomy is not experienced by Goricheva as problematic since, in her opinion, she is fulfilling her destiny.

Goricheva's use of the word "personal" (*persönlich* in the German text) offers no further insights in this context. However, in reading Goricheva's texts, we find that developing a personality is significant for her. In this regard, she perceives the norms of socialist society as a hindrance,[76] but the influence of the church as highly beneficial.[77] According to Goricheva's understanding, fulfilling (imposed) religious duties is in no way contradictory to the development of a personality but is a prerequisite for it.[78]

What other demarcations between the public and private spheres can be found in Goricheva's texts? Unlike in Bonner's and Alexeyeva's life writing, her family environment does not seem to matter much to her. Goricheva describes the relationship with her parents as being very difficult. In *Salvation of the Lost*, she states in a brief paragraph that they were no longer united as a family and although they lived together in one room, they did not talk to each other. Moreover, she suggests that her mother had beaten her in her childhood. This dysfunctional environment made her retreat into a fantasy world.[79]

In *Talking about God is Dangerous*, the conflict with her parents is literarily orchestrated. Right at the beginning of the first chapter (which is meaningfully titled *An Encounter with the Devil*[80]) the reader learns that Goricheva's relationship with her parents suffered a lot from the fact that their daughter avowed herself a Christian (they feared consequences for themselves). According to Goriche-

Vaters und wiederhole mit dem Psalmsänger: 'Und im Hause des Herrn darf ich wohnen für immer...'" [emphasis by the author] Goricheva, *Rettung der Verlorenen*, 36.

75 Here, Goricheva adopts monastic traditions, which often organize the daily routine of Order members in a very structured way. This is consistent not only insofar as she lives at the time in a monastery: in Russian Orthodoxy, there is no basic distinction between monasticism and the laity, in principle, monastic ideals apply to all believers. Bremer, *Kreuz und Kreml*, 181–182.

76 Goricheva, *Von Gott zu reden ist gefährlich*, 73, 121.

77 Goricheva, *Rettung der Verlorenen*, 9–10, 56.

78 Goricheva, *Von Gott zu reden ist gefährlich*, 45.

79 Goricheva, *Rettung der Verlorenen*, 11–12, 20.

80 Goricheva, *Von Gott zu reden ist gefährlich*, 7–17.

va, they did not support or defend her even when she was to be picked up for interrogation by the KGB. On the contrary, they reproached her and even urged her to obey the officials without fuss:

> "Just go with them, as long as they ask you to do so amicably, otherwise you will shame us in plain view of our neighbors. You are already considered a nun. You have studied so many years—and all in vain." That's how Mom gets upset. She is deplorable when she hides my icons as soon as I go out during the day—so that the neighbors would not see them. She sighs and cannot fall asleep when I pray in the bathroom in the evening, where I hide from my parents.[81]

When her parents understood that they could not persuade her to turn herself in, they turned to a KGB official: in an attempt to de-escalate the situation, they offered "Boris" (as he introduced himself)[82] some tea and asked for sympathy for their daughter, who was (in their eyes) a "lunatic."[83] However, Boris, who should have been a natural ally of Goricheva's loyalist parents, remained neutral and calm and even took Goricheva's side once. Thus, in Goricheva's understanding, he became her moral advocate against her parents. Goricheva remained relentless; only when "Boris" called the police to have her taken away, she turned herself in and accompanied the KGB official.[84]

According to her description, Goricheva cannot live in faith openly even within her closest family and she finds neither understanding nor support there. The portrayal of the protagonists in the scene above is evidently designed to emphasize her conflicts with her parents. Unlike Boris, Goricheva's parents remain nameless, as if Goricheva intended to point out the distance between her parents and herself. Also, Goricheva differs significantly from her parents in her behavior: her own calm and pertinacity in dealing with the official are in sharp contrast to the sometimes smarmy, sometimes hysterical behavior of her parents. When Boris (who, in Goricheva's conviction, must be considered a part of the "evil")[85] takes the side of a Christian woman, the confusion with her parents

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81 "'Fahr doch, solange man dich im Guten dazu auffordert, sonst wirst du uns vor allen Nachbarn Schande machen. Man hält dich schon für eine Nonne. So viele Jahre hast du studiert – und alles umsonst.' So regt sich Mama auf. Die Arme versteckt meine Ikonen, wenn ich tagsüber aus dem Hause gehe – damit die Nachbarn sie nicht sehen. Sie seufzt und kann nicht einschlafen, wenn ich abends im Badezimmer bete, wo ich mich vor den Eltern versteckt habe." *Ibid.*, 8.
82 Goricheva writes his name in quotation marks, probably to indicate that it is not his real name.
83 *Ibid.*, 9.
84 *Ibid.*, 8 – 10.
85 See also, e. g., her elaborations in Goricheva, *Hiobs Töchter*, 15.

is taken to the extreme: they are alienated from each other to such extent that overcoming their differences seems hardly possible.[86]

Unlike Bonner and Alexeyeva, Goricheva only devotes a few sentences to the story of how she met her husband, Viktor Krivulin, and eventually got married.[87] They later divorce even though (as Goricheva states), she "loved him very much." She describes this experience as follows: "It was painful. But more important to me was the realization of our ideas, and so with utmost honesty, I endeavored to realize the 'incarnation' of these ideas in all other aspects of my life."[88] Apart from these few passages, Goricheva gives no further information about her parents or her husband in the texts examined here. It is quite possible that this restraint is caused by her negative experience. This may explain why Goricheva's distinction between privacy and publicity is so different from that of Bonner and Alexeyeva: in their life writing, the family is a shelter and retreat, not only from the state but also at times from their social commitments. In Goricheva's texts, however, neither her parents nor her marriage to Krivulin can fulfill this function because all these relationships have failed. Considering this, it

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86 Nevertheless, Goricheva expresses understanding for the behavior of her parents and explains that they grew up in different times when people were not just interrogated but immediately executed. This is obviously an allusion to the Great Terror and the associated social climate of fear and mistrust in Soviet society. Two important works which deal with this subject are Boris Dubin, "Gesellschaft der Angepassten: Die Brežnev-Ära und ihre Aktualität," *Osteuropa* 57, no. 12 (2007) and Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999). In the chapter "Purge and Self-Criticism: The Collective as a Subject of Knowledge and Action" (123–163), Kharkhordin shows that shortly after the Revolution, mutual surveillance (and possibly denunciation) was discussed as a method of enforcing the new norms of post-Revolutionary Russia (131–132) and how practices of purging and self-criticism were finally implemented in the 1920s and 1930s (140–142). The fact that denunciations were an integral part of these practices created a social climate of anxiety and mistrust, ultimately leading to the almost total isolation of the individual. The fear of the Great Terror remained effective even after its end, resulting in comparatively little violence being needed in later times to enforce state interests (161–163, esp. 163). With her allusion to the Great Terror, which was still present in her parents' minds, Goricheva confirms, albeit anecdotally, Kharkhordin's thesis. Dubin's article also provides evidence that this anxiety-driven isolation continued through the 1970s and beyond (67) and is therefore relevant for the authors in question here. Dubin, "Gesellschaft der Angepassten."
87 Goricheva mentions her former husband Viktor Krivulin only marginally, although he shared her religious views and was a well-known member of Leningrad's unofficial culture in his own right. However, within Goricheva's texts, he does not seem to have played any role in establishing a private sphere.
88 "Es tat weh. Doch viel wichtiger erschien mir die Verwirklichung unserer Ideen, [...] und so bemühte ich mich in äußerster Ehrlichkeit, alle anderen Stufen meines Lebens zur 'Inkarnation' der Ideen zu machen." Goricheva, *Rettung der Verlorenen,* 17.

can be interpreted as a rejection of familial, intimate relations. Instead of focusing on family relationships and personal needs, she focuses on implementing her religious values in a lifestyle that she calls "the incarnation of our ideas." In this respect, the divorce from Krivulin can be understood as a turning point.[89]

While in Alexeyeva's and Bonner's case the family is clearly a part of the private sphere, in Goricheva's text, family is replaced by religion. According to Goricheva, life as an Orthodox Christian requires an almost complete separation from the influence of the state. In her conception, the state and its representatives belong to the "demonic" sphere and should be excluded from the consciousness of a believing person as much as possible.[90] For many people in Goricheva's generation, the human rights movement was unsuccessful. Therefore, they searched for other, alternative, ways of life.[91] Goricheva is critical of the human rights movement and considers Christianity to be a logical and essential progression. The consistent exclusion of the state can be a consequence of this disappointment, since most attempts of the human rights movement to start a dialogue with the state (for example, via petitions) failed. Her public/private divide is therefore certainly a consequence of her ideological orientation. The following example shows how she implements this belief before an imminent questioning by the KGB:

> On my own, I prayed in silence. Jesus Prayer,[92] in particular, helped me: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, the sinner." This prayer created an impenetrable field around me. Thanks to this prayer, I felt utterly protected, no matter which walls enclosed me and in what circumstances I was.[93]

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89 Publicly available information suggests that she never married again.

90 Goricheva, *Von Gott zu reden ist gefährlich*, 12–13. She refers here to the "holy fathers" (*heilige Väter*, 12), i.e., the church fathers, whose teachings characterize Russian Orthodoxy to this day. Bremer, *Kreuz und Kreml*, 149.

91 This generation was by no means exclusively oriented toward religious values but experimented with different concepts. See Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, NJ/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006).

92 The "Jesus Prayer" is a praying technique widely used in Orthodox monasticism since the Middle Ages. To practice it, the praying person constantly repeats a short sentence (for example: "Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me!"; variations of this formula were possible), while focusing on his breath. Bremer, *Kreuz und Kreml*, 190–191.

93 "Ich betete still für mich. Besonders das Jesusgebet half mir: 'Herr Jesus Christus, Sohn Gottes, erbarme dich meiner, der Sünderin.' Dieses Gebet schuf ein undurchdringliches Feld um mich herum. Dank dieses Gebetes fühlte ich mich völlig geschützt, hinter welchen Wänden ich auch war und in welchen Verhältnissen ich mich auch befand." Goricheva, *Von Gott zu reden ist gefährlich*, 12.

The example shows the extent to which Goricheva excludes the state from her consciousness or at least tries to: even in a situation where she is completely and utterly at the mercy of its representatives, she creates a sphere which belongs exclusively to her and remains closed to the state's influence. This sphere of belief is not necessarily a physical space, but first and foremost a mental one, into which the individual can withdraw from the state, even if he or she is entirely within the state's sphere of influence physically. Since the sphere of belief serves here as a retreat from the official-public sphere, it can be considered a private sphere.

In Goricheva's perception, however, turning away from the state does not mean retreating from (an alternative) public life. On the contrary, she attaches great importance to the social commitment of (religious) women's rights activists.[94] Similar to Bonner's and Alexeyeva's writing, a private-public sphere can also be identified in Goricheva's texts. Also, she claims that they did not hide their work from the state when publishing religious samizdat:[95]

> The principle of our work was complete openness. We did not hide anything; we did not make any secret of our work. We lived and worked as if there were no Soviet power, no Soviet authorities, and no KGB. [...] The KGB people acted as if they did not notice our journal and our seminar, even though they kept watching us.[96]

For Elena Bonner, openness toward the state is informed by her notion of a decent dissident lifestyle. Similarly, Goricheva declares complete openness as a principle of her activities. Nevertheless, there is a significant difference: while members of the human rights movement publicly challenged the state, i.e., the official-public sphere to act, Goricheva describes a distant and (for the time being) undisturbed coexistence with state institutions. By ignoring the existence of the KGB, she follows her principle to exclude the state from her consciousness.

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94 E. g., Goricheva, *Hiobs Töchter*, 10 – 12.

95 In this case, one can think of the journal *37* that was published by members of a religious-philosophical seminar of the same name, which was co-founded by Goricheva. The journal has not been edited till now; the original manuscripts are stored in the archive of the Forschungsstelle Osteuropa at the University of Bremen.

96 "Das Prinzip unserer Arbeit war völliges Offensein. Wir haben nichts verborgen, wir haben aus unserer Arbeit kein Geheimnis gemacht. Wir lebten und arbeiteten so, als gäbe es keine Sowjetmacht, keine Sowjetbehörden und keinen KGB. [...] Die KGB-Leute taten, als bemerkten sie unsere Zeitschrift und unser Seminar nicht, obwohl sie uns ständig beobachteten." Goricheva, *Rettung der Verlorenen*, 8 – 9.

Based on the examined texts, I conclude that all authors make a tripartite division of the communicative space, which can be described with the terminology proposed by Oswald and Voronkov. The official-public sphere is represented in all texts by the state, its institutions, or representatives. The private-public sphere corresponds to the social engagement of the authors. The contents of the private sphere however differ: in Bonner's and Alexeyeva's texts, the family is an integral part of the private sphere, while in Goricheva's writings this place is occupied by religion. In the second part of the analysis, I therefore focus on Bonner's and Alexeyeva's family life and Goricheva's religious life.

One important aspect to be noted: the analyzed examples suggest that none of the authors has developed a concept of privacy. Although such a concept is explicitly mentioned in *The Thaw Generation*, this is most likely due to the influence of Goldberg rather than the reflection of Alexeyeva's language. This assumption is supported by the fact that privacy as a concept virtually disappears in the Russian translation. In all texts, however, we can identify the demand or at least the desire to establish spaces that are separated from the state and social control.

Descriptions of Private Life

In this section, I analyze the areas of life that are most likely to be considered private according to the above examples. In Bonner's and Alexeyeva's case, I focus primarily on their family life. For Goricheva, who describes very few events from her family life, it is the sphere of the belief that serves as a retreat.

Elena Bonner

As stated above, Bonner tries to establish a clear distinction between her family life on the one hand and her dissident activities and state interventions on the other hand using literary strategies. However, Bonner herself admits that such a separation was hardly possible in both her real life and her writings. For example, an episode in which Bonner describes how her daughter Tatiana is suffering professional disadvantages due to the dissident activity of her mother shows that the spheres of family life and public activities were not separate.[97] Her son Alexei

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97 Bonner, "Do dnevnikov," 153.

also suffered as a result of the situation: according to Bonner, he was urged at school to distance himself from Andrei Sakharov's political positions.[98]

Furthermore, she states that Sakharov's and her decision to marry was motivated by political circumstances: "Andrei decided that our relationship should be legalized. [...] Andrei's main argument was, 'When you are arrested, I am not allowed to visit you.'"[99] Because of their activities as human rights activists, they were in danger of being arrested. As spouses, they had more rights to provide assistance for one another. After their marriage in 1971, Bonner and Sakharov traveled to Kyiv to observe a political trial. Despite traveling in their capacity as dissidents, they considered this journey to be their honeymoon.[100] The route and destination of another holiday trip in 1972 were also determined by their wish to get acquainted with a group of like-minded people.[101]

Although her private and public life seemed to be hopelessly intertwined, Bonner describes in the following passage how she and Sakharov consciously tried to create a private sphere for themselves, at least for a short time. She explains that, for about three months, they had two apartments at their disposal and organized their lives during this period as follows:

> All economic/domestic and so-called social life, with individual exceptions, took place on Chkalov Street, and we spent the night in my apartment in Novogireevo. [...] After four months of separation [Bonner traveled to Oslo to receive the Nobel Peace Prize on Sakharov's behalf], we really wanted to be alone [lit. only two of us] for at least a part of the day. We usually left there in the evening, sometimes not before midnight. There, we had breakfast together [lit. the two of us]. In general, the morning together [lit. the two of us] was our favorite time during all these years.[102]

Bonner's description clearly shows her desire for a retreat, a place where she and Sakharov could spend at least several hours a day undisturbed by the "so-called social life." Perhaps it is precisely the impossibility to establish a permanent sep-

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98 *Ibid.*, 172.

99 "Андрей решил, что наши отношения должны быть оформлены. [...] У Андрея главным доводом было – тебя арестуют, а меня не пустят к тебе на свидание." *Ibid.*, 79. Alexeyeva, incidentally, describes very similar considerations in regard to her second marriage (see below), *ibid.*, 270.

100 *Ibid.*, 94.

101 *Ibid.*, 98.

102 "Вся хозяйственная и так называемая общественная жизнь за отдельными исключениями шла на улице Чкалова, а ночевать мы ездили в мою квартиру в Новогиреево. [...] После четырехмесячной разлуки очень уж хотелось хоть часть суток быть вдвоем. Уезжали мы обычно туда вечером, иногда не раньше полуночи. Завтракали там вдвоем. Вообще – утро вдвоем у нас все годы было самым любимым временем." *Ibid.*, 317.

aration between personal life and social engagement that occasionally leads Bonner to write about very intimate details. For example, she describes in detail the manner in which she met Sakharov, how their relationship developed and they got close, how she refused his first invitation to stay with him and regretted this later, how her bond with Sakharov—"the convergence, the mutual confluence of body and soul"[103]—continued to grow. She even explains to the reader how she changed her sleeping habits for Sakharov's sake during their relationship: "And I learned to sleep on my left side. Andrei said that whenever I pressed my knees against his stomach, a feeling of peace and complete well-being both in himself and in the world descended to him [from the heavens] [...]."[104] Bonner explicitly strives to depict her life with Sakharov in as personal a manner as possible, potentially to state that this dimension of her life also existed. Apart from episodes of intimacy, Bonner's perspective determines the events from her family environment that she interpreted as private or public. At times, this association seems to be the result of arbitrary decisions.

Ludmilla Alexeyeva

As mentioned above, Ludmilla Alexeyeva describes in *The Thaw Generation* the extent to which her family life is influenced by her sense of being different and her later involvement in the Moscow human rights movement, including the subsequent interventions of the state. In one way or another, almost all episodes of family life that she describes in her book relate to her dissent, thus emphasizing how much the developments in her private life were linked to her growing involvement in social and political opposition.

Alexeyeva pays special attention to her two marriages in her life writing. In particular, she writes intensively about her first marriage to Valentin Alexeyev which she describes (at least in retrospect) as being ill-fated from the beginning. Alexeyeva reports frankly that this marriage was not motivated by infatuation or even love: there were few suitable men for a woman of her age because many of them had died in the war. Also, she draws a quite positive picture of his character that corresponded to her idea of a good husband, which prompted her to accept his marriage proposal:

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103 "[...] это сближение, взаимопроникновение душевное и физическое [...]." *Ibid.* 131.
104 "И я научилась спать на левом боку. Андрей говорил, что когда мои коленки упираются в его живот, на него нисходит [...] чувство покоя и полного благополучия и в себе, и в мире." *Ibid.*, 131.

> Valentin Alexeyev was an attractive, calm, stable man; he spoke correct Russian; he wasn't crippled; he liked to dance; he wasn't opposed to reading. He was six years older than I [sic!], his career was underway, and he was mature. When he proposed, I talked myself into accepting. [...] By the time I married Valentin, I had convinced myself that I was in love.[105]

However, Alexeyeva eventually realizes that these rational considerations are not enough for a proper marriage. She is financially dependent on her husband and he keeps pointing this out to her, while her fight against this dependence leads to hopeless power struggles.[106] Another crucial reason Alexeyeva is unhappy with her first husband is that he is much closer to the Soviet system than she is and therefore does not share her wishes for social change. Consequently, he considered the *kompaniia* movement[107] a waste of his time, whereas Alexeyeva was deeply involved in it because of the possibility of meeting like-minded people.[108] Nevertheless, the decision to divorce was hard for her for several reasons. First, her marriage was one of the better ones compared to those of some of her acquaintances: "At least Valentin and I weren't rude and didn't drink or cheat on each other. Except for the fact that I didn't love him, Valentin was an exemplary husband."[109] Second, for this very reason, her friends strongly advised her against divorce. Whenever she told them about her intention, their reaction was as follows or very similar: "Are you crazy! He doesn't drink. He doesn't smoke. He doesn't chase skirts! He is in the military!"[110] Third, her husband threatened to either separate their two sons or demand full custody of both.[111] Only when she found out that this was not in accordance with the Soviet law, she confronted Alexeyev with this fact and left him.[112]

This episode shows that Alexeyeva's rebellion against the state and the unwritten rules of the private-public sphere were preceded by emancipation efforts

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105 Alexeyeva and Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation*, 36–37.

106 *Ibid.*, 41.

107 The *kompanii* (friendship circles) were a phenomenon of the Thaw that emerged in the mid-1950s. Groups of like-minded friends and acquaintances came together to drink and dance in a relaxed atmosphere and exchange concerns about daily and political life that had no place in the official-public sphere. Although most of these groups had no specific political orientation, they served as a place of opinion-making. Alexeyeva sees them as the origin of the human rights movement in Moscow. Alexeyeva and Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation*, 83–84; Fürst, "Friends in Private," 229–230.

108 Alexeyeva and Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation*, 84.

109 *Ibid.*, 66.

110 *Ibid.*, 41, for another example, see *ibid.*, 85.

111 *Ibid.*, 84–85.

112 *Ibid.*, 109–110.

in her personal sphere. These efforts are not only directed toward her husband but also toward her circle of friends and acquaintances, according to whom her first marriage was good enough to be continued. She presents herself as a self-confident woman who wants to shape her life and portrays her divorce as a milestone on her path to this life. However, Alexeyeva also emphasizes that she and her husband had a good relationship with each other after the divorce and that he regularly visited their sons.[113] In the context of her life story, Alexeyeva presents the termination of this marriage, about which she had reservations from the very beginning, as an essential step on her way to self-realization. Her claim that the relationship to her ex-husband is mostly tension-free additionally legitimizes this step to the reader.

In 1959, while she was still married to Alexeyev, Alexeyeva made the acquaintance of Nikolai Williams who belonged to a circle of former political prisoners (*politzeki*), who called themselves "Sybarites." The Sybarites were originally a circle of friends consisting of eight students who met in Moscow in 1943. Alexeyeva emphasizes that it was an unusually large group at the time, thus pointing out the extreme isolation and enormous distrust of others that characterized Stalinist society. Ultimately, the Sybarites were prosecuted for establishing an anti-Soviet organization and sentenced to several years in the camps in 1946.

Alexeyeva explains that young people, who had to spend significant time in the camps, often grew up physically but not mentally. It also applies to the Sybarites: "The Sybarites were in their thirties when we met, but they behaved like boys."[114] They enthusiastically recited self-written texts full of slaughtering (preferably, but not exclusively, with saws of all kinds), spreading blood and heaps of corpses.[115] Alexeyeva quotes their texts in detail and also gives examples of their sprawling use of the word *blia* (short for *bliad'* or *bliat'*, Eng. "slut").

It is astonishing that Alexeyeva, who has always paid a lot of attention to a correct language (compare the qualities of her former husband quoted above), does not criticize this use of language. Rather, she shows great sympathy for these men shaken by the fate: "Natasha and I were in love with all eight of the Sybarites, and we soon formed a *kompaniia* similar in spirit to the brotherhood that had cost the Sybarites their freedom."[116] Therefore, Alexeyeva is drawn to an outsider, someone whose behavior diverges from the norms of the Soviet society, but who shares her social and political views much more than

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113 *Ibid.*, 151.
114 *Ibid.*, 88.
115 *Ibid.*, 89 – 90.
116 *Ibid.*, 90.

her former husband. Her interest in him shows how far she has already distanced herself from Soviet norms, which makes her relationship with Williams another step on her path to self-discovery.

In 1967, Alexeyeva and Williams became lovers, and for about a year, they had a rather loose relationship. Since both already had unfortunate marriages, they had no intentions of making promises to each other.[117] However, when she lost her job,[118] she found herself at high risk of persecution for parasitism (*tuneiadstvo*) as a divorced woman. In this situation, Williams proposed to her in a very unromantic way (as she admits), which nevertheless seemed appropriate to both of them:

> Look, if we get married, you can tell them that I support you, and they can go to hell. You need that paper saying that you are married. We don't have to live in the same apartment. We would not have to have joint finances, and you would not have to change your name. Everything will stay the same between us. That little piece of paper will be for them, not for us.[119]

Initially, they did not want to make a fuss about the primarily formal act of registering as a married couple. However, when other members of the human rights movement learned of their intention, the evening after the registration turned into a delirious party.[120] This example illustrates once more the blurred boundaries between (potentially) public engagement and private (family) life from Alexeyeva's perspective. Not only did members of the Moscow human rights movement share a common cause, but they also maintained friendly relations with each other (in part, since the time of *kompanii*). Accordingly, Alexeyeva describes their involvement in each other's private lives as a matter of course.

Despite a life situation that holds a lot of potential for conflict in relation to Alexeyeva's children (divorce of the parents, the mother's new partner, financial problems), she describes a mostly harmonious relationship with them. On the one hand, she demonstrates a high degree of trust in them: Alexeyeva reveals her views and her involvement in samizdat to her sons as soon as they are dis-

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117 *Ibid.*, 187.

118 Due to her dissident activities, Alexeyeva was expelled from the Communist Party and as a consequence, lost her job as an editor at the *Nauka* Publishing House.

119 *Ibid.*, 187. Judging from the marriage proposal above, the marriage between Ludmilla Alexeyeva and Nikolai Williams seems to be a marriage of convenience *par excellence*. However, the relationship quickly develops, apparently to their surprise, in a different direction: "he was living in my apartment, he had turned over his salary, and our friends had begun treating us as a married couple. Was it possible that we were indeed married?" *Ibid.*, 191.

120 *Ibid.*, 187–188.

creet enough not to divulge this secret in public, e. g., at school.[121] She decides to be frank with her children:

> But if you whisper about "forbidden subjects" and lock samizdat from your children, they grow up to be strangers. Besides, the forbidden subjects were too much a part of my life. If I had attempted concealment, I would have been talking in a perpetual whisper and carrying a purse full of keys. Life would have become impossible.[122]

On the other hand, she describes her children as being very considerate when it comes to sharing the (financial) consequences of their mother's political position. For example, her son Mikhail[123] did not ask for a new school uniform because he knew about the precarious financial situation of his family, even though he had long outgrown his old one.[124]

Alexeyeva describes in detail a long-term conflict and reconciliation with her mother who initially disapproved of Alexeyeva's unofficial activities. The resolution of this conflict comes when her mother appropriates conspiratorial communication techniques: Alexeyeva describes an episode, in which her mother and another dissident arrange an unofficial press conference via Magic Pad while simultaneously talking about banalities because of the probable KGB surveillance.[125] Here it is noteworthy that the private in this scene (the disregard of privacy by state surveillance) does not seem to matter at all. Rather, Alexeyeva's focus is on the fact that her mother deals with the situation in a "dissident" way, which reduces the distance between them. Finally, her mother makes friends with some members of the Moscow human rights movement: "My God, my friends were now her [Alexeyeva's mother] friends. She had become one of us."[126] At the very latest since her marriage to Williams and the reconciliation with her mother, Alexeyeva spends most of her life, according to her description, in a grey area where it is difficult to distinguish clearly between the private and the public.

The episodes from Alexeyva's private life cited above deal with interpersonal relationships, but she also presents a passage in which her dissent has direct physical effects on her: She describes how she gets a molar extracted which, ac-

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121 It was quite common among dissenters not to keep their political stance secret from their children. See Stephan, *Von der Küche*, 260.

122 Alexeyeva and Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation*, 109.

123 In *The Thaw Generation*, Alexeyeva usually uses the diminutive "Misha".

124 *Ibid.*, 200.

125 *Ibid.*, 289–290.

126 *Ibid.*, 301.

cording to the dentist, could have been saved. She undergoes this painful procedure which is executed without adequate anesthesia for fear of being arrested soon: "[…] there are few things worse than having bad teeth in the camps, and […] I didn't have time for fillings, caps, and root canals."[127] Alexeyeva's actions should not necessarily be understood as fulfilling a dissident obligation of a sort. At this time, she was so deeply involved in the dissident movement that in the event of an arrest, she would have to expect punishment even if she decides to collaborate with the authorities. Therefore, she uses the possibilities available to her to prepare herself for the worst-case scenarios (arrest and sentencing to prison camp) in the best possible way.

The dominance of dissent in Alexeyeva's life writing, including her private life, can be explained by considering the purpose of her writing. *The Thaw Generation* is a coming-of-age story: her otherness from childhood onward and her later involvement in the Moscow human rights movement are so crucial to the development of her personality that a private life beyond dissident circles seems unthinkable. Yet, Alexeyeva refrains from presenting her life as a mere political biography and instead chooses a holistic view in which her private emancipation is an important milestone on her way to self-realization.

Tatiana Goricheva

Goricheva makes a clear distinction between her life as an Orthodox Christian and the state that is supposed to influence this life as little as possible. Since family ties play a rather subordinate role in Goricheva's texts, her religious life is the closest proxy to a private sphere in her writings. Goricheva regards the Church as an absolute authority, whose ideals and demands the believers are to accept and fulfill without contradiction.[128] Prayers and contemplation become a central part of her life. She regularly mentions worship services which she perceived as being peaceful and cathartic,[129] and describes her occasional participation in the monastic life in detail.[130] She also recounts certain lively meetings and hours of chaotic discussions, especially at the meetings of the religious circles in which she took part, but does not go into great detail.[131] In personal

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127 *Ibid.*, 213.

128 Goricheva, *Von Gott zu reden ist gefährlich*, 30; *Hiobs Töchter*, 15.

129 E. g., Goricheva, *Rettung der Verlorenen*, 41.

130 *Ibid.*, 28 – 52; Goricheva, *Von Gott zu reden ist gefährlich*, 85 – 106.

131 E. g., Goricheva, *Rettung der Verlorenen*, 58; *Von Gott zu reden ist gefährlich,* 62, 67.

terms, many of her old friends, who have converted to Christianity as well, remain important to her:

> I remember how suddenly and unexpectedly the rebirth of almost all my friends, who used to be ironists, cynics, buffoons, and drinkers, was for me. Now they were Orthodox Christians. How bright and serious were their faces now, how young did they seem, how much silence was there in their gestures, words, feelings.[132]

This portrayal of her friends is a very typical example of Goricheva's stereotypical way of describing her fellow believers, especially in the context of religious practices, such as worship. The people whom she regards as role models usually exude calm and serenity and are beautiful in a modest way.[133] In addition, Goricheva emphasizes the deep bond between the believers, which creates a sense of togetherness even without a personal acquaintance.

Overall, Goricheva tends to identify herself with the group with which she socializes. Usually, she shares significant experiences (e.g., the conversion) with a group of like-minded people. As a result, she does not talk about these experiences by talking about *herself*, but by using the collective pronouns *we* or *us*. In doing so, she linguistically lessens her importance as an individual and seeks to be absorbed into a collective instead. A possible explanation for this stylistic peculiarity can be found in a passage in which Goricheva enthusiastically reports about her experiences during a visit to a monastery. "Only my always well-tempered father confessor reacted uncommonly. He noticed the pride in my enthusiasm. And he forbade me the word *me/I*."[134] Overcoming the deadly sin of pride is an important endeavor in Goricheva's writing.[135] In turn, she declares modesty and humility to be ideals to strive for and often assigns these qualities to people she regards as an example.[136] Thus, Goricheva's

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132 "Ich erinnere mich, wie plötzlich und unvermutet sich für mich die Wiedergeburt fast aller meiner Freunde darstellte, die früher Ironiker, Zyniker, Hanswurste und Trinker waren. Nun waren sie orthodoxe Christen. Wie hell und ernsthaft waren jetzt ihre Gesichter, wie jung wirkten sie doch, wieviel Stille zeigte sich in ihren Gesten, Worten, Gefühlen." Goricheva, *Rettung der Verlorenen*, 54.

133 Goricheva, *Hiobs Töchter*, 52–53; *Von Gott zu reden ist gefährlich*, 41, esp. 56.

134 "Nur mein immer gutmütiger Beichtvater reagierte ungewöhnlich. Er bemerkte den Hochmut in meiner Begeisterung. Und er verbot mir das Wort 'ich'." Goricheva, *Von Gott zu reden ist gefährlich*, 56.

135 Goricheva, *Rettung der Verlorenen*, 15, 55; *Von Gott zu reden ist gefährlich*, 25, 44–45.

136 Goricheva, *Rettung der Verlorenen*, 89; *Von Gott zu reden ist gefährlich*, 50, 86–87.

emergence in a collective *we* can be interpreted as a stylistic realization of a life agreeable to God (in her eyes).[137]

Goricheva does not only present her religious experiences, but she also develops an idea of the type of (family) life appropriate to the Christian faith. In Goricheva's conception, there are two appropriate ways of life for women: one of a wife and (potentially) a mother, and one of asceticism. In her view, asceticism does not necessarily imply a monastic life, but can just as well be lived out in society. Thus, she writes about a believer who lived in a communal apartment with drunkards and prostitutes. This woman practiced the selfless grace of charity by devoting herself to these people.[138] Considering this example, a life of asceticism can mean an extensive openness to one's fellow human beings. The consequence of this openness is (in this case) an almost total loss of privacy due to both religious devotion and the living situation in a communal flat. According to Goricheva, the individual should not decide on a way of life autonomously. Instead, monks and priests should have a significant impact on these issues and even influence private decisions, such as the choice of a spouse:

> It is interesting that not every woman receives the blessing of marriage. This is not only because the experienced *startsy* [the elders] already see a future Bride of Christ in some of them, but also due to the fact that these very *startsy* know perfectly well what marriage means.[139]

In Goricheva's conception of life, turning away from state structures and socialist models of life does not necessarily mean gaining privacy (at least from a western perspective): living as a believer often does not allow individuals to make autonomous decisions, even when it comes to highly personal matters. From a secular point of view, Goricheva's conception of life does not overcome the authoritarian system in the Soviet Union but reproduces it in a reverse manner, thereby replacing "demonic" authoritarianism with a religious one. However, it is important to keep in mind that the concepts "privacy" and "autonomy" do not seem to be rel-

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137 It should be noted that this is not just Goricheva's individual moral conception. Modesty and humility are important Christian values and have long been part of Orthodox practice. Vasily V. Zenkovsky, "The Spirit of Russian Orthodoxy," *The Russian Review* 22, no. 1 (1963), esp. 38 – 39, 50 – 51. However, the lives of certain sections of the clergy sometimes contradicted these ideals, leading to controversy till the recent past. Bremer, *Kreuz und Kreml*, 234.

138 Goricheva, *Hiobs Töchter*, 26 – 27.

139 "Und es ist interessant, daß durchaus nicht jede Frau den Segen für die Ehe erhält. Nicht nur deshalb, weil die erfahrenen Starzen in mancher schon die zukünftige Braut Christi sehen, sondern auch deshalb, weil eben diese Starzen sehr gut wissen, was die Ehe bedeutet." *Ibid.*, 115 – 116.

evant to Goricheva. Above everything else, it is important for her to fulfill her God-given destiny, which is why she perceives religious life as empowerment.

At least on the textual level, Goricheva makes no attempt to distinguish between a private-public and a private sphere, maybe because she views her activities in the Leningrad women's rights movement as a direct continuation of her beliefs. By analyzing these texts, distinguishing between activities aimed at the public (such as the publishing of samizdat or the founding of religious-philosophical seminars) and religious involvement that also takes place in society (charity practice) is possible. However, this distinction is not text-immanent since it seems to have no meaning for Goricheva. In her texts, the religious life is certainly similar to privacy insofar as it offers the opportunity to retreat and provides security even in precarious situations. However, the religious sphere goes far beyond privacy. In this sphere, privacy and autonomy in relation to one's own interests are rather unimportant, but the individual can derive great satisfaction from fulfilling his or her God-given destiny within the community of believers and society. It is quite possible that Goricheva's conception of life is based on the ideal of *sobornost'*.[140] Consequently, it is understandable that, at least on the textual level, Goricheva seems to make no attempt to differentiate any spheres within the religious sphere.

The Boundaries of Privacy

As mentioned above, no autobiographical text can describe the entirety of an author's life. Instead, these texts are the result of a process of selection and construction. The analyzed texts were written with a particular communication situation in mind, depending on the subject, the intention of the authors and the implied reader. In other communication situations, the boundary between the public and the private could have been drawn differently. Therefore, the extent to which an autobiographical text provides insight into the private life and which parts of it remain hidden to the reader is usually the author's decision. Consequently, it is not only important to analyze what the authors write about, but also what they remain silent about.

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140 In the nineteenth century, the concept of *sobornost'* was developed by Slavophile intellectuals as a countermodel to western European culture, which in their perception, placed too much emphasis on man and neglected the relationship with God. It is difficult to translate the word appropriately; the term *community of believers* is only an approximation. The individual is merged into this community, but this does not mean giving up one's identity—on the contrary, one finds it and fulfills it. Bremer, *Kreuz und Kreml*, 162–164.

If we reconsider the quotes from the previous section, it is striking to discover the extent to which the authors differ in their descriptions of intimacy. Alexeyeva and Bonner describe in detail how they met their future husbands and started a relationship, without omitting doubts and uncertainties during this time. In contrast, Goricheva is much less communicative. Her husband and their life together are hardly ever mentioned. Goricheva even seems to have virtually wiped out the marriage with Krivulin from her biography: in the later texts to which this article refers, there is no indication that this marriage ever existed.

As mentioned above, Soviet autobiographical practice demanded certain restrictions in portraying work and political life and excluded openly private subjects like love, marriage, or the birth of children. Alexeyeva consciously used the co-authorship with Goldberg to break through these boundaries and be more open regarding her private life.[141] Keeping this in mind, it is remarkable that Bonner reveals even more intimate details about her life with Sakharov. For example, she lets the reader know that she learned about his heart problems when she lay next to him after their first night together.[142] Although Goricheva mentions sexual excesses before her conversion she does not go into further details and constantly places herself in the context of a group, thereby disappearing into a collective *we*. In *Daughters of Job*, she reflects on female sexuality (primarily in connection with motherhood and in the context of general considerations), but these elaborations remain unrelated to her own life.

Despite this openness, Bonner as well as Alexeyeva and Goricheva, avoid explicitly sexual details. In *The Thaw Generation*, sexuality occurs in jesting allusions at most, e.g., when comparing Muscovite and Ukrainian intellectuals: "These people were nothing like the Moscow intelligentsia. They didn't use foul language; they drank in moderation; and, I suspect, most of them slept exclusively with their spouses."[143] Surely, this is enough for most readers to get a picture of the customs in the Moscow milieu.[144]

Moreover, Goricheva's central motivation for her engagement as a women's rights activist and her autobiographical writing, namely the problematic situation for women caused by having the almost exclusive responsibility for childcare and household, is barely mentioned in Bonner's and is also rare in Alexeyeva's texts. This contrast is striking, especially as research has shown that the role

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141 Alexeyeva and Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation*, ix–x; Christina Jüttner and Mirja Lecke, "Narrating Resistance: Ludmilla Alexeyeva's and Paul Goldberg's 'The Thaw Generation' (1990)," *Miscellanea Posttotalitariana Wratislaviensia*, no. 5 (2016), 58–59.
142 Bonner, *Do dnevnikov*, 66–67.
143 Alexeyeva and Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation*, 214.
144 Stephan proves these customs using a broader source base. Stephan, *Von der Küche*, 252.

models of men and women in dissent did not differ from those in Soviet society: it was primarily the women's task to type the samizdat texts or to spread manuscripts, and they also usually hosted guests during (conspiratorial) meetings.[145] While Alexeyeva describes some situations that indicate this burden,[146] these are single incidents and she does not draw the conclusion that her personal experience reflects a social problem. For Bonner, the absence of this aspect may be explained by the fact that unlike Alexeyeva, she retired early, and her children had already grown up by the time she married Sakharov.

The same applies to the hierarchy between men and women associated with the predominant role model. There are (implicit) indications of a tendency toward chauvinist attitudes by men in both texts: Alexeyeva's and Bonner's accounts of their marriage proposals show that men decide to marry to protect women. This attitude was widespread in the dissident movement, and Alexeyeva reduces it to the slogan "The camps are no place for a woman" that is repeated (sometimes ironically) in different variations throughout the text.[147] Bonner does not name this circumstance explicitly, but Alexeyeva does so when considering emigration, possibly due to Goldberg's influence.[148] However, Bonner also describes a situation in which she feels patronized by Sakharov: during their very first shopping expedition, he wants to dictate to her how much (of her own) money she should spend on new lamps. This leads to a heated argument that almost ends their relationship:

> I spoke with such an expression, to put it mildly, that he recoiled and, having hooked his foot on the wire, fell. This fall saved our future family life. It is impossible to continue the quarrel when a man fell and heavily injured his leg. We did not have serious family quarrels anymore.[149]

Thus, there is some evidence that Bonner and Alexeyeva were well aware that their social roles as women were potentially problematic. But unlike Goricheva, they do not address the role models of women and men as a subject of socio-po-

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145 *Ibid.*, 257–258; Zdravomyslova, "Konstruktion der arbeitenden Mutter," 31.

146 E.g., Alexeyeva and Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation*, 200–201.

147 *Ibid.*, 213–214, 215, 270, 294. See Stephan, *Von der Küche*, 389–391. Stephan points out that there were two possibilities for women to cope with chauvinistic attitudes: to appropriate this viewpoint or to break the norm at the cost of massive social criticism (*ibid.*, 391–393).

148 Alexeyeva and Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation*, 277.

149 "[Bonner] Говорила с такой, мягко говоря, экспрессией, что он отшатнулся и, зацепив ногой за проволоку, упал. Это падение спасло нашу будущую семейную жизнь. Невозможно продолжать ссору, когда человек упал и сильно расшиб ногу. Больше настоящих семейных ссор у нас не было." Bonner, "Do dnevnikov," 71.

litical discussions that are supposed to bring about social change.[150] After Bonner and Sakharov clarified their positions, the relationship is presented as being consistently harmonious. This also applies to Alexeyeva and is probably the reason why they both avoid potentially conflicting issues such as traditional role models and hierarchies. In Alexeyeva's text especially, it is noticeable that the more she is subjected to state persecution, the less she describes serious conflicts within the family, with Nikolai Williams or with her sons. In both texts, the family is presented as being a bulwark against the siege by the state.

Goricheva also attaches great importance to presenting her own retreat as harmoniously as possible. According to her writings, disagreements arise primarily due to mistakes on her part, caused by personal traits she perceives as deficiencies or because of her inexperience as a newly converted Christian.[151] Here, it is noteworthy that Goricheva (who is a women's rights activist) is critical of the role of women in Soviet society but does not criticize the Orthodox church and its patriarchal structures at all. She explains that she first dealt with such questions in exile under the influence of western feminist discourses. However, in her view this criticism is not relevant in the Russian context.[152]

Conclusion

As illustrated, neither of the authors puts forth the idea of a clear distinction between the public and the private spheres (at least not on the textual level). They perceive different boundaries, depending on their personal experiences, perceptions, and the intention of their writings.

In Bonner's and Alexeyeva's texts, a tripartite division can be identified, namely the separation between state institutions, their social engagement as human rights activists and their family life. In everyday life, however, family life and social engagement are so closely intertwined that separation seems hardly possible. The authors choose different ways of dealing with this fact: while Bonner tries to establish a separation of these spheres by means of literary strategies, Alexeyeva describes her dissent as dominating her whole life (including her family life). The description of episodes that can be interpreted as private

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150 See Stephan, *Von der Küche*, 258, who confirms this for a larger text corpus.

151 See, for example, the passage quoted above in which Goricheva's confessor reprimands her self-centered enthusiasm (see fn. 134).

152 Goricheva, *Hiobs Töchter*, 12–13, 15, Goricheva argues that in western Christianity, sacred offices are more strongly associated with secular power than in the Orthodox Church. This attitude could be discussed critically, but this would exceed the scope of the current study.

also serves different purposes in their life writing: while Bonner seems to describe private and even intimate episodes for their own sake, to put them into words and thus preserve this dimension of her life, private episodes in Alexeyeva's text should be regarded as evidence of her emancipation and as milestones on her way to self-realization. Goricheva, however, establishes a strict separation between the state and religious life. She does not show any desire to further differentiate the latter. Instead, she presents her life after her conversion to Christianity as completely immersed in her faith.

It is especially apparent in Bonner's and Alexeyeva's texts that their family life, i.e., the area that can best be described as private, can only be considered (with some reservations) as a retreat from the state and their social commitments. In Goricheva's case, it is most important to retreat from the influence of the state, though the nature of her religious conception is such that she does not seek privacy. A distinction between the spheres that Oswald and Voronkov describe as private-public and private is consequently of little importance to her.

For Bonner and Alexeyeva, aspects that can be considered private in a particular context are a matter of negotiation. Both authors are not as concerned with objective circumstances as they are with their subjective perception: sometimes, they simply decide to regard a situation as private. While from a western point of view, the state of privacy in Soviet Russia may seem desolate, especially for a differently thinking individual, these authors, at least in their texts, create private spaces that are independent of external attributions. Thus, both the alternative public of dissenters on the one hand and the privacy they claim for themselves on the other is an act of resistance to a state with authoritarian claims against its citizens.

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On Both Sides of Surveillance
and Doctrine: **(Re-)Claiming Agency**

Mirja Lecke

Privacy, Political Agency, and Constructions of the Self in Texts Written by Dissidents[1]

Eastern and East-Central European dissidents' texts about the self under Communism often present the latter as a residual quantity: the self is what must be defended and what remains, preferably untouched and pure, after a permanent struggle with the manipulative and oppressive state apparatus. This concept can, for instance, be found in the following statement by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who instructed his son: "For us, life is a neverending struggle. [...] We will never compromise, since compromising has destroyed humanity [...] If they [the KGB] get hold of you, [...] you must behave with dignity."[2] This demand for strength and unconditional commitment to moral principles can be understood as an objection to what Oleg Kharkhordin called a "society whose key constitutive practice was a pervasive and [...] cynical dissimulation."[3] Solzhenitsyn's call to defend one's dignity against outer corruption is built on specific spatial connotations. This is evident in his essay *Zhit' ne po lzhi* (Live not by Lies, 1973), where he repeatedly calls on his fellow countrymen to shake off (*otriachnut'sia, otshatyvat'sia, ottolknut'sia*) the "lie," meaning all ideologically charged habitual utterances and routines that one cannot fully support.[4] Obviously, Solzhenitsyn perceives these conventional "lies" as purely external; they can be brushed off without residues, leaving an inner kernel of the self that like the donjon in a fortress, has to be defended against the outside world. In his condemnation of Communist everyday life as "lie," the Czech dissident Václav Havel took a similar stance in his famous essay *Moc bezmocných* (The Power

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2 Quoted in Michael Scammell, ed., *The Solzhenitsyn Files: Secret Soviet Documents Reveal One Man's Fight Against the Monolith* (Chicago, IL/Berlin/Tokyo/Moscow: edition q, 1995), 223–224.
3 Oleg Kharkhordin, "Reveal and Dissimulate: A Genealogy of Private Life in Soviet Russia," in *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy*, eds. Jeff Weintraub and Krishan Kumar (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 335.
4 Alexander Solzhenitsyn, "Live not by Lies," *Index on Censorship* 33, no. 2 (2004).

of the Powerless, 1978).[5] By being forced to show certain gestures of loyalty in speech or action and conceal all that could be labeled deviant, he was convinced that people no longer communicated with each other, but with an abstract pseudo-democratic authority, veiling their "fallen existence" from themselves and their fellow citizens.[6] In Havel's view, to overcome moral and political calamity, people had to "live in the truth"—meaning that they should openly speak their mind regardless of ideological demands. Havel also insinuates that the authentic individual self exists in socialist societies, but that every individual suffers from a deep split between a better and a worse half within the self.[7] If people listen to their better inner selves that he associates with the truth, and sincerely show their beliefs, society could undergo a deep change to the better, a process that Havel terms the pressure of "alternative behaviour."[8] However, it could happen only under one important precondition that neither Havel nor Solzhenitsyn delve into: as a social movement, the activists' life in truth can unfold its force only if these convictions become publicly *visible* as distinct from "common" ideology. To assure this visibility, actions and utterances must be addressed to a certain audience or public, which in modern societies almost inescapably involves the use of media. In other words: dissidence has a performative nature, as has been pointed out in the studies of Kacper Szulecki[9] and Natali Stegmann,[10] who coined the phrase of "doing dissidence" in order to describe anti-Communist protest as a communicative process.

As Juliane Fürst has pointed out, Soviet citizens were eager to take a public stance and to contribute to public affairs[11] (and this is particularly true for dissidents), but as I will show, they nevertheless were striving to control what was or was not to be seen and heard by family members, friends, or larger circles, such as their *kompanii*—a looser group of acquaintances and discussion

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5 Václav Havel, "The Power of the Powerless," in *The Power of the Powerless*, ed. John Keane (London/New York: Routledge, 2016).

6 *Ibid.*, 29.

7 *Ibid.*, 56.

8 *Ibid.*, 83.

9 Kacper Szulecki, *The Figure of the Dissident: The Emergence of Central European Dissidentism and its Impact on the Transnational Debates in Late Cold War Era* (PhD diss., University of Konstanz, 2012).

10 Natali Stegmann, "Open Letters: Substance and Circumstances of Communication Processes in Late Socialist Czechoslovakia and Poland," *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 65, no. 1 (2016), 43–46, 57.

11 Juliane Fürst, "Friends in Private, Friends in Public: The Phenomenon of the *kompaniia* Among Soviet Youth in the 1950s and 1960s," in *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia*, ed. Lewis H. Siegelbaum (New York/Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 231.

partners,—let alone by the representatives of the state. This striving can be described in terms of the protection of the private sphere as outlined by Beate Rössler, who defines privacy as control over the access to something.[12] This is another reason why the conceptual figure of the self as a "besieged" entity can, explicitly or implicitly, be found in numerous texts of various genres that were written by people who disagreed with the political order, in which they were forced to live. But here the performative nature of dissidence took its toll, too. Despite the wish to control information about certain spheres, it became paramount for dissidents to ostensibly present certain attitudes or actions in order to signal the "truth" of the self. This affected the public-private divide insofar as the exposure of the "private" (that represented the "true") in some cases functioned as evidence in their presentations of the self: certain elements of the self that conventionally would not be publicly shown or addressed—ranging from private apartments to the intimate life—were chosen to represent the private in the public eye and as a result acquired political significance. This, in turn, affects the spatial connotations of the private and public, or metaphorically, the donjon and the world outside of the fortress. Their presentation as binary oppositions becomes destabilized and the borders blurred. This is in line with recent research findings on space and privacy. Private space is by no means an absolute given, but is relative, which means that it needs to be produced and delineated in complex social and semiotic processes under concrete (political, historical, cultural, technological, etc.) circumstances.[13]

The complex relationship of public self-presentations and figures of the private that they employed is of fundamental significance for dissidents' writings. The stronger the Communist state's pressure against ideological deviation, the more palpable the above-mentioned configuration of the self was and its striving to restrict access to certain spheres and open them to others. Therefore, in this article, I analyze paradigmatic texts of dissidents from three countries (both in life writing and more openly fictional literary genres) that connect the topic of the secret service's surveillance and their coercive schemes with expressions of the self. These texts are by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn from the Soviet Union, Aleksander Wat from Poland, and Wolf Biermann from the German Democratic Republic.

For a number of reasons, life writing is a particularly apt body of texts for an analysis of this topic. Memoirs, autobiographies, letters, diaries, scratch books,

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12 Beate Rössler, *Der Wert des Privaten* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2001), 23.

13 Carmen Keckeis, "Privatheit und Raum: Zu einem wechselbezüglichen Verhältnis," in *Räume und Kulturen des Privaten*, eds. Eva Beyvers et al. (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2017).

and the like have since the beginning of the modern era been established as textual loci of self-reflection and the production of subjectivity.[14] Dissidents, as Benjamin Nathans has shown, often used these genres, because life writing facilitated their self-positioning in an environment that strove to mute them. The dissidents' activities and self-presentation, at least in the Soviet Union, were perceived as a backlash into excessive individualism.[15]

In the texts that I chose, all printed and published, and fabricated for this very purpose, the self is presented as manifesting itself in speech and/or writing. These complementary forms of self-expression—voice and grapheme—require different media technologies (ranging from paper to typewriter, from audio-recorder to telephone) and imply different communicative situations that are each embedded in distinct social relations between the self and its addressee —notably all as representations on the textual level. If the self is rather seen and "read," at least potentially, the distance between the self and the reader is larger and, importantly, may also be a temporal one, since scripture is durable. If the self-expression is by contrast carried out orally, the content is of ephemeral nature, but the relation to the listener is in tendency closer, more dialogical.

In late socialist dissidents' everyday practice too, self-expression by means of sound/voice or scripture corresponded with spaces, which dissidents wanted to keep inaccessible or restricted to others, particularly to the state. They wrote, kept, and circulated texts that they considered dangerous, preemptively assuming the state organs' stance and its possible countermeasures, and also articulated words that they did not want the state's representatives to hear. Though it is tempting to use the term "private sphere" for these segregated communicative spaces, in view of plural and differing socio-historic traditions in Eastern and East-Central Europe, it is best not to automatically assume western normative connotations of the concept of "private sphere" and its generally accepted domains,[16] since aspects like living conditions in communal apartments show how circumstantial privacy can be. This precaution seems particularly pertinent

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14 Margaretta Jolly, ed., *Encyclopedia of Life Writing: Autobiographical and Biographical Forms* (London: Routledge, 2001); Monika Wagner-Egelhaaf, *Autobiographie* (Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler, 2005).

15 Benjamin Nathans, "Talking Fish: On Soviet Dissident Memoirs," *The Journal of Modern History* 87 (2015), 583–584.

16 In view of early Soviet ideology, Oleg Kharkhordin states that the Russian phrase "*lichnaia zhizn'* must not be translated as "private life," because it was believed that the exposure of *lichnaia zhizn'* was a necessary condition for the development of a Bolshevik self and thus conceptually even opposed to western privacy as protected from the outer gaze. Kharkhordin, "Reveal and Dissimulate," 343.

with regard to dissidents' communication with persons other than state officials (that would at least potentially correspond to the western, Habermasian, "public sphere") and it pertains to legal implications of "privacy" that for ideological reasons in socialist states were contested and demonized as a remnant of the bourgeois past, even though nonintervention in personal affairs became more and more customary in late socialism.[17]

In my analysis, I pay special attention to descriptions of oral communication, cases of audio monitoring, and reflections about their effects. One reason for this focus is the fact that the acoustic communication between individuals and the state as well as audio surveillance due to the secret police's functioning on the base of *written* records have so far been less frequently addressed in research than textual, visual communication.[18] Yet, as Jean François Chassay has shown, the telephone is a particularly apt technology to analyze cultural effects of technological modernization, since this apparatus not only made the perception of disembodied voices part of many peoples' lives, but also brought about the experience of non-linearity in time and space.[19] Apart from this, the opposition between the written and the spoken word, graphic sign and voice is of fundamental importance for self-presentation, media choice, and perception in *literary* communication.

Dissidents in Communist countries were subject to eavesdropping and wiretapping on a regular basis,[20] some of them were interrogated by the police, secret

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17 Vladimir Shlapentokh, *Public and Private Life of the Soviet People: Changing Values in Post-Stalin Russia* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 180.

18 On the self and surveillance with a focus on texts in the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, and Romania see Alison Lewis, Valentina Glajar, and Corina Petrescu, eds., *Secret Police Files from the Eastern Bloc: Between Surveillance and Life Writing* (Rochester, NY/New York: Camden, 2016). Telephone tapping in the GDR is treated comprehensively in Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk and Arno Polzin, eds., *Fasse Dich kurz!: Der grenzüberschreitende Telefonverkehr der Opposition in den 1980er Jahren und das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014). Kowalczuk states in the introduction that technical constraints and legal regulations impeded telephone tapping in the GDR and hence only 10 % of the oppositional activists were wiretapped, whereas letters were intercepted systematically. Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk, "Telefongeschichten: Grenzüberschreitende Telefonüberwachung der Opposition durch den SED-Staat – eine Einleitung," in *Fasse Dich kurz!: Der grenzüberschreitende Telefonverkehr der Opposition in den 1980er Jahren und das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit*, eds. Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk and Arno Polzin (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 48, 50, 54.

19 Jean François Chassay, "Quand la voix tient à un fil," *Études françaises* 39, no. 1 (2003), 84 – 85.

20 Surveillance was not restricted to people who were known or suspected to be dissidents in the sense outlined above. As Kharkhordin points out, mutual surveillance was an indispensable part of social life in the Soviet Union. Even the Thaw period brought no relief but more individ-

service or public prosecutors or had informal conversations with agents of the state organs. As a result, the secret police formed an audience that the dissidents needed to consider in their actions, which they did in various ways, including making them a part of their performances of dissidence. I follow the artistic treatment of oral communication, audio monitoring, and oral self-expression of different kinds of surveillance in the texts published by the three dissidents, relating them to underlying ideas of the dissidents' role in society and their self-presentation. All three authors are the most publicly visible critics of their respective socialist regimes and all three made their control over what could be known about them (we could also say the role that they performed in view of various publics) and the defense (or active negotiation) of their "private" communicative sphere from the state an important issue in their texts. Solzhenitsyn, Wat, and Biermann left accounts of their aural and oral interaction with Communist regimes (i.e., of speaking and being overheard as well as of testifying in interrogations) in their life writing, while two of them (Solzhenitsyn and Biermann) also raised the topic of audio monitoring in artistic literary texts, a novel and a ballad respectively.[21] On the material of these texts, I illustrate that the need to take multiple potential audiences of each utterance into account led them to reconsider concepts of the self and individual expression as well as possibilities of political activities. All three authors describe utterly restricted living conditions in prisons, camps, or under permanent surveillance, in which—according to today's western perception—the creation of a private sphere is a sheer impossibility. Therefore, it is even more remarkable that they invented media strategies and social forms that allowed them to delineate segregated communicative spaces and by describing them in literary texts, performed "mediated selves." As I demonstrate, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn transforms voice and sound into written self-expression, whereas Aleksander Wat opts for the voice in searching and dialog-

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ualized and sophisticated technology for surveillance of even larger numbers of people. Despite the change of living conditions (more and smaller apartments), the intensity of control did not decrease. See Kharkhordin, "Reveal and Dissimulate," 357 and Susan Reid, "The Meaning of Home: 'The Only Bit of the World that You Can Have to Yourself,'" in *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia*, ed. Lewis H. Siegelbaum (New York/Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 152. With reference to East Germany, Paul Betts claims that the intensive activity of the secret police led to an increased sense of privacy: "In effect the Stasi's secret machinery of power both undermined and in turn inadvertently created a sense of privacy among GDR citizens." Paul Betts, *Within Walls: Private Life in the German Democratic Republic* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 23.

21 I will discuss in detail Solzhenitsyn's novel *The First Circle* (1968) and his memoir *The Oak and The Calf* (1975), Wat's life writing *My Century* (1977), and Wolf Biermann's "Stasi-Ballade" (1960s) as well as the autobiography *Don't Wait for Better Times!* (2016).

ically performing his "true self." In contrast, Wolf Biermann intertwines voice and written word into a performance of self.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn: Hiding the True Word

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's life seems almost representative of the Soviet state's varying, yet ultimately failed handling of discontent elites. From 1945 until 1956, Solzhenitsyn was detained in a penal camp and later exiled. The literary work he dedicated to his imprisonment, his 1961 novella *Odin den' Ivana Deniso-vicha* (One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich, 1962), instantly made him famous, since he addressed the cruel and unjust Soviet prison camp system openly in an earthy, realist manner. Solzhenitsyn's texts could be published in the USSR only for a short time during the Thaw era. As restrictions on the public critique of Stalinism were reestablished in the mid-1960s, Solzhenitsyn embarked on a fierce struggle with the authorities that was mostly carried out in the battlefield of the legal system that included membership in the Writers' Union and publication rights.[22] Meanwhile, Solzhenitsyn published his works in samizdat (the illegal underground press) as well as in western publishing houses. For the questions of the connections between privacy, text, and surveillance mentioned above, I consider two of Solzhenitsyn's texts particularly relevant. One is his novel *V kruge pervom* (The First Circle, 1968) and the other his memoir, *Bodalsia telenok s dubom* (The Oak and the Calf, 1975).

The First Circle tells the story of an engineer who is detained in a so-called *sharashka*, a special prison run by the Secret Service (*Narodnyi Komissariat Vnu-trennikh Del*, NKVD) and the Interior Ministry. In this Stalinist prison, well-educated inmates ("enemies of the people," because of their assumed ideological unreliability) are exploited as forced workers for secret government projects. The text's main topic is people's reaction to the state's pressure. Are they loyal to family members, friends, and fellow inmates? Do they resist the cynical system or collaborate? These questions are treated using an artfully constructed network of intertextual allusions to authors as diverse as Dante Alighieri and Alexandre Dumas père.[23] In crucial parts of the book, morals are presented as connected to peoples' voices. In a society of lies, it becomes vital for the prison-

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22 Important files from Soviet institutions such as the Secret Service and the Central Committee's Culture Department that document reactions to Solzhenitsyn's oppositional writings and initiatives have been published: Scammell, *The Solzhenitsyn Files*.

23 Natalia Kissellef, "Literary Allusions and Themes in *The First Circle*," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 13, no. 2–3 (1971).

ers to decipher additional meaning in the voices of their conversation partners. The voice and its transmission by telephone even become subject to a veritable paranoia,[24] because the phone cord fatally connects people with the authorities, and in the book, the spoken word directed to a sole listener, seemingly confidential and ephemeral, all of a sudden becomes durable and the speaker identifiable due to a new technology.

The prisoners' main technological project is dedicated to the control of telephone communication: they have to develop a cryptographic device for Iosif Stalin's telephone that, by cutting speech up into encrypted chunks, would make it impossible to eavesdrop on Stalin's phone calls and would thus help to uphold his rule without his physical presence (he lives in complete seclusion on his dacha country house). As part of this counterintelligence project, engineers and one philologist develop *VIR* (*vidimaia rech'*, i.e., visible speech),[25] or phonoscopy—a technology that captures speech in diagrams that can later be deciphered by a specialist, who in the novel is represented by a Jewish philologist called Lev Rubin.[26] Phonoscopy, described in an entire separate chapter bearing the same title[27] offers an interesting take on surveillance as well as its prevention: speech from phone calls and face-to-face communication gets recorded on audiotape. The tapes are subsequently transcribed into diagrams on paper strips. In this way, magnetic patterns on tape get transferred into a visual code. The new technology combines advantages (from a surveillance point of view) of spoken and written language. Therefore, in Solzhenitsyn's novel, this visualized speech is considered more objective than mere sound recordings. The diagrams on paper reveal certain linguistic traits like pronunciation and other individual speech habits and can therefore be "read" and unmistakably attributed to individuals. Yet, their readability is restricted to an expert, a philologist and even for him, the validity of the analysis sometimes remains questionable. The heuristic path Solzhenitsyn chose for phonoscopy is counterintuitive and in fact, an avoidable detour: scripture, i.e., visual communication, yields no additional insight for phonoscopy's task as outlined in *The First Circle*. Hence, I would argue that Solzhenitsyn was rather interested in the presentation of a

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24 Chassay, "Quand la voix," 93–94.

25 Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *V kruge pervom, Sobranie sochinenii v shesti tomakh*, tom 3–4 (Frankfurt/Main: Posev, 1969), 261.

26 Rubin is modeled after Lev Kopelev, Solzhenitsyn's fellow inmate, a famous Moscow Germanist and dissident.

27 Solzhenitsyn, *V kruge pervom*, tom 3, 271–277.

mythical figure: the savant,[28] the reading expert, who miraculously attributes meaning to a text by connecting a visual representation of the sound of a voice with the speaker's identity.

However, the basic pressure in Solzhenitsyn's *The First Circle* is not a result of audio monitoring, but of the omnipresence of spies. These are carefully placed in the dormitory in order to overhear the inmates' conversations just before and after they go to sleep, which allegedly are the most revealing ones.[29] What is intriguing about the spies' eavesdropping in terms of media and durability: the inmates' sole medium of expression is the spoken word, but denunciation demands written form. Almost with teleological necessity, all spoken content has to be turned into a written testimony, because this is the only means for the NKVD to keep the informer under control and to ensure that the authorities will be able to retrieve the document at any time. The temporal factor is important, since the passing of time might re-contextualize information and give it a new, unexpected meaning.

> No conversation ended just as a conversation but inevitably concluded with writing a denunciation, or signing a transcript, or a receipt renouncing false testimony, or promising confidentiality, agreeing not to travel, confirming safe receipt or having been informed. Precisely this patient attention was needed, precisely this accuracy that were characteristic of Shikin, in order not to create chaos in the paperwork and to distribute it, log it in so that any item could be found any time.[30]

For one character from Solzhenitsyn's *The First Circle*, agent Stepanov, the written form even acquires ontological status. He insists on filing a written record of every KGB action for securing credibility.[31] Sarcastically Solzhenitsyn's narrator comments: "Just like a Catholic priest would never believe that somebody can lie in a confessional, it would not occur to Stepanov that one could also lie in

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28 Chassay points out the importance of the savant and scientist in his laboratory as a figure in contemporary literature that embodies discourse about technology. Chassay, "Quand la voix," 83.

29 Solzhenitsyn, *V kruge pervom*, tom 3, 201.

30 "Ни один разговор не кончался попросту как разговор, а обязательно завершался написанием доноса, или подписанием протокола, или расписки о недаче ложных показаний, о неразглашении, о невыезде, об осведомлении, о вручении. Требовалось именно то терпеливое внимание, именно та аккуратность, которые отличали характер Шикина, чтобы не создать в этих бумажках хаоса, а распределить их, подшить и всегда найти любую." [Translations here and throughout the article are mine if not indicated differently.] Solzhenitsyn, *V kruge pervom*, tom 4, 612.

31 *Ibid.*, 622.

written documentation."[32] Thus, even though Solzhenitsyn shared the extremely high estimation of the written word (as I show below), he ridicules his character's blind trust in the scripture—and adds a double layer to his pun. Confession, of course, is an *oral* practice, the credibility of which is transcendentally assured, at least for believers. Additionally, Solzhenitsyn's narrator makes the strategic move to ascribe the ridiculed naïveté to a Catholic cleric (*ksendz,* from Polish *ksiądz*), not a Russian Orthodox priest. But more importantly, Solzhenitsyn shows the impracticability of absolute faith in scripture: Soviet prison reality and surveillance practice prove too complex to uphold such confidence in files. Toward the end of the novel, the NKVD operative Shikin receives different accounts about one alleged sabotage incident. He is therefore forced to juxtapose various spies' assertions, interpret their texts, and consider the authors' individual character and motivation. It is the ephemeral nature of the spoken word in *The First Circle* that makes it inferior to the written word. The sound seems doomed to be turned into grapheme in order to function politically. The scene above ironically sheds light on the fact that scripture too may add complexity to the ideological struggle.

In Solzhenitsyn's memoir about becoming a dissident, titled *The Oak and the Calf,* the enormous appreciation of the written word and the way that it correlates with an individual's self-expression and his presence in society's public sphere can be seen. Writing literature is presented as a prophetic task, the process of delivering the truth, almost in a religious sense, which can be seen for example, in Solzhenitsyn's programmatic foreword to the memoir: "poetry's law is to be superior to your anger and to conceive the essential from the perspective of eternity."[33] Since the individual (Solzhenitsyn the writer) lives in a hostile environment where those in power try to prevent him from proclaiming the truth, he has to protect his texts by means of a hide-and-seek game with his persecutors. He internalizes the deep gap between truth and lie that he finds characteristic of society, separating what he thinks ("truth") from what he says ("lie") in order to be able to complete his texts, while out of the secret service's field of sight. The content in his consciousness (that notably consists of texts learned by heart—a peculiar form of "writing"),[34] is the authentic truth for him. He imagines delivering it to the people as a speech act: "My entire life I was tormented by the impossibility to tell the truth loudly. My entire life consisted of cutting a path to this open

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32 "Как ксёндз бы не поверил, что можно солгать в исповедальне, – так Степанову не приходило в голову, что можно солгать и в письменной документации." *Ibid.*, 623.

33 "закон поэзии – быть выше своего гнева и воспринимать сущее с точки зрения вечности." Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *Bodalsia telenok s dubom* (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1975), 12.

34 *Ibid.*, 8.

public truth."[35] And yet, this wish to speak out loudly is a mere metaphor. Solzhenitsyn clearly thinks these truths can be brought to public knowledge only by means of the written word. This is, on the one hand, his memoirist narrative, and on the other, the voluminous documentary appendix to it, in which Solzhenitsyn collected protocols, open letters, and the like to supplement the narrative, testifying to its authenticity. The aural in Solzhenitsyn's *The Oak and the Calf* can be characterized as merely intermediary, as a sphere of dangerous and potentially contaminating contact with the state officials. It also becomes evident in Solzhenitsyn's treatment of phone wiretapping and phone harassment. The already highly alert former inmate Solzhenitsyn coincidentally found out that a bugging device had been built into the phone of his dacha, a countryside cabin. As a reaction, he not only took even more caution in his phone conversations with others but, fully in line with critics of the telephone when it was newly invented,[36] he also perceived it more generally as a dangerous, "faceless," disembodied intrusion into one's home:

> 20th century's new weapon: with an impersonal rattling of the telephone bell you can intrude into a locked house and sting somebody who just woke up into the heart without even yourself having to get up from your office table or the armchair with a cocktail in your hand.[37]

When Solzhenitsyn's phone was eventually used in order to harass him (as well as his fearless defender, Lidiia Chukovskaia) he paid the KGB back by inverting the audio monitoring process: KGB agents would call him up repeatedly and threaten or verbally abuse him. Solzhenitsyn recorded those calls, documenting the attacks, and passed them on to western radio stations for broadcast. Moreover, he used those wiretapped phones to make sure the KGB agents were aware that they were themselves being recorded.[38] Interestingly though, Solzhenitsyn's criticism of their phone terrorism, like his reflection about his role as a politically engaged artist, exclusively draws on the notions of sincerity and artistic truth. Never does he speak out against the state's violations of his private

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35 "Всю жизнь я мучился невозможностью громко говорить правду. Вся жизнь моя состояла в прорезании к этой открытой публичной правде." *Ibid.*, 478.

36 The phone as violation of privacy and the reorganization of the private-public dualism that became necessary as a reaction to the spread of telephones are described in Chassay "Quand la voix," 95.

37 "Новое оружие XX века: безличным дребезжаньем телефонного звонка вы можете проникнуть в запертый дом и ужалить проснувшегося в сердце, сами не поднявшись от своего служебного стола или из кресла с коктейлем." Solzhenitsyn, *Bodalsia telenok*, 418.

38 *Ibid.*, 419.

sphere or personal dignity. It is the truth itself that the state combats: "among hundreds of these phone calls there was not a single one that would have been skillful, artistic, their falsity revealed itself with the first word and sound, independently of the topic."[39] In this passage, Solzhenitsyn takes on the task of the mythical exegete, expert, and sound decipherer, not unlike Rubin in his novel *The First Circle*. Nonetheless, the aural is secondary and inferior to scripture, which is valid not only for Solzhenitsyn individually but also holds true more broadly for socialist societies.[40] Scripture is the indispensable medium to produce truth. Hence, for Solzhenitsyn, his self-presentation as a writer and political activist is only metaphorically represented as an act of speech. It evolves in a process of writing and publishing fiction, documentary material, and protocols akin to official files, in which the self is presented as fiercely withstanding the state, without ever becoming "contaminated" by compromise and dialogue.[41]

Aleksander Wat: The Sounds of the Self

My second example is Aleksander Wat's *Mój wiek* (My Century, 1977), probably the most famous Polish life writing project of the twentieth century and a veritable manifesto of anti-Communism.[42] Wat, who was born to a Polish Jewish bourgeois family, began his career with avant-garde futuristic experimental po-

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39 "среди сотен этих звонков не было ни одного умелого, артистического, фальшивость выявлялась в первом же слове и звуке, независимо от сюжета." *Ibid.*, 420.

40 Václav Havel describes self-expression in written form as one of the characteristic features of dissidents. Havel, "Power," 57.

41 Katherine Verdery has shown that the production of truth in files was also a mechanism crucial for socialist secret services (her focus is on Romania). It was supplemented with many writers' competing ambitions to express the truth. See Katherine Verdery, *Secrets and Truths: Ethnography in the Archive of Romania's Secret Police* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2014), 31–76.

42 *My Century* has frequently been the subject of research. Some significant Polish studies have been collected in the latest commented edition of *Mój wiek* that I used for this article: Aleksander Wat, *Mój wiek*, tom 1–2 (Kraków: universitas, 2011/12). These are, for instance, Jerzy Jarzębski, "'Mój wiek': przygody idei i ciała," in *Mój wiek*, tom 2 and Aleksander Fiut, "Egzorcyzmy Aleksandra Wata," in *Mój wiek*, tom 2. A comprehensive study of Wat's entire work in English is Tomas Venclova, *Aleksander Wat: Life and Art of an Iconoclast* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996). In German language: Matthias Freise and Andreas Lawaty, eds., *Aleksander Wat und sein Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002). Wat's reflection on media is the subject of Mirja Lecke, "Schreiben. Schweigen. Sprechen: Dichter und Medium bei Aleksander Wat," *Zeitschrift für Slawistik* 51, no. 3 (2006).

etry. Already at that time, around 1920, he was deeply troubled, both philosophically and artistically, by the opposition between the spoken and written language. He considered the phonetic quality of the word superior to its semantic referentiality, to which his co-authored manifesto *Nuż w bżuhu* bears witness: the title, "A knife in the belly," correctly represents pronunciation, yet fundamentally violates Polish orthography that conveys etymologic descent and would correctly be "*Nóż w brzuchu.*"

Wat was a convinced Communist, an important editor, and literary critic in the interwar period. Editing and advising other writers' texts, he stopped writing poetry, which he explained (in hindsight) by ideological doubts caused by the Bolsheviks' policy.[43] Starting in the 1930s, Wat was repeatedly detained in Polish and Soviet prisons, first for his leftist literary activities and after the breakout of WWII in the USSR, as a Communist intellectual whose political reliability seemed dubious. In 1946, he returned from exile in Soviet Kazakhstan to postwar Poland, where he became an important public figure. But soon he suffered a stroke, battled chronic pain, and eventually left the country. Wat, who had always considered himself a poet could hardly write, even though he felt determined and morally obliged to author a monumental book about the crimes of Communism.[44] As a substitute for the book, his colleague Czesław Miłosz taped conversations with Wat about his life and literary activity. These were later transcribed, edited, and published as *My Century*.[45]

For the entire work, the spoken word is of paramount significance.[46] This starts with the dialogic structure of the narrative that is preserved in the printed text and overlays the equally important conventions of autobiography (as a necessarily *written*, self-authored narrative)[47] that Wat himself pointed out as substantial for *My Century*. He mentioned the Russian revolutionary Aleksandr Gert-

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43 The process of ceasing to write is a recurring topic in *My Century*, see for example Wat, *Mój wiek*, tom 1, 240, 253, 270.

44 Czesław Miłosz, "Przedmowa," in *Mój wiek*, tom 1, 12.

45 The emergence of *My Century* with the participation of many "co-authors" (transcribers, editors, etc.) has been well researched, see, e.g.: Rafał Habielski, "O czytaniu Mojego wieku," in *Mój wiek*, tom 2. Some parts of Miłosz and Wat's conversation are available online as audio files at "Conversation between Miłosz and Wat," Polskie Radio, accessed May 18, 2018, https://www.polskieradio.pl/68/787/Tag/48576.

46 The same is true for Wat's poetry. Aleksandra Kremer argues that Wat's recordings of his own poems are "independent work" and a specific "testimony to the experience of suffering." See Aleksandra Kremer, "Testament and Testimony: Listening to 'Ode III' by Aleksander Wat," *Slavic and East European Journal* 61, no. 1 (2017), 95–96.

47 For a discussion of autobiography as a genre, see Philippe Lejeune, *The Autobiographical Pact* (London: Routledge, 2016).

sen's memoirs *Byloe i dumy* (My Past and Thoughts, 1870), having in mind the broad political scope of the narrative and his own role as a contemporary witness.[48] But in contrast to Gertsen, Wat was very aware of the pitfalls of autobiography as a genre, declaring it to be utterly impossible in the age of the disintegration of the self.[49]

Czesław Miłosz too was highly sensitive to the deep impact of the oral element in *My Century*'s literary form. He even claimed the text had established a new genre:

> This genre is a conversation that has been recorded on a magnetophone tape and has, that's true, subsequently been edited to tidy up the syntax and partially remove repetitions, albeit preserving the main characteristics of the direct speech addressed to a listener. [...] a voice's intonation cannot be conveyed [...].[50]

Against the backdrop of both poets' high awareness of literary form and media communication, it seems legitimate to state that Wat's consent to record his specific "life writing," despite being a mere stopgap at the outset, became a deliberate choice that served to explore alternatives to the written word.

Wat's preference of oral to written expression can also be traced on the subject level of the text, where Wat develops an "aesthetics (and ethics) of voice, as opposed to an aesthetics of sight."[51] We sometimes find a true cult of orality. During his detainment in Warsaw in 1939, Wat claims to have discovered that the voice is the gate to the truth:

> When the man reads only with his eyes, any lie can pass unnoticed, even for the most critical eye. The mouth is for telling the truth or the untruth, but eyes are essentially aesthetic. Eyes see whether something is beautiful or ugly, whether it is targeted or ill-directed.[52]

All that is solely written and read is at least potentially a lie, which may also explain, why it is only in oral conversation that Wat could reassess his entangle-

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48 Wat, *Mój wiek*, tom 2, 218.

49 Wat, *Mój wiek*, tom 1, 39, 41, 196.

50 "Tym gatunkiem jest rozmowa utrwalona na taśmie magnetofonu, opracowana następnie, to prawda, tak aby składnię doprowadzić do porządku i częściowo usunąć powtórzenia, niemniej zachowująca główne rysy wypowiedzi bezpośredniej, zwróconej do słuchacza. [...] intonacje głosu są niemożliwe do przekazania [...]." Miłosz, "Przedmowa," 7.

51 Venclova, *Wat*, 268–269.

52 "Kiedy człowiek czyta tylko oczyma, wszelkie kłamstwa mogą przejść niepostrzeżenie, przy najbardziej krytycznym oku. Usta są od mówienia prawdy albo nieprawdy, ale oczy są właściwie estetyczne. Oczy widzą, czy coś piękne czy brzydkie, czy celowe czy antycelowe." Wat, *Mój wiek*, tom 1, 221.

ment with Communism that he compares with demonic possession.[53] Thus, his poet-colleague Czesław Miłosz took on multiple roles: of an expert in the field of interwar literature, but also as a subordinate autobiographical conversation partner (the "ideal listener," as Wat's wife Ola wrote),[54] a witness of a testimony and lastly, the role of a confessor.

Ironically though, Wat's conversations with Milosz about literature and the pitfalls of ideology resembled a highly traumatic experience in Wat's life: his interrogations in the KGB Lubianka headquarters in Moscow (where he was imprisoned in 1940–1941). As an expert on Polish pro-Communist literature, he was requested to write reports about the ideological reliability of his fellow Polish writers. Wat knew that almost any judgment could be dangerous for his colleagues and therefore offered tactically composed texts, striving to report facts that were already known, while attributing real ideological "breaches" to those Communists who had already been murdered.[55] It was evident that he was excessively sensitive to the gap between the spoken and written word, and he soon became troubled by the fact that each word he had written could be interpreted in various ways without him even knowing about it: "But paper remains paper, and it'll go on to other chain links, and these chain links will already search for something else."[56] As a consequence, he refused to write down his evaluations and henceforth repeatedly had oral conversations about the same topic with the KGB officer Lalashvili and a Party representative Nikolaev.[57] Wat apparently did not take into consideration that these talks would ultimately also be turned into written protocols for the KGB's files (see above) and thus end up as a no less problematic scripture. KGB agents were not Wat's only conversation partners: he had a cellmate, the linguist and poet (not the popular composer!) Evgenii Iakovlevich Dunaevskii, with whom Wat also spoke tirelessly (Chapters 24–29). However, it is important to note that the conversations with Dunaevskii were whispered, articulated *without unfolding the voice*,[58] the truth-revealing organ.

Wat's conversations with Miłosz uncannily resembled the Lubianka talks, but now in 1964, Wat was clearly determined to tell the truth about himself and his colleagues—in Wat's view, a task that called for clearly articulated

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53 *Ibid.*, 59–60.

54 Ola Watowa, *Wszystko co najważniejsze* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1990), 169.

55 Wat, *Mój wiek*, tom 2, 142–143.

56 "Ale papier zostaje papierem i to pójdzie do innych ogniw, a te inne ogniwa już czego innego szukają." *Ibid.*, 142.

57 *Ibid.*, 104.

58 *Ibid.*, 46.

oral communication. However, Wat also appreciated the ephemeral nature of speech: interlocutions allow for differentiations and rectifications to be added. But here the audiotape's specific media features proved to be problematic. What seemed right for Wat in his oral conversations with Miłosz later became unbearable for him when listening to his own recorded speech.[59] He was terrified by the gap between his ambitions to express his experience and the phonetic traces they left on the tape, and his discontent referred to form as well as content: "this enormous amount of work that was necessary to transfer the taped conversation into something that at least to a minimal degree corresponded to his intentions and ambitions."[60]

We all know that effect, which Kremer terms an experience "of alienation of our voice from our perceptions of it."[61] Yet additionally, Wat's discomfort is connected to his reflection about media and language. Whereas differentiations in a talk may be acceptable, they become overabundant in the written version of *My Century*, which is full of "postcripta," as Wat called his lengthy additions to previous parts of the conversation.[62] The latter often alter the narrative so slightly that they come close to repetitions—an awkward side effect of the media change from spoken to written language.

In *My Century,* Wat repeatedly touches upon the process of listening, eavesdropping, and audiotaping. The topic appears with frequency in the accounts of his detainment in the Lubianka prison (Chapters 24–31), where he whispered for days and hours. Obviously, in a cell in Lubianka (or in any prison, for that matter), one can hardly speak of a private sphere in the western understanding: detainees were being watched and eavesdropped upon ceaselessly. Yet the whispering did indeed help to avoid undesired listeners and thus created a certain space in which social exchange—in itself politically significant—without knowledge of the state organs became possible. Ironically, though, in this case, it undermined national solidarity and whipped a Polish cellmate's latent antisemitism: "All day long we would not stop whispering with Dunaevskii [...] shsh [...] two Yids agreeing on an arrangement."[63] In *My Century*, Wat also dwells intensively on the in-

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59 Wat's extreme reaction to hearing his own speech from tape is related in Watowa, *Wszystko*, 170, and analyzed in Venclova, *Wat*, 250 as well as Habielski, "O czytaniu," 561.

60 "ogrom pracy i czasu, którego trzeba było, aby doprowadzić nagranie do stadium bodaj w jakimś minimalnym stopniu odpowiadającego jego zamierzeniom i ambicjom." Watowa, *Wszystko*, 170.

61 Kremer, "Testament," 108.

62 Wat, *Mój wiek*, tom 1, 138.

63 "Cały dzień naszeptywaliśmy się z Dunajewskim [...] szu-szu [...] dogadali się dwaj Żydkowie." Wat, *Mój wiek*, tom 2, 46.

terconnectedness of certain media and totalitarianism. Stalinism, in his opinion, would not be viable with developed audio surveillance. Instead, he argues, Stalinism is about nurturing distrust among the population down into the smallest, most intimate units of society.[64] This means that the state did not actually need to obtain information in order to intimidate people, on the contrary: the Soviet social order declared privacy—control over what could be known by others—undesired and ruled it utterly impossible to defend one's private sphere. Together with semantic opacity and uncertainty about the potential conversation partners' knowledge, this formed the *condition* of the totalitarian rule.

On the other hand, we know today (as Wat knew) that Stalinism (as well as post-Thaw Communism) had a high affinity with the written word.[65] In Wat's logic, this came at the expense of a fatal detachment of the thing and the word. Their mystic union is Wat's unattainable ideal, which he repeatedly addressed in his late poetry.[66] One of his posthumously published poetry cycles is called *Z naszeptów magnetofonowych* (From the Tape Recorder Whispers).[67] The unusually prefixed word *naszept* (literally: that, which has been whispered onto something) in the title resonates with Polish *nasłuch:* eavesdropping; but instead of reflections about the private sphere or empowerment, the poems convey a search for the connection between the verbal sign and the body.

And, finally, in his last years, Wat kept a diary, in which he wrote only consonants, sparing the vowels. The text was published posthumously as *Dziennik bez samogłosek* (Diary without vowels). The Polish word for vowel—*samogłoska*—literally means "self-sound." By omitting the sounds of the self, Wat expresses his skepticism about the very possibility of a truthful representation of the diarist's self and his individual world perception. Wat's writing during his later life also very forcefully shows his artistic reflection about his Jewish heritage—he imitates the Hebrew consonant writing system. It thus becomes obvious that for Wat, (self-)observation, privacy, truth, and the voice remained entangled until his death in 1967. Wat conceptualizes the self as a primarily sensuous entity and clearly prefers the aural and haptic to the visual. This is in part due to his desire to control the communicative framework, in which the signs are used. Thanks to its shorter durability, he opts for self-expression in oral speech that

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64 *Ibid.*, 179.

65 Igor' Kondakov, "Po tu storonu slova: krizis literaturotsentrizma v Rossii XX–XXI vv.," *Voprosy literatury* 5 (2008).

66 For a description of bipolarity and the most important motifs in Wat's late poetry see Stanisław Barańczak, "Four Walls of Pain: The Late Poetry of Aleksander Wat," *Slavic and East European Journal* 33, no. 2 (Summer 1989).

67 Aleksander Wat, *Pisma zebrane*, tom 1 (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1997), 48–49.

by means of tape recordings gets preserved and after a change in medium—to written language—makes his intimate dialogue with Miłosz publicly consumable, as Tomas Venclova puts it: "a book that embodies this self in the process of becoming."[68]

Wolf Biermann: Singing Back to the Observers

Wolf Biermann, born in 1936, is a "Liedermacher"[69]—a singer and songwriter—who emigrated from the western part of Germany into the German Democratic Republic in 1953 because of his Communist convictions. He soon became well-known for his bitingly critical, often satirical political songs about the "real existing socialism," which earned him both a ban from public performance and the fame of a dissident in the West and the East alike. During a concert trip to West Germany in 1976, he was deprived of his East German citizenship and expelled from the country, which forced him to settle in West Germany.[70]

Throughout his career, Biermann was subject to observation and harassment by the Stasi (the East German Ministry of State Security) and this fact played a pivotal role in his conception of the self. Life under surveillance is one of the crucial topics of his 2016 autobiography entitled *Warte nicht auf bessre Zeiten!* (Don't Wait for Better Times!). With regard to genre and narrative, and particularly in juxtaposition with Wat's *My Century* and also Solzhenitsyn's *The Oak and the Calf*, Biermann's text is an all too conventional autobiography, recounting his life chronologically in first person narration from his Jewish working-class family roots down to present day. Like Wat's, Biermann's life narrative is built on the motif of conversion: the disenchantment with Communism.

What makes Biermann an interesting counterpart to Solzhenitsyn and Wat though is that he was convinced that the state organs wanted him to know he was being watched and that he intensively reflected on this exposure to the gaze of others in his oeuvre. Biermann presents his interaction with the secret service as an important part of his performance of self and this is why we can

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68 Venclova, *Wat*, 272.

69 For a critical discussion of the term "Liedermacher" that was used to canonize German political, left-wing singers who accompanied themselves on an acoustic guitar, see Dietmar Elflein, "In Germany After the War: Broadening the Discourse on the *Liedermacher*," in *The Singer-Songwriter in Europe: Paradigms, Politics and Place*, eds. Isabelle Marc and Stuart Green (London: Routledge, 2016).

70 For further reading about the Biermann case, see Roland Berbig, ed., *In Sachen Biermann: Protokolle, Berichte und Briefe zu den Folgen einer Ausbürgerung* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 1994).

describe his actions as "doing dissidence" in the sense of Natali Stegmann.[71] Like Solzhenitsyn, but in a more ludistic key (that among others results from the far lesser pressure in the GDR as opposed to the USSR), Biermann recounts his and his friend Robert Havemann's interpretation of the emotional as well as strategic motifs on the side of the Stasi. This can be seen in a scene, where Biermann describes how they found a bugging device "a couple thousand Marks" worth in Havemann's house.[72]

> It had always been clear to us that we were being audio monitored. Now we mischievously imagined the comrades listening how their precious bug was detected and caught. Everybody knew what we thought anyway. [...] For us, such bugging devices, who knows, might even be an advantage. The ones in power were exceptionally well informed about what was driving us and what we were doing. And nevertheless, they had not yet put us in jail. Robert concluded that they were shit scared."[73]

Therefore, in his autobiography, Biermann does not present his knowledge about being audio monitored as impeding open conversations in his private rooms (as did most other dissidents, who described loud music, whispering, exchanging written messages in audio monitored apartments,[74] or outdoor walks with their conversation partners as an antidote). On the contrary: he is proud that his views were publicly known and claims to have gained additional strategically relevant knowledge from his interaction with the Stasi, and even simultaneously hurt the adversaries as they had to listen to the destruction of their precious equipment. Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk explains that GDR citizens generally were very cautious with regard to surveillance, which also extended to political statements in phone calls.[75] However, the very limited confidence in the medium's privacy occasionally sparked its inclusion in performances of dissidence by playful inversion. When Biermann's friend Havemann called the writer Stefan Heym

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71 Wolf Biermann, *Warte nicht auf bessre Zeiten!* (Berlin: Ullstein, 2016), 137.

72 "ein paar tausend Mark." *Ibid.*, 203.

73 "Dass wir abgehört wurden, war uns immer klar gewesen. Nun malten wir uns schadenfroh aus, dass die Genossen mit anhören mussten, wie ihre kostbare Wanze entdeckt und eingefangen wird. Was wir dachten wusste ja jeder sowieso. [...] Für uns hatten so Abhörwanzen, wer weiß, einen Vorteil. Die Herrschenden waren bestens informiert über alles, was uns trieb und was wir trieben. Trotzdem hatten sie uns noch nicht in den Knast gesteckt. Daraus zog Robert den Schluss, dass sie Schiss hatten." *Ibid.*, 203.

74 These are common topics in dissidents' life writing. The Soviet Secret Service in at least one incident reported to the USSR Council of Ministers that Solzhenitsyn had exchanged written notes with western press correspondents during a meeting in his Moscow apartment as a reaction to eavesdropping, see Scammell, *The Solzhenitsyn Files*, 213.

75 Kowalczuk, "Telefongeschichten," 38 – 162.

after Biermann's deprivation of citizenship in 1976 and Heym warned Havemann that his phone was probably intercepted, Havemann embraced the Stasi audience: "The better, [...] the telephone is a public sphere too."[76]

Reflections about the effects of audio monitoring on Biermann's conceptions of the self as well as on its unexpected side effects can also be found in his musical oeuvre. The best example is his *Stasi-Ballade* (The Stasi Ballad)—a song written in the 1960s that came out on the record *Ahh – Ja!* (Ohh—Yeah!, 1974), in which Biermann is literally speaking out to the institution that permanently observed him. In the opening, the singer gives a satirical account of the alleged advantages of surveillance. Firstly, he claims the spies would defend him against potential nightly attacks from rude peasants, providing him safety. Secondly, morals, where Biermann comes very close to Foucault's ideas about surveillance and self-discipline: Stasi observation prevents him from betraying his wife because the spies would surely inform her and cause him trouble. However, involuntarily the Stasi's gaze even contributes to his artistic immortality: his suppressed sexual energy boosts his musical output. What is most important in connection with the topic of the voice, privacy, and the self is the second stanza of the ballad:

> Only you can bear witness
> how my entire human quest
> passionate gentle and wild
> is dedicated to our great cause
> words that would else be lost
> you capture firmly on audiotape
> and I do know that once in a while
> you sing my songs when you're in bed
> —thanks, I appreciate that:
> the Stasi is my Ecker-
> the Stasi is my Ecker-
> the Stasi is my Eckermann.[77]

Biermann discusses here the deep impact of surveillance on the constructions of the self. The Stasi is a dubious witness. They consider him an enemy of the socialist state, but as Biermann claims, their collected material only serves as a

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76 "Umso besser [...], auch das Telephon sei eine Öffentlichkeit." *Ibid.*, 38.
77 "Ihr allein könnt Zeugnis geben / Wie mein ganzes Menschenstreben / Leidenschaftlich zart und wild / Unsrer großen Sache gilt / Worte, die sonst wärn verscholln / Bannt ihr fest auf Tonbandrolln / und ich weiß ja: Hin und wieder / Singt im Bett ihr meine Lieder / Dankbar rechne ich euchs an: / Die Stasi ist mein Ecker- / Die Stasi ist mein Ecker- / Die Stasi ist mein Eckermann." Biermann, *Warte nicht,* 477.

true testimonial of his innocence. First, this refers to ideological reliability. Biermann claims that the surveillance material proves his sincere Communist strivings (my entire human quest [...] is dedicated to our great cause)—and thus debilitates accusations of his nurturing anti-socialist feelings, spreading western bourgeois propaganda, and the like. Second, he touches upon the ephemeral nature of spoken words ("words that would else be lost you capture firmly on audiotape"). Here too, the audiotaping has a side effect that is clearly contrary to the Stasi's intentions: it makes precious words durable that would otherwise be lost. Indirectly, this passage also raises the issue of the generally fugacious nature of life and experience, which have posed a great challenge to life writing in general and autobiography specifically, throughout the history of the genre. The stanza culminates in the threefold repetition of the verse "The Stasi is my Eckermann."

This statement is particularly ambiguous. Johann Peter Eckermann (1792–1854) was the conversation partner of the German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832). After Goethe's death, Eckermann published his *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens* (Conversations with Goethe in the Last Years of His Life, 1836–1848),[78] a counterpart to Goethe's autobiography *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (Truth and Fiction, 1808–1831). In the German cultural history, Eckermann is considered a supplementary figure and in this role, he has often been ridiculed.[79] By comparing the Stasi with Eckermann, the subordinate, Biermann obviously styles himself as Goethe, the master, thereby inverting the power relations between himself and the dangerous Secret Service. However simultaneously, he reflects upon the intricate relationship between one's own perspective and the view of others in life writing. After all, even somebody of Goethe's stature gained his nimbus at least partly due to the zealous attention of incommensurable contemporaries.

This became important when Biermann assessed his Stasi files after the opening of the archives in 1992. The attempt to understand how the Secret Service functioned—as a political, but even more so as an organizational and technological structure—was of paramount importance for Biermann's autobiographical project. In his *Don't Wait for Better Times!*, he raises the question of how to represent experience in media and the effects of the changes in media on

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78 Johann P. Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1836–1848).

79 On Eckermann as a supplementary figure to Goethe see, for instance, Heinrich H. Houben, ed., *J.P. Eckermann: Sein Leben für Goethe* (Leipzig: Hessel, 1925) or the catalogue to an exhibition Reiner Schlichting, ed., *Johann Peter Eckermann: sein Leben im Spannungsfeld Goethes* (Weimar: Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1992).

the subject matter. Again, the Stasi-Ballade is illustrative: from his Stasi files, Biermann retrieved a transcript of the ballad made from a monitoring audio tape. Instead of "die Stasi ist mein Eckermann" (the Stasi is my Eckermann) the agent had understood "Die Stasi ist mein Henkersmann!" (The Stasi is my hangman!).[80] This not only shows one concrete agent's lack of literary knowledge but is even more remarkable against the backdrop of Biermann's above-mentioned pun on inverted power relations. The agent understands "hangman," whereas Biermann sang about a servile scribe that only immortalized a genius.

However, we must not forget the cynical, socially destructive, and even life-threatening impact of the Stasi surveillance and sabotage practices, which for most people were much more palpable than the Stasi agents' pathetic ignorance. In his conduct of life and political opinions, Biermann claims that he was never influenced by the pressure—he presents himself as somebody who heroically and slyly kept his sincere inner dignity and integrity (as Solzhenitsyn instructed his son to do). But despite Biermann's denial of the Stasi's impact, due to the markedly dialogical and even theatrical character of his conduct, the concept of "doing dissidence" can be applied to his actions. Also, in the retrospective examination of his life, Biermann had to acknowledge the importance of the Stasi's perspective on himself: he had to mediate (if not negotiate) his self with an external view. As we learn from a note at the end of the autobiography, the Stasi indeed turned out to be a sort of a pervert Eckermann. Just as Biermann observed and textually modeled himself in his journal daily since 1954, so did the Secret Service. They also engaged in life writing, albeit of a different kind that was unauthorized and guided by suspicion, but nonetheless stylistically distinct and hyper realistic.[81] Along with his diary, Biermann used his Stasi file, the diary's "stinking counterpart" (*stinkendes Pendant*)[82] to make sense of his life in his autobiography *Don't Wait for Better Times!*. The intrusive gaze of the Stasi thus became an integral part of Biermann's autobiographical self-evaluation, and as a result, not only of his literary persona but also his concept of the self.

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[80] Biermann, *Warte nicht*, 477–478.
[81] Alison Lewis, Valentina Glajar, and Corina Petrescu, "Introduction," in *Secret Police Files from the Eastern Bloc: Between Surveillance and Life Writing*, eds. Alison Lewis, Valentina Glajar, and Corina Petrescu (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2016), 9–11.
[82] Biermann, *Warte nicht*, 528.

Conclusion

The lives of late socialist dissidents, often presented using binary oppositions such as "truth" as opposed to "lie," "black" as opposed to "white," necessitated the use of media, each with its own semiotic dynamics, and complex maneuvers of knowledge control, be it by concealing actions from state officials or securing an audience for declarations. As a result, the delimitation between purportedly authentic inner truth and the allegedly contaminated outer world not only became blurred but virtually dissolved in a series of negotiations about individual agency and the adequate representation of an individual in various media. Dissidence thus can be described as a performative process. The authors that were the focus of this article all devoted themselves to the problem of controlling their audiences in various spaces. They all were under secret service surveillance and had restricted access to media publicity, yet they wanted to present a certain image of themselves to a broader public and, therefore, had to make their distinctiveness palpable. In their actions, they had to consider that each utterance potentially had multiple audiences, which guided their use of and reflection about media. Solzhenitsyn, Wat, and Biermann show three different strategies of reacting to ambiguous audiences: one creates ever more concealed kernels of the self, the second tries to avoid semantic fixation in written text, and the third publicly addresses the performative nature of the self. Even though their self images will be passed down as written text, thanks to their work with various media and their attempts to directly address their audience, voice and listening form an indispensable part of their reflections about the self.

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Thomas Goldstein

Privacy as a Weapon?*

The Mysterious Health of Hermann Kant

In December 1984, Hermann Kant announced he was taking a leave of absence as president of the East German Writers Union (*Schriftstellerverband der DDR*, SV), the government organization tasked with managing the country's writers and promoting their social and professional well-being. The stated reason for his decision—a health crisis—seemed plausible enough as Kant had endured persistent medical problems for years. News of this transition was soon made public, as was the appointment of union vice president Gerhard Holtz-Baumert as acting president. Six months later Kant resumed his post and continued as president until after the fall of the Berlin Wall. When measured against the many significant cultural and political events in the history of the German Democratic Republic, Kant's absence appears entirely insignificant at first glance, a fact that explains why the incident is almost never mentioned in scholarship on Kant or the Writers Union.[1] Yet an examination of files by the East German Ministry for State Security (*Ministerium für Staatssicherheit*, MfS or Stasi) and the ruling Socialist Unity Party (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*, SED) reveals that not all was as it seemed.

Indeed, many union members immediately expressed doubts about the explanation given for Kant's leave, especially as he was spotted just two days after his announcement at an award ceremony and continued to attend public events over the next several months. Speculation on Kant's *true* motives soon became rampant. Some colleagues suggested the decision was a product of growing conflict with the SED over cultural policy, while others saw a familiar pattern of Kant threatening resignation unless granted concessions. Kurt Hager, the

1 See e.g., Sabine Pamperrien, *Versuch am untauglichen Objekt: Der Schriftstellerverband im Dienst der sozialistischen Ideologie* (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 2004); Karl Corino, ed., *Die Akte Kant: IM "Martin," die Stasi und die Literatur in Ost und West* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1995); Sara Jones, *Complicity, Censorship and Criticism: Negotiating Space in the GDR Literary Sphere* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 81; Linde Salber, *Hermann Kant: Nicht ohne Utopie: Biographie* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 2013), 362–369; Irmtraud Gutschke, *Hermann Kant. Die Sache und die Sachen* (Berlin: Das Neue Berlin, 2007), 119.

SED's chief ideologue, preferred to attribute Kant's decision to the breakneck pace he maintained as president, while longtime union First Secretary Gerhard Henniger suspected problems in his private life.[2]

Here was a mystery that Kant's colleagues, the SED, and the secret police could not solve. What precisely was Kant's motivation for stepping down? Did he intend to resume his post or did he hope to make this a permanent hiatus? And if it were the latter, to what end? This chapter explores this strange but revealing episode within the union's presidium, its sixteen-member leadership body, focusing on regime and Stasi officials' attempts to formulate an accurate narrative of Kant's intentions while also seeking to stymie counter-narratives in the broader literary community and East German public. In doing so, it considers the implications of surveillance on a leading cultural institution and its leaders and the possibilities that citizens such as Kant had to use their privacy as a weapon against the regime. It also probes the extent to which secret police records can be used to gauge the private life and identity of individuals.

Much of the subsequent discussion centers on the relationship between privacy (particularly as a means of obscuring intentions) and the rumors that this secrecy can engender.[3] Gossip and hearsay have long interested historians, including ordinary people using rumor and innuendo for entertainment, sharing information inaccessible in other media, resolving disputes, discrediting rivals, or protecting reputations. From witchcraft accusations in ancient Athens to backbiting and informing in the Third Reich, scholars have revealed the omnipresence of rumors as tools for redressing social and political grievances and polic-

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2 See, e.g., Hauptabteilung (hereafter HA) XX/7, "Information über Reaktionen aus Kreisen der Schriftsteller zu dem Verhalten des Präsidenten des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR, Hermann Kant" (January 4, 1985), BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr. 4810, 3–4; HA XX/7, "Information über Reaktionen zum Verhalten des Präsidenten des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR, Hermann Kant" (January 7, 1985), BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr. 4810, 5–6; Kurt Hager to Erich Honecker (November 23, 1984), SAPMO-BArch, DY30/26310, 1–2 [The letters used in this article have no proper title in the archives. For the readers' convenience, I reference them throughout the text according to the Chicago style—Sender to Recipient, with their archival location]; "Information über die Mitteilung von Hermann KANT an den Vorstand des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR, seine Funktion als Präsident des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR aus gesundheitlichen Gründen nicht mehr ausüben zu können, über dazu getroffene Massnahmen sowie über damit im Zusammenhang stehende Reaktionen und Meinungsäusserungen" (December 19, 1984), BStU, MfS, HA XX, ZMA, Nr. 4130, Bd. 2, 328.

3 See, e.g., James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985); Henry Abelove, *Deep Gossip* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

ing communal relations.[4] Similar approaches have been extended to Communist regimes, typically focusing on how workers and peasants crafted narratives of political circumstances given their limited access to hard information or on their use of gossip as a form of dissent.[5] As with other historical examples, rumors became a vital alternative source of news for nearly the entire population given the control that ruling parties exercised over all official media and the consequent unreliability of its reporting.[6]

Such insights have been applied less often to East Germany, though in 1996 Bernd Eisenfeld observed, "Rumors accompanied everyday life in the GDR like

4 See, e.g., Robert Paine, "What is Gossip About? An Alternative Hypothesis," *Man* 2, no. 2 (1967); Esther Eidinow, "Patterns of Persecution: 'Witchcraft' Trials in Classical Athens," *Past & Present* 208 (2008); Phillipp R. Schofield, "Peasants and the Manor Court: Gossip and Litigation in a Suffolk Village at the Close of the Thirteenth Century," *Past & Present* 159 (1998); Marjorie Harness Goodwin, "'Instigating': Storytelling as Social Process," *American Ethnologist* 9, no. 4 (1982); Alison Rowlands, "Witchcraft and Old Women in Early Modern Germany," *Past & Present* 173 (2001); Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathern, *Witchcraft, Sorcery, Rumors, and Gossip* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Gregory Evans Dowd, "The Panic of 1751: The Significance of Rumors on the South Carolina-Cherokee Frontier," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (1996); Edith B. Gelles, "Gossip: An Eighteenth-Century Case," *Journal of Social History* 22, no. 4 (1989); Karen V. Hansen, "The Power of Talk in Antebellum New England," *Agricultural History* 67, no. 2 (1993); Martin Sökefeld, "Rumours and Politics on the Northern Frontier: The British, Pakhtun Wali and Yaghestan," *Modern Asian Studies* 36, no. 2 (2002); Ian Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich: Bavaria, 1933 – 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); Robert Gellately, "Rethinking the Nazi Terror System: A Historiographical Analysis," *German Studies Review* 14, no. 1 (1991); Lars-Broder Keil and Sven Felix Kellerhoff, *Gerüchte machen Geschichte: Folgenreiche Falschmeldungen im 20. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2006); Sara Maza, *Private Lives and Public Affairs: The Causes Célèbres of Prerevolutionary France* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 112 – 166; Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (New York: Norton, 1995), 137 – 168, 198 – 216; Andrea Friedman, "The Smearing of Joe McCarthy: The Lavender Scare, Gossip and Cold War Politics," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (2005); Claire Bond Potter, "Queer Hoover: Sex, Lies, and Political History," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 15, no. 3 (2006).
5 See, e.g., S. A. Smith, "Talking Toads and Chinless Ghosts: The Politics of 'Superstitious' Rumors in the People's Republic of China, 1961 – 1965," *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 2 (2006); S. A. Smith, "Fear and Rumour in the People's Republic of China in the 1950s," *Cultural and Social History* 5, no. 3 (2008); Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance & Survival in the Russian Village After Collectivization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 5 – 6, 286 – 296; Lynne Viola, *Peasant Rebels under Stalin: Collectivization and the Culture of Peasant Resistance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 45 – 66; Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia: Terror, Propaganda, and Dissent, 1934 – 1941* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 114 – 118.
6 Timothy Johnston, *Being Soviet: Identity, Rumour, and Everyday Life under Stalin 1939 – 1953* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), xxxvi–xl.

bread at mealtime."[7] Historians of the Stasi have likewise drawn attention to *Zersetzung* (decomposition) operations, institutionalized during the 1970s as the SED reduced the overt use of terror in a bid to gain greater legitimacy at home and abroad. The MfS thus shifted to more covert actions, using informants and agents to deploy false information to smear oppositional figures and undermine trust among civil society groups.[8] Relatively few, though, have pursued the implications of Caitlin E. Murdock's study of how citizens could use rumors as weapons of the weak. In her analysis of gossip about harsh working conditions in Soviet occupation zone mines, she suggests that negative reports in the western press and widespread rumors among ordinary Germans created pressure on the SED to improve conditions amidst its drive to recruit mineworkers.[9] As we will see, Kant's strategy in this affair may well have derived from a similar assessment, banking on the regime's fear of negative publicity as leverage to achieve his aims.

In Kant's actions, we also see the tensions inherent in the interplay between public and private life under Communism. On the one hand, while Communist regimes initially sought total control over both the public and private spheres, they gradually conceded a right to privacy as part of their social contract with citizens. Yet on the other hand, as Paul Betts asserts, "Private life was never a world apart, but was always shot through by the forces of state and society."[10] This was especially true for prominent members of the ruling parties, such as Kant, who understood that playing the "political game" well in the private sphere had a direct impact on one's standing.[11] At the same time, standards of

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7 "Gerüchte gehörten in der DDR zum Alltag wie das Brot zum Essen." [Translations here and throughout the article are mine if not indicated differently.] Bernd Eisenfeld, "Gerüchteküche der DDR: Die Desinformationspolitik des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit," *Werkstatt Geschichte* 15 (1996), 41. See also Stefan Wolle, *Die heile Welt der Diktatur: Alltag und Herrschaft in der DDR, 1971–1989* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 1998), 156–160; Andrew I. Port, *Conflict and Stability in the German Democratic Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 121–123; Keil and Kellerhoff, *Gerüchte machen Geschichte*, 135–158, 237–258.

8 See e.g., Sandra Pingel-Schliemann, *Zersetzen: Strategie einer Diktatur* (Berlin: Robert-Havemann-Gesellschaft, 2002), 86–125; Jens Gieseke, *The History of the Stasi: East Germany's Secret Police, 1945–1990* (New York: Berghahn, 2014), 146–148; Gary Bruce, *The Firm: The Inside Story of the Stasi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 130–134.

9 Caitlin E. Murdock, "A Gulag in the Erzgebirge? Forced Labor, Political Legitimacy, and Eastern German Uranium Mining in the Early Cold War, 1946–49," *Central European History* 47, no. 4 (2014).

10 Paul Betts, *Within Walls: Private Life in the German Democratic Republic* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1–20, 13.

11 See Jan C. Behrends, "Inside the System: The CPSU Central Committee, Mikhail Gorbachev's *komanda*, and the End of Communist Rule in Russia," in *Communist Parties Revisited: Sociocul-*

private behavior were not merely tools for reinforcing Party hegemony. Citizens could also construct an image of private life so as to impact public life, transforming privacy under communism into a "social practice" that enabled people to assert agency or *Eigen-Sinn* (self-directedness or obstinacy), using their knowledge of official structures and practices to advance self-interests.[12] In other words, these actions were designed to have an effect, becoming what John L. Austin labeled "performative utterances."[13] In fact, state socialism may have created ideal conditions for such expressions: as Scott Skinner-Thompson contends about the information age more generally, "the widespread surveillance regimes now in place help steep individual efforts to maintain privacy with expressive value."[14] In this sense, as Kant's "performance" of his private life undermined his public statements, he was perhaps seeking to exploit the unstable relationship between public and private life under Communism. Indeed, as a high-ranking SED member and a previous Stasi informant, Kant was well aware that his private conduct drew great scrutiny, pointing us to the conclusion that perhaps the union president was not tailoring his private actions to meet regime expectations so much as making a mockery of them, calling attention to the official façade in order to pursue his personal aims.[15] Just as Judith Butler argues that "gender parody" performances are subversive because they call attention to the constructed nature of gender,[16] Kant's parody of accepted standards of private behavior for Party members in East Germany might well have aimed to "de-

tural Approaches to Party Rule in the Soviet Bloc, 1956–1991, eds. Rüdiger Bergien and Jens Gieseke (New York: Berghahn, 2018); Krysztof Dabek, "The Idea of Social Unity and Its Influence on the Mechanisms of a Totalitarian Regime in the Years 1956–1980," in *Communist Parties Revisited: Sociocultural Approaches to Party Rule in the Soviet Bloc, 1956–1991,* eds. Rüdiger Bergien and Jens Gieseke (New York: Berghahn, 2018); Andrew I. Port, "Love, Lust, and Lies under Communism: Family Values and Adulterous Liaisons in Early East Germany," *Central European History* 44, no. 3 (2011).

12 Betts, *Within Walls*, 17; Alf Lüdke, *Eigen-Sinn: Fabrikalltag, Arbeitererfahrung und Politik vom Kaiserreich bis in den Faschismus* (Hamburg: Ergebnisse Verlage, 1993); Mary Fulbrook, "The Concept of 'Normalisation' and the GDR in Comparative Perspective," in *Power and Society in the GDR, 1961–1979: The 'Normalisation of Rule'?,* ed. Mary Fulbrook (New York: Berghahn, 2009); Scott Moranda, *The People's Own Landscape: Nature, Tourism, and Dictatorship in East Germany* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2014), 135–155.

13 John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 1–12.

14 Scott Skinner-Thompson, "Performative Privacy," *UC Davis Law Review* 50, no. 4 (2017).

15 Betts, *Within Walls*, 32–34. On Kant's decades as a Stasi informant, see Corino, *Die Akte Kant*.

16 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 174–178.

naturalize" that standard, pointing out that the reason typically presented to the public for removing prominent Party members from their positions—a health crisis—was largely (if not entirely) a sham.[17] The threat his contradictory comportment thus posed to this official myth created pressure on the regime to fulfill his ambitions.

A Troubled Beginning

Hermann Kant, born in 1926, was one of the most important cultural figures in East Germany by the 1980s. In 1959, the aspiring novelist joined the Writers Union, the government's professional organization for all literary professionals. Over the next decade Kant found literary success with his book *Die Aula* (The Auditorium, 1965) and rose to become one of the union's vice presidents in 1969. His willingness to criticize fellow union members who supported Wolf Biermann, a dissident songwriter ejected from the country in 1976, coupled with his nearly twenty years as a Stasi informant thus made him a natural choice to succeed novelist Anna Seghers, who retired as president in 1978. Yet in the short period between 1978 and 1984, Kant's reign was beset with controversy, especially as he presided over the ouster of nine authors from the union in 1979 for airing criticism of the SED in the West, an act that all-but ended their literary careers in East Germany.[18] Such actions tarnished his image among dissenting East German writers and in the western media, prompting *Der Spiegel* to later bestow him with the sobriquet "the Stalinist bailiff in the Writers Union."[19]

Yet while this rendering paints Kant as a steadfast SED sycophant, a glance at internal files from the Writers Union, SED, and MfS reveals a man who offered to resign no less than six times in his twelve years as president. His first attempt came less than six months into his new post over the SED's decision in 1978 to cancel a second print run of Erich Loest's *Es geht seinen Gang* (Things Go Their

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17 When Walter Ulbricht and Erich Honecker stepped down as SED chief in 1971 and 1989, respectively, they cited health as the primary reason. Despite their poor health, in reality, political factors precipitated their downfall. Catherine Epstein, *The Last Revolutionaries: German Communists and Their Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 184–186, 240–241.
18 The authors were Stefan Heym, Kurt Barsch, Adolf Endler, Karl-Heinz Jakobs, Klaus Poche, Klaus Schlesinger, Dieter Schubert, Joachim Seyppel, and Rolf Schneider. Joachim Walther et al., eds., *Protokoll eines Tribunals: Die Ausschlüsse aus dem DDR-Schriftstellerverband, 1979* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1991).
19 "Selbst Hermann Kant, stalinistischer Büttel im Schriftstellerverband [...]" "Bleibt die Avantgarde zurück?" *Der Spiegel* 49 (1989), accessed July 3, 2019, http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-13496635.html; Salber, *Hermann Kant*, 12.

Way, 1978) for its criticism of East German socialism. Meeting with GDR leader Erich Honecker (1971–1989) over the incident, the SED chief dressed down Kant for his tactics, reminding that his appointment "counted as a Party order." Kant promptly withdrew his threat and promised to never again make such an offer, explaining his gesture was not about Loest's book *per se* so much as "his authority as president of the Writers Union." As First Secretary Gerhard Henniger recounted, "[I]f Loest's book does not receive a new edition, [Kant] would be a 'knife without a blade,'" and in future conflicts "no one would listen to him." Nonetheless, Honecker's reproach reportedly made a "strong impression," leaving Kant "very dejected" by the suggestion his resignation would be seen as an act of desertion.[20]

It would seem here that Kant's concern was less about the publication of a specific book and more about his credibility among critical writers, which would give him capital to spend on weightier disputes between the SED and dissenting union members.[21] His threat may also have aimed at strengthening his standing among SED leaders, but Honecker's criticism had depressed him, and an event in early 1979 only magnified his fears about his Party standing. In January, the Berlin district SED leadership, where Kant had been a member for five years, instructed him and several others to give up their seats, ostensibly to reduce the number of functionaries in the body. According to Berlin SED chairman Konrad Naumann, Kant reacted indignantly to this news, railing against the "provincialism" of decision-makers.[22] Perhaps he had cause for concern. A fellow novelist

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20 "[...] da es ihm nicht schlechthin um das Buch von (Loest), sondern um seine Autorität als Präsident des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR ginge [...]. Wenn das Buch von (Loest) jedoch keine Nachauflage erhält, würde er wie ein 'Messer ohne Klinge' dastehen. In künftigen Auseinandersetzungen, wo es unter Umständen um größere Probleme als ein (Loest)-Buch gehen könne, würde dann niemand mehr auf ihn hören [...]. Gen. Honecker wies Kant darauf hin, daß dessen Berufung zum Präsidenten des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR als Parteiauftrag gelte. [...] Nach Meinung des Gen. (Henniger) hatte das Gespräch mit Gen. Honecker auf Kant einen starken Eindruck hinterlassen. Kant sei sehr niedergeschlagen gewesen." HA XX/7, "Information: Gerhard Henniger über die Rücktrittsabsichten von Hermann Kant und die Reaktion von Erich Honecker" (November 2, 1978), in *Die Akte Kant: IM "Martin," die Stasi und die Literatur in Ost und West*, ed. Karl Corino (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1995).

21 Joachim Walther and Gesine von Prittwitz, *Sicherungsbereich Literatur: Schriftsteller und Staatssicherheit in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 1996), 734–735; Jones, *Complicity, Censorship and Criticism*, 75–81.

22 "[...] das Verhalten des Genossen Hermann KANT etwas unbescheiden, da er seine Mitgliedschaft in der Bezirksleitung für eine Gesetzmässigkeit hält und im Änderungsfalle sein Ausscheiden Provinzialismus bezeuge." Konrad Naumann to Ursula Ragwitz, Berlin (January 25, 1979), SAPMO-BArch, DY30/IVB2/9.06/63, 1; Bezirksleitung Berlin der SED, 2. Sekretär, "AKTENNOTIZ über die durchgeführten Gespräche mit Mitgliedern und Kandidaten der Bezirksleitung, die

hinted to Kant that he was "being slowly phased out,"[23] while union VP Gerhard Holtz-Baumert reported rumors that certain SED leaders, perhaps even Naumann, wanted to remove him as union president.[24] Such gossip aggravated Kant, who worried that losing his SED standing would diminish his "political credentials and reputation" in the union.[25]

The expulsion of nine authors from the union five months later did little to help Kant's confidence. The president played a leading role in the affair; following instructions from Kurt Hager,[26] in late May, Kant addressed the union's steering committee with a speech that was reprinted in the East German daily *Neues Deutschland* the following day. Here, he laid out the charges against the expellees, especially their act of publishing an open letter in the western press criticizing Honecker's cultural policy.[27] A week later the union's Berlin district branch ratified the expulsions, but just days afterwards, Kant admitted to Henniger that he harbored doubts over the decision due to disapproval from people close to him. For instance, opposition from his good friend and fellow novelist Stephan Hermlin led Kant to question himself,[28] while his girlfriend apparently

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nicht für eine Wiederkandidatur vorgesehen sind," Berlin (January 24, 1979), SAPMO-BArch, DY30/IVB2/9.06/63, 1.

23 "[...] wie er 'langsam aus dem Verkehr gezogen' wird." HA XX, "Vermerk," Berlin (January, 29, 1979) BStU, MfS, AIM, Nr. 2173/70, Teil I, Bd. 5, 16.

24 The rumor about Naumann has a whiff of plausibility since the Berlin SED chief had helped break up Kant's marriage to actress Vera Oelschlegel in 1976. Salber, *Hermann Kant*, 260–264.

25 "[...] außerdem mindert dieses seine politische Qualifikation und Ansehen im Vorstand [...]" HA II, "Information: Meinungsäußerung zur geplanten Nichtwiederwahl des Genossen Hermann KANT in die Bezirksleitung der SED Berlin," Berlin (February 9, 1979), BStU, MfS, AIM, Nr. 16481/81, Teil II, Bd. 5, 63.

26 HA XX/7, "Information über in der Präsidiumssitzung des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR am 23.5.1979 festgelegte Massnahmen gegen feindlich-negative Schriftsteller der DDR," Berlin (May 24, 1979), BStU, MfS, HA XX, ZMA, Nr. 4130, Bd. 1, 21–23.

27 Hermann Kant, "Wir lassen uns von unserem Kurs nicht abbringen: Referat von Hermann Kant," in *Protokoll eines Tribunals: Die Ausschlüsse aus dem DDR-Schriftstellerverband, 1979*, eds. Joachim Walther et. al. (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1991), 101–110. A draft of the speech is also found in SAPMO-BArch, DY30/IVB2/9.06/61. See also Joachim Walther, "Die Amputation – Zur Vor- und Nachgeschichte der Ausschlüsse," in *Protokoll eines Tribunals: Die Ausschlüsse aus dem DDR-Schriftstellerverband, 1979*, eds. Joachim Walther et. al. (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1991), 11–12; HA XX/7, "Information über die Vorstandssitzung des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR am 30.5.1979," Berlin (May 31, 1979), BStU, MfS, HA XX, ZMA, Nr. 4130, Bd. 1, 16–20.

28 HA XX/7, "Information über Reaktionen von Stephan HERMLIN auf die Aktivitäten feindlich-negativer DDR-Schriftsteller," Berlin (June 30, 1979), BStU, MfS, AIM, Nr. 2173/70, Teil I, Bd. 5, 49–50.

urged him to block confirmation of the expulsions.[29] To make matters worse, Kant soon became the target of regular, sometimes vicious criticism, receiving reproachful letters from several East German writers and facing accusatory questions during a trip to West Germany that summer, all while the western media dismissed him as an "SED yes-man."[30] His health even began to decline and medical treatment in the Soviet Union failed to fully revive him.[31]

Growing Doubts

Despite these troubles, in the 1980s, Kant's star continued to shine brightly in the eyes of the SED leadership. Early in the decade, he emerged as a leading spokesman for the regime's campaign against the installation of NATO missiles in Western Europe, a cause that became central to Writers Union activism.[32] Yet beneath the surface, challenges persisted, especially as fellow presidium members increasingly griped about Kant's leadership style. Already in 1980, Klaus Höpcke, the GDR's "publishing tsar," proposed that Kant should not be permitted to remain SV president after his term expired. He complained that in speeches and interviews Kant liked to distance himself from the government, questioned his "uncritical engagement" with prominent but troublesome writers, and decried his unwillingness to take criticism from SED leaders.[33] Trouble was also brewing within the union, as a March 1981 Stasi report noted that "the extremely cynical, ironic behavior of Hermann Kant alienated an array of presidium members," particularly his tendency to make important decisions by him-

29 HA XX/7, "Vermerk: Über Zweifel Hermann Kants an der Richtigkeit der Ausschlüsse," Berlin (June 11, 1979), in *Die Akte Kant: IM "Martin," die Stasi und die Literatur in Ost und West*, ed. Karl Corino (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1995), 400 – 401.

30 "Dies ginge soweit sagte Genosse KANT, dass einzelne Kollegen sich die Argumentation der Westpresse zu eigen machen und ihn als einen 'SED-Schleimer' bezeichnen." HA XX, "Information," Berlin (March 27, 1980), BStU, MfS, AIM, Nr. 2173/70, Teil I, Bd. 5, 161 – 162.

31 HA XX, "Vermerk," Berlin (July 4, 1979), BStU, MfS, AIM, Nr. 2173/70, Teil I, Bd. 5, 95; "Bericht über die Reise der Genossen Hermann Kant und Gerhard Henniger in die BRD," Berlin (July 6, 1979), BStU, MfS, AIM, Nr. 2173/70, Teil I, Bd. 5, 106 – 110.

32 Thomas Goldstein, "A Tenuous Peace: International Antinuclear Activism in the East German Writers Union during the 1980s," in *Nuclear Threats, Nuclear Fear, and the Cold War of the 1980s*, eds. Eckart Conze, Martin Klimke, and Jeremy Varon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

33 "Darüber hinaus gibt es noch eine ganze Reihe von Praktiken und Verhaltensweisen von Kant, z.B. sein unkritisches Engagement für Loest, Kunert, Christa Wolf u.a. politisch-negative Schriftsteller [...]." HA XX, "Vermerk," Berlin (November 26, 1980), BStU, MfS, AIM, Nr. 2173/70, Teil I, Bd. 5, 259 – 260.

self.[34] A year later, the Stasi noted that several presidium members still felt Kant avoided working with them on controversial issues, resulting in a "breach of trust." There were even rumors that two members were ready to quit their posts if Kant was not dropped as president,[35] while others were supposedly so fed up that they felt it was "often better not to participate in the meetings of the presidium or the steering committee."[36]

Rank and file union members voiced similar grievances. In February 1982, several felt Kant shirked his duty to make a "clear political and partisan statement on current problems" and that his unwillingness to challenge divisive authors suggested tacit approval of them.[37] Worse yet, in March, the Stasi reported that some who voted for the 1979 expulsions "with heavy hearts" felt they were getting "the run-around," as Kant had begun to court those authors who had opposed the expulsions.[38] Finally, a May report warned that Kant's "headstrong, autocratic, arrogant, partly unpartisan" leadership had created fear of "a splitting of the Writers Union."[39] So great was the dissatisfaction that there was

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34 "Wie inoffiziell bekannt wurde, befremdete das äußerst zynische, ironische Auftreten Hermann Kants, eine Reihe von Mitgliedern des Präsidiums [...]" HA XX/7, "Information zu operativ interessierenden Fragen während der Sitzung des Präsidiums des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR am 18.3.1981," Berlin (March 20, 1981), BStU, MfS, AIM, Nr. 2173/70, Teil I, Bd. 5, 295–297.
35 "[...] führte zu einem Abbruch des Vertrauens der Mitglieder des Präsidiums gegenüber KANT [...]." "Information zur Lage im Präsidium des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR" (March 22, 1982), BStU, MfS, AIM, Nr. 2173/70, Teil I, Bd. 6, 47–50.
36 "Aus diesem Grund sei es für sie oft besser, an den Sitzungen des Präsidiums oder des Vorstandes gar nicht teilzunehmen." "Information zur gegenwärtigen Situation im Schriftstellerverband der DDR" (May 27, 1982), BStU, MfS, HA XX, ZMA, Nr. 4130, Bd. 2, 46–47.
37 "So vermied es Kant in letzter Zeit, mit einfachen Worten eine klare politische und parteiliche Stellungnahme zu aktuellen Problemen abzugeben." "Information zur gegenwärtigen Situation im Schriftstellerverband der DDR" (February 16, 1982), BStU, MfS, AIM, Nr. 2173/70, Teil I, Bd. 5, 405–407.
38 "Alle 'kleinen Leute' im Schriftstellerverband, die während der Auseinandersetzungen mit den Biermann-Sympathisanten schweren Herzens einem Verbandsausschluß dieser Leute zustimmten, kommen sich heute durch den Präsidenten, der ihnen damals riet, diese Leute aus dem Schriftstellerverband auszuschließen, an der Nase herumgeführt vor." "Information zur gegenwärtigen Situation im Schriftstellerverband der DDR" (March 2, 1982), BStU, MfS, HA XX, ZMA, Nr. 4130, Bd. 2, 77–79.
39 "[...] in der eigenwilligen, selbstherrlichen, überheblichen teilweise nicht parteilichen Leitungstätigkeit des Präsidenten des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR, Hermann Kant. [...] so daß Tendenzen zur Spaltung des Schriftstellerverbandes aufgetreten sind." "Information zur gegenwärtigen Situation im Schriftstellerverband der DDR" (May 27, 1982), 43.

talk of founding a new union "to represent and discuss the actual interests and problems of authors,"[40] rumors that surely unsettled the SED.

For his part, Kant found the burden of office heavy. So unhappy was he that in March 1981, he asked that he be allowed to resign in an unsent letter to Kurt Hager.[41] In it, he identified three areas of discontent: the excessive time he devoted to his office, his poor health, and conflict with SED leaders over cultural policy. He also pilloried the East German media's coverage of him, especially its failure to print some of his speeches and its omission of any mention of a recent essay collection.[42] To prevent any scandals, he offered to blame poor health and exhaustion for stepping down.[43] Catching wind of the letter, Henniger urgently wrote to Honecker,[44] who in turn summoned Kant in March. Once more, the SED head admonished the union president that someone in "such a politically important role must never toy with the thought of resigning." The office, he continued, carried a "high responsibility," and reflected the SED's "great trust" in him. As an olive branch of sorts, he paid lip service to Kant's complaints, and in the end the president acknowledged his mistake and vowed once more to fulfill his duties. As a Stasi report on the meeting concluded, Kant left feeling "optimistic."[45]

The feeling evaporated quickly, as barely two weeks later Kant was reportedly shunned at a cultural policy meeting by Party stalwarts and nonconformists

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40 "[...] der sich damit befassen wird, die wirklichen Interessen und Probleme der Autoren zu vertreten und zu diskutieren." "Information zur gegenwärtigen Situation im Schriftstellerverband der DDR" (February 16, 1982), 405–407; see also HA XX, "Information zur gegenwärtigen Situation im Schriftstellerverband der DDR" (April 22, 1982), BStU, MfS, AIM, Nr. 2173/70, Teil I, Bd. 6, 64–65.

41 HA XX/7, "Information zu operativ interessierenden Fragen während der Sitzung des Präsidiums des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR am 18.3.1981," Berlin (March 20, 1981), 295–297.

42 The collection was entitled, *Zu den Unterlagen: Publizistik, 1957–1980* (East Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1981). Salber, *Hermann Kant*, 348–355.

43 HA XX/7, "Information zu operativ interessierenden Fragen während der Sitzung des Präsidiums des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR am 18.3.1981," Berlin (March 20, 1981), 295–297.

44 HA XX/7, "Information," Berlin (n. d.), BStU, MfS, AIM, Nr. 2173/70, Teil I, Bd. 5, 307–308.

45 "[...] dieses Gespräch habe ihn optimistisch gestimmt. Genosse Erich Honecker habe ihm in einer sehr sachlichen Debatte beigebracht, dass man in einer solchen politisch wichtigen Funktion überhaupt nicht mit dem Gedanken spielen dürfe, zurückzutreten. Die Funktion des Präsidenten des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR sei mit einer hohen Verantwortung verbunden und Zeuge von großem Vertrauen, das die Partei in ihn, Kant, bei der Wahrnehmung der damit verbundenen Aufgaben setze." HA XX/7, "Information über Reaktionen des Präsidenten des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR, Hermann KANT, auf ein Gespräch, das der Generalsekretär des ZK der SED, Genosse Erich Honecker, mit ihm am 27.3.1981 geführt hat," Berlin (March 27, 1981), BStU, MfS, AIM, Nr. 2173/70, Teil I, Bd. 5, 306.

alike. Surrounded by "enemies" and with a renewed feeling of being on the SED's "hit list," he now claimed he was merely a "figurehead" whom the Party was itching to replace with a more suitable candidate like fellow presidium members Günter Görlich[46] or Gerhard Holtz-Baumert, both recently confirmed to the SED Central Committee.[47] Six months later, the Stasi reported that Kant still felt that he "obviously did not enjoy the trust of the Party," since Hager treated him "like a stupid boy." Belabored efforts by other union leaders roused his spirits,[48] though only temporarily, as the following March Henniger reportedly again had to convince him not to resign his office.[49]

Despite such efforts, Kant's gloomy outlook persisted. He continued to feel the sting of critics inside the union, and hecklers regularly harassed him at international meetings. He often complained about a lack of support in the GDR press, suggesting that if a famous singer or sports star were maligned in the western media, *Neues Deutschland* would immediately rush to his or her defense.[50] In 1982, Kant and Stephan Hermlin sent Honecker a letter criticizing the regime's heavy-handed treatment of young people opposed to the SED's peace policies,[51] and despite his expressed interest in becoming editor of the country's leading literary journal, *Sinn und Form*, when its editor died, the post instead went to his union vice president, Max Walter Schulz.[52]

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46 "Hermann Kant vertritt die Auffassung, dass Partei- und Staatsführung der DDR ihm als Präsidenten des Schriftstellerverbandes misstrauen und er auf der 'Abschlussliste' stehe. Er könne sehen, wohin er will, überall habe er Feinde. Er sei nur noch eine 'Gallionsfigur.'" HA XX/7, "Information," Berlin (April 13, 1981), BStU, MfS, AIM, Nr. 2173/70, Teil I, Bd. 5, 323.

47 "[...] da er offensichtlich nicht das Vertrauen der Partei genieße [...] habe ihn Genosse Hager 'wie einen dummen Jungen' behandelt und geschulmeistert." HA II/3, "Treffauswertung," Berlin (April 28, 1981), BStU, MfS, ANS AGMS, Nr. 12448/89, Bd. 1, 128–129.

48 HA XX/7, "Information über die gegenwärtige Haltung des Präsidenten des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR, Hermann KANT," Berlin (October 6, 1981), BStU, MfS, AIM, Nr. 2173/70, Teil I, Bd. 5, 381–383.

49 "Information zur Lage im Präsidium des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR" (March 22, 1982), 47–50. See also "Information über die gegenwärtige politisch-ideologisch Situation des Präsidenten des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR, Hermann KANT" (July 9, 1982), BStU, MfS, AIM, Nr. 2173/70, Teil I, Bd. 6, 132–133.

50 "Information über die Sitzung des Präsidiums des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR am 4. Mai 1983," Berlin (May 4, 1983), SAPMO-BArch, DY30/18932, 1–4.

51 Salber, *Hermann Kant*, 333–334. See also HA XX/7, "Information über operativ interessierende Fragen im Zusammenhang mit der turnusgemässen Sitzung des Präsidiums des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR am 23.2.1984," Berlin (February 29, 1984), BStU, MfS, AIM, Nr. 2173/70, Teil I, Bd. 6, 381–383.

52 Salber, *Hermann Kant*, 350–351.

So severe were his doubts that in July, Henniger met regime officials to see whether or not it was still viable for Kant to remain president after the union's upcoming 1983 national congress.[53] That same month, Hager, in Kant's words, "behaved like an ass" at a meeting of the Politburo's Cultural Commission, pitching a "tantrum" when the president criticized a puerile formulation of socialist culture. A week later, Kant was hospitalized with heart problems, and shortly thereafter he sent Hager his letter from 1981 in which he requested to resign, though it is unclear if he was repeating his proposal or merely making Hager aware of the depths of his frustration.[54] A meeting in December between the two seemed to clear the air, however, with Hager reassuring Kant that there was no debate among SED leaders about his remaining president. Kant thus agreed to run again[55] and was reconfirmed six months later.

A Health Crisis?

Still more problems emerged as soon as Kant's new term began. In the fall of 1983, the centerpiece of his public activism, the campaign to prevent the installation of NATO missiles in West Germany, failed, and his chief collaborator in this endeavor, Bernt Engelmann, was forced to resign as chairman of the West German Union of Writers.[56] To add insult to injury, Kant nominated the now-out-of-favor Engelmann for an East German literary prize, but the award was repeatedly delayed because of inopportune political circumstances. Finally, the film version of *Der Aufenthalt* (The Residence), Kant's 1978 novel about a Polish POW camp, was blocked from the Berlin film festival after objections by the Polish government, with Kant grousing that his presidium colleagues failed to offer support during this setback.[57] In 1984, as a result of the accumulated stress of these incidents, Kant suffered another heart incident.[58]

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53 "Information über die gegenwärtige politisch-ideologisch Situation des Präsidenten des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR, Hermann KANT" (July 9, 1982), 132–133.

54 "Hager hatte sich wie ein Arsch benommen [...]. Fast glaube ich, Hagers Wutanfall speiste sich nicht zuletzt aus der Einsicht, daß diese Entgegnung weniger meine als seine Sache gewesen wäre [...]" Salber, *Hermann Kant*, 348–355.

55 HA XX/7, "Information über erste Reaktionen des Präsidenten des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR Hermann Kant nach einem Gespräch mit dem Mitglied des Politbüros des ZK der SED Gen. Prof. Kurt Hager" (December 17, 1982), BStU, MfS, AIM, Nr. 8443/91, Teil II, Bd. 1, 156–158. See also Gutschke, *Hermann Kant*, 84.

56 "Lärm um nichts," *Der Spiegel* 48 (November 28, 1983), 231.

57 Abteilung Kultur, "Information über die Sitzung des Präsidiums des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR am 23.2.1983" (February 25, 1983), SAPMO-BArch, DY30/18932, 4.

That November, Kant once again requested to resign in a nine-page letter to Kurt Hager. In the past two years, he explained, he had been in the hospital twice for heart problems. He ascribed this to the immense stress he had endured since the Biermann controversy in 1976, sacrificing his reputation to uphold the Party line. With this backdrop, he explained that the 1982 Cultural Commission meeting in which Hager had criticized him had sent Kant over the edge and a few days later he was in the hospital. More recently, he wrote, he had suffered additional affronts, including ugly gossip from Party officials about his trips to the West and the failure to give Engelmann the award. Within hours of this latest setback he was back in the hospital, leading Kant to grimly observe, "[I]f I keep going like this, I won't become an especially old writer." Finally, he explained how his life was now ruled by inane bureaucratic tasks. Exclaiming, "I can't live like that," he asked to resign. He declined to suggest a successor, though he pointedly observed that two other presidium members had recently joined the SED Central Committee. In closing, he suggested that "reasons of health are always the most convincing," reassuring Hager that speculation on his motives would die down soon enough.[59] By his own account, Kant's decision stemmed from a heart condition exacerbated by the daily frustrations he encountered as head of the Writers Union, including the mountain of paperwork and disagreements over cultural policy. The fact that he was willing to ascribe his retirement to poor health shows a keen awareness of the SED's desire to present a public narrative that would not damage the Party or invite western criticism.[60] Nonetheless, his letter evinced disillusionment with Party policies and with the lack of respect for all that he had accomplished as union president.

Hager immediately briefed Erich Honecker, offering the first assessment of Kant's *real* motives. In his view, the most likely cause was the novelist's "exceedingly nervous and exhausted condition" and his desire to devote more time to writing, but he suggested other likely reasons were conflicts within the presidium and tensions with the SED over an array of "foolishness" like Engelmann's award. Perhaps more to the point, he observed that the failure to nominate Kant to the Central Committee proved his long-standing fears about the Party's insufficient trust in him. As such, Hager advised that this be only a temporary

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58 Salber, *Hermann Kant*, 355–362.

59 "[...] daß ich, wenn ich so weitermache, kein besonders alter Schriftsteller werden werde [...]. So kann ich aber nicht leben [...]. Außerdem sind Gründe der Gesundheit immer dann am überzeugendsten, wenn sie wirklich vorliegen." Hermann Kant to Kurt Hager (November 22, 1984), SAPMO-BArch, DY30/26310, 1–9.

60 For Kant's desire to avoid public criticism of the SED, see Jones, *Complicity, Censorship and Criticism*, 40, 70–71.

absence, as resigning might spark gossip about a "crisis of confidence between Kant and Party and a crisis within the Writers Union."[61] Hager took Kant's claims of being overworked seriously, but to him, the taproot of Kant's discontent was the failure to appoint the ambitious president to the Central Committee, and unsurprisingly his concern was that others would see it the same way, providing fodder for malicious rumors about tensions between the union and SED. Because controlling the narrative was crucial, Kant would have to play along, claiming his absence was purely health related and that he would resume his post as soon as possible.

By December, despite some union leaders' objections,[62] SED officials had settled on Gerhard Holtz-Baumert to serve as acting president in Kant's absence.[63] With the issue seemingly resolved, all that remained was for Kant to set the plan in motion by announcing to the union's steering committee that he wanted to take medical leave and that he wanted Holtz-Baumert to be his replacement. The first part went smoothly; writing to the steering committee, Kant cited only health reasons, presenting a timetable of at least four months for his recovery.[64] He then proposed that one of his vice presidents take over during this

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61 "Er ist seit einiger Zeit in einem überaus nervösen und erschöpften Zustand […]. Er nimmt aber diese Vorgänge bzw. auch eine Reihe ausgesprochener Dummheiten außerordentlich ernst […]. Ein Rücktritt wäre sicher politisch unangenehm, da man daraus eine Vertrauenskrise zwischen Kant und der Partei sowie eine Krise im Schriftstellerverband selbst konstruieren würde." On the memo, Honecker noted simply, "Agreed" ("Einverstanden"). Kurt Hager to Erich Honecker (November 23, 1984), 1–2. See also "Information über die Mitteilung von Hermann KANT an den Vorstand" (December 19, 1984), 328.

62 The Stasi reported that both Jurij Brezan and Stephan Hermlin laid claim to the presidency. Abteilung XX/7, "Information: Wahl eines amtierenden Präsidenten des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR," Berlin (December 11, 1984), BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, Nr. 4590, part II, 288. VPs Rudi Strahl and Rainer Kerndl proposed a rotating presidency among all vice presidents until Kant's return. "Information über die Mitteilung von Hermann KANT an den Vorstand" (December 19, 1984), 329.

63 Ursula Ragwitz to Kurt Hager (December 3, 1984), SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/2313, 1–2. Holtz-Baumert was likely chosen due to the fact that he was a Central Committee member and a long-time Stasi informant. Regarding the latter, the MfS approached him in 1956 because of his friendship with a man who worked with a West German intelligence service. The Stasi hoped to make a double agent of his friend and Holtz-Baumert consequently became a vital part of a years-long and ultimately successful operation. He was later awarded a distinguished service medal for creating "the decisive preconditions for the infiltration of an important enemy intelligence service center." ("Die Arbeit des GM schaffte die entscheidenden Voraussetzungen für das Eindringen in eine wichtige feindliche Geheimdienstzentrale.") HA II/3, "Vorschlag," Berlin (August 5, 1959), BStU, MfS, AIM, Nr. 16481/81, Teil I, Bd. 2, 84–85.

64 Hermann Kant to the Vorstand des Schridftstellerverbandes der DDR (December 6, 1984), SV 510, Bd. 2, 111.

period, but despite explicit orders to nominate Holtz-Baumert, Kant's letter avoided specifics, an omission that, according to Henniger, led to "an unnecessary discussion" about the succession question.[65] In the end, Holtz-Baumert was elected, but had to be nominated by another vice president.[66] Was Kant deliberately undermining Hager? The failure to nominate a successor lent credence to the idea that Kant's decision stemmed from non-medical issues and hinted that recuperation could take more than four months, suggesting his leave might not be so temporary after all.

Adding fuel to the speculative fire, Kant continued to attend public events, including appearing at Bernt Engelmann's long-delayed award ceremony just two days after stepping down. What's more, as some astonished observers reported, the purportedly ill president was a picture of perfect health.[67] The Stasi related that Kant told another union official that the reason for his improved condition was being freed from cultural politics. According to a source, he even admitted the real reason for stepping down was that "the Party did not give him enough leeway for the exercise of this function." The informant elaborated that Kant was deeply frustrated that his efforts to reintegrate nonconformists into the Writers Union had failed due to his inability to secure publication of their work in the GDR.[68] Such hearsay must be taken with a grain of salt, but given Kant's earlier struggles to bring dissenting authors back into the fold, such an explanation has a ring of plausibility. In any event, Kant continued to attend events throughout the winter and spring, confounding observers in the process.[69]

Confronted with Kant's seemingly renewed vigor, union members and regime officials alike began speculating about his *true* motives. Gerhard Henniger deduced problems in Kant's personal life,[70] a view echoed by a family friend.[71]

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65 "Dadurch wurde eine unnötige Diskussion unter den Präsidiumsmitgliedern darüber hervorgerufen [...]." "Information über die Mitteilung von Hermann KANT an den Vorstand" (December 19, 1984), 328. See also Gutschke, *Hermann Kant*, 119.

66 "Untitled report" (December 12, 1984), SV 510, Bd. 2, 113 – 114.

67 "Information über die Mitteilung von Hermann KANT an den Vorstand" (December 19, 1984), 330; HA XX/7, "Information über Reaktionen zum Verhalten des Präsidenten des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR, Hermann Kant," Berlin (January 7, 1985), 5 – 6.

68 "[...] da ihm die Partei nicht den nötigen Spielraum für die Ausübung dieser Funktion einräumte." HA XX/7, "Information über Reaktionen aus Kreisen der Schriftsteller zu dem Verhalten des Präsidenten des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR, Hermann Kant" (January 4, 1985), 3 – 4.

69 See e. g., HA XX, "Information," Berlin (February 22, 1985), BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr. 4810, 7 – 8; Schriftstellerverband der DDR, "Notiz," Berlin (May 16, 1985), SV 526, Bd. 1, 36 – 38.

70 "Information über die Mitteilung von Hermann KANT an den Vorstand" (December 19, 1984), 327 – 328.

Klaus Höpcke guessed that Kant's actions were merely a pretense for dropping the presidency altogether,[72] though he worried that Kant attending public events would spawn "political speculations" in the western press.[73] Worse yet, the Stasi reported that some East German cultural figures were whispering that Kant's withdrawal was anything but voluntary. In this version of the tale, Kant had been pushed out as punishment for critical statements he had made at a recent meeting with Honecker, supposedly taking issue with the SED's bureaucratic morass and "obstruction of artistic creation." To these skeptics, the lesson was clear: "he who doesn't tell them what they want to hear gets the boot." Most frustrating of all, the Stasi reported that the foreign press was already questioning the rationale behind Kant's resignation and dismissing Holtz-Baumert as a "marionette."[74] Thus within mere days of his announcement, the secret police was anxious that Kant's subsequent actions were feeding the rumor mill and allowing the narrative to escape the SED's control.[75]

As weeks passed, the crisis deepened, and by January, Holtz-Baumert was on the verge of his own resignation. He was reportedly aggravated that Kant was attending events and that the GDR press was still referring to him as union president,[76] leading Holtz-Baumert to assert, perhaps with more than a hint of exasperation, that Kant was clearly feeling better.[77] By May, confusion still reigned as Kant completed a book tour in West Germany, leading frustrated presidium members to seek a definitive answer as to if and when he intended to come back. Holtz-Baumert now scoffed at any notion that he was "acting president," claiming that Hager continually avoided him but always found time for Kant.[78] And to

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71 HA XX/7, "Information über Reaktionen zum Verhalten des Präsidenten des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR, Hermann Kant" (January 7, 1985), 5–6.

72 "Information über die Mitteilung von Hermann KANT an den Vorstand" (December 19, 1984), 329.

73 "[...] da dieser durch einen scheinbar zur Schau gestellten guten Gesundheitszustand Anlaß biete, für politische Spekulationen." HA XX/7, "Information über Reaktionen zum Verhalten des Präsidenten des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR" (January 7, 1985), 5–6.

74 "[...] indem sie von Bürokratismus, Behinderung des künstlerischen Schaffens sowie Ängsten und Engstirnigkeit seitens der Partei gesprochen haben. Es ist schlussfolgend der Gedanke geäussert worden, 'wer nicht nach dem Munde redet, wird abserviert.'" HA XX/9, "Information," Berlin (December 20, 1984), BStU, MfS, HA XX, Nr. 4810, 1.

75 "Information über die Mitteilung von Hermann KANT an den Vorstand" (December 19, 1984), 330.

76 HA XX/7, "Information über Reaktionen aus Kreisen der Schriftsteller zu dem Verhalten des Präsidenten des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR, Hermann Kant" (January 4, 1985), 3–4.

77 HA XX, "Information," Berlin (February 22, 1985), 7–8.

78 "Er äußerte, daß er nicht mehr gewillt sei, länger als 'amtierender Präsident' zu arbeiten." HA XX/7, "Information zu operativ interessierenden Fragen im Zusammenhang mit der Sitzung

add insult to injury, the East German press still had it wrong; "Never has Kant been referred to as president," a report noted, "as often as after the day he declared that his illness no longer permitted him to exercise his office as president."[79] As misinformation swirled, the presidium agreed to ask Kant to clarify his stance, lest his "inconsistency" do any more harm to the union.[80]

The crisis came to a head a month later. By this point, Hager was convinced that Kant had no intention of giving up his presidency but rather was angling for a spot on the Central Committee. For his part, Holtz-Baumert was refusing any further pretense that he was union president, acting or otherwise. At the very least, all could agree with Hager's assessment that a "confused situation" prevailed among union leaders.[81] With uncertainty reaching dire proportions, Kant finally returned to the presidium in June. At his first meeting back, he described his heart condition in detail but also explained how increased difficulties in the East German literary scene had made his work as president immensely taxing. He then attempted to smooth things over, thanking the group for carrying on his work[82] and pledging to rely more on other presidium members for help, a suggestion Holtz-Baumert eagerly accepted.[83]

The reasons for Kant's sudden return are hard to gauge. By his own account, his health had recovered after six months away from the job, but it was likely more than that. The organizational chaos in his absence may have served as sufficient proof of his importance, and his conflicts with fellow presidium members may have abated. A further clue might be gleaned from the SED's decision that spring, after Kant personally appealed to Honecker, to expunge his dear friend Stephan Hermlin's Party record of the "strong rebuke" he had earned in 1976

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des Präsidiums des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR am 15.5.1985," (May 17, 1985), BStU, MfS, HA XX, ZMA, Nr. 4130, Bd. 3, 74–75.

79 "Noch nie sei Hermann Kant in der Presse als Präsident so oft genannt worden wie seit dem Tage, als er erklärte, dass seine Krankheit nicht mehr zulasse, das Präsidentenamt auszuüben." Schriftstellerverband der DDR, "Notiz," Berlin (May 16, 1985), 36–38.

80 "Verband gerät in schlechte Lage durch Hermanns Inkonsequenz." Meeting transcript (n. d. [likely May 15, 1985]), SV 511, Bd. 3, 102–104.

81 "Dadurch ist im Schriftstellerverband gegenwärtig eine konfuse Situation in Bezug auf die Leitung entstanden." Kurt Hager to Erich Honecker (June 5, 1985), SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/26310, 1.

82 HA XX/7, "Information über politisch-operativ interessierende Probleme während der Sitzung des Präsidiums des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR am 27.6.1985," Berlin (July 3, 1985), BStU, HA XX, ZMA, Nr. 4130, Bd. 3, 91–92.

83 "Präsidium 27.6.1985," SV 511, Bd. 3, 71–72; "Beschlussprotokoll" (June 27, 1985), SV 511, Bd. 3, 65.

for protesting Wolf Biermann's expatriation.[84] This olive branch might have set things in motion, signaling that his efforts to reform cultural policy were not wholly in vain. Finally, coincidence or no, Kant was elected to the Central Committee in 1986, perhaps satisfying his ambitions.[85]

Assessment

Stasi and SED files on Kant's health crisis reveal a great deal to historians of state socialism. On a basic level, they chart growing tensions within the Writers Union over cultural policy, highlighting the president's mounting crisis of confidence about his relationship to the Party. They provide basic details on Kant's stated motives for resigning and on his subsequent actions. They also offer a wide range of interpretations on his behavior by union and regime officials, even if scholars must scrutinize these perspectives.[86] And the sheer volume of paperwork devoted to the incident shows the lengths to which the SED would go when faced with inscrutable actions by a key cultural figure, a testament to the enormous expansion of the Stasi under Honecker.[87]

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84 Interestingly, Kant invoked the Biermann turmoil as a ploy to bypass the normal route for expunging a Party penalty, namely a vote in the base Party organization. "Dear Comrade Honecker," he explained, "I don't believe that the Party would be well served with a great debate in the base organization of the Writers Union in Berlin, where it is once again about the damn Biermann affair and the behavior of several comrades. Old resentments and new grudges would come into play and distract us from more sensible work. Not to mention the fun that our enemy would have with this process." ("Lieber Genosse Honecker, ich glaube nicht, dass der Partei mit einer grossen Debatte in der Grundorganisation des Schriftstellerverbandes in Berlin gedient wäre, in der es noch einmal um die verfluchte Biermann-Affäre und das Verhalten einzelner Genossen in ihr ginge. Alte Ressentiments und neuer Neid kämen ins Spiel und hielten uns von vernünftiger Arbeit ab. Ganz abgesehen von dem Spass, den unsere Gegner an diesem Vorgang hätten.") Hermann Kant to Erich Honecker (March 20, 1985), SAPMO-BArch, DY30/2313, 1–2; Kurt Hager to Egon Krenz (March 20, 1985), SAPMO-BArch, DY30/26310, 1.
85 Egon Krenz claimed to have been responsible for Kant's selection to the Central Committee, as it was an "affront" against Kant that three other presidium members were on the Central Committee but he was not. Salber, *Hermann Kant*, 382–383.
86 See Mary Fulbrook, "Methodologische Überlegungen zu einer Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR," in *Die Grenzen der Diktatur: Staat und Gesellschaft in der DDR*, eds. Richard Bessel and Ralph Jessen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996); Jones, *Complicity, Censorship and Criticism*, 22–23.
87 The number of Stasi employees ballooned from just under 33,000 in 1967 to more than 81,000 in 1982, an increase of 147%. Mike Dennis, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality* (Harlow: Pearson, 2003), 77–78.

From another angle, perhaps the reason for the growing paper trail had less to do with Kant *per se.* In reading these sources, one is struck by the disparity between anxiety over the president's actions and the lack of instructions to press him for answers. There was genuine concern over his behavior on the part of officials, but there was little fear that Kant, whose loyalty to the GDR was unquestionable, was seeking to publicly malign the regime. Evidently, the *narrative* of his motives that emerged among his colleagues and the general public was of greater concern to the Stasi and SED than Kant's *actual* motives. In the end, it was the rumors, not the truth, that gave them pause. Less than a decade after the divisive Biermann affair, the SED could ill afford for talk to circulate that Hermann Kant, one of the chief supporters of the Party's decision to expel the dissident, now had his own doubts about cultural policy. Joachim Walther adds weight to this argument in his observation that "the information flow between SED and MfS swelled particularly intensely if positive writers attracted negative attention."[88] This obsession with gossip is unsurprising; paradoxically, just as the GDR was finding legitimacy abroad in the 1970s and 1980s, the Stasi's ever-expanding interest in citizens' private lives testified to a deeply entrenched feeling of insecurity.[89] As Mary Fulbrook asserts, "As time went by, and the very existence of the GDR appeared less under threat, the paranoia became, in a sense, more institutionalized."[90] In this view, the great fuss over Kant perhaps indicates the gradual derangement of a dictatorship obsessed with documenting every negative rumor. And because such rumors typically arise amidst "ambiguous situations" and periods of "social unrest and tension,"[91] their existence casts doubt on perceptions of East German stability, especially given the context of unrest building elsewhere in the Soviet bloc.

Finally, one is struck by what the files *do not* provide, namely a definitive statement about what Kant's intentions actually were. The ever-expanding list of possible motives suggests a lack of clarity on the part of the Stasi and SED as to precisely what Kant was up to. Each official had his or her theories, but there is no report that catalogues and evaluates each purported motive to find the most plausible one. This is significant in and of itself, as it signals that despite the Stasi's obvious interest in gauging Kant's true objectives, it was still

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88 "Daß der Informationsfluß zwischen SED und MfS besonders heftig schwoll, wenn positive Schriftsteller negativ auffielen [...]" Walther, *Sicherungsbereich Literatur*, 65.

89 Betts, *Within Walls*, 38–39.

90 Mary Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship: Inside the GDR, 1949–1989* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 27. See also Betts, *Within Walls*, 39.

91 Anand A. Yang, "A Conversation of Rumors: The Language of Popular Mentalitès in Late Nineteenth-Century Colonial India," *Journal of Social History* 20, no. 3 (1987), 485.

possible to keep a secret or two from the secret police, an observation that corroborates recent scholarship calling into question the totalitarian reach of the East German dictatorship.[92] This is even more striking in view of the fact that the SED had long taken an interest in the private lives of its members and had previously shown a willingness to remove local leaders whose private indiscretions became the source of scandal.[93] Yet as Paul Betts has suggested, over the course of East German history, "people became more skilled at protecting aspects of their private lives by means of dissimulation and outward conformity," leading him to conclude that "the Stasi's secret power was met by citizens' own developed sense of secrecy and masked identities."[94] Intriguingly, Sara Jones has observed that Kant's literature often grapples with similar themes of masking.[95]

Is it possible that Kant's behavior in this incident reveals him as a skilled actor, playing the game as the SED wanted but using his understanding of the rules to conceal his true intentions? Perhaps he was angling for a spot on the Central Committee, or seeking to demonstrate his importance to officials, or protesting the rigidity of cultural policy. Perhaps he was simply tired of the stress of his job. Perhaps he was even having a bit of fun with the regime, repeatedly appearing in public despite his claims of illness, daring officials to guess what was behind his mask. Whatever his goals were, Kant was displaying cunning through his words and actions, or perhaps pursuing his *Eigen-Sinn*. Yet while cases

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92 See e.g., Hartmut Kaelbe, Jürgen Kocka, and Hartmut Zwahr, eds., *Sozialgeschichte der DDR* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1994); Richard Bessel and Ralph Jessen, eds., *Die Grenzen der Diktatur: Staat und Gesellschaft in der DDR* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996); Konrad H. Jarausch, ed., *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR* (New York: Berghahn, 1999); Jeannette Z. Madarász, *Conflict and Compromise in East Germany, 1971– 1989: A Precarious Stability* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2003); Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005); Judd Stiziel, *Fashioning Socialism: Clothing, Politics, and Consumer Culture in East Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Donna Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic: Women, the Family and Communism in the German Democratic Republic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Katherine Pence and Paul Betts, eds., *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008); Eli Rubin, *Synthetic Socialism: Plastics & Dictatorship in the German Democratic Republic* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Jan Palmowski, *Inventing a Socialist Nation: Heimat and the Politics of Everyday Life in the GDR, 1945– 90* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Josie McLellan, *Love in a Time of Communism: Intimacy and Sexuality in the GDR* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
93 Port, "Love, Lust, and Lies under Communism," 478– 505.
94 Betts, *Within Walls*, 50.
95 Jones, *Complicity, Censorship and Criticism*, 90.

abound of citizens exploiting the SED to resolve private disputes,[96] Kant's example opens a new avenue of inquiry: citizens' ability to play on the Party's fear of negative rumors to achieve their own political ends. To be sure, perhaps only someone of Kant's stature could execute this ambitious stratagem, having earned both political and literary capital as a leading functionary and famous author.[97] But in his actions we are reminded of Czesław Miłosz's description of intellectuals under Communism: "Life in constant internal tension develops talents which are latent in man. He does not even suspect to what heights of cleverness and psychological perspicacity he can rise when he is cornered and must either be skillful or perish."[98] In this sense, Kant's shrewd crafting or "performance" of his private life enabled him to pursue his true objectives, in the process strengthening his privacy as well as impacting public life. The possibilities of using one's privacy and the attendant rumors as weapons and as leverage against a regime paranoid about its reputation and stability, thus merit further study.

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96 See e.g., Port, "Love, Lust, and Lies under Communism," 503–504.

97 Matthew Philpotts, "Double Agents: The Editorial Habitus and the Thick Socialist Literary Journal," in *Writing Under Socialism*, eds. Sara Jones and Meesha Nehru (Nottingham: Critical, Cultural and Communications Press, 2011).

98 Czesław Miłosz, *The Captive Mind* (New York: Vintage, 1981), 78.

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Lukas Raabe

Privacy "Detached from Purely Private Tendencies"

Preserving Interpretational Control in Marxist-Leninist Discourses of the Late Socialist GDR

Introduction

An internal training document of the Law School of the Ministry of State Security (*Juristische Hochschule des MfS*),[1] dated October, 1973, reads:

> The task of the VIII Party Congress and the enforcement of its resolutions are thus an expression and decisive guarantee of fundamental rights and obligations. This is guaranteed by Article 19 (1) of the Constitution. "The GDR guarantees all citizens the exercise of their rights and their participation in defining the course of the society's development." For the MfS, this means, in accordance with its class mandate, the obligation to ward off all hostile attacks on citizens' fundamental rights and obligations and to ensure that the latter are fully exercised by citizens.[2]

This quotation reveals the dialectical intertwining embedded in the relations and interactions between the actors who formed socialist society—formal actors as

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1 *MfS* stands for the *Ministerium für Staatssicherheit*—the official name of the GDR State Security Ministry. Its Law School was officially denominated the Academy of the MfS (*Hochschule des MfS*) since the 1970s, whereas the term *Juristische Hochschule des MfS* (abbreviated JHS, stems from the former name of the school) was used in correspondence and on certificates. Günter Förster, *Die Juristische Hochschule des MfS: MfS-Handbuch III/6* (Berlin: BStU, 1996), 4. I will, therefore, use the abbreviation "JHS" throughout this article.
2 "Die Aufgabenstellung des VIII. Parteitages und die Durchsetzung seiner Beschlüsse ist somit einerseits ein Ausdruck der Realität der Grundrechte und -pflichten und andererseits ihre entscheidende Garantie. Diese Garantie verbürgt Art. 19 (1) der Verfassung. ,Die DDR garantiert allen Bürgern die Ausübung ihrer Rechte und ihre Mitwirkung an der Leitung der gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung.' Für das MfS ergibt sich daraus, in Übereinstimmung mit seinen [sic!] Klassenauftrag die Pflicht, alle feindlichen Angriffe auf die Grundrechte und -pflichten der Bürger abzuwehren und ihre volle Wahrnehmung durch die Bürger zu sichern." [Emphasis in the original; first emphasis printed, second and third are inserted by hand in the original file; translations here and throughout the article are mine if not indicated differently.] *Studienanleitung. Die Stellung und Verantwortung der Bürger bei der Gestaltung und beim Schutz der entwickelten sozialistischen Gesellschaft. Die Staatsbürgerschaft der DDR* (1973), BStU, MfS, JHS, MF, Nr. 22431, 14.

well as individuals—in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). In its constitution, the socialist state outlined certain basic rights of citizens, encouraging, *inter alia*, their active participation in guiding the progress of society.[3] At the same time, however, the MfS was equipped with a "class mandate" to "monitor" the *proper* exercise of these rights and obligations. Thus, a central field of friction in socialism can ultimately be extracted from this training document and operationalized for this research project: normative educational demands, everyday living conditions, social dynamics, and ideological attempts at control were created, monitored, embedded, and expelled through formal[4] discourses.[5] The collectivist social order encouraged its citizens to become active and participate—even though every form of participation was subject to the system's regulatory bodies.

In this article, I argue that personality and privacy—and especially the verbal semanticization and re-semanticization of these concepts—can function as lenses to view social interdependencies and interactions within late socialist dictatorships,[6] for these concepts bind central aspects of late socialist dynamics: they linked normative demands with social negotiation processes and thus were fundamental to interactive processes related to the "participation in defin-

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3 See the next section of this article for the GDR constitution and the legal concepts derived from it.

4 I use the term "formal" to describe not only Party-official documents but to denominate all sources somehow affiliated with the state (the Party, universities, state agencies).

5 See Peter Christian Ludz, *Mechanismen der Herrschaftssicherung: Eine sprachpolitische Analyse gesellschaftlichen Wandels in der DDR* (Munich/Vienna: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1980) for a broad study on the capabilities of Marxist-Leninist language usage and Ralph Jessen, "Semantic Strategies of Inclusion and Exclusion in the German Democratic Republic (1949–1989)," in *Political Languages in the Age of Extremes*, ed. Willibald Steinmetz (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2011) who identifies "temporalization," "territorialization," "scandalization," and "homogenization" (277) as semantic strategies in formal discourse and propaganda. Jessen argues that formal discourse developed strategies of creating a coherent narrative of socialism and excluding disturbing elements from it. My own arguments focus on formal discourses as attempts to gain interpretational hegemony over societal issues within a broader communicative setting including individuals and officials and with a special emphasis on semantics of personality and privacy.

6 In this article, I understand the term "late socialism" as the phase of "unity of economic and social policy" in the Honecker era (1971–1989). In addition to socio-political promises, this phase was also marked by a massive expansion of the security organs and an increasing mutual skepticism of the regime and society. Günther Heydemann, "Gesellschaft und Alltag in der DDR," *Informationen zur politischen Bildung* 270, no. 1 (2001); Günther Heydemann, "Entwicklung der DDR bis Ende der achtziger Jahre," *Informationen zur politischen Bildung* 270, no. 1 (2001).

ing the course of the society's development" demanded in the socialist constitution. Furthermore, they embodied a European process of system competition, since the normative concepts of personality and privacy lay at the core of competing social models of western liberal democracies and state socialism—as well as at the core of competition between individualism and collectivism.[7] I assume that subjective developments of personality and systemic ideology were condensed into specific discourses, into mutual friction, as both individuals and officials had to adopt their rhetoric by taking societal issues—the facets of real existing socialism—into consideration. A history of interaction, which included the process of production and preservation of interpretational agency, evolved[8]: formal discourse attempted to catch up with societal developments, issues, and questions in order to then re-embed these aspects into the overall societal design demanded by state socialist ideology. Interpretational agency thus describes a certain rhetoric that is used to preserve the consistency of an ideological discourse, even though societal developments may somehow diverge from or even contradict these assumptions.[9]

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7 See the next section on the socialist personality right for the elaborations on the normative dimensions of these concepts.

8 Diverse analyses and studies of late socialism have pointed out that the society and the regime were involved in an intensive communication process and that both the regime and society had to react to societal, political, and everyday issues. See, e.g., Natali Stegmann, "Open Letters: Substance und Circumstances of Communication Processes in Late Socialist Czechoslovakia and Poland," *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 65, no. 1 (2016), 47. Stegmann illustrates this intensified communication process using the example of petitions and open letters. See also Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton; NJ/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006). As examples of research focusing on the GDR, see Katherine Pence and Paul Betts, eds., *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Cultures and Politics* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008), Jan Palmowski, *Inventing a Socialist Nation: Heimat and the Poltics of Everyday Life in the GDR: 1945 – 90* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), and Thomas Lindenberger, "SED-Herrschaft als soziale Praxis, Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn: Problemstellung und Begriffe," in *Staatssicherheit und Gesellschaft: Studien zum Herrschaftsalltag in der DDR*, ed. Jens Gieseke (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 2007).

9 See Ralph Jessen, "Diktatorische Herrschaft als kommunikative Praxis: Überlegungen zum Zusammenhang von ‚Bürokratie' und Sprachnormierung in der DDR-Geschichte," in *Akten. Eingaben. Schaufenster: Die DDR und ihre Texte: Erkundungen zu Herrschaft und Alltag*, eds. Alf Lüdtke and Peter Becker (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997), who considers the formal use of language as a communicative tool of rule and interaction and posits to especially be aware of the formal rhetoric to implement societal developments into the own societal design. He speaks of rule as a "communicative action" and thereby suggests the necessity of further examination of institutional language usage (58). In the late socialist context, it was the concrete historical context with its socio-political implications that shaped these communication processes and the mutual search

Therefore, I illustrate the mechanisms of comprehensive negotiation, semanticization, and re-semanticization of the concepts of personality and privacy at the level of the formal discourse. I explain how the actors involved in the production of ideology took changes that occurred in society into account and adapted their rhetoric with regard to these two concepts in order to preserve discursive consistency within the late socialist framing. I use legal, sociological, and intelligence discourses of the GDR—dissertations written within the GDR university system (mostly unpublished), ideologically prepared, Party-related, or -own publications as well as papers of the JHS—to answer the following questions: How are the concepts of personality and privacy negotiated and semanticized in the formal Marxist-Leninist discourse? What is the importance that they have in the context of the production of ideology? Which discursive developments and strategies can be reconstructed in the sources that demonstrate the attempts of their authors to preserve interpretational agency?

From my methodological perspective, it follows that formal discursive attempts of interpretation and their textual traces can become points of friction in the history of interaction in late socialism. The authors of doctoral theses written within the GDR university system,[10] Party-affiliated and -internal authors,[11]

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for interpretational agency; an interaction of different historical actors as well as an interaction of historical structures and events. On the interaction of structures and events, see Reinhard Sieder, "Sozialgeschichte auf dem Weg zu einer historischen Kulturwissenschaft?," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, no. 20 (1994). This late socialist framing may be grasped using the term of a socialist "world of meaning" (*Sinnwelt*). Martin Sabrow and a research network of the Institute of Contemporary History in Prague and the Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam shaped this concept. See Martin Sabrow, "Sozialismus als Sinnwelt: Diktatorische Herrschaft in kulturhistorischer Perspektive," *Potsdamer Bulletin für Zeithistorische Studien*, no. 40–41 (2007). The network devoted itself to the "realm in-between related to experienced ways of acting and attitudes that is difficult to grasp" (*schwer fassbare[n] Zwischenreich an eingeübten Handlungsweisen und Einstellungen* (16)) as well as to the perceived normality of socialist worlds of life and meaning (16–17).

10 Dissertations of the GDR university system provide insight in the practices of systemic and above all, internal interpretation and analysis of societal and theoretical issues. Thus, they allow an understanding of the way social problems have been dealt with and evaluated in rhetorical terms—the source value of these documents lies less in the identification of concrete data than in the possibility of analyzing the system's own attempts at interpreting diverse categories, for example, society. For information on the GDR doctoral practice, which yielded dissertations A (PhD) and B (habilitation) and classified the written works mostly as secret, see Wilhelm Bleek and Lothar Mertens, *DDR-Dissertationen: Promotionspraxis und Geheimhaltung von Doktorarbeiten im SED-Staat* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994). A bibliography of secret dissertations can be found in Wilhelm Bleek and Lothar Mertens, eds., *Bibliographie der geheimen DDR-Dissertationen. Band 1 und 2* (Munich: K. G. Saur, 1994).

and candidates at the JHS[12] contributed to this process with their papers and analyses. They thus stand for social, everyday processes of appropriation of the socialist ideology, for specific actions and reactions that were influenced by various events and structural elements. Their texts become points of friction because they are also to be understood as attempts to re-embed developments in everyday life in one's own theoretical visions of the socialist society that authors expressed on paper.

After all, control and agency are by no means just concepts that seem to be important at the level of ordinary citizens. Formal actors were also in constant conflict over interpretational hegemony and over the sovereignty of interpretation of everyday life. In historical analysis, the formal discourse and above all, the associated production of file and text material in state socialist dictatorships are to be understood not only as sources from the history of rule and institutions but also as narratives[13] that can be analyzed in terms of the history of interaction.

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11 The source value of these documents is like that of dissertation papers. However, it should be noted that the publishing process in the GDR was associated with censorship and strict guidelines.

12 Also, the documents of the JHS represent internal interpretation practices of specific empirical or theoretical questions. The JHS functioned as a training, qualification, and research center of the MfS, which was not a law school in the true sense, but an "academic secret service institution" (*akademisierte Geheimdiensteinrichtung*, Förster, *Die Juristische Hochschule des MfS*, 3). Studies and doctorates at the JHS were assigned to the career qualification of officers and were not recognized as legal training in the German Reunification Treaty (*Einigungsvertrag*) of 1990. The research results of the JHS were passed on to the service units of the MfS, while their operational influence remains debatable. See Förster, *Die Juristische Hochschule des MfS*. As discursive interpretative practices of the central organ of control in the GDR dictatorship, however, they have a high source value for this article.

13 See Dorothee Wierling "Oral History," in *Aufriß der Historischen Wissenschaften: Band 7: Neue Themen und Methoden der Geschichtswissenschaft*, ed. Michael Maurer (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2003), 148, who suggests reading and interpreting files in the same way as oral history interviews; to consider them as sources of appropriation processes. Obviously, the usage of official documents (especially, surveillance files) needs a proper reflection of the source value and increases the complexity of the research process. See also Olga Galanova, "Geheimdienstberichte als Belege für ‚deviante' Persönlichkeiten? Praktiken der Konstituierung von Geheimnissen durch das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit der DDR," in *Welche „Wirklichkeit" und wessen „Wahrheit"? Das Geheimdienstarchiv als Quelle und Medium der Wissensproduktion*, eds. Thomas Großbölting and Sabine Kittel (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 2019), who advocates reading surveillance files as "official practices of constructing biographies" (*amtliche Praktiken der Biographiekonstituierung* (51)). On the narrative form of formal language, see also Alf Lüdtke, "Sprache und Herrschaft in der DDR: Einleitende Überlegungen," in *Akten. Eingaben. Schaufen-*

In a similar key, Katherine Verdery uses the metaphor of a second economic production—not the production of goods, but the production of paper—to elaborate on the lives and identities incorporated into files.[14] Verdery refers to the memories of a Romanian political prisoner, Herbert Zilber, who stated: "In the socialist bloc, people and things exist only through their files. All our existence is in the hands of him who possesses files and is constituted by him who constructs them. Real people are but the reflection of their files."[15] The narrative character of the formal documents thus becomes clear. On the one hand, surveillance and its practical implementation by appropriate state organs and the procedural documentation of these monitoring processes are to be viewed as structural, repressive, and devastating elements of everyday life in socialist dictatorships. On the other hand, the state bodies and their employees were also actors who entered concrete appropriation and negotiation processes and documented them—but in turn were subject to specific structural influences in the documentation work that they carried out. The process of surveillance, as suggested by Verdery, thus became a practice of social interpretation and construction of reality—an argument, which can equally be applied to multiple formal documentary and commentary processes. This ambivalence illustrates the interweaving and reciprocity of historical structures and events—a central social momentum of late socialism—which became decipherable in the real-life confrontation of the ones surveilling and the ones under surveillance, of the ones formulating ideological comments, dissertations, and theoretical papers and the ones that are commented on in those texts.[16]

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ster. *Die DDR und ihre Texte. Erkundungen zu Herrschaft und Alltag*, eds. Alf Lüdtke and Peter Becker (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997).

14 Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 24.

15 Herbert Zilber, quoted in: *ibid.*, 24.

16 On the source value of surveillance files for social history studies, see also Jan Palmowski, "Staatssicherheit und soziale Praxis," in *Staatssicherheit und Gesellschaft: Studien zum Herrschaftsalltag in der DDR*, ed. Jens Gieseke (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 2007), 271, who stresses the importance to consider both the social practice of surveillance exercised by the MfS and the social practices of society perceived by the MfS. Therefore, Palmowski pleads for the use of a methodology similar to the one I employ in this paper; a historiographic approach significantly influenced by cultural studies and focusing on social appropriation processes. In Palmowski, *Inventing*, he convincingly uses this approach to analyze the semantics and negotiation of a socialist nation. For the influence of cultural studies on the GDR historiography, see Sieder, "Sozialgeschichte." See also Thomas Lindenberger, "Alltagsgeschichte und ihr möglicher Beitrag zu einer Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR," in *Die Grenzen der Diktatur: Staat und Gesellschaft in der DDR*, eds. Richard Bessel and Ralph Jessen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck

Socialist Personality Right: On Creatorship and the "Social Quality of the Individual"

The ideas of personality and personality development contained completely different semantics in Marxist-Leninist theory of state and law than in western liberal thought.[17] For instance, the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union provided the following perspective: "In socialism, the private sphere of life and the private interests of man do not stand in opposition to the public sphere, to the affairs of the state and of the public."[18] State socialism thus guaranteed—on the level of political theory—personal freedom *within* the collective, but not the freedom *from* the state, or *from* the collective[19]—which was also the central difference between the socialist constitution of the GDR and its legal concepts, and the liberal-democratic order of western democracies (in particular, the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany). The general right of personality guaranteed by the Basic Law has meanwhile "won the stature of a fundamental right in the constitution"[20] and the separation of private and public spheres was frequently called a basis of the contemporary liberal state.[21] Privacy and informational self-determination represented variations of this general right of per-

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& Ruprecht, 1996), 321, who pleads for a "dialogic historiographic approach" (*dialogische Geschichtspraxis*) exploring both structures and events of a historical setting.

17 See, e.g., Kai von Lewinski, *Die Matrix des Datenschutzes: Besichtigung und Ordnung eines Begriffsfeldes* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2014) for legal implications of liberal thought.

18 "Im Sozialismus stehen die private Lebenssphäre und die privaten Interessen des Menschen nicht im Gegensatz zum öffentlichen Bereich, zu den Angelegenheiten des Staates und der Öffentlichkeit." S. N. Bratus et al., *Marxistische Staats- und Rechtstheorie: Band 1 Grundlegende Institute und Begriffe* (Cologne: Pfahl-Rugstein, 1974), 345. This text is a translation of the Russian original by the GDR authorities. West German print version was licensed by the GDR state publisher (*Staatsverlag der DDR*).

19 Kai von Lewinski, "Datenschutzrecht in der DDR," in „*Worüber reden wir eigentlich?*" *Festgabe für Rosemarie Will*, eds. Michael Plöse et al. (Berlin: Humanistische Union, 2016), 579. I would like to thank Professor Kai von Lewinski for a useful overview of sources on the GDR's legal history and for a conversation that informed my decision to consider the implications of the concept of socialist personality.

20 "die Statur eines Grundrechts im Grundrecht gewonnen." Maunz/Dürig, *Grundgesetz-Kommentar* (82. EL Januar 2018), lines 127–131. This legal comment on German Basic Law was established in 1958.

21 *Ibid.*, lines 127–131.

sonality and characterized the normative effect of the liberal semantics of personality in the sense of defensive rights directed against the state.[22]

The 1968 GDR constitution, in contrast, stated in Article 19, paragraph 3, that every citizen had the same opportunities to develop their abilities free from exploitation, "by free will and for the benefit of society and his own benefit in the socialist community [...]. In this way, he realizes freedom and dignity of his personality."[23] The training document mentioned above accordingly stated: "The protection of the personality and each citizens' freedom by means of the constitution does not provide an unlimited and absolute freedom, <u>no freedom to act against the socialist order.</u>"[24] Self-realization was thus framed as an action for the common good; freedom as a collective experience.[25] In stating this, the socialist right of personality was derived from the philosophies of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin, who argued that "the human being is not an inherent abstraction of the individual [...] [but] is the ensemble of social conditions"[26] and that "[o]ne cannot live in society and be free of it at the same time"[27] respectively. Drawing on these philosophies, the state socialist doctrine of the socialist

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22 See the so-called "census decision," in which the concept of informational self-determination was introduced by the Constitutional Court in the Federal Republic of Germany. BVerfG, *Verfassungsrechtliche Überprüfung des Volkszählungsgesetzes 1983* (NJW 1984), 419. Of course, this private sector is outside the sphere of social influence only in the normative, defensive sense of fundamental rights. On the empirical level, private action obviously also influences the social context and has been shaped by it. See also Simon Garnett, "Informational Self-Determination and the Semantics of Personality in the Jurisprudence of the Federal Constitutional Court 1949 – 1983," in *Textuelle Historizität: Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven auf das historische Apriori*, eds. Heidrun Kämper et al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016).

23 "aus freiem Entschluss und zum Wohle der Gesellschaft und zu seinem eigenen Nutzen in der sozialistischen Gemeinschaft [...]. So verwirklicht er Freiheit und Würde seiner Persönlichkeit." DDR-Verfassung von 1968/1974, Art. 19 (3), documentarchiv.de, accessed July 17, 2018, http://www.documentarchiv.de/ddr/verfddr.html. The constitution of 1968 was revised in 1974, this paragraph remained unchanged.

24 "Der Schutz der Persönlichkeit und Freiheit eines jeden Bürgers durch die Verfassung ist kein Recht auf eine unumschränkte absolute Freiheit, <u>keine Freiheit gegen die sozialistische Ordnung tätig zu werden.</u>" [emphasis in the original] *Studienanleitung: Die Stellung und Verantwortung der Bürger*, BStU, MfS, JHS, MF, Nr. 22431, 26.

25 Lewinski, "Datenschutzrecht," 579 – 580.

26 "Aber das menschliche Wesen ist kein dem einzelnen Individuum innewohnendes Abstraktum. In seiner Wirklichkeit ist es das ensemble der gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse." Karl Marx, "Thesen über Feuerbach," in *Marx/Engels. Ausgewählte Werke. Band 1* (East Berlin: Dietz, 1988), 199.

27 "Man kann nicht zugleich in der Gesellschaft leben und frei von ihr sein." W. I. Lenin, "Parteiorganisation und Parteiliteratur," in *Lenin. Werke. Band 10* (East Berlin: Dietz, 1959), 33.

Party SED developed a normative educational ideal of the socialist personality by framing the latter as

> a comprehensively developed personality who demonstrates extensive political, professional, and general knowledge, maintains the firm *class standpoint* informed by Marxist-Leninist teaching, distinguishes herself through high physical and moral qualities, is inspired by collective vision and action, and actively, consciously, and creatively participates in the construction of socialism.[28]

In other words, the socialist personality did not exist outside the collective but attained the supposedly highest degree of individual freedom only through its embedding within and commitment to the community.[29] The Marxist-Leninist discourse thus placed normative educational demands on the personal rights that were granted *a priori* in western liberal societies. Personality became an ideological dictum of social activity, in which private and public realities of life blurred, intertwined, and conditioned each other. Therefore, in Marxist-Leninist discourse, the normative claim to collectivist personality development replaced the normative claim to privacy and self-determination of liberal discourses. The legal concept of socialist personality seemed to absorb a separate norm

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28 "allseitig entwickelte Persönlichkeit, die über umfassende politische, fachliche und allgemeinwissenschaftliche Kenntnisse verfügt, einen festen, von der marxistisch-leninistischen Weltanschauung geprägten *Klassenstandpunkt* besitzt, sich durch hohe geistige, physische und moralische Qualitäten auszeichnet, vom kollektiven Denken und Handeln durchdrungen ist und aktiv, bewußt und schöpferisch den Sozialismus mitgestaltet." [emphasis in the original] "Sozialistische Persönlichkeit," in *Wörterbuch zur sozialistischen Jugendpolitik*, eds. Horst Ebert and Friedrich Walter (East Berlin: Dietz, 1975), 249. In her widely received monograph on the social history of the GDR, Mary Fulbrook speaks of "East German individualism" (137) and thus makes it clear that the developments of real existing socialism sometimes contradicted official claims and ideas of the socialist way of life. Fulbrook furthermore discusses the ambivalence of educational norms (e. g., the socialist personality (115)) in the GDR. This article indicates the extent to which official discourses tried to reintegrate these developments rhetorically. Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven, CT/London: Yale University Press, 2008). See for an early but relevant discussion of the socialist personality Irma Hanke, "Vom neuen Menschen zur sozialistischen Persönlichkeit: Zum Menschenbild der SED," *Deutschland Archiv* 9, no. 5 (1976); Angela Brock, *The Making of the Socialist Personality: Education and Socialisation in the German Democratic Republic 1958–1978* (Ph.D. diss., University College London, 2005). See also Lewinski, "Datenschutzrecht," Valentin Petev, "Rechtstheoretische Aspekte des Schutzes individueller Rechte und Interessen in der sozialistischen Gesellschaft," in *Der Schutz individueller Rechte und Interessen im Recht sozialistischer Staaten*, eds. Klaus Westen et al. (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1980), and Werner Rossade, *Gesellschaft und Kultur in der Endzeit des Realsozialismus* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1997) for discussions of the concept and overviews of specific sources.
29 Bratus, *Staats- und Rechtstheorie. Band 1*, 351.

of privacy, since a genuinely private sphere of life merged into the normative de-
mands of collectivism. In this way, the educational claim of socialist personali-
ties also represented a terminological and ideological dissolution of private and
public spheres and a focus on social activity oriented toward the collectivist com-
mon good.

The value of the concepts of privacy and personality in terms of their inter-
active aspects is already apparent. Most importantly, these concepts can compre-
hensively explain intersecting processes: on the one hand, an analysis through
the lens of these concepts focuses on empirical developments and negotiation
processes, the scope and willingness to act; on the other hand, it contrasts
these empirical observations with normative claims and values of the contexts,
in which they played out. In this way, the momentum of interaction between in-
dividuals and the political context becomes visible.

As mentioned earlier, the creative and collectivist orientation of the person-
ality was at the center of the socialist claim to education, which was also reflect-
ed in the standardization of the legal concept of socialist personality. Until the
1980s, there was a terminological disagreement within the socialist legal dis-
course about the category of personality rights. Professor Hans Nathan, Director
of the Institute for Inventors' and Copyright Law at Humboldt University in East
Berlin, pled in 1964 for "copyrights [to be categorized] as actual personality
rights"[30] since "creative people" would be defined "as socialist personalities."[31]
According to Nathan's central argument, the protection of the output of the in-
dividual would also protect the genuinely socialist aspect of personality: creativ-
ity. The central aspect of the socialist expectations of citizens—the moral duty of
social, creative activity—was thus at the forefront of this approach. Nathan also
argued that general fundamental rights and obligations were rights granted *a
priori* that ignored concrete individuality (i.e., individual creativity). But it was
only the concrete output (creativity) that had to be protected as the core of a spe-
cific personality by the specific right of personality (copyright).[32] The ideological
concept (socialist personality) was thus also reflected in a corresponding legal
concept (copyright law). Finally, socialist law acted as a "lever for the release

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30 "Urheberrechte als eigentliche Persönlichkeitsrechte." Hans Nathan, "Fragen der Gesetzge-
bung: Das Persönlichkeitsrecht," *Neue Justiz: Zeitschrift für Recht und Rechtswissenschaft* 18,
no. 24 (1964), 743.
31 "schöpferische[n] Menschen," "als sozialistische Persönlichkeit[en]." *Ibid.*, 743–744. See
also Lewinski, "Datenschutzrecht." He also refers to Nathan's approach to the legal concept
of the socialist personality.
32 See Nathan, "Persönlichkeitsrecht," 744.

of the creative forces of the man"[33] and was thus decisively involved in the collectivization of individual resources. The discourse about the legal norm of personality and Nathan's concrete proposal to call copyright a genuine socialist personality right fit into the Marxist-Leninist desire for the education of a new socialist man who puts his creative potential at the disposal of the collective. Personality thus became a "question of the social quality of the individual."[34]

Against the background of the formative aspirations of socialist law, the mere naming of copyright as a personal right (the declaration of copyright as a creative right *per se* being the sole right of personality) was not enough for some participants in the discourse, although the ideological figure of socialist personality was above all characterized by its productive social commitment.[35] Gerhard Haney pled, for example, for the legal status of socialist citizens to be grasped not only "as the *mere indulgence* of rights and obligations not described in terms of content."[36] Instead, the aspirations of socialist law should also become clear in the legal position of the citizens. The demand that not only existing social productivity, e.g., existing creative output which was to be protected by copyright law, but also the actual "release of human creativity"[37] must be illustrated by the legal position of citizens and the legal concept of personality—remains abstract and empirically intangible in Haney's treatise. However, from his writings it can be concluded that he pled that law should be interpreted and concrete legal concepts used as tools to free the potential of socialist personalities, rather than just to protect existing societal ambitions. The normative claim to education persisted: the utopia of a collectivist-minded society of socialist personalities, which was also reflected in legal discourse.

In a legal dissertation B at the University of Jena in 1982, Dr. Ingo Fritsche stated that the protection of personal integrity under the civil law could create "elementary prerequisites for the creative involvement of citizens."[38] Therefore,

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33 "Hebel zur Freisetzung der schöpferischen Kräfte des Menschen." Gerhard Haney, *Sozialistisches Recht und Persönlichkeit* (East Berlin: Staatsverlag der DDR, 1967), 83.

34 "Frage der sozialen Qualität des einzelnen." *Ibid.*, 84.

35 *Ibid.*, 95.

36 "als *bloße Innehabung* inhaltlich nicht bezeichneter Rechte und Pflichten." [emphasis in the original] *Ibid.*, 93.

37 "Freisetzung des Schöpfertums der Menschen." *Ibid.*, 95.

38 "elementare Voraussetzungen der schöpferischen Mitwirkung der Bürger." Ingo Fritsche, *Das Recht auf Achtung der Persönlichkeit und sein Schutz im Zivilrecht* (Dissertation B, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Gesellschaftswissenschaftliche Fakultät, 1982), 3. See also Lewinski, "Datenschutzrecht," who refers to Fritsche's study as well.

"the individual as a component of the collective"[39] was secured—however, this legal functionality did not serve "for the enforcement of selfish interests."[40] Fritsche also actively differentiated his position from Nathan's comments on copyright as the sole personal right. From Fritsche's perspective, Nathan's approach promoted "an elitist concept of personality"[41] that ignored aspects of integrity and freedom. He went on to argue that "being 'for oneself' [had] no smaller justification than collective existence"—but that this did not allow the individual to "set up a reserve" that would promote isolation.[42] In Fritsche's understanding, the protection of individual integrity was necessary for one to be able to shape individual and social dimensions of personality. Thus, the protection of individual personalities simultaneously became the protection of collectivity and sociality. The "shielding of the individual from society with the help of these rights"[43] was in itself excluded. Unlike Nathan, Fritsche defined creativity as one but not the only component of socialist personality. "The area of relations existing between the individual personality and socialist society, which is shaped by the active participation of the individual in the development of social life and associated values, attitudes, emotions, etc."[44] was defined as the concrete sphere of socialist personality rights. The figure of the socialist personality manifested through the interweaving of individuality and collectivity, privacy and publicity. Genuinely private or genuinely public existences became a supposed unity of individuality and collectivity in this normative concept of personality. Fritsche called the private sphere a "concrete form of existence"[45] of "bourgeois" private owners in capitalist societies, which contradicted increasing socialization and thus made the conceptual differences of Marxist-Leninist and liberal personality concepts poignantly clear.

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39 "das Individuelle als Bestandteil des Gesellschaftlichen." Fritsche, *Achtung der Persönlichkeit*, 3.

40 "zur Durchsetzung egoistischer Interessen." *Ibid.*, 3.

41 "ein elitärer Persönlichkeitsbegriff." *Ibid.*, 102.

42 "'für sich sein' keine geringere Berechtigung als das kollektive Dasein," "kein Reservat abgesteckt." *Ibid.*, 35, note 168, chapter 2 (bibliographic reference list).

43 "Abschirmung des Einzelnen von der Gesellschaft mit Hilfe dieser Rechte." *Ibid.*, 103.

44 "jener Bereich der zwischen der individuellen Persönlichkeit und der sozialistischen Gesellschaft bestehenden Beziehungen, der durch die aktive Mitgestaltung des gesellschaftlichen Lebens durch den Einzelnen und die damit verbundenen Wertvorstellungen, Einstellungen, Emotionen usw. geprägt wird." *Ibid.*, 104–105.

45 "konkrete[n] Existenzform." *Ibid.*, 10. On this source, see also Lewinski, "Datenschutzrecht."

Processes of Ideological Re-Semanticization: "Bourgeois" Categories in Marxist-Leninist Ductus

These conceptual differences at the level of ideology led to permanent frictions between actual societal developments and normative conceptions: everyday life and negotiation processes oscillated between the normative concepts of personality and privacy—thereby fueling a communicative interweaving of the competing systems of western liberal democracies and eastern state socialisms. Central discursive mechanisms of compensation for this friction and preservation of interpretational hegemony were processes of ideological re-semanticization of, for example, concepts of personality and privacy in the late socialist discourse.[46]

Referring to the daily burdens of the population, Helmut Hanke, professor of Marxist-Leninist cultural studies, pled in a publication of the Academy of Social Sciences at the Central Committee of the SED (*Akademie für Gesellschaftswissenschaften beim ZK der SED*) for the "understanding of the general desire for peace and solitude"[47] and called this wish and the way of life behind it "private existence"[48] that should be respected, referring to the writings of Johannes R. Becher.[49] He went on to formulate:

> It should be added that "living in one's own four walls" is a special tradition of German people's way of life and that one's own home, orderly life in the family, cleanliness, and coziness are highly valued here. This tradition, detached from negative, purely private tendencies and isolated from social problems, has a great value for socialism.[50]

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46 See also Jessen, "Diktatorische Herrschaft." He concludes that verbal rituals in formal discourse aimed at creating the fiction ("Fiktion"; *ibid.*, 75) of the socialist idea and reality being similar. The processes of re-semanticization identified in this article corroborate this conclusion.
47 "Verständnis für den allgemeinen Wunsch nach Ruhe und Alleinsein." Helmut Hanke, *Freizeit in der DDR* (East Berlin: Dietz, 1979), 122.
48 "Privatdasein." *Ibid.*, 123.
49 Becher was the GDR secretary of culture (*Minister für Kultur*) in 1954–1958. He also wrote poetry and is known for writing the lyrics of the GDR anthem *Auferstanden aus Ruinen* (Risen from Ruins). "Biographische Datenbanken," Federal Foundation for the Study of Communist Dictatorship in the GDR, accessed July 17, 2018, https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/wer-war-wer-in-der-ddr-%2363;-1424.html?ID=161.
50 "Hinzuzufügen wäre, daß das ‚Leben in den eigenen vier Wänden' eine besondere Tradition der Lebensweise des deutschen Volkes ist und die eigene Wohnung, das geregelte Leben in der Familie, Ordnung, Sauberkeit und Gemütlichkeit in diesem Lebensbereich hoch geschätzt werden. Von negativen, rein privaten und von den gesellschaftlichen Problemen isolierten Tendenzen befreit, hat diese Tradition für den Sozialismus einen großen Wert." Hanke, *Freizeit*, 123.

This quotation clearly shows that the implications of an individualistic, "bourgeois" way of life in late socialism were also reflected upon and semanticized in Party-affiliated discourses. The author believed that life in one's own home in socialism was "detached from […] purely private tendencies." He postulated that such ideas were neither "petty-bourgeois"[51] nor individualistic and instead promoted a basic collectivist orientation of the citizens: "In any case, we assume that every citizen in socialism has a right to his private life, that the recognition and realization of this right has a considerable influence on the social activity of people."[52]

The apparent contradiction in the meanings of the attribute "private" in both quotes is noteworthy. While the first quote presented domesticity in its socialist functionality "detached from purely private tendencies" (which the author understood to mean an isolation from society), the second emphasized that there is a "right to a private life" and thereby denominated domesticity as something private—although its detachment "from purely private tendencies" was stated earlier. In the historiographical analysis, we must enquire about the different semantic levels that were assigned to the attribute "private" by the author. On the one hand, the suggested freedom of "purely private" aspects resulted in a negative connotation from the author's point of view. Though it is not explained in detail, it can be possibly linked to a detachment from "bourgeois" (i. e., western) semantics and implications of a private existence: "purely private" thus meant "western" and "individualistic." On the other hand, according to the author, the "change between sociality and privacy"[53] was a basic need of the population that did not seem to contradict a socialist way of life. In other words, the source suggests that the use or rejection of the attribute posed challenges to the production of socialist ideology and led to contradictions: private life was declared an important aspect of society, albeit it needed to be "detached from purely private tendencies."

One can conclude from this example that the concepts of privacy and personality were at the center of an interactive reading of the state socialist social dynamics. These concepts and their normative dimensions also stood for the systemic competition of individualism and collectivism and thus bound the central points of friction within the late socialist framing. Of particular interest is that in socialist (collectivist) discourses, the attribute "private" was not necessarily ex-

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51 "spießbürgerlich." *Ibid.*, 123.

52 "Wir gehen jedenfalls von dem Grundsatz aus, daß jeder Bürger im Sozialismus ein Recht auf sein Privatleben hat, daß von der Anerkennung und Verwirklichung dieses Rechtes die gesellschaftliche Aktivität der Menschen nicht unwesentlich beeinflußt wird." *Ibid.*, 123.

53 "Wechsel von Gesellschaftlichkeit und Privatheit." *Ibid.*, 124.

cluded but rather re-semanticized and thus integrated into authors' own discursive structures.[54]

This development signals that formal discourses took note of individualistic or "bourgeois" lifestyles and developments—the results of late socialist policies in the fields of consumption and leisure time, which were undoubtedly promoted during that period—and that, as a consequence, the demand for education of socialist personalities fell victim to the socio-political and internal social developments of late socialism.[55] Arguments such as the ones delivered by Helmut Hanke are emblematic of the attempts to incorporate everyday developments in real existing socialism into the original premises of socialist ideology through the re-semanticization of the concepts.

The findings of the GDR Academy of Political and Legal Studies (*Akademie für Staats- und Rechtswissenschaft der DDR*) also illustrate that the utopia of a collectivist society of socialist personalities often seemed unattainable even for contemporary observers. A 1983 issue of the journal *Neue Justiz* (New Justice) contains an article on perpetrator's motives in theft offences that presented interesting observations regarding this aspect of socialist life. The author, Dr. Rolf Müller, noted that perpetrators would show contradictory behavior not only through the committed theft: workers who performed properly during their shifts were rather reserved in collective life and showed "self-centered goals and features of a culturally and mentally undemanding life in shaping their social relationships in the 'private sphere.'"[56] Moreover, violations and property offences at workplace, i.e., the theft of socialist property served the purpose of raising personal living standards. The ideological detachment from the concept of privacy in this contribution to the *Neue Justiz* is of interest. The

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54 In Jessen, "Diktatorische Herrschaft," 58, the author points to a similar aspect. One must reflect on the terminological repertoire of state socialist regimes, which was used to describe societal developments.

55 Along with communicative developments in late socialism, these socio-economical aspects increased, and state-promoted consumption and leisure time activities were distinctive of that period. See Paulina Bren, "Weekend Getaways: The Chata, the Tramp, and the Politics of Private Life in Post-1968 Czechoslovakia," in *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc*, eds. David Crowley and Susan E. Reid (Oxford/New York: Berg, 2002) and Nada Boškovska, Angelika Strobel, and Daniel Ursprung, "Einleitung," in „*Entwickelter Sozialismus" in Osteuropa: Arbeit, Konsum und Öffentlichkeit*, eds. Nada Boškovska, Angelika Strobel, and Daniel Ursprung (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2016), 12. See also Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*.

56 "bei der Gestaltung ihrer sozialen Beziehungen in der ‚Privatsphäre' egozentrische Zielstellungen und Züge eines kulturell und geistig anspruchslosen Lebens." Rolf Müller, "Differenzierte Erfassung der Motive bei Eigentumsstrafen," *Neue Justiz: Zeitschrift für sozialistisches Recht und Gesetzlichkeit*, no. 11 (1983), 455.

term "private sphere" is enclosed in inverted commas and semantically linked to egocentricity and lack of aspiration: prestigious craving led to corruption and selfishness within a closed private sphere from which it was necessary to distance oneself.[57] It further reads:

> The professional ambition of these perpetrators was dictated to a large extent by the attitude of realizing personal demands of life and needs with as little commitment as possible as well as at the expense of others. In their subjective relationship to socialist property, distinctive individualistic tendencies dominated.[58]

In this passage, subjectivity and privacy seem to contradict the theoretical understanding of society and personality, because the individualistic motive for the crime of theft, despite good performance in the work collective, was related to basic character traits and personal deficits in the private sphere. It is precisely this skeptical distance that can also be observed in the MfS-related records. For example, the JHS documented in a paper:

> Another important aspect of political and operative work that should not be underestimated is the fact that family relationships that seem intact from the outside perspective can indeed be based on attitudes, lifestyles, and norms that are not oriented toward socialism, as is the case with so-called petty-bourgeois families. The withdrawal into the "private sphere" typical of these families or isolation from socialist society can never replace the diversity of social relations necessary for the development of socialist personalities.[59]

Again, the dissociation from a genuinely private sphere of life can be determined using inverted commas. While Helmut Hanke posited that "every citizen in so-

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57 *Ibid.*, 455.

58 "Der berufliche Ehrgeiz dieser Täter war in starkem Maße durch die Haltung diktiert, persönliche Lebensansprüche und Bedürfnisse mit möglichst geringem Einsatz sowie auch auf Kosten anderer zu verwirklichen. In ihrem subjektiven Verhältnis zum sozialistischen Eigentum dominierten ausgeprägte individualistische Tendenzen." *Ibid.*, 455.

59 "Eine nicht zu unterschätzende Bedeutung für die politisch-operative Arbeit hat auch die Tatsache, daß äußerlich als intakt erscheinende Familienbeziehungen tatsächlich auf nicht am Sozialismus orientierten Einstellungen, Lebensgewohnheiten und Normen beruhen können, wie das bei sogenannten kleinbürgerlichen Familien der Fall ist. Die für diese Familien typische Zurückgezogenheit in die ‚Privatsphäre' bzw. Abkapselung von der sozialistischen Gesellschaft kann niemals die für die Entwicklung sozialistischer Persönlichkeiten notwendige Vielfalt gesellschaftlicher Beziehungen ersetzen." *Zu den Ursachen und Bedingungen für die Herausbildung feindlich-negativer Einstellungen sowie für das Umschlagen dieser Einstellungen in feindlich-negative Handlungen von DDR-Bürgern: Konsequenzen für die weitere Erhöhung der Effektivität der Vorbeugung und Bekämpfung feindlich-negativer Handlungen durch das MfS* (1985), BStU, MfS, JHS, Nr. 21975, 112–113.

cialism has a right to his private life"[60] and that this right should not be misinterpreted as "bourgeois"—the commentary of the *Neue Justiz* and the JHS source from an analytical perspective suggest that the interpretation of lifestyles in real existing socialism that involved the use of liberal terminologies of "the private" and "the public" fueled controversial discourses. This is because the empirically tangible facets of late socialist contexts seemed explainable not only by Marxist-Leninist terminology.

Interestingly, a supplement to this issue of *Neue Justiz* revealed that a certain materialism of society as a whole and the existence of personal material needs could not be excluded even within a socialist way of life. Individualism stimulated by consumption opportunities was also part of proper societal behavior.[61] The egocentricity of private enrichment, rejected and negatively connotated in the *Neue Justiz* on the basis of property offenses, thus ultimately became the theoretical impetus behind socialist claims to productivity and stability. In 1982, a team of authors from the Institute for Marxist-Leninist Cultural and Art Studies of the Academy of Social Sciences at the Central Committee of the SED (*Institut für marxistisch-leninistische Kultur- und Kunstwissenschaften der Akademie für Gesellschaftswissenschaften beim ZK der SED*) noted that:

> The satisfaction of needs in a more effective way through a greater and better production removes the root of socially damaging behavior that has to do with selfish exploitation of the phenomena of scarcity and insufficient satisfaction of needs, such as enrichment at the expense of others, corruption, and speculation.[62]

The concession to satisfy individual material needs was additionally backed by a strategic prospect of consolidating and stabilizing power: "In this respect, the extended rights that citizens have as consumers should inspire them to provide more and qualitatively better consumer goods and services."[63] Individual, even

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60 "daß jeder Bürger im Sozialismus ein Recht auf sein Privatleben hat." Hanke, *Freizeit*, 123.

61 Gustav-Adolf Lübchen and Joachim Göring, "Die Verwirklichung des Zivilrechts als Bestandteil der Maßnahmen zur Durchsetzung einer sozialistischen Lebensweise," *Beilage zu Neue Justiz: Zeitschrift für sozialistisches Recht und Gesetzlichkeit*, no. 11 (1983), I.

62 "Mit der besseren Befriedigung der Bedürfnisse durch umfangreichere und bessere Produktion wird gesellschaftsschädigendem Verhalten der Boden entzogen, die mit der egoistischen Ausnutzung von Erscheinungen des Mangels und unzureichender Bedürfnisbefriedigung zu tun haben, wie Bereicherung auf Kosten anderer, Korruption und Spekulantentum." Hans Koch et al., *Zur Theorie der sozialistischen Kultur* (East Berlin: Dietz, 1982), 265.

63 "Insofern sollen die erweiterten Rechte, die die Bürger als Konsumenten haben, diese stimulieren, mehr und qualitativ bessere Konsumgüter und Dienstleistungen zu erbringen." Lübchen and Göring, "Verwirklichung," I.

individualistic possibilities of consumption and prosperity, should keep misguided individualism in controlled tracks: the private sector should be expanded, promoted, and concessionized to prevent private upheaval.

The dissociation from an individualistically connoted private sphere, mentioned in the examples above, was at odds with the social and consumer policy of the Honecker era—at least in the radicality that it indicated. Therefore, the state concession of the private sphere[64] for personal development and individualistic opportunities was claimed to counter the motivational egocentricity in property offenses. A doctoral candidate of the Institute for Scientific Communism of the Academy of Social Sciences at the Central Committee of the SED (*Institut für wissenschaftlichen Kommunismus der Akademie für Gesellschaftswissenschaften beim ZK der SED*) stated: "As experiences since the VIII Party Congress of the SED have taught, there is a close connection between the fact that political stability, in the long run, can only be achieved through social stability."[65] In a 1976 dissertation submitted to the Social Sciences Institute at the Central Committee of the SED (*Institut für Gesellschaftswissenschaften beim ZK der SED*), a doctoral candidate postulated that "on the basis of socialist production relations, personal interests in principle align with collective and social interests."[66] The program of socialist productivity envisaged that interests of individual producers and work collectives in achieving productivity to satisfy their needs would also take into account the interests of the economy as a whole and the society as a whole. Individual consumption opportunities and incentives, i.e., the concession to a certain degree of individualism, were thus granted to increase productivity in the interests of society. Ideally, the Marxist-Leninist concept of society demanded a combination of individual consumption and social activity.[67] However, it was well known, for example, that "not all human

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64 See, e. g. Boškovska, Strobel, Ursprung, "Einleitung," 12 and our introduction to this volume.
65 "Wie die Erfahrungen seit dem VIII. Parteitag der SED lehren, besteht ein enger Zusammenhang darin, daß politische Stabilität auf die Dauer nur durch soziale Stabilität zu erreichen ist." Brunhilde Becker, *Erfahrungen, Probleme und Tendenzen bei der Entfaltung demokratischer Aktivität der Werktätigen für hohen ökonomischen Leistungsanstieg* (Dissertation A, Akademie für Gesellschaftswissenschaften beim ZK der SED, Institut für wissenschaftlichen Kommunismus, Berlin, 1983), 4.
66 "Auf der Grundlage der sozialistischen Produktionsverhältnisse befinden sich die persönlichen Interessen prinzipiell mit den kollektiven und gesellschaftlichen Interessen in Übereinstimmung." Waldemar Pillukat, *Die Entwicklung des sozialistischen Kollektivismus und seine gesellschaftliche Wirksamkeit bei der Gestaltung des entwickelten Sozialismus* (Dissertation A, Institut für Gesellschaftswissenschaften beim ZK der SED, Lehrstuhl für marxistisch-leninistische Philosophie, Berlin, 1976), 86.
67 *Ibid.*, 92.

needs can be satisfied by jointly organized individual consumption."[68] "The ever more intensive shaping of one's relations with the environment and an isolation from society are two sides of one's personal development. For example, many human needs can only be satisfied individually because of their physical and social nature."[69]

It is, therefore, clear that the author was quite aware that a certain degree of individualism, even privacy, was indispensable to satisfy the socio-cultural needs of the population. In order to combat individualism and the impulse to show prestige, it was not eradicated but incorporated into areas of influence shaped by the state.[70] However, formal discourse increasingly reconstructed terminologies and semantics of the private and the public that have shaped western research discourse and implied a liberal, "bourgeois" way of life—private and public areas of life were also constructed in the state socialist society of the GDR. Thus, the initial normative claim to socialist personalities often lay contrary to the formal framework of empirically tangible realities of life in late socialism. The goal of educating collective-minded, socially active, and creative individuals (with a deliberate emphasis on the supposed incompatibility of collectivity and individuality in "bourgeois" societies and their overcoming in socialism) showed a dissociation of the private and public aspects of life and personality. However, real existing socialism and the awareness that "certain domestication of cultural consumption"[71] could be observed meant that countless sources, including MfS-related documents, ultimately adopted the vocabulary of liberal political theory to grasp new demarcations between private and public realities. Processes of ideological re-semanticization clearly show one point: the concepts of privacy and personality are at the focus of discursive interactions and negotiations; they reveal the struggle to preserve interpretational agency.

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68 "Nicht alle Bedürfnisse des Menschen können jedoch durch eine gemeinschaftlich organisierte individuelle Konsumtion befriedigt werden." *Ibid.*, 94.

69 "Die immer intensiver erfolgende Gestaltung seiner Beziehungen zur Umwelt als auch seine Vereinzelung in der Gesellschaft sind zwei Seiten der Persönlichkeitsentwicklung. Eine Reihe von Bedürfnissen des Menschen können z.B. auf Grund seiner physischen und sozialen Natur nur individuell befriedigt werden." *Ibid.*, 94.

70 See also the later comments on the concession of compensatory opportunities in the private sector in order to prevent "hostile-negative" behavior.

71 "eine gewisse Verhäuslichung des Kulturkonsums." Collective of authors, *Sozialismus und Persönlichkeit* (East Berlin: Dietz, 1980), 228.

Processes of Ideological Demarcation: "Hostile-Negative" Attitudes and a "Social War of All against All"

Alongside these attempts to integrate individual lifestyles into the image of the self that was produced by formal discourses, various sources (most of them MfS-related papers) also reveal clear narratives of demarcation from individualistic lifestyles and personality developments. Specifically, this means that in addition to processes of ideological re-semanticization of empirical developments, the rhetoric of exclusion played a central role in the examined sources.[72] The individualistic personality developments were also interpreted and evaluated as isolation and private retreat in the sense of a capitalist legacy. This discursive conflict can be seen in the following excerpt from a document of the JHS:

> Individual consciousness that becomes clear in the orientation of personality [...] cannot be mechanically judged as "positive or negative" with regard to its social evaluation. [...] This explains [...] why people with positive ideological attitudes can appear petty-bourgeois in their social behavior. It is only the analysis of concrete processes of life and development that reveals the emergence and hostile-negative change of such contradictions. To uncover their connections [...] is an important problem of preventive activities by the MfS and of practical-political activities in all areas of social life.[73]

Types of behavior and mindsets that were outside the range of ideological tolerance were monitored and sanctioned. This fundamental, almost fearful skepticism toward the population of late socialist countries by their respective governments was a central aspect—a deterrence to interactive processes—of these societies and their intensified communicative processes, which is reflected in

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72 See also Jessen, "Strategies," 282–284. He refers to the creation of scandals as a semantic strategy of exclusion.

73 "Das in der Ausrichtung der Persönlichkeit [...] deutlich werdende individuelle Bewußtsein ist hinsichtlich seiner gesellschaftlichen Bewertung nicht mechanisch als ‚positiv oder negativ' beurteilbar. [...] Daraus erklärt sich, daß [...] Menschen mit positiven ideologischen Einstellungen in ihrem Sozialverhalten kleinbürgerlich auftreten können. Erst die Analyse der konkreten Lebens- und Entwicklungsprozesse macht die Entstehung und feindlich-negative Veränderung solcher Widersprüche deutlich. Ihre Zusammenhänge aufzudecken [...], ist ein wichtiges Problem vorbeugender Aktivitäten des MfS und der praktisch-politischen Tätigkeit in allen gesellschaftlichen Lebensbereichen." [emphasis in the original] *Zu den Ursachen und Bedingungen*, BStU, MfS, JHS, Nr. 21975, 267–268.

the archival sources of the MfS as well as in the MfS' own language and schematization[74]:

> The <u>term of hostile-negative actions</u> describes all socially destructive activities which are directed in a differentiated way against the requirements, goals, interests, norms, and values of socialism <u>and</u> aim objectively and subjectively at the destabilization and elimination of the socialist state and social order, <u>or</u> are objectively classified according to their content as subversive attacks of the opponent and the activity of inner enemies with different motives and objectives.[75]

The denomination of attitudes and actions as "hostile-negative" thus functioned as a descriptive instrument to comprehend the deficient status of the normative ideal of socialist personalities. However, the definitional work and the concrete use of the vocabulary by the MfS and JHS illustrate that the semantic emptiness of the applied terminologies covered a broad mass of behaviors under the framework of "hostile-negative" orientations. The previously mentioned range of ideological tolerance was by no means exactly determinable. JHS authors defined the dimensions of "hostile-negative" characteristics as follows:

> 1. rejection of real socialism from a more or less well-founded ideological position [...], 2. rejection of real socialism from a more or less pronounced individualistic-egoistic attitude to life [...], 3. rejection of real socialism from anti-social or rather criminal attitude to life [....], 4. rejection of real socialism mainly from personal, negatively processed experiences,

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74 This skepticism is also evident in the massive expansion of the MfS in the 1970s and 1980s. See, e.g., Jens Gieseke, *Die DDR-Staatssicherheit: Schild und Schwert der Partei* (Bonn: BPB, 2001), 56–86. The relationship between this institutional surveillance and control and the socio-political attempt at stabilization and "normalization" in the Honecker era is almost dialectic. On the normalization period, see Mark Pittaway, *Eastern Europe 1939–2000* (London/New York: Bloomsbury, 2010); Michal Pullmann, "'Ruhige Arbeit' und Einhegung der Gewalt: Ideologie und gesellschaftlicher Konsens in der spätsozialistischen Tschechoslowakei," in *Ordnung und Sicherheit, Devianz und Kriminalität im Staatssozialismus: Tschechoslowakei und DDR 1948/49–1989*, eds. Volker Zimmermann and Michal Pullmann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014); Paulina Bren, *The Greengrocer and his TV: The Culture of Communism after the 1968 Prague Spring* (Ithaca, NY/London: Cornell University Press, 2010).

75 "Der <u>Begriff der feindlich-negativen Handlungen</u> erfaßt alle jenen sozial destruktiven Aktivitäten, die sich in differenzierter Weise gegen die Erfordernisse, Ziele, Interessen, Normen sowie Werte des Sozialismus richten <u>und</u> objektiv und subjektiv auf die Destabilisierung und Beseitigung der sozialistischen Staats- und Gesellschaftsordnung abzielen <u>oder</u> sich nach ihrem Gehalt objektiv in die subversiven Angriffe des Gegners und die Tätigkeit innerer Feinde bei unterschiedlicher Motivation und Zielstellung einordnen." [emphasis in the original] *Zu den Ursachen und Bedingungen*, BStU, MfS, JHS, Nr. 21975, 17–18.

especially conflict situations [...], 5. rejection of real socialism mainly due to psychological abnormalities.[76]

It is therefore evident that the designation of one's attitude as "hostile-negative" was to be interpreted not as a clear-cut categorization but rather as an instrument of exclusion. Although the designation "hostile-negative" remained rather broad, one aspect is clear in the document: the concept of personality, as well as semantics and normative concepts ascribed to it, constitutes a central analytical starting point in this context too. Once again, the normative claim to the education of socialist personalities was at the center of socialist ideological production. The surveillance work of the MfS, according to this JHS document, was aimed at "elucidating all those factors and correlations that were to be assessed, interpreted, and dealt with operationally in complex—as social causes and conditions as well as conditions inherent in the personality"[77] for deviant behavior. It is clear then that the concept of personality was not only a central component of the socialist ideological discourse, but also had a prominent role in the institutional analyses of the JHS. Figure 1 shows that personality development was identified as a focus of MfS's surveillance work in the paper presented by JHS authors.

The scheme focuses on "Assessment Criteria for Personality Development."[78] It presents the roots of "hostile-negative" behavior in a misguided personality development and distinguishes the levels of "individual existence," "individual life story," "consciousness," and "behavior."[79] In the level of "consciousness," the authors placed individual "capacities for action,"[80] which could develop into "hostile-negative" tendencies. In the scheme presented in Figure 1, the capacity to act is closely linked to the personality structure of respective individuals and ultimately, forms the beginning of divergent, "hostile-negative" behavior.

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76 "1. Ablehnung des realen Sozialismus aus mehr oder weniger fundierter ideologischer Position [...], 2. Ablehnung des realen Sozialismus aus mehr oder weniger ausgeprägter individualistisch-egoistischer Lebenshaltung [...], 3. Ablehnung des realen Sozialismus aus asozialer bzw. krimineller Lebenshaltung [...], 4. Ablehnung des realen Sozialismus vorwiegend aus persönlichen, negativ verarbeiteten Erlebnissen, insbesondere Konfliktsituationen [...], 5. Ablehnung des realen Sozialismus vorwiegend auf Grund psychischer Auffälligkeiten." *Ibid.*, 27–29.
77 "alle jene Faktoren und Wirkungszusammenhänge aufzuklären, die im Komplex als soziale Ursachen und Bedingungen sowie in der Persönlichkeit liegende Bedingungen." *Ibid.*, 23.
78 "Bewertungskriterien der Persönlichkeitsentwicklung." *Ibid.*, 263.
79 "individuelles Sein," "individuelle Lebensgeschichte," "Bewußtsein," "Handlungen." *Ibid.*, 263.
80 "Handlungsbereitschaften." *Ibid.*, 263.
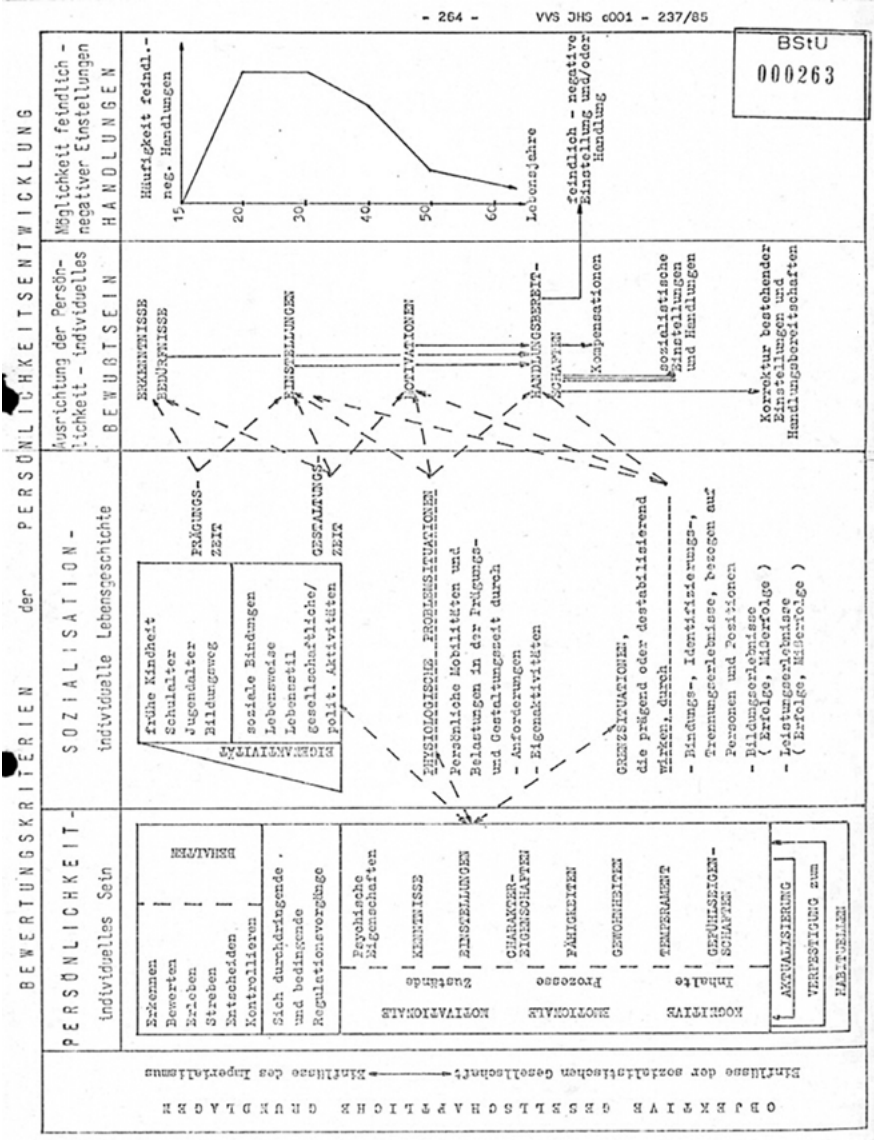
Figure 1: "Assessment Criteria for Personality Development." Source: *Zu den Ursachen und Bedingungen*, BStU, MfS, JHS, Nr. 21975, 263.

Thus, it can also be concluded that this aspect constituted a main point of friction between regime and society in their history of interaction; the individual capacities fueled the regime's skepticism and lead to increased interference and surveillance processes by the regime. Specifically, it was stated that "the <u>capacity to act is</u>, therefore, <u>a general evaluation category of the individual</u>."[81] Interestingly, the scheme on Figure 1 suggests various interactive possibilities of influence and interdependencies between state actors and concrete individuals. On the one hand, this capacity and willingness to act could lead to desirable behaviors and thus be regarded as part of the socialist vision of society. However, the prevalent attitudes and resulting behavior could also show the potential to be excluded from systemic discourse. In the scheme, possibilities for compensation and recovery of personalities were also mentioned, and thus suggest that in the perception of the state bodies, not every "hostile-negative" attitude had to shift into such actions. Instead, the authors emphasized that the operative treatment of "hostile-negative" personalities could not be carried out "causal-mechanically."[82] The following aspect is particularly clear:

> For a relatively large group of people, compensatory elements will prevent the shift from hostile-negative attitudes to corresponding actions, e. g., through the expansion of private and professional life. However, other forms of compensation can also be religious activities, joining so-called marginalized social groups, alcohol abuse, frequent illness. Ultimately, these are people whose incorporation into society has not been sufficiently successful.[83]

The MfS demonstrated their awareness for the need of individual leeway in the analysis of social tendencies of individualization to which compensatory elements were ascribed. Although this development showed a lack of collective values, the withdrawal into private life or professional ambitions, unlike alcohol abuse and religious activities, were not negatively semanticized or excluded *per se* from the given analysis. Compensation prevented, as the main statement went, the development of attitudes into concrete "hostile-negative" actions. The

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81 "Die <u>Handlungsfähigkeit ist</u> deshalb <u>eine allgemeine Bewertungskategorie des Individuums.</u>" [emphasis in the original] *Ibid.*, 264.

82 "kausalmechanisch[e]." *Ibid.*, 268.

83 "Für einen relativ großen Personenkreis werden kompensatorische Elemente den Umschlag von feindlich-negativen Einstellungen zu entsprechenden Handlungen verhindern, z. B. über den Ausbau des Privat- und Berufslebens. Andere Kompensationsformen können jedoch auch religiöse Aktivitäten, der Anschluß an sogenannte soziale Randgruppen, Alkoholmißbrauch, häufiges Kranksein darstellen. Letztlich handelt es sich um Menschen, deren Vergesellschaftung nicht ausreichend gelungen ist." *Ibid.*, 268.

authors identified compensatory channeling of dissatisfaction; substitutes were sought for it in "petty forms of private life."[84]

> In this respect, it can be concluded that insufficient involvement of personality in the collective production process [...] promotes [...] isolation phenomena [...]. Pseudo-needs, such as the excessive orientation of personality toward money, property, food, drink (alcohol!), sexuality, and also power— problems inherent in imperialism—can, at the current stage of development of socialist society, take on compensatory functions for inner-psychic contradictions.[85]

Security agencies, therefore, reflected on the forms of behavior that did not meet the requirements of the system (at least in their internal papers) and even realized that this could have a stabilizing effect. Terms such as "isolation phenomenon" or "pseudo-need" nonetheless illustrated the skepticism toward and the rejection of supposedly western influences or connotations of a private sphere by the state bodies. The document goes on to state:

> If compensation mechanisms do not succeed, the apparent alternative is an ideological relapse into the historically outdated capitalist society and thus, the possibility of corresponding goal-oriented actions. The suggestive moment when imperialism's means of mass communication appear, or the comparatively greater possibilities assumed in the area of "private life," show their effect. [...] It is only through the parallel development of social production and personal development that the phenomenon of finding the "time to live" only outside of work, the extreme of which again represents non-work as "freedom and happiness," can be solved.[86]

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84 "kleinlichen Formen des Privatlebens." [emphasis in the original] *Ibid.*, 286.

85 "Insofern läßt sich zusammenfassend feststellen, daß ungenügende Einbeziehung der Persönlichkeit in den kollektiven Produktionsprozeß [...] Isolierungsphänomene [...] fördert [...]. Pseudobedürfnisse, wie die übermäßige Orientierung der Persönlichkeit nach Geld, Besitz, Essen, Trinken (Alkohol!), Sexualität und auch nach Macht, dem Wesen nach systemimmanente Probleme des Imperialismus, können beim derzeitigen Entwicklungsstand der sozialistischen Gesellschaft kompensatorische Funktionen für innerpsychische Widersprüche einnehmen." [emphasis in the original] *Ibid.*, 293–294.

86 "Gelingen die Kompensationsmechanismen nicht, ist die scheinbare Alternative der ideologische Rückfall in die historisch überholte kapitalistische Gesellschaft gegeben und damit die Möglichkeit entsprechender zielorientierter Handlungen. Das suggestive Moment des Scheins der Massenkommuniaktionsmittel [sic!] des Imperialismus bzw. der angenommenen vergleichsweise größeren Möglichkeiten im Bereich des ‚Privatlebens' zeigen ihre Wirkung. [...] Das noch oft zu findende Phänomen, nur außerhalb der Arbeit ‚Zeit zum Leben' zu finden, deren Extrem wieder Nichtarbeit als ‚Freiheit und Glück' darstellt, ist nur durch parallele Entwicklung von gesellschaftlicher Produktion und Persönlichkeitsentfaltung lösbar." *Ibid.*, 294.

The JHS analysis emphasized that deficits in the collective education of socialist personalities lead to substitute actions that could compensate for "hostile-negative" potentials, i.e., the authors attributed a valve function to actions such as these. According to the analysis, the "suggestive moment" of greater freedoms in the West led to "hostile-negative" attitudes and, with a lack of compensation, even to concrete actions. To seek the "time to live" outside working hours and in individual development corresponded to western, liberal semantics of the private sphere—the authorities of the socialist dictatorship observed and evaluated these attitudes and came to the conclusion that western ideology seduced socialist citizens with these suggested possibilities. Nevertheless, they also recognized the valve function of these values for their own unsatisfied population.[87]

The authorities' fear of "imperialist" influences on the population of late socialist countries can be identified in the work of the JHS as a central element in the rhetoric of exclusion used in the files and as a core element ascribed to "hostile-negative" activities. The skepticism about the "spontaneous anarchic effects"[88] of the western way of life and the presumed deliberate western influence on the population caused great concern. In the report of the JHS, the central fear that the state bodies associated with these western influences is described:

> In fulfilling this specific responsibility, the MfS's main task is [...] to detect hostile-negative forces within the GDR and to prevent them from committing hostile-negative acts [...]. This is all the more truer because primary plans, intentions, and measures of the most aggressive forces of imperialism include constant attempts to bring [...] their crusade aimed at the annihilation of real socialism into the socialist countries [...]. With unprecedented intensity, it pursues the goal of undermining socialism from within and shaking it politically.[89]

"Hostile-negative" attitudes and actions were thus linked to western, "imperialist" influences and were semantically excluded from the authorities' own concept of society. Elsewhere in the source, it says: "Hostile-negative attitudes and actions of GDR citizens are a logical consequence of the planned struggle

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87 *Ibid.*, 294.
88 "spontan-anarchischen Wirkungen." [emphasis in the original] *Ibid.*, 59.
89 "In Wahrnehmung dieser spezifischen Verantwortung steht für das MfS die Aufgabe im Mittelpunkt, [...] rechtzeitig feindlich-negative Kräfte im Innern der DDR aufzuspüren und zu verhindern, daß sie feindlich-negative Handlungen [...] begehen. Das gilt umsomehr, weil zu den vorrangigen Plänen, Absichten und Maßnahmen der aggressivsten Kräfte des Imperialismus die ständigen Versuche gehören, seinen auf die Vernichtung des realen Sozialismus gerichteten [...] Kreuzzug, in die sozialistischen Länder [...] hineinzutragen [...]. Mit noch nie gekannter Intensität verfolgt er das Ziel, den Sozialismus von innen heraus zu unterminieren und politisch zu erschüttern." *Ibid.*, 17.

led by imperialism to destabilize and destroy real socialism and of the manifold effects emanating from the imperialist system."[90]

The perception and evaluation of the MfS and its training and qualification bodies excluded a violation of the norm through the designation "hostile-negative." These external influences were semanticized as historical traditions of an "imperialist" legacy:

> Socialism also had to be built up with people who were to a large extent born and raised under capitalist conditions with the usual ways of thinking and behavior and who, despite their own socialist development, still carried many of these bourgeois ways of thinking within themselves and passed them on to the generations already born under socialist conditions.[91]

In this quote, a central basic assumption of the operative ductus of state bodies manifested itself: deviations and diversion could be traced back to the previous capitalist social order or to the direct influence of these mindsets. "In capitalist society, there is a social war of all against all,"[92] the same JHS research report stated. This resulted in "selfish hardship; mutual plunder under the protection of the law; narrow, selfish interests; uncaring isolation of the individual to his private interests; narrow-minded selfishness."[93] According to the authors, patterns of this "social war" were reflected in "petty bourgeoisie" and private existence—patterns of behavior that could also be found—according to this source—in the state socialist society of the GDR as a legacy of the capitalist order:[94] as the position of the individual was interpreted as an "area of individual freedom and self-determination to be defended by all means, guaranteed by private proper-

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90 "Das Auftreten feindlich-negativer Einstellungen und Handlungen von Bürgern der DDR ist eine gesetzmäßige Folge des vom Imperialismus zur Destabilisierung und Vernichtung des realen Sozialismus planmäßig geführten Kampfes und der vom imperialistischen Herrschaftssystem ausgehenden vielfältigen Wirkungen." [emphasis in the original] *Ibid.*, 61.

91 "Der Sozialismus mußte des weiteren [sic!] mit Menschen aufgebaut werden, die zu einem großen Teil unter kapitalistischen Verhältnissen mit den hier üblichen Denk- und Verhaltensweisen geboren und aufgewachsen waren und die trotz eigener sozialistischer Entwicklung nicht wenige dieser bürgerlichen Denk- und Verhaltensweisen noch in sich trugen und diese an die bereits unter sozialistischen Verhältnissen geborenen Generationen weitergaben." *Ibid.*, 93.

92 "In der kapitalistischen Gesellschaft findet ein sozialer Krieg aller gegen alle statt." [emphasis in the original] *Ibid.*, 75.

93 "egoistische Härte; gegenseitige Plünderung unter dem Schutz des Gesetzes; borniert, egoistische Interessen; gefühllose Isolierung des einzelnen auf seine Privatinteressen; borniert Selbstsucht." *Ibid.*, 76.

94 *Ibid.*, 76–77.

ty."[95] Similarly, the journal *Neue Justiz* listed prestige among central motives for property offences at the workplace. The author formulated that "motives in property offences have a predominantly 'socially accentuated' character."[96] The enhancement of personal status and recognition was thus suspected as a motive.[97]

The argumentation by the JHS authors seems to claim that state bodies of the GDR regarded "material and ideological consequences of the exploitation regimes, in particular, the capitalist way of production and living (social heritage)"[98] as a seed of so-called "hostile-negative" behavior. Another source of the JHS even states: "Behavior that is detrimental to society, especially if it has anti-socialist tendencies, is primarily determined from outside by the imperialist system. In the GDR, there is no longer any social-economic or class-based basis for such behavior."[99] As a result, the reproduction of attitudes and behaviors attributable to the heritage of a capitalist order promoted "bourgeois" values and "anti-socialist views and attitudes such as [...] anti-Communism [and] nationalism."[100] The main legacy to overcome was identified as "selfishness, individualism, striving for enrichment, bureaucratic behavior, dishonesty."[101]

Interestingly, in this study of the JHS, individualism was excluded categorically from formal discourses, whereas Professor Hanke pled for the inherence of individual interests to the socialist ideology in the previously analyzed source. Following the questions raised at the beginning, it can be stated at this point that the discursive processes of negotiation, evaluation, and ideological incorporation of personality and privacy semantics show potential for controversy in the history of interaction. Similar patterns of behavior were sometimes ideologically re-semanticized and thus re-incorporated in Party-affiliated publications and

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95 "mit allen Mitteln zu verteidigende[r] Raum individueller Freiheit und Selbstbestimmung, der durch das Privateigentum garantiert sei." *Ibid.*, 77.

96 "Motive bei Eigentumsstraftaten [...] insgesamt gesehen einen überwiegend ,sozialbetonten' Charakter tragen." Müller, "Motive," 454.

97 *Ibid.*, 454.

98 "Materielle und ideelle Nachwirkungen der Ausbeuterordnungen, insbesondere der kapitalistischen Produktions- und Lebensweise (soziales Erbe)." *Zu den Ursachen und Bedingungen*, BStU, MfS, JHS, Nr. 21975, 73.

99 "Gesellschaftswidriges Verhalten, insbesondere wenn es antisozialistische Tendenzen aufweist, ist primär von außen durch das imperialistische System determiniert. Für ein solches Verhalten besteht in der DDR keine sozial-ökonomische und klassenmäßige Basis mehr." *Die politisch-operative Bekämpfung des feindlichen Mißbrauchs gesellschaftswidriger Verhaltensweisen Jugendlicher* (1981), BStU, MfS, JHS, Nr. 20067, 89.

100 "antisozialistische Auffassungen und Haltungen wie [...] Antikommunismus [und] Nationalismus." *Ibid.*, 92.

101 "Egoismus, Individualismus, Bereicherungsstreben, bürokratisches Verhalten, Unehrlichkeit." *Ibid.*, 91.

dissertations but were largely excluded from MfS-related discourses. Therefore, it can be surmised from these patterns of argumentation that formal discourse participants tried, on the one hand, to rhetorically integrate spheres of life and action that seem to have fallen out of the normative social doctrine of Marxism-Leninism in real existing socialism back into the discourse. On the other hand, analyses produced by the JHS bear witness to the fact that ambivalent environments of late socialism were discursively separated from the socialist system, or at least, authors ascribed non-systemic origins to them.

Summary: Production and Preservation of Agency

In the introduction to this article, I referred to an intensified communicative process of interaction that shaped GDR society of the late socialist period and was present in other socialist countries as well.[102] By referring to the narrative character of formal documents, I illustrated that state actors and their affiliates were engaged in this interaction and had to take note of societal developments and issues. I advocate looking at the communicative negotiation processes and frictions between formal actors and the society at large from the perspective of a history of interaction. My choice of this term was informed by my argument that the concrete historical context with its socio-political implications shaped these communication processes as well as the mutual search for interpretational agency. This was an interaction of different historical actors as well as an interaction of historical structures and events.[103]

Semantic dimensions of the concepts of personality and privacy reached into the scope of conflict outlined in the documents analyzed above: the appropriation and negotiation of interpretational control and agency. In this way, different and sometimes conflicting connotations and semanticizations of differentiated areas of life crystallized at subjective and systemic points of friction, both in personality development and personal scope for action.

In the sources that I analyzed, various strategies for preserving interpretational agency could be identified. In research discourses of Marxist-Leninist cultural and legal studies, empirical observations were partly described by using "bourgeois" (western liberal) terminology and semantically reconnected to the concept of society that was produced by late socialist authorities. Some sources

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102 See, e.g., Stegmann, "Open Letters."
103 See, e.g., Sieder, "Sozialgeschichte" and Lindenberger, "Alltagsgeschichte."

also show processes of re-semanticization of liberal terminology, implying that the conceptual repertoire for describing semantic dimensions of the concepts "personality" and "privacy" of liberal-western theory discourses was adopted and implemented in state socialist discourses. Discursive mechanisms that excluded specific semantic dimensions of these concepts from the system's own social design stand in contrast to this incorporation. These manifold results show that the production and preservation of discursive interpretational agency functioned as central points of friction in these communication processes. Negotiation processes, demands, and connotations of personality and privacy can provide insight into this history of interaction, as the constant preservation and production of agency by social and political forces becomes evident. The textual sources of these discourses represent systemically inherent appropriation processes and thus have a potential of broader applicability: discourses on personality and privacy form a suitable frame of reference for the continuing analysis of late socialist dictatorships.

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Notes on Contributors

Andra-Octavia Cioltan-Drăghiciu finished her History Studies in 2011 at the University of Vienna with a Herder Scholarship. She was a member of the doctoral college for Central European history at the Andrássy University Budapest funded by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science, and Research, from which she obtained her PhD degree with the thesis on youth cultures in socialist Romania. As of 2016, she is a research assistant at the University of Graz with teaching responsibilities in Graz and Budapest. Her book *"Gut gekämmt ist halb gestutzt." Jugendliche im sozialistischen Rumänien* was published in 2019 in the series Studies on South East Europe (ed. Karl Kaser), LIT Verlag, Vienna.

David Gillespie taught Russian language and culture at the University of Bath from 1985 to 2016. Since 2014, he has been Visiting Professor at Tomsk State University, where he lectures and supervises students on modern Russian literature. He has lectured on Russian culture at the universities of Berlin, Navarre, Magnitogorsk, and Krasnodar. He has written or edited 10 monographs and is the author of 36 book chapters and 38 articles in refereed journals. He is currently working on *A History of Russian Literature on Film* for Bloomsbury Publishing.

Thomas Goldstein is an Assistant Professor in the Department of History and Anthropology at the University of Central Missouri. He is the author of *Writing in Red: The Writers Union and the Role of Literary Intellectuals* (Camden House, 2017) and has also contributed a chapter to the volume *Nuclear Threats, Nuclear Fear, and the Cold War of the 1980s*, edited by Eckart Conze, Martin Klimke, and Jeremy Varon (Cambridge University Press, 2016). He is particularly interested in the relationship between politics and intellectual life under modern dictatorships.

Christina Jüttner is a doctoral student at the Chair of Slavic Literatures of the Ruhr-University Bochum (Germany). She studied Slavic Philology with focus on Russian and Polish language and culture at Ruhr-University Bochum (Germany) and the Belarusian State University in Minsk. She gained her Master's degree with a work on Valentin Kataev's and Yuri Olesha's life writings. She is currently working on a monograph about Soviet dissidents' life writings as a literary and social practice.

Tatiana Klepikova is a Faculty of Arts & Science Postdoctoral Fellow at the Women & Gender Studies Institute at the University of Toronto, where she is working on her monograph about queer theater and drama in contemporary Russia. Her academic trajectory runs through the cities of Yaroslavl in Russia and Passau in Germany, where she studied Pedagogy of Foreign Languages, English and Hispanic Studies, and Russian and East-Central European Studies before doing her Ph.D. in Slavic Literary Studies. Her dissertation offers insight into late Soviet constructions of privacy in the literary field, and the collections of articles she co-edited serve to uncover novel contexts and methods of privacy exploration: *Privatheit in der digitalen Gesellschaft* (Duncker und Humblot, 2018) and *Privates Erzählen: Formen und Funktionen von Privatheit in der Literatur des 18.–21. Jahrhunderts* (Peter Lang, 2018).

Mirja Lecke is chair of Slavic Literatures at the University of Regensburg (Germany). She gained her doctoral degree in 2001 in Münster and taught at Ruhr-University Bochum in 2009 – 2020. Her academic interests include Russian literature of the imperial and post-Soviet periods in postcolonial perspective, as well as the Polish literature of the enlightenment and post-communist eras. She published a monograph about the representation of the Western borderlands in Russian imperial literature: *Westland. Polen und die Ukraine in der russischen Literatur von Puškin bis Babel'* (Peter Lang, 2015) and co-edited a volume on Russian-Georgian literary relations of the post-Soviet era (*Rossiia–Gruziia posle imperii*, NLO, 2018).

Jon Berndt Olsen is an Associate Professor of History at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, where he teaches courses in the fields of Public History, Digital History, German and European History. He holds a Ph.D. in German History from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and an M.A. in German and European Studies from Georgetown University. His first book, *Tailoring Truth: Politicizing the Past and Negotiating Memory in East Germany, 1945 – 1989* appeared with Berghahn Books in January 2015. His new book-length research project focuses on the history of travel, tourism, and leisure culture in East Germany. Tentatively titled *Visa-Free to Hawaii: Going on Vacation in a Socialist Land*, it explores "organized" as well as "unorganized" vacations, camping trips, day trips, weekend bungalows, and garden communities in East Germany.

Claudiu Oancea is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Bucharest. He holds a Ph.D. in History and Civilization from the European University Institute in Florence, Italy (2015) and an M.A. in History from Central European University in Budapest, Hungary (2007). He was a visiting student at UC Berkeley (2011) and the University of Pittsburgh (2011 – 2012). In academic year 2016 – 2017, he was a postdoctoral fellow at New Europe College Institute for Advanced Study in Bucharest, Romania. His research interests center on the Cold War and post-communist periods, state socialism, nationalism, popular culture, as well as official and alternative culture.

Lukas Raabe (birthname: Lukas Edeler) studied Czech-German Studies at the Universities of Regensburg and Prague and International Cultural and Business Studies at the University of Passau with the focus on East-European and contemporary German history. He was Research Associate at the DFG Research Training Group 1681/2 "Privacy and Digitalization" and a Teaching Fellow at the University of Passau. He is working on his dissertation on dimensions of the concept of personality within the GDR opposition scene based on archival research and oral history.

Agnieszka Sadecka is a researcher and lecturer at the Institute of European Studies at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. As a fellow of the Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorate "Cultural Studies in Literary Interzones," in 2016, she completed a doctoral dissertation on socialist orientalism in Polish travel reportage from India. Currently, she is involved in the Horizon2020 research project "Populist Rebellion against Modernity in 21st-century Eastern Europe: Neo-Traditionalism and Neo-Feudalism (POPREBEL)," analyzing cultural narratives of post-transformational Poland.

Lewis H. Siegelbaum is the emeritus Jack and Margaret Sweet Professor of History at Michigan State University where he has taught since 1983. He is the author of books on industrial

mobilization during World War I (1984), the Stakhanovite movement of the 1930s (1988), the Soviet state and society in the 1920s (1994), and the award-winning *Cars for Comrades* (2008). He is co-author with Leslie Page Moch of *Broad is My Native Land: Repertoires and Regimes of Migration in Russia's Twentieth Century* (2014). He has edited and co-edited six books, including *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia* (2006) and *Empire and Belonging in the Eurasian Borderlands* (2019) and co-authored with Jim von Geldern the award-winning online sourcebook "Seventeen Moments in Soviet History." He also has published a memoir, *Stuck on Communism* (2019).

Irina Souch is Lecturer in the Department of Modern Foreign Languages and Cultures of the University of Amsterdam and Research Fellow at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA). Her monograph *Popular Tropes of Identity in Contemporary Russian Television and Film* (Bloomsbury, 2017) focuses on the relation between the Soviet past and the state of Russian society today, public and scholarly discourses on Russian national identity, Russia's relation to the West, and the ways these questions are represented in popular media. She is also co-editor of the collection of articles *Heterotopia and Globalisation in the Twenty-First Century* (Routledge, 2020). Her current work addresses narrative, aesthetic, and political functions of landscape in serial television drama which requires exploration of various aspects of contemporary critical theory, philosophy, cultural geography, and media studies.

Xawery Stańczyk is a researcher, activist, and poet based in Poland. He obtained his M.A. in cultural studies (2009) and sociology (2012) as well as Ph.D. in cultural studies (2015) from Warsaw University. In 2017 – 2019, he participated in the project "Cultural Opposition: Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Dissent in the Former Socialist Countries" at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of Polish Academy of Sciences. His main fields of interest include youth culture, popular music, nationalism, social movements, and public spaces in socialist and post-socialist Eastern Europe. He authored *Macie swoją kulturę: Kultura alternatywna w Polsce 1978 – 1996* (2018, recognized as the best Ph.D. in cultural studies in Poland in 2016) and co-edited *Miasto na żądanie: Aktywizm, polityki miejskie, doświadczenia* (2014) and *Awangarda/underground: Idee, historie, praktyki w kulturze polskiej i czeskiej* (2018).

Natali Stegmann holds the position of an academic researcher and a professorship at the chair for South East and East European History at the University of Regensburg since 2009. She has a Ph.D. in East European History and a habilitation from the University of Tübingen. She has published monographs on the history of the Polish women's movement from 1863 till 1918 (*Die Töchter der geschlagenen Helden. "Frauenfrage", Feminismus und Frauenbewegung in Polen, 1863 – 1919*, Harrassowitz, 2000) and on Czechoslovak war victims after the First and Second World Wars (*Kriegsdeutungen – Staatsgründungen – Sozialpolitik. Der Helden- und Opferdiskurs in der Tschechoslowakei, 1918 – 1948*, Oldenbourg, 2010) as well as multiple articles in the fields of her research interests that include 19th- and 20th-century history of East-Central Europe, gender history, war experiences, social policy, and culture of late socialist societies.

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