Comic Books and Culture in the German Democratic Republic,
1955-1990: Between Constructions of Power and Childhood.

by

Sean Eedy

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario

© 2016
Sean Eedy

Abstract.

In 1955, the East German Socialist Unity Party issued the Regulations for the Protection of Youth as a means of controlling publications for children and young people coming across the relatively open German-German border. At the same time, the regime authorized the creation of socialist comics in order to fill the gaps these regulations left in children's entertainment. However, as socialist alternatives to the perceived trash and filth represented by western comics and American influence, these East German comics were employed as extensions of the regime's education system, delivering the state's ideology in its efforts to develop the socialist personality among youth and generate genuine enthusiasm for the construction of state-socialism. Just as these comics organized children's activities and leisure time, they were taken up and read by East German children who made their own meanings of the publications' contents. As much as these comics were meant to fulfill the state's ideological agendas and foster the spirit of socialism within these readers, the children themselves understood comics in terms of the perceived freedoms they allowed. As such, children projected their own desires, interests, and tastes upon these publications. These expectations limited the range of actions available to the regime for drawing these readers into participation with socialism and the SED-state.

This dissertation approaches the subject of comics in the German Democratic Republic as constructions of state power and, in keeping with Foucault's governmentality thesis, as levers of power that allowed for the perpetuation of SED control. As children understood comics in ways different from the regime, comics are also examined in terms of Jürgen Habermas' critical public sphere insofar as they provided space for child-readers to make their own sense of the SED-state and the society around them despite these constructions of power. To this end, this dissertation

examines archival records of the GDR youth groups and issues of *Verlag Junge Welt*'s comics and children's magazines. This study argues that GDR comics were constructions of the regime's power at the same time that they provided fantasies of empowerment, escapism, and constructive of the experience of childhood under socialism.

Acknowledgements

Although my name is on the title page and I am ultimately responsible for the words as they appear on the pages contained within this dissertation, this work cannot be attributed to me alone. If any part of this work should be praised, that praise goes to those who supported me throughout this process. Should any faults appear in the pages that follow, those faults are my own. This project is one that I could not have undertaken without the support of people too numerous to mention here in their entirety. I tried to remember all of those who helped me along this journey. If there is anyone I have forgotten, please be kind. That fault is also mine. Like many who have come before me, I stand on the shoulders of giants. Regardless of how the title page reads, everything that follows belongs to us all.

First and foremost, I must thank Jennifer Evans who has not only been my supervisor, but whom I would like to think has also been my friend over these past seven years. Without her guidance, I would not have made it through the Master's program, let alone the PhD. I must also thank her for agreeing to supervise my doctoral work only if I went ahead with this comics project over the other topic I had in mind.

Joan White somehow managed to keep me ahead of my deadlines, most likely through her own diligence and repeated emails more so than any effort on my part. Joan is also wonderful at catching errors I myself often miss. Just ask her about my original title page. My 'i's are dotted and my 't's are crossed because of Joan.

Though I had a class with her once, I did not really get to know Dominique Marshall prior to her becoming Head of the History Department. I am glad I did. We share an interest in children and childhood development and she often passed along articles and calls for papers that I would have missed without her. In fact, my publication in the *Journal of Graphic Novels and*

Comics, which later developed into the first chapter of this dissertation, can be attributed to a CfP received from her. More importantly, when personal crisis struck, Dr. Marshall came to my aid. This culminated in my contribution and assistance to the Canadian Network on Humanitarian History and is something I am happy to continue with for as long as she will have me.

I would also like to thank the members of my examination board: Susan Whitney and James Casteel, both of whom are great people. I've enjoyed their classes and our conversations over the years. As both have previously been involved with either my Master's defence or my comprehensive exams (or both), I feel that they've accompanied me on this journey as much as anyone. I only had the pleasure of meeting Benjamin Woo once before, but I very much enjoyed being able to discuss comics in a relatively academic setting without the stigmas typically associated with the medium. It pleases me to know other academics interested in the study of comics and to see something of a coming out for the comics medium in terms of mainstream acceptability both in and out of popular culture. I didn't have the chance to know Corey Ross prior to my defence and then didn't have the opportunity to talk with him nearly as much as I would've liked, but his work proved invaluable and influential to my own and I'm glad and thankful that he agreed to be part of this.

Although her role was small, I'd like to thank Cristina Cuevas-Wolf at the *Wende* Museum in Culver City, California. Back when I was researching aspects of my Master's thesis at their archive, I shared my PhD idea and inquired about potential copies of *Mosaik* and *Atze* in their collection. Cristina was good enough to show me their nearly complete run of *Mosaik* kept in their holdings. Though I was unable to get back to California recently, I appreciate her help and my experience there.

Jane Freeland and Jennifer Rodgers were both extremely important to the successful completion of this project. I visited the *Bundesarchiv* in Berlin-Lichterfelde back in 2011 or 2012 doing some preliminary research for this work, much of which found its way into the first chapter. However, given the time I had available and the volume of material to get through, I found myself with a list of files left unexplored and no financial way to get back. Jane connected me with Jennifer who was good enough to put those files into my hands. Without their assistance, much of the material I needed and contained herein would have remained beyond my reach for a while longer. Quite literally, my ability to complete this project on schedule was entirely because of their efforts overseas. I owe them both no ends of thanks.

Thanks needs also be extended to Peter Lorenz MA and the staff at *Comic Bibliothek Renate* in Berlin. I am so glad a place like this exists. Yes, it serves as an indie comic shop and the range of comix I found there was fantastic, but more importantly the *Comic Bibliothek* serves as an archive of a cultural medium ignored by many other institutions. The *Comic Bibliothek* not only serves the history of comics in the former German Democratic Republic, but of comics and German comics more generally. Moreover, I found there secondary literature of which I'd heard or seen referenced, but had previously been unable to access. Peter was good enough to accommodate my needs, allowed me access to the entirety of material in his collection, and let me stay as late as I needed in order to pour through what was there. Though, my first experience with Turkish coffee was something of a shock and I can't say I've become a fan of it since.

On a more personal level, I'd like to thank Thomas McKechnie for always being my friend and being supportive when I decided to do this. I may not see him or his family as often as I may like, but we always manage to pick up where we left off as though no time has passed. That's really the best kind of friendship.

Finally, and perhaps most important, I'd like to thank my wife, Deborah, for being at my side throughout this experience. I'm sorry that sometimes this has caused me stress and I'm sorry that sometimes research, conferences, or classes took me away, but she has always been there and supported me. I could not have done this without her and maybe I wouldn't have wanted to. I love you, Debbie.

Sean Eedy

Ottawa, ON, 18 September 2016

Table of Contents.

Abstract	ii.
Acknowledgements	iv.
Table of Contents	viii.
List of Figures	ix.
Introduction.	
Comics at the Intersection of State Power and Childhood in the German Democratic Republic.....	1.
Chapter One.	
<i>Kultur</i> , Developing the Socialist Personality, and the Campaigns Against Comics as a Western Medium in the SED-State.....	27.
Chapter Two.	
Comics Culture, Demonstrations of State Power, and Capturing the East German Zeitgeist.....	73.
Chapter Three.	
Power, <i>Eigen-Sinn</i> , and the Construction of Space through Comics and <i>Kinderzeitschriften</i>	127.
Chapter Four.	
Travel, Cultural Imperialism, and the Socialist Ideal in <i>Mosaik</i> and <i>Atze</i>	169.
Chapter Five.	
Western Influence in <i>Mosaik von Hannes Hegen</i> , Popular Taste, and the Limitations of the FDJ's Publishing Regime.....	207.
Conclusion	248.
Bibliography	255.

List of Figures.

1. G. Hain, Comic Page, “Leuchtkugeln über den Karpfenteichen.” *Atze* issue 7/1981, page 2, Verlag Junge Welt. Comic Bibliothek Renate, Berlin, DE.....**50.**

2. Hannes Hegen, Mosaik-Kollektiv, Comic Page, *Ritter Runkel-serie*, *Mosaik von Hannes Hegen* issue 91, page 14, Verlag Junge Welt, 1964. Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Leipzig, DE.....**53.**

3. Hannes Hegen, Mosaik-Kollektiv, Comic Page, *Amerika-serie*, *Mosaik von Hannes Hegen* issue 156, page 21, Verlag Junge Welt, 1969. Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Leipzig, DE.....**61.**

4. G. Hain, Comic Page, “Frühling im Oderbruch.” *Atze* issue 6/1975, page 2, Verlag Junge Welt. Comic Bibliothek Renate, Berlin, DE.....**89.**

5. Unknown Socialist Realist Comic (found without cover, title, or contents pages). *Kinderbuchverlag*, DDR, 1984. Comic Bibliothek Renate, Berlin, DE.....**92.**

6. Hannes Hegen, Mosaik-Kollektiv, Comic Page, *Weltraum-serie*, *Mosaik von Hannes Hegen* issue 38, page 10, Verlag Junge Welt, 1960. Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Leipzig, DE.....**100.**

7. Hannes Hegen, Mosaik-Kollektiv, Design Drawings, “Coloured Warriors/Sioux-Indians” *Amerika-serie*. *Mosaik von Hannes Hegen*, Verlag Junge Welt, 1969. Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Leipzig, DE.....**111.**

8. Unknown, Photograph, Gojko Mitić at the *Frösi-treff*, TiP, 23 March 1981. Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, BArch DC 207/686, Berlin, DE.....**116.**

9. H. Schlegel, *Pats Reiseabenteuer*, Comic Detail, *Atze* issue 6/1975, page 9, Verlag Junge Welt. Comic Bibliothek Renate, Berlin, DE.....**139.**

10. Hannes Hegen, Comic Page, *Wie alles begann*. *Mosaik von Hannes Hegen* issue 1, page 10, Verlag Neues Leben, 1955. Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Leipzig, DE.....**178.**

11. Hannes Hegen, Mosaik-Kollektiv, Comic Page, *Ritter Runkel-serie*. *Mosaik von Hannes Hegen* issue 90, page 24 (back page), Verlag Junge Welt, 1964. Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Leipzig, DE.....**180.**

12. Hannes Hegen, Comic Page, *Wie alles begann*. *Mosaik von Hannes Hegen* issue 9, page 10, Verlag Neues Leben, 1957. Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Leipzig, DE.....**185.**

- 13.** Hannes Hegen, Design Drawing, *Amerika-serie. Mosaik Dgedags* as American Indians, Verlag Junge Welt, 1969. Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Leipzig, DE.....**205.**
- 14.** Hannes Hegen, Mosaik-Kollektiv, *Weltraum-serie. Mosaik von Hannes Hegen* issue 26, page 20, Verlag Junge Welt, 1959. Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Leipzig, DE.....**215.**
- 15.** Unknown Artist, Promotional Art, “Two Generations of *Mosaik*.” MOSAIK Steinchen für Steinchen Verlag, 2013. Berlin, DE.....**243.**

Introduction.

Comics at the Intersection of State Power and Childhood in the German Democratic Republic.

In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War in Europe, concerns over the acceptability and perceived harmfulness of comics were bolstered by the effects of Americanization on youth and how these issues affected the nation-state, European civilization, and culture (*Kultur*).¹ In the same moment, Dr. Fredric Wertham, a German-American psychologist and one of the comic industry's most vocal opponents, suggested that comics "indoctrinated children against the accepted rules of decency," comparing these publications to propaganda under European dictatorships. Here, Wertham was not entirely wrong as comics were employed by those very same dictatorships, as we shall see. Wertham thoughts on comics sided with the opinions of the Frankfurt School, a school of social theory and philosophy associated with the Institute for Social Research at the Goethe University Frankfurt. "Mass culture," the Frankfurt School contended, was used for the purposes of "homogeniz[ing] society with false class consciousness and capitalist aspirations."² In Wertham's estimation, comics served this same function in western society. As a result, comics produced in North America, Europe, and even the Soviet Bloc during the 1950s, the latter being the subject of this dissertation, were hotly contested sites of power between educators, parents, politicians, and their constructions of the state and childhood and how the two should relate and interact. As spaces

¹ James Chapman, *British Comics: A Cultural History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011), 9-11; Richard Ivan Jobs, "Tarzan Under Attack: Youth, Comics, and Cultural Reconstruction in Postwar France," *French Historical Studies* 26, no. 4 (Fall 2003): 688-95; Goran Jovanovic and Ulrich Koch, "The Comics Debate in Germany: Against Dirt and Rubbish, Pictorial Idiotism, and Cultural Analphabetism," in *Pulp Demons: International Dimensions of the Post-War Anti-Comics Campaign*, ed. John A. Lent (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1999), 95-102; Peter Lee, "Decrypting Espionage Comic Books in 1950s America," in *Comic Books and the Cold War, 1946-1962: Essays on Graphic Treatment of Communism, the Code and Social Concerns*, eds. Chris York and Rafael York (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2012), 30-44.

² Bradford W. Wright, *Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 159.

uncontrolled by adult supervision, comics allowed children to enact their own desires and make their own meanings of the spaces they created. In effect, children themselves affected the production of these comics and exerted their own brands of power over them.

This introduction thus argues that comics in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), though certainly not limited to this state or even to the Soviet Bloc, provided spaces in which both the regime and the children themselves were able to delineate what was understood and defined as “childhood” and what that entailed in terms of belonging within the state itself. In this, the state as a political body and the publishing regime of the state exercised more obvious demonstrations of power, but the consumption of the comics themselves and the interactions children had with those publications were indicative of their own methods of control in how comics were consumed and how the contents of the stories were understood and digested by the readership. As a larger project, this dissertation examines comic books in the GDR as an intersection between state power and the development and *Alltag* (everyday life) of their child-readership despite these publications being indicative of the SED-state’s authority. It argues that although comics were, indeed, power constructions of the state and in this purpose served the state well, they were also power fantasies, escapist, and constructive of the experience of childhood. In effect, East German comics were sites upon which both the state, the FDJ, the publishers, and the children for whom they were published enacted and exercised the various and very independent and individual definitions and meanings of childhood and what it meant to be a child living and growing up under East German socialism. While these publications were most assuredly constructions of state power, they were necessarily negotiated through the lens of the child’s understandings of state and society. Not only this, but as comics were consumed within the domestic, they became associated with privacy and the ersatz public sphere and became the

subjects of children's criticisms of the state via this material cultural output. Moreover, comics allowed children the opportunity to interact and negotiate with the FDJ and the SED-regime on a level that was engaging and entertaining as it operated to increase their own political awareness and in so doing enabled a dialogue between (child) citizen and state for the perpetuation of the participatory dictatorship.³

Historian Mary Fulbrook has described the power exercised by the Socialist Unity Party (SED) as being both benign and malign as part of her conceptualization of East Germany as a honeycomb state. This is to suggest that the GDR was a state in which the activities of the population were compartmentalized. Arguably, this division and overlap of the public and the private spheres served to exonerate the vast numbers of civilians who willingly participated in the SED-system while maintaining the perception of separation from and victimization by those same structures of governmental authority. Malign power often refers to those overt means of coercion employed by the state against its own population. Here, we infer most obviously the Stasi, the East German secret police whose fingers ran deep in the FDJ's publishing houses as with all aspects of the SED-state, but also threats made against individuals and groups such as the East German church to secure their demonstrations of loyalty, or even Party loyalty in exchange for better housing, employment opportunities, or the ability to send one's child to pursue a university education over manual labour in the lignite (brown coal) mines.⁴ It was in these malign modes of SED power that writer and researcher Phil Leask suggests the SED employed methods of humiliation, as the unjustified use of power seemingly without reason and at random, against Party-members in order to secure loyalty through the individual's desire to

³ Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 12.

⁴ Ibid, 235-49.

conform as a means of attaining their own ideals.⁵ Often, this direct interference in the lives of the East German citizenship is understood in terms of a carrot and stick approach to policy formation, whereby the SED-regime offered incentives to the population in exchange for their loyalty or, during Erich Honecker's leadership after 1971, outward demonstrations of conformity over the dyed-in-the-wool belief in the Party-line. If these incentives proved ineffective in generating the desired conformity or conviction, the stick was applied to breed loyalty by force.⁶ This carrot and stick approach to the perception of the SED's malign demonstrations of power has been made clear, largely in those areas where there seemed no consistent policy to deal with the problems of the population.⁷

Benign power, on the other hand and exactly as the term itself suggests, is much more difficult to detect. Fulbrook suggests that the benign is more completely woven in to the fabric of the East German *Alltag*, the everyday experience of life, and is found in numerous nebulous forms as benign power shaped the reality of the *Alltag*, from shopping, to entertainment, to the perceived acceptability of the East German culture of complaint generated through the practice of *Eingaben* (citizen petitions).⁸ These letters of complaint thus acted as something of a pressure valve for the population's pent up problems and desires, while atomizing voices that could lead

⁵ Phil Leask, "Humiliation as a Weapon within the Party: Fictional and Personal Accounts," in *Becoming East German: Socialist Structures and Sensibilities after Hitler*, ed. Mary Fulbrook & Andrew I. Port (New York: Berghahn, 2013), 237-56.

⁶ David Childs, *The GDR: Moscow's German Ally* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 281. See also, Andrew I. Port, *Conflict and Stability in the German Democratic Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 2-10.

⁷ Where this notion of the carrot and stick is applied with regard to East German authors, see Patrick Major, *Behind the Berlin Wall: East Germany and the Frontiers of Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 176-88; in relation to youth and the Free German Youth, see Alan McDougall, *Youth Politics in East Germany: The Free German Youth Movement 1946-1968* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004); In relation to East German gender and sexuality, see Josie McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism: Intimacy and Sexuality in the GDR* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁸ Fulbrook, *People's State*, 235-49.

to protest.⁹ Andrew Port characterizes the GDR as a “grumble society” that is effectively defined by controlled confrontation and condoned interaction with the state through the official endorsement of complaints issued to the local, regional, and state SED-authorities.¹⁰ Likewise, Corey Ross suggests that the East German population had their own agendas (*Eigen-Sinn*) that both contradicted and clashed with the state. The accommodation negotiated between state authority and the desires of the population effectively consolidated the regime, at least for a time.¹¹ Benign power structures were those that became invisible to life as it was lived in the GDR as they affected not only the ways in which the population related to the state, but also how the people interacted with each other.¹² It was through these benign power structures that East Germans normalized their interactions and their own senses of self and were allowed and able to act sometimes against the state that created the power structures themselves. In effect, the population internalized these everyday modes of power to produce their own meanings of East German society.¹³ Although this internalization is not entirely divorced of the carrot and stick in the SED-state, and can be evidenced in the bedroom politics described in Josie McLellan’s *Love in the Time of Communism* and with regard to East German authors in Robert Darnton’s *Censors at Work*, benign power structures provided the illusion of freedom from the authority of the regime understood solely in terms of the malign.¹⁴ While it is easy to consider this comprehension of the SED-state’s authority solely in terms of the malign as mistaken, the

⁹ Peter Grieder, *The German Democratic Republic* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2012), 5.

¹⁰ Port, 115. Fulbrook suggests that those of the working class and demonstrating left-wing tendencies or sympathies could grumble, typically through the use of *Eingaben*, without being admonished or punished by the SED-regime. Fulbrook, *People’s State*, 4-5.

¹¹ Corey Ross, *Constructing Socialism at the Grass-Roots: The Transformation of East Germany, 1945-65* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2000), 8-9. See also, Mary Fulbrook, “Putting the People Back In: The Contentious State of GDR History,” *German History* 24, no. 4 (November 2006): 618 and Grieder, 2-6.

¹² Fulbrook, *People’s State*, 235-49.

¹³ 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), 1-30.

¹⁴ Robert Darnton, *Censors at Work: How States Shaped Literature* (New York: Norton, 2014), 149-227.

conscious and willful ignorance of the state's benign power by the population created the illusion that the state stopped at the door of the domicile. This constructed the private sphere as a perceived safe zone from the state's malign power structures regardless of the truth of the matter, as argued by Paul Betts in his study of privacy in the GDR.¹⁵ This distinction between the malign and the benign thus allowed for the creation of the perception of *Eigen-Sinn* in the East German subconscious and as a way of generating meaning in the *Alltag* beyond the binary offered by the narrative of state power and victimization.

Between 1977 and his death in 1984, and with particular regard to his lecture delivered at *Collège de France* in 1978, philosopher Michel Foucault developed his notion of governmentality. Broadly understood as the art of governance that explained how governments actively set about affecting power over the ruled population, governmentality more specifically addresses how governments produce citizens as those loyal to and willing to act in the best interests of the nation-state. At the same time, this thesis explores and examines the realities of those concrete and physical systems, institutions, and practices whereby governments actively govern the population. Foucault himself understood this notion as the systemic exercise of power, through politics and security apparatuses, against a population, the recognition of those institutions of power as a legitimate authority by that population, and the way those institutions are bureaucratized and codified as governmental power.¹⁶ This is to say that governmentality is the way in which governments enact power over their populations. While Foucault most often discusses this power wielded by governments in terms of the West and the, arguably, democratic governments of Western Europe and North America, such an approach is rendered even more

¹⁵ Paul Betts, *Within Walls: Private Life in the German Democratic Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1-18, 119-47, and 173-92.

¹⁶ Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality with Two Lectures by and an Interview with Michel Foucault*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 102-3.

clearly when applied to the perceived totalitarian regimes of the Soviet Bloc, and here the GDR in particular. This becomes especially true when taken into account in conjunction with Foucault's conceptualization of panopticism as a means of creating a sense of self-policing.

Through governmentality, populations are coerced to act within a specific set of actions considered acceptable by those in positions of authority of the state, such as the notions of "democracy," "law," "freedom", and "choice," to name a few. Moreover, considerations of policing, economic stability, and nationalism are employed in order to convince that population of its own security within the state.¹⁷ As long as the population remains convinced of the government's ability to provide for their security, adherence to the perceived norms, that is the acceptable set of actions within the state, becomes the "normal" and "rational" action of those living under that governmental authority. "Discipline" is yet another tool available to governments to convince populations of the necessity of this adherence. In western states, this method of governance is typically demonstrated through the individual's failure to adhere to the codified law of the state, though this in and of itself is dependent upon the population's previous acceptance of those codified laws and the authority and power of the government to enforce them, thus revealing the structures of state power. In the Soviet Bloc states following the Second World War, this same principle applied. In this case, however, "discipline" was not limited to the understood and acknowledged codified laws of the state, but was also subject to the whims and arbitrariness of those in power as argued by Leask.¹⁸ And although the panopticon was conceived as a model for a theoretical prison, the notion is sound in relation to the East German state particularly after the closure of the inner-German border in the early 1950s and the

¹⁷ This list is by no means exhaustive of the constructions governments employ to affect control over those governed, but is intended merely to give the reader an idea of the illusions of state power which appear less visible in the Western World.

¹⁸ Leask, 240-1.

construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 that remade the GDR state itself as a literal prison for its population.

Panopticism proposes a perpetual state in which prison inmates are assumed to be watched, regardless of the truth of the matter. As such, individual behaviour is modified to adhere to the perceived laws and rules of the prison as institution.¹⁹ Extrapolating this concept to the state and particularly the GDR for purposes here, the citizen conducts a process of self-regulation and self-censorship while acting in the public space under the assumption that the citizen is under the surveillance of the state, the Stasi. In his study on forensic psychology, deviation, and the socialist self as subject, Greg Eghigian suggests that the SED defined notions of the socialist personality and asocial deviation through the linguistics of direction (ie. to steer [*Steuerung*], to divert [*ableiten*], derailings [*Entleisungen*], etc.). As such, and in opposition to western perceptions of deviation as deviation from a statistical norm, the GDR understood deviation as that from “a path of natural development, a path by which all socialist subjects should invariably converge,” the socialist personality.²⁰ As such, Eghigian contends that demonstrations of conformity in the GDR were part of a project to educate the psychology of the self (psycho-pedagogical) as much or more than they were a political impetus. This rationale implies that observation in the East German state and the subsequent self-regulation undertaken by the population was part of the socialist utopian project, further demonstrated in instances of socialist science fiction novels, comics, and films. Comics and the other mechanisms of power employed by the SED are thus aspects of Foucault’s governmentality, set upon the population for the express purposes of this self-regulation, perceived conformity, and the associated retreat into

¹⁹ Michel Foucault, “Discipline and Punish, Panopticism,” in *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, ed. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 195-228.

²⁰ Greg Eghigian, “The Psychologization of the Socialist Self: East German Forensic Psychology and its Deviants, 1945-1975,” *German History* 22, no. 2 (2004): 203.

the private sphere that allowed for the legitimization of SED authority.²¹ This modification of behaviour becomes a defense mechanism to avoid the discipline by the state while at the same time acknowledging the authority of the state to enact that discipline.²² Though, this approach is hardly new to the study of the SED- and the Stasi-state and is often used in connection with studies of the East German everyday and the perception of the private sphere.²³

One such mode of SED power was the Free German Youth (FDJ), a mass organization refounded in 1946 by the Soviet Military Administration in Germany (SMAD) in order to combat fascism among youth, particularly given the recent history of children's involvement in the Hitler Youth and the *Volkssturm* (People's Storm, a militia organized by the Nazi Party as Germany's last line of defense against the Allied Forces encroaching on German territory), in the Soviet Zone of Occupation (*Sowjetische Besatzungszone* or SBZ).²⁴ Subordinated to the SED following the marriage of the East German Social Democrats (SPD) and the German Communist Party (KPD) in 1946 and, in a more official capacity, after the foundation of the GDR in 1949, the FDJ acted in parallel with the official educational regime of the SED-state, largely responsible for the organization of the free time of youth, effectively educating them to the proper ways in which they were responsible to act in service to the socialist state.²⁵ As free time, also the idea of a leisure society (*Freizeitgesellschaft*), was on the rise among the postwar

²¹ Ibid, 200-4.

²² Foucault, "Discipline," 195-228.

²³ Governmentality and Panopticism form the theoretical backbone of numerous studies of the East German *Alltag* in relation to both the modes of state power and how the population worked within and normalized that power including, but not limited to: Betts, *Within Walls*; Donna Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic: Women, the Family, and Communism in the German Democratic Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism*; Mark McCulloch, "Sword and Shield of Consumption: the Police-Society Relationship in the Former East Germany," *Past Tense: Graduate Review of History* 1 (2012): 67-83; Port, *Conflict and Stability*; Judd Stitzel, "Shopping, Sewing, Networking, Complaining: Consumer Culture and the Relationship between State and Society in the GDR," in *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics*, ed. Katherine Pence and Paul Betts (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 253-286.

²⁴ McDougall, *Youth Politics*, 2-5.

²⁵ Fulbrook, *People's State*, 121-8; Anna Saunders, *Honecker's Children: Youth and Patriotism in East(ern) Germany, 1979-2002* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 11-13.

population generally, it was the FDJ's responsibility to turn this arguable waste of youthful energies toward the construction of East German socialism and society. Not only was the idea of children and youth, when left to their own devices, a threat to the perceived control and conformity of the fledgling East German state, but the organization of leisure activities and time subverted the influence of western capitalism transgressing the GDR's borders both before and after construction of the Wall. As such, and as suggested by Konrad Jarausch and Michael Geyer in their 2003 volume, *Shattered Past*, mass culture and the organization of leisure time became a prominent feature of both Germanies during the postwar. With specific regard to the GDR, they argue that when the individual was not acting directly in service to the state, free time was dominated by state run agencies delivering state ideology through organized activities to such an extent that there developed a close, almost indistinguishable association between free time and mass culture, or more precisely "the mass consumption of culture."²⁶ Comics and other children's magazines and publications produced by the FDJ served this function in that they organized children's free time, time that was not dominated by the structures and institutions of education or of the FDJ, by penetrating the perceived sanctity of the private sphere as the last bastion of East German life free from the state. As comics proved immensely popular with children not only in Germany, but throughout Europe and North America, they provided a platform by which the FDJ could continue to loosely organize leisure space in a way that was equally educational and ideologically acceptable to the motives and agendas of the East German educational and political regimes.

The unofficial steering of children's free time through comics proved more important still following the construction of the Berlin Wall. As a means of keeping youth closely in line with

²⁶ Konrad Jarausch and Michael Geyer, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 286.

the socialist cause after the closure of the escape hatch provided by divided Berlin and the perceived cessation of West German and American influence in terms of youth culture and all that entailed, including western comic books, the SED-regime under the leadership of Walter Ulbricht initiated the relative liberalization of the FDJ's and SED's youth policies. Policy related to comics, however, regardless of any unevenness in the implementation of that policy from comic to comic and across the larger scope of *Kinderzeitschriften* (magazines for children), moved in the other direction as the control of leisure time came to be of ever greater importance for the FDJ and the SED-regime.²⁷ In this regard, though, comics were understood both as part of the regime's state-socialist education and in terms of larger developments surrounding children's literature in the GDR, improving the content and quality of both aspect to compete with perceived western influence, as argued separately by both social historian Jeanette Madarasz and language scholar Gaby Thomson-Wohlgemuth.²⁸ With the *Verordnung zum Schutz der Jugend* (Regulations for the Protection of Youth) in 1955 effectively banning the possession of western comics and children's publications and the Berlin Wall physically putting an end to the availability of these materials, the FDJ and their publishing house for children's books and magazines, *Verlag Junge Welt*, were able to put aside the perceived competition with Western publications that previously, albeit arguably, determined much of the direction,

²⁷ Ross, 174-5.

²⁸ Jeanette Z. Madarasz, *Conflict and Compromise in East Germany, 1971-1989: A Precarious Stability* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2003), 62-6; Gaby Thomson-Wohlgemuth, "About Official and Unofficial Addressing in East German Children's Literature," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 34-5; and Gaby Thomson-Wohlgemuth, *Translation under State Control: Books for Young People in the German Democratic Republic* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 1-4. Madarasz approaches this material from the position of the FDJ's mandates in drawing youth into the socialist fold. Meanwhile, Thomson-Wohlgemuth suggests that East German children's literature underwent a period of transformation as the FDJ attempted to raise it to the levels enjoyed by adult literature and in keeping with the *Bitterfelder Weg* and tenets of socialist realism laid out by the regime in 1959. However, both meet in the middle to suggest the importance of children's literature published by the FDJ and its educational mandate in the development of the socialist personality and the construction of German socialism given the perceived significance of youth participation to the future of the SED-state.

presentation and content of GDR comics prior to the beginning of the 1960s.²⁹ The Berlin Wall not only created a captive audience for these publications, but also allowed the comics to expand beyond the derivative clones of West German and American publications, to attach themselves to the burgeoning children's literature movement in the GDR and transform into quality publications that exceeded the typical cheapness and disposability that previously defined and glutted the medium in the postwar period.³⁰ In the post-Wall space, East German comics became sites in which the FDJ and the editorial regime attempted to control the leisure time of its readership in a way that operated hand-in-hand with the East German educational systems in constructing children and childhood as a developmental space for the socialist personality, as suggested by historian Dorothee Wierling.³¹

At the same time, comics were typically consumed within the private sphere, the home, and those moments that arguably went unregulated by both parents and the FDJ. As suggested by Sabin, comics were often purchased by the child-readers themselves and with their own money, therefore bypassing the authorities of parents or institutions, including the FDJ. The absence of authority made the child-reader's sense of ownership over their leisure time and their private space total and empowering.³² Moreover, Matthew Pustz argues that the awareness that thousands of others were making the same purchases and for the same reasons created the sense of kinship among child-readers necessary for the establishment of a comic culture.³³ For this

²⁹ Jan Palmowski, "Between Conformity and Eigen-Sinn: New Approaches to GDR History," *German History* 20, no. 2 (2002): 499-500.

³⁰ Wright, 1-29.

³¹ Dorothee Wierling, "Youth as Internal Enemy: Conflicts in the Educational Dictatorship of the 1960s," in *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics*, eds. Katherine Pence and Paul Betts (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 166-73.

³² Sabin, 28.

³³ Matthew J. Pustz, *Comic Book Culture: Fanboys and True Believers* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1999), 155-6. Though Pustz is here writing to the American experience, the experience of childhood may be understood to be a universal and, as such, it is not hard to imagine East German school children discussing comics before and after class, particularly as the FDJ encouraged a connection between comics and the classroom.

reason, comics were important to the regime from an ideological stand-point in the control of children's free time and those sites of leisure. In the mid-1980s, Günter Gaus articulated the GDR as a "niche society" in that its population retreats into the private as an escape from the incessant ideology and politicization of society rendered by the SED.³⁴ Moreover, Anna Saunders suggests that the niche is useful in highlighting the importance of privacy and the interactions that occur within the home as spaces supposedly removed from the influence of the regime. At the same time, the concept of the niche fails to recognize the significance of interactions between the public and the private spheres. This means that while the niche is important in the construction of East German identity, it should not be implied that that space is one free from the politics of the state.³⁵ As such and since that time, historians have come to understand the private as an ersatz public sphere in the same way as Jürgen Habermas in his book, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*.³⁶

Here, Habermas argues that the bourgeois order emerging with the Enlightenment forged a distinction between the public and the private. It was within this private realm where a bourgeois public sphere developed as a space to critically engage with politics and society. This public sphere shifted from the private to the public realm with the mobilization of mass society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as the divisions between the two were blurred and intertwined with the rise of the modern social welfare state.³⁷ Typically, the public sphere was considered inconsistent with the lived experience of the GDR as the state did not permit

³⁴ Günter Gaus, *Wo Deutschland liegt* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1986).

³⁵ Saunders, 10.

³⁶ See Betts, *Within Walls*; Karl Christian Führer and Corey Ross, "Mass Media, Culture, and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany: an Introduction," in *Mass Media, Culture, and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany*, eds. Karl Christian Führer and Corey Ross (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2006), 1-22; Fulbrook, *People's State*; Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Wierling, 157-182.

³⁷ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 175-7.

criticisms leveled against society, those in power, or the construction of socialism and its successes or failures more generally. More than this, but as a socialist state, the GDR and the entire Soviet Bloc, for that matter, lacked a bourgeois class and the perceived political structure and freedoms upon which Habermas based his notion of a public sphere as providing a space for, effectively, the formation of rational and critical public opinion.

That said, in an encyclopedia article, Habermas himself suggests that the public sphere is:

a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body.³⁸

He goes on to characterize the “public sphere as a sphere which mediates between state and society, in which the public organizes itself as the bearer of public opinion, accords with the principle of the public sphere.”³⁹ This is to suggest that the public sphere can exist anywhere citizens are allowed to gather where the practice of open conversation is allowed to foment public opinion of rational criticism of the political state. In this instance, we cannot discuss the political upheavals of either 1953 or 1989 in the German Democratic Republic as those were both very different beasts, especially the latter given how irrevocably connected it was to concurrent events in the neighbouring Warsaw Pact states, than the perpetual ersatz public sphere that was conducted within the domestic space.⁴⁰ However, historians such as Paul Betts have

³⁸ Jürgen Habermas, “The Public Sphere: an Encyclopedia Article (1964),” *New German Critique* no. 4 (Autumn 1974), 49.

³⁹ Ibid, 50.

⁴⁰ For more on the development of something closer to Habermas’ conceptualization of a true public sphere in a liberal society in the Soviet Bloc and how that public sphere affected the collapse of Communism, not only in East Germany but throughout Eastern Europe, see Stephen Kotkin, *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment* (New York: Modern Library, 2009); Michael Meyer, *The Year that Changed the World: the Untold Story Behind the Fall of the Berlin Wall* (New York: Scribner, 2009); Mary Elise Sarotte, *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

incorporated the notion of the public sphere into their own writings on the East German *Alltag*.⁴¹ Combined with Fulbrook's notion that East German citizens normalized and internalized the perceived omnipresence of SED and Stasi power allowing those citizens to pursue a "normal" everyday life, the domestic space is understood as this ersatz public sphere free from state power.⁴² Not only this, but as state power was internalized, the citizen's perceived ability to construct the home as an ersatz public sphere provided de facto stability to the SED-regime in that the rational criticisms of a true public sphere were conducted in such a way and employing language that proved acceptable to the regime and without providing a real challenge to the structures of the state as a result.⁴³ Employing Habermas' *civil privatism* as a foundation, Marc Morjé Howard argues elsewhere that everyday experiences of life under Soviet-style regimes, including the GDR, caused citizens to develop "organizationally passive and detached" from the regime that exercised power over them.⁴⁴ As such, the transformation of the private into the ersatz public sphere essentially politicized the home. As this transformative process was unofficially permitted by the regime, the ersatz public sphere and the perceived and incomplete freedoms permitted through the domestic practices of *Eigen-Sinn* were themselves constructions of Foucault's governmentality.⁴⁵

Often this ersatz public sphere was expressed in terms of the East German practice of the *Eingaben*. Paul Betts points out that citizens of the GDR were afforded the legal right to

⁴¹ Betts, *Within Walls*, 173-4.

⁴² A "normal" everyday life is here assumed to mean the ability to live under the assumption that the state was not always watching or else to act in such a way that practices of self-censorship became normal in and of themselves.

⁴³ Fulbrook, "Normalisation," 1-16.

⁴⁴ Marc Morjé Howard, *The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 153.

⁴⁵ Although these practices were prevalent during the Ulbricht era of GDR history, this became more the case after Honecker's rise to power in 1971 as outward demonstrations of state loyalty grew more important and unofficial SED policy compared to the necessity of the dyed-in-the-wool socialists and the significance of developing the socialist personality of earlier decades.

complain about problems of the state through these petitions as this right was written in Article 3 of the GDR's 1949 Constitution. Ulbricht argued that this right provided a binding force between state and citizen, but more properly it provided citizens a legal outlet through which they could engage with the state in a way non-threatening to SED power.⁴⁶ This right was not exclusive to the GDR, but stemmed from a pre-Soviet Russian tradition whereby peasants believed that the leadership was on their side and if the leadership knew the plight of peasants then surely their problems would be solved.⁴⁷ This practice continued into post-revolutionary Russia and, arguably, found its greatest expression in the Soviet Union during the reign of Joseph Stalin.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, the *Eingaben* in GDR society constituted one of the most prolific and common means of constructing this ersatz public sphere and giving citizens the perception of voice in socialist society.⁴⁹ Similarly, this served to firmly associate the ersatz public sphere in East Germany with the domestic and the feminization of space as the act of writing these petitions established the home as the site of exchange between the authors of these *Eingaben*, their neighbours, and friends sharing similar complaints.⁵⁰ This effectively followed Habermas'

⁴⁶ Betts, *Within Walls*, 174.-5.

⁴⁷ Leonid Heretz, "Petitions from Peasants," in *From Supplication to Revolution: A Documentary History of Imperial Russia*, ed. Gregory Freeze (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 170-9. This implied that the problems experienced by the citizens were not the fault of the leadership, as the leadership was obviously and apparently on the side of the peasantry, but the fault of petty bureaucrats. This made the practice of *Eingaben* completely in line with socialist society and the Party line of loyalty and participation of the socialist personality as integral to the continuation of the state.

⁴⁸ Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 175-89.

⁴⁹ Betts, *Within Walls*, 175.

⁵⁰ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Richard Howard and Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1957), 58. In "Novels and Children," Barthes argues that the domestic is a space from which men, and thus the state as the masculinised political and public sphere, are absent. Yet, pressure is exerted on the domestic by men on all sides. This suggests that within the domestic, the individual is free, relatively speaking, so long as they acknowledge the authority of the state and their obligations to that authority. Interactions with the state are permitted from within the domestic so long as they are subordinated to those authorities and obligations. Hilary Chute also suggests that comics themselves were feminized not only because of their association with low-brow and mass culture/entertainment, but because of the space they occupied and in which they were consumed, regardless of the masculinisation of definite genres within the space of comics. Hilary L. Chute, *Graphic Women: Life Narratives & Contemporary Comics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 9-10.

definition of the public sphere through this transformation and utilization of the private in the construction of these letters critical of state power as often expressed through material concerns.⁵¹

It was, however, this notion of *Eigen-Sinn* that not only permitted the construction of the domestic as a space free from the state and thus perceptibly “free” to foster the ersatz public sphere, but provided dialogue and negotiation with the state power arguably left at the door. Although coined by Alf Lüdtke and Thomas Lindenberger toward the late 1980s and mid-1990s, *Eigen-Sinn*, more than simply doing things one’s own way, implied the ability to marginalize state structures of power in order to make meanings of everyday life in a way that expressed the normalcy of those meanings.⁵² In effect, this marginalization of official power is the process of normalization discussed elsewhere by Fulbrook. Of equal importance to this, and cited from Saunders above, is the effect *Eigen-Sinn* has upon Gaus’ construction of the “niche society.” The niche is an effective tool in describing the lived experience of citizens in the German Democratic Republic. However, this same niche often tends to ignore the realities of state authority and power beyond their initial purposes of atomizing and controlling society, although there is some debate surrounding the perceived atomization of East German society.⁵³ Saunders suggests that *Eigen-Sinn* nuances the niche in that it comes to account for this exercise of state power. As a result, *Eigen-Sinn* recognizes the constructed nature of the domestic space and the entire notion of privacy in the GDR. This allows East Germans the pretense that the regime does

⁵¹ Betts, *Within Walls*, 173-192; Fulbrook, *People’s State*, 269-88; and Stitzel, 253-86.

⁵² Alf Lüdtke, “Wo blieb die ‘rote Glut?’ Arbeitererfahrungen und deutscher Faschismus,” in *Alltagsgeschichte, Zur Rekonstruktion historischer Erfahrungen und Lebensweisen*, ed. Alf Lüdtke (Frankfurt aM: Campus Verlag, 1989), 224-82; Thomas Lindenberger, “Alltagsgeschichte und ihr möglicher Beitrag zu einer Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR,” in *Die Grenzen der Diktatur: Staat und Gesellschaft in der DDR*, ed. Richard Bessel and Ralph Jessen (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 298-325.

⁵³ Konrad H. Jarausch, “Care and Coercion: The GDR as Welfare Dictatorship,” in *Dictatorship as Experience: Toward a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, ed. Konrad H. Jarausch, trans. Eve Duffy (New York: Beghahn, 1999), 47-69 and Port, 87-94.

not transgress the boundaries of the home despite the presence of television, radio, print publications, and other forms of mass media. This is to say nothing of the presence of the Stasi, the FDJ, the trade union (FDGB), or even the women's league (DFD) pervading the home in an ethereal, if not a very real, way. But the notion of *Eigen-Sinn* suggests an approach to daily life that marginalizes that state power, negotiating the citizen's place within East German society with a supposed voice provided by engagement with the ersatz public sphere. In this way, *Eigen-Sinn*, effectively allowing citizens to engage with the regime through means permissible to both the citizen and the state, proposes a negotiation between a Foucauldian notion of power and Habermas' conceptualization of the public sphere, albeit one necessarily transposed onto a landscape void of a liberal bourgeoisie. *Eigen-Sinn* is thus an understanding of state power that engages with that power through the ersatz public sphere while at the same time acknowledging that public sphere as another unofficial institution of that same power.

Comics and *Kinderzeitschriften*, as with much mass media and entertainment in the GDR, thus occupied a problematic middle-ground between the state and the child-readers for whom they were largely intended. As an aspect of the FDJ's publishing regime and an unofficial extension of the state's educational systems, the comics medium suffered from the influence of its western forebears. The FDJ wanted to publish comics largely because of their popularity with children on both sides of the postwar ideological divide. In order to ensure their own popularity, however, the publishing regime needed comics that, for all intents and purposes, mirrored their western counterparts. The Berlin Wall made possible the necessary reorientations in the East German comic market to allow the inclusion of education and ideology to a greater degree, but was never able to indoctrinate the publications as much as the FDJ preferred, particularly with

regard to *Mosaik von Hannes Hegen*.⁵⁴ At the same time, children consumed their comics in terms largely similar to how they previously understood western publications prior to the 1955 regulations. As such, the children as consumers negotiated what was allowable within the pages of those publications. This is not to suggest that children were able to remove ideology from their comics. Rather, the ways in which children consumed comics and *Kinderzeitschriften* suggested that, although the ideology and education was understood and the comics themselves were considered as part of the socialist education, children's desires recognized comics as private entertainment regardless of the state's intention to provide a socialist alternative to the western *Schund und Schmutz* (trash and filth).

The tensions at work between those in power, here understood as both the producers of comics and the critics of their efforts, and those upon whom that power is directed, the comics' consumer, will be examined through notions of power and privacy and the negotiation that necessarily occurs between the two. Specifically, it is my hope here to bring a Foucauldian understanding of power into conversation with Jürgen Habermas' conceptualization of the Public Sphere (*Offentlichkeit*). While these two concepts are not typically known to coexist, largely as a result of differing notions on the extent of power and surveillance particularly with regard to a perceived totalitarian state in which there is arguably no division between the public and the private, both were observable in the GDR if we look through the conceptual lens of *Eigen-Sinn*. According to German historian Jan Palmowski, *Eigen-Sinn* is important in this regard as it

⁵⁴ The comic created in 1955 by Johannes Hegenbarth and featuring the *Digedag* characters was officially titled *Mosaik von Hannes Hegen* (this being Hegenbarth's pseudonym). This title remained in place until the introduction of the *Abrafaxe* characters, developed by Lothar Dräger and Lona Reitschel, at the beginning of 1976. At this point, the comic was officially renamed simply *Mosaik*. Throughout this dissertation, I use the title *Mosaik* to refer to both the *Digedags* and the *Abrafaxe* eras, though not interchangeably. When it is necessary to draw distinction between the two for the purposes of analysis, I revert back to the titling employed by *Verlag Junge Welt*. It should also be noted that Hegenbarth assumed the official title of the comic to be *Mosaik* as, following his departure, he sued for use of the word itself as a recognizably associated and copyrighted aspect of his comic publications.

creates historians who are “concerned not just with structural relationships, but also with the individual meanings attached to GDR life in its diversity.” As such, *Eigen-Sinn* provides us a framework “sufficiently flexible to integrate research into very different aspects of life in the GDR,” that often appear at odds with one another if not entirely contradictory.⁵⁵ In this, and particularly in regard to the history of the GDR, that which occurs within the private sphere, the domestic, and the *Alltag* becomes the central focus which negotiates how modes of power affect and are affected by the everyday. Power enacted by the regime remains very real in this analytic framework, but is marginalized by the interactions within the East German *Alltag* and the interactions between the everyday and those modes of governmental power. Moreover, this approach explores the often tumultuous relationships between citizens, the state and its power structures, and how perceived permissiveness allowed withdrawal from the state at the same moment that those actions sustained and perpetuated the SED-regime.⁵⁶

Chapter One examines a proposal for and the implementation of changes to the comic magazine *Atze*, submitted to the Central Committee of the FDJ in 1966 by then *Chefredakteur* (Editor-in-Chief) Wolfgang Altenburger. Of the two dedicated comics in the GDR, *Atze* was a distant second in terms of both quality and sales to the more popular and consistent *Mosaik*. While *Mosaik* was permitted, within reason, to follow trends borrowed from Western European and American comics, Altenburger suggested changes to *Atze* that would not only improve the overall quality of the publication, but also bring the comic in line with the ideological and educational objectives emerging in children’s literature at the end of the 1950s. This proposal spoke to larger trends in East German children’s literature that attempted to elevate the mediums, both literature and comics more generally, to compete with the best adult literature being

⁵⁵ Palmowski, 494 & 496.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 494-7.

produced in the socialist state as well as with the literary canons of the western world.

Moreover, this chapter argues that trends in the West, notably the anti-comics campaigns of the 1950s which was a conflict over cultural power in East Germany just as it was in America and Western Europe, revealed flaws in the East German comics industry at large.⁵⁷ As such, the East German variation on the anti-comics campaign highlighted the importance and the potential of these types of *Kinderzeitschriften* for the FDJ and the GDR state.

The second chapter turns attention toward notions of power projected through the comics and *Kinderzeitschriften* themselves and how the FDJ employed the interests of the child-readers themselves within those constructions of power. Examined through the lens of Fulbrook's Weberian conceptualization of benign power and Foucault's own governmentality thesis, this chapter expands upon the arguments made in the first chapter through an extended analysis of the operation of power constructions in *Atze* and the rationale for the comic's new profile proposed in the mid-1960s. The chapter then turns to *Mosaik*, specifically the *Weltraum*- (outer-space) and *Amerika-serie* as stories constructed to capture the cultural zeitgeist of their respective decades while turning their backdrops toward a decidedly ideological approach to story-telling without sacrificing the perceived entertainment value that drew children to the publications initially. This dual approach, however, created tensions between the child-readers and the educational and publishing regimes as children understood these stories in terms arguably different than those intended by the FDJ. That said, the FDJ invoked many of these elements and the societal zeitgeists that accompanied them again in the early-1980s, hosting a meet-up between the audience and the creators of one of these publications (*Frösi*, in this case). As such, the FDJ attempted to utilize comics and the culture created around those

⁵⁷ Wright, 87.

Kinderzeitschriften to generate the perception of youth enthusiasm toward the state as a legitimization of East German socialism.

Chapter Three picks up on threads left from the previous chapter, bringing the comics as a construction of state power into the home as the home itself constituted the ersatz public sphere. In doing so, this chapter examines the transformation of these comics from the constructions of authority that the FDJ and the publisher, *Verlag Junge Welt*, intended them to be, to sites of criticisms made by the child-readers through their understanding of what these comics meant to them as consumers and as citizens within the East German state. Through an analysis of letters written to the FDJ's publishing regime and reports drafted by the publisher to examine trends within the letters themselves, this chapter argues that comics created sites of negotiation between the state and the readership over whom the state enacted its modes of control. This does not suggest that the child-readership consciously ignored or was oblivious to those modes of authority, but instead created their own meanings and significations across these publications. In essence, within the domestic space and the perceived ersatz public sphere constructed therein, the child-readership created comics as sites of *Eigen-Sinn* or spaces in which children enacted and experienced their own definitions of childhood and belonging in the socialist state. This practice enabled children access to a critical evaluation of the promises made to them by the FDJ and a direct confrontation with the FDJ's perceptions and definitions of childhood within socialism.

Chapter Four brings back the stories of *Mosaik* and *Pats Reiseabenteuer* (appearing in *Atze*) and their dependence upon western comic book tropes and the visual language of travel as a means of constructing an image of the GDR and of eastern European socialism in a form easily digestible to the children reading these comics. While comics permitted the readership the

opportunity for the “inner emigration” that the regime considered so problematic with citizens consuming West German media and culture, it also allowed the FDJ to demonstrate an idealized socialist state as means of generating within youth the socialist personality and the participation with the structures and constructions of the state necessary for the GDR’s perpetuation. Moreover, and by necessity, depictions of travel in these comics and the required ideological objectives of the state represented socialism through western tropes. While arguing in favour of the superiority of East German socialism, travel and the use of these western tropes often led to the agents of both socialism and capitalism becoming virtually indistinguishable as they enacted their will over others. At the same time and in the context of a supposed historically accurate past, travel in these comics did not actively address issues of German division or of the GDR as an enclosed society, effacing the lived reality of East German citizens. Rather, comics attempted to idealize socialism in spite of these perceived failings. This chapter thus suggests that comics and the representation of the socialist experience through travel created a window into the possibilities and the potentials of European Communism that life in the divided and walled state could never hope to achieve. As a result, and despite the stories’ attempts to generate enthusiasm toward the state and socialism, these stories had the opposite effect by building unrealistic expectations among the children reading these comics.

The fifth and final chapter then looks toward the problems that developed between Hannes Hegen, creator of the popular comic *Mosaik*, and the publishers of these comics from 1955 until his departure from the *Mosaik-Kollektiv* in 1975. Initially hired to develop a comic that would provide a counterpoint, a socialist alternative, to the American comic books that accompanied American GIs during the Second World War and flooded the German marketplace in the aftermath, Hegen created the *Digedags* as direct competition to the American funny

animal genre embodied by Disney comics published by Gold Key.⁵⁸ This aspect was important and necessary in order for *Mosaik* to carve its own niche in the marketplace of the mid-1950s. Following the Bitterfeld authors and publishers conference in 1959 and the subsequent implementation of the *Bitterfelder Weg* as a new direction for East German literature, dedicated to the depiction of the lived experiences of average workers in the socialist state, known as Socialist Realism made popular in the Soviet Union during Stalin's rule, Hegen came under attack by the FDJ's educational regime. Although it was the adherence to western tropes that popularized *Mosaik* upon its debut in December 1955, by the turn of the decade those same conventions were charged with a decided disregard for historical accuracy, educational value, and a lack of ideological content that proved harmful to the development of the socialist personality among the publication's readership. Essentially, *Mosaik* was charged with too closely emulating the *Schund und Schmutz* through which it originated. As such, this chapter explores Hegen's changing relationship with the editorial regime and the tensions that developed in the gap distancing the two. Here, Hegen exercised his own control over the publication and the direction of the stories despite interference from the FDJ. Although this dynamic ultimately proved too much, forcing Hegen's departure, during his tenure the publication's popularity provided Hegen the space necessary to resist, if only marginally, the power constructions of the state. While this arguable and limited opposition is not intended to speak to larger conversations of resistance in the GDR, it is demonstrative of trends developed throughout this paper. Specifically, it addresses the benign and malign machinations of FDJ and SED-state authority

⁵⁸ Wright, 31. Bradford Wright suggests that at least 35 000 copies of Superman were received and read by American GIs every month during WWII. American comics thus became identifiably if not synonymous with GI culture during the war. This led to assumptions by European observers as evidence of "American immaturity and unsophistication."

and the abilities of the individual, or children as a group, to carve their own spaces within and make their own meanings of East German socialism and socialist society.

Taken as a whole, this dissertation questions power as a construction in publications for children and as a means of conditioning those child-readers to act in ways rendered acceptable to the perpetuation of the East German socialist state. It is hoped that in demonstrating the state's apparent benign methods of coercion, the child-reader's own resistance to or acceptance of those *Kinderzeitschriften* will be made clear as letter columns, reader taste and consumption patterns made East German comic books sites of dialogue between children and the state. This dissertation thus examines the records of the Free German Youth and the *Thälmann* Pioneers pertaining to the publications discussed within, the publishers, and the educational system specifically where it targets these comics as part of its own ideological agenda. Reader letters provide excellent opportunity to penetrate reader impressions and the successes or failures of FDJ campaigns to construct the socialist personality. While these letters are abundant, most are now in the hands of private corporations, restricting access by scholars.⁵⁹ To overcome this restriction, I have used those letters published by the regime and present in reports made to the FDJ's Central Committee. Though this indicates a mediation of those sources, they are nonetheless valuable in assessing what the regime considered important in terms of reader interest and taste and how those fit with the state-socialist agenda. In the examination of FDJ and Pioneer records relating to the readership, and unable to question that readership directly, we can interrogate how that readership affected the publications and the state's inclusion of ideology. This dissertation also looks to the comics themselves, *Mosaik* and *Atze* and to a lesser

⁵⁹ Führer and Ross, 15. In their introduction to *Mass Media, Culture and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany*, Führer and Ross discuss problems associated with a history of the East German press due to the processes of privatization in the early 1990s and the reluctance of the inheritors of those records to open their archives to researchers.

extent the magazine *Frösi*, across the divide in socialist representation created by the *Bitterfelder Weg* and the construction of the Berlin Wall from the mid-1950s to the mid- to late-1960s as means of demonstrating the limitations imposed by both the readership and western influence on the state's ability to publish this ideological material in a supposedly insular society. Moreover, *Mosaik* and *Atze* allow for larger comparisons and discussions of western influence in the GDR as these comics came into being specifically as a result of the availability of similar western publications and at a time when questions of the potentially harmful effects of comics on children's development infiltrated the GDR from Western Europe and the United States.

Conceptually, this dissertation approaches these comics from perspectives that are typically opposed to one another. As suggested by Foucault's governmentality thesis, these comics are indeed constructions of state power and were considered by the state as part of their influence over segments of the East German population. At the same time, these publications, when taken up by the child-readership, were not subject to the same understandings and intentions of the regime as they were negotiated through the child's *Eigen-Sinn*. Although these publications remained firmly entrenched in Foucauldian concepts specifically because the regime allowed comics to be reinterpreted by the readership, they were also sites of the ersatz public sphere that East Germans associated with notions of privacy and the home. It is thus important that these comics are recognized as spaces of intersection between constructions of state power and of the children who read those comics as this constituted a dialogue regarding aspects of citizenship, obligation, and childhood under the SED regime.

Chapter One.

***Kultur*, Developing the Socialist Personality, and the Campaigns against Comics as a Western Medium in the SED-State.¹**

Originally the heirs to the Victorian era's penny dreadful in England, comics have endured much criticism regarding the purportedly harmful aspects of both their content and their quality. In the United States, this crusade against comics came to a head in 1954 with the publication of Fredric Wertham's influential though hopelessly unscientific text, *Seduction of the Innocent*, the Supreme Court Subcommittee hearings on juvenile delinquency with their focus on the impact of comics on young minds, and the comics industry's voluntary formation and adoption of the Comics Code Authority. According to John A. Lent, the anti-comics crusade in Europe, however, mounted little action as research proved inconclusive and a connection between comics and juvenile delinquency was never concretely established. By 1953, then, the campaign in Western Europe was losing steam as the British Communist Party came on board to back the American Wertham and other educators, politicians, and medical professionals who protested the medium.²

Nonetheless, in and around the same time as in the United States, Europe underwent its own campaign against the comics medium, albeit for reasons sometimes different and at odds with those found in the US. French law established the Commission for the Oversight and Control of Publications for Children and Adolescents in an attempt to control the influx of American comics popularized during the interwar (1919-1939) and postwar (1945 on) years and

¹ This chapter appeared in an earlier form as "Reimagining GDR Comics: *Kultur*, Children's Literature and the Socialist Personality," *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 5, no. 3 (September 2014): 245-56.

² John A. Lent, "Introduction: The Comics Debate Internationally: Their Genesis, Issues, and Commonalities," in *Pulp Demons: International Dimensions of the Postwar Anti-Comics Campaign*, ed. John A. Lent (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1999), 16 & 29-30.

encourage a national cultural identity among France's youth.³ Likewise, the 1950s and 1960s saw the development of an anti-comics campaign in the both the West German Federal Republic (FRG) and the East German Democratic Republic (GDR). Despite the existence of German comics in the 1920s and 1930s and a history of German comic strips extending as far back as 1865's *Max und Moritz*, Goran Jovanovic and Ulrich Koch suggest that comics in the postwar were considered wholly foreign to Germany and of American import, though possessing a morality comparable to the popular Grimm fairy tales.⁴ Like their American occupiers, the West German comics publishers adopted a voluntary Auditing Board similar in both form and function to, though arguably more stringent than, the American Comic Code Authority. Socialist East Germany, meanwhile, adopted the *Verordnung zum Schutz der Jugend* (Regulation for the Protection of Youth) on 10 April 1955. As with both the French law and the West German Auditing Board before it in varying degrees, the East German law underlined the difference between High and Low Culture in children's literature, highlighting the educational and moral value of comics while curbing the spread of western (both American and capitalist) influence.⁵

The East German law, for all intents and purposes, banned the sale and possession of comics in the GDR at the same moment that the Socialist Unity Party (SED) and its associated mass youth organization, the Free German Youth (FDJ), launched the first socialist alternative to these western comics. This timing should not be viewed as coincidental. The launch of *Atze* in April 1955 and of *Mosaik* later that same year was a direct response to the popularity of American and West German comics in the GDR. It was not enough, however, to simply provide

³ Richard Ivan Jobs, "Tarzan Under Attack: Youth, Comics, and Cultural Reconstruction in Postwar France," *French Historical Studies* 26, no. 4 (Fall 2003): 688-9.

⁴ Goran Jovanovic and Ulrich Koch, "The Comics Debate in Germany: Against Dirt and Rubbish, Pictorial Idiotism, and Cultural Analphabetism," in *Pulp Demons: International Dimensions of the Postwar Anti-Comics Campaign*, ed. John A. Lent (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1999), 98-9 and Lent, 21.

⁵ Reinhard Pfeiffer, *Von Hannes Hegen bis Erich Schmitt: Lexikon der Karikaturisten, Presse- und Comic-Zeichner der DDR* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf Verlag, 1998), 20-1.

a socialist alternative to those comics found just across the inner-German border as the SED regime and the FDJ soon came to realize. The initial phase of the anti-comics campaign in East Germany, an extension of currents and trends moving throughout and imposed on youth culture across Europe and North America, rejected the perceived capitalist content of Walt Disney's "funny animal" comics and the violence of EC's (Entertaining Comics) crime and horror comics as symptomatic of fascist and imperialist western society. This reaction had a causal effect on East German comics as a domestic industry. The second wave of the anti-comics campaign in East Germany, as I consider it here for the purposes of this chapter, attacked the content and quality of these socialist comics as insufficient to properly educate and socialize the third to seventh grade children for whom they were intended.⁶ By the early 1960s, then, as happened in France following the introduction of the Commission for the Oversight and Control of Publications for Children and Adolescents (1949) and in the United States after the Supreme Court Subcommittee hearings in 1955, East German parents, educators, and political authorities felt it necessary to address the educational content, or lack thereof, found in both *Atze* and *Mosaik*.

As such, on 22 July 1966, Wolfgang Altenburger, editor of *Mosaik*, submitted a report for a new direction and conceptualization for *Atze*, the comic magazine of the *Ernst Thälmann* Young Pioneers published by *Verlag Junge Welt*. This report proposed improvements to the overall content, quality, and circulation of the magazine, raising standards in both the art and in the stories being told. This addressed complaints that the comics magazine, as happened with *Mosaik* earlier in the decade, was "too flat" in terms of its socialist content and what educational material did appear was largely incomprehensible due to a poor dynamic between the scripts and

⁶ BArch DY 24/1581, "Konzeption für das neue Profil der Bilderzeitschriften 'Atze'," 7.

the illustrations of each comic serial.⁷ Since its launch in 1955, *Atze* was a small, eight-page anthology, normally containing two or three different stories in each issue. These stories were then anchored by the *Fix und Fax* comic created, written, and drawn by Jürgen Kieser. Part of the “funny animal” genre of comics popularized in West Germany by Walt Disney, specifically *Donald Duck* and *Uncle Scrooge* by Carl Barks, and borrowing a naming convention from the West German comic *Fix und Foxi* created by Rolf Kauka, these stories followed the adventures of two anthropomorphic mice. Additionally, and as was symptomatic of East German consumer culture more broadly, *Atze* suffered from paper shortages. These shortages caused an erratic publication schedule. Altenburger’s report, submitted to the Central Committee Secretariat of the FDJ in July and discussed in session on 2 August 1966, sought to rectify these deficiencies, introducing historical educational comics, such as *Pats Reiseabenteuer* (Pat’s Travel Adventures, written by Altenburger and second in popularity only to *Fix und Fax*), and overtly ideological comics featuring the biographies of German and Russian socialist leaders and the heroicization of the socialist states into *Atze*’s lighter traditional fare. By addressing the key concerns of party leaders and educators, Altenburger’s proposal for *Atze*’s new profile attempted to reinvent the comics magazine as a serious and viable publication for children, filling a gap in the children’s literature fostered by the regime and facilitating the development of socialism among the state’s youngest readers.

First appearing nearly eight months after *Atze*, Hannes Hegen’s (the pen name of Johannes Hegenbarth) *Mosaik* underwent its own growing pains during the 1960s. Coinciding approximately with SED leader Walter Ulbricht’s 1963 address, “Youth of Today—Masters of Tomorrow. Trust and Responsibility for Youth” (more commonly known as Ulbricht’s Youth

⁷ Gerd Lettkemann and Michael F. Scholz, “Schuldig ist schließlich jeder...der Comics besitzt, verbreitet oder nicht einziehen läßt” *Comics in der DDR—die Geschichte eines ungeliebten Mediums (1945/49-1990)* (Berlin: MOSAIK Steinchen für Steinchen Verlag, 1994), 49.

Communiqué) and the period of relative relaxation in the sphere of youth policy that accompanied it, *Mosaik* was largely allowed to continue in a form that was not as overtly ideological as *Atze*. This permissiveness has led to assertions in the post-unification period that *Mosaik* was an ideologically free zone.⁸ While this was by no means the case, what I have termed here to be the second wave of the anti-comics campaign in East Germany (the first culminating in the *Verordnung zum Schutz der Jugend* and the introduction of *Atze* and *Mosaik*) struck the more popular of the two comics in a fashion decidedly different than the effects on *Atze*. Although subject to the same desired increase in quality and bridging the perceived divide between story and art that would later be leveled against *Atze*, *Mosaik* was able to provide the socialist ideological content necessary to appease the magazine's critics while that content was written as subtext to the adventures of the *Digedag* characters. The obfuscation of ideological content allowed *Mosaik* to flourish in a way that was unavailable to *Atze* under Altenburger's guidance. While *Atze* was burdened by the overt ideology plugged into its content, *Mosaik*'s quiet use of ideology in its stories allowed the comic to appeal to children's sense of adventure and provide both a metaphorical and literal escape from the GDR.

This chapter explores these changes wrought across the pages of *Atze* and *Mosaik* during the 1960s, the criticisms that forced the hands of the creators and editors of those comics, and how the FDJ and the SED regime understood childhood development and the power of comics as a form of children's literature. To achieve this, this chapter closely examines Altenburger's 1966 report on the new profile of *Atze* and the concept report for *Mosaik*'s *Amerika-Serie* (America Series, published July 1969-June 1974) approved by the Central Committee of the *Ernst Thälmann* Pioneers in October 1968. The first wave of the East German anti-comics campaign

⁸ Dolores L. Augustine, *Red Prometheus: Engineering and Dictatorship in East Germany, 1945-1990* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), 230.

in the 1950s, like its counterparts elsewhere in Europe and the United States, was in part the result of the SED leadership's backlash against the influence of western, specifically American, comics on East German children more so than it was against the comics themselves. The second wave of this campaign in the early and mid-1960s, then, argued that this socialist alternative to western comics did little to foster the necessary socialist personality among children for the continued success of socialism in the GDR. This chapter argues that the anti-comics campaign that began in the United States and spread across Europe following the Second World War alerted the East German leadership to flaws in its own response to this western influence on children. This campaign and the changes mandated in the socialist magazines provided a means of addressing that imperialist influence without condemning the comics medium as a whole. The anti-comics campaign, as experienced in East Germany, came to understand the value of comics in their ability to target children as a consumer culture ravenous for graphic literature. At the same time, these comics prepared East German children for the FDJ's burgeoning children's literature and *Kinderkultur* that was, for the moment, well beyond their education and comprehension and for their ultimate inclusion as active participants in socialist society. Indeed, the comics published by *Verlag Junge Welt* were drawn into the ideological orbit of the FDJ's editorial regime as a mode of the GDR state's power structures. As discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, East German comics thus incorporated Foucauldian notions of governmentality in order to demonstrate state appropriate depictions of childhood and of the child's role in state socialism.

The Anti-Comics Campaign Internationally, Americanization, and the State.

In 1949, the French government founded the Commission for the Oversight and Control of Publications for Children. While Richard Ivan Jobs suggests that the anti-comics campaign in France was not specifically about comics per se, he argues that the flood of American comics in Europe following World War II created a perceived threat to French national identity and culture. As comics were understood by those in positions of authority to be exclusively made for and read by children, controlling what children read was a means by which the Commission shaped social and civic responsibility and morality among youth. This outlook provided for the future security of the state by raising children indoctrinated into the culture of the state.⁹ Similarly, in the early 1950s, West German parent and teacher groups considered American comics poor literature in terms of both aesthetics and ethics, citing the potential harm done to children through the violence and horror at the core of comics. More important perhaps, in their article “The Comics Debate in Germany,” Jovanovic and Koch argued that American comics served to internalize an American way of life and cultural patterns among West German youth. Like the GDR, West Germany was very much a state that broadly defined itself through *Kultur*.¹⁰ In the postwar, *Kultur* was “judged in terms of the educational effects and correct ethical attitude” resulting from the recent Nazi past.¹¹ The content of some American comics, such as the horror and crime comics published by EC that became the targets of anti-comics campaigns in the FRG and elsewhere, were considered un-German as the portrayal of violence in these comics was assumed to be an end unto itself. As a result of strict censorship controls, many West German publishers dropped violent American comic titles in favour of the “funny animal” books like Disney’s *Mickey Mouse* and *Donald Duck*, which were as popular in the West as

⁹ Jobs, 688-9.

¹⁰ Jovanovic and Koch, 93-8.

¹¹ Ibid, 98.

Mosaik was in the East. The juvenile nature of these stories earned comics a reputation for being literature intended only for children. As with their East German counterparts, the West German government condemned comics based on their perceived lack of artistic merit and thus applied broad censorships without mention of national identity, politics, or the recent war, but as transgressions of broader German *Kultur*.¹²

Nor was this backlash against comics limited to Europe, but had some of its most profound effects and ardent critics in the United States. Following the 1954 publication of *Seduction of the Innocent* by the German-American psychiatrist Dr. Fredric Wertham, the American comics industry created the Comics Code Authority as a self-policing organization similar to those set up in the FRG. The Authority used arguments related to aesthetics and morality in comics to side-step notions of political freedoms of speech.¹³ As happened in Western Europe and the GDR, the Comics Code was established, arguably, to combat the supposed rise in juvenile crime by frightening publishers into self-censorship.¹⁴ This moral body eliminated those comics that attempted to appeal to an older, more mature audience, particularly those books published by EC, under the assumption that all comics were read by children and should be acceptable to children as such.¹⁵ The result was the survival of diluted teen, romance, and superhero genres that preserved the gender and moral norms of 1950s America and, to borrow from Hillary Chute, prohibited any exciting content.¹⁶

¹² Ibid, 100-8.

¹³ Ibid, 105.

¹⁴ Jacqueline Danziger-Russell, *Girls and Their Comics: Finding a Female Voice in Comic Book Narrative* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2013), 17.

¹⁵ Mathew J. Pustz, *Comic Book Culture: Fanboys and True Believers* (Jackson: University of Mississippi, 1999), 65.

¹⁶ Fredrik Stroemberg, *Comic Art Propaganda: a Graphic History* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2010), 93 and Hillary L. Chute, *Graphic Women: Life Narrative & Contemporary Comics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 13.

The complaints surrounding comics in France, the FRG, and the GDR all resulted from the incursion of American comics into Europe following the war and the supposed threat these magazines represented to the national identity, culture, and future of each state as embodied by its youth. Whereas France and West Germany regulated comics in order to protect a perceived national culture (*Kultur*) regardless of children's desires as cultural consumers to purchase and read these magazines, the FDJ and the *Ernst Thälmann* Pioneers retooled the comics' genre and form so that it conformed to an East German understanding of *Kultur*, specifically the *Kinderkultur* developing through a state-sponsored children's literature.¹⁷

In his 1963 Youth Communiqué, Walter Ulbricht promoted the mobilization of GDR youth through the allowance of relative liberalizations in the area of youth policy in order to modernize the East German state. This policy failed two years later and by December 1965 many of those freedoms were reversed.¹⁸ As such, the implementation of ideological and educational content in the pages of *Atze* in 1966-7 may be understood merely as a return to the repressive forms of a perceived totalitarian regime. However, the way in which the comic was conceptualized in the report spoke to larger trends in East German youth culture. Like children's and youth literature in the GDR, in the 1960s comics were taken seriously by the regime in terms of their ability to influence East German children. As with books, the permanence of the comics medium afforded children the opportunity to repeatedly experience the content, particularly after long delays in the publishing schedule. This perception led the regime to acknowledge the ability of comics to convey the history of the labour movement and provide role models appropriate to children of the working class. The abilities of comics were indeed deemed

¹⁷ For more on the development of children as consumers and the relational impact of the comics industry, see Bradford W. Wright, *Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001).

¹⁸ Alan McDougall, "The Liberal Interlude: SED Youth Policy and the Free German Youth (FDJ), 1963-65," *Debatte* 9, no. 2 (2001): 154.

superior to that of either radio or television exactly due to the permanence of the medium, even if the potential of these publications was not yet realized prior to Altenburger's proposals.¹⁹ These comics were intended to mobilize children, preparing them for their membership in the FDJ and their active and responsible participation in socialist society more broadly. Through the anti-western, nationalist, and socialist education in the pages of *Atze*, Altenburger and the FDJ sought to politicize the youngest members of socialist society, creating in them the socialist personalities that bridged the individual and society.

As happened with states on the western side of the Iron Curtain during their own anti-comics campaigns, the SED regime employed overlapping models of childhood in order to define the potential dangers and benefits of comics in a socialist state. Children were concurrently viewed as the victims of harmful, imperialist influence, socialist citizens responsible for the construction of the state, vessels to be influenced and guided in his or her responsibilities, and pupils. At once, these models created tension, revealing the complexity of the state's understanding of childhood in the mid-1960s. The colourful and funny characters in comics provided examples of how the children should speak, act, and think socialist. The subtext of the stories made children aware of the class struggle and of the evils of capitalist imperialism. The incorporation of technology specific to the GDR in instructional comic strips and in the stories of *Mosaik* and *Atze*, argued elsewhere by both Eli Rubin and Dolores Augustine, ingrained not only the superiority of socialism but also a sense of pride in the GDR state more broadly.²⁰ Comics in East Germany functioned as educational primers marketed to those children just entering school, providing a foundation to be built upon in the classroom and meetings of the *Ernst Thälmann* Pioneers and FDJ youth groups. Although comics were only

¹⁹ BArch DY 24/1581, "Konzeption für das neue Profil der Bilderzeitschrift 'Atze,' 3.

²⁰ Eli Rubin, *Synthetic Socialism: Plastics & Dictatorship in the German Democratic Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 131-2, 145-6 and Augustine, 244.

tangentially connected to the FDJ's educational regime, this relationship attempted to reconcile the tensions created by those conflicting models of childhood and secure the future of socialism in the GDR by securing the youth for socialism. As a result, the noticeable deficiencies of the FDJ's publications for children (*Kinderzeitschriften*) led to the implementation of the changes contained in Altenburger's proposal if East German comics were to be a model of the SED-state's power over children and in their development.

In April 1955, then, the SED regime had implemented the *Verordnung zum Schutz der Jugend*. Although the FRG implemented its own laws on the protection of youth two years earlier, the East German law required parents and teachers to turn over confiscated material, *Schund-* and *Schmutzliteratur* (trash and filth literature) of which western comics were dominant, to the *Volkspolizei* (People's Police or Vopo) for destruction.²¹ These regulations were, however, largely adopted to stifle the spread of western influence throughout the GDR. The impact this influence had in real terms on the burgeoning national culture was, of course, inflated by the East German media. Therefore, it is difficult to know if the perceived hazards of westernization in general and western comics in particular were worse in the GDR than elsewhere.²² What can be accurately judged is the impact the SED regime and its regulations had on western comics in the socialist state. The *Verordnung zum Schutz der Jugend* eased the SED's ability to enforce stricter laws regarding the importation and distribution of western comics.²³ These included the Disney comics which were particularly popular in West Germany and Kauka's *Fix und Foxi*, created in the FRG in 1953 as part of an effort to create a domestic

²¹ Lettkemann, 13.

²² Pfeiffer, 20-1.

²³ Lettkemann, 13.

(West) German comic industry to compete with the postwar American imports.²⁴ As a result of the East German law, the word ‘comic’ took on a distinctly western connotation and became one of the markers that determined how *Schund-* and *Schmutzliteratur* were defined. Instead, *Atze* and *Mosaik*, when it finally appeared in December 1955, were called *Wort-Bildgeschichte*, literally word-picture stories or otherwise lumped together with the broader term, *Bilder-* or *Kinderzeitschriften* (picture or children’s magazines).²⁵

In 1966 when Wolfgang Altenburger submitted his report for the new profile of *Atze* to the FDJ Central Committee Secretariat, this literal rephrasing of what a comic was proved problematic to the earlier conception of the publication. Altenburger’s proposal suggested that, due to the comic form itself, the dialogue and narrative in *Atze* failed to fulfill their functions to adequately explain and enhance the images and make character motivations apparent. The text, Altenburger claimed, included many foreign words without explanation of their meaning. The irregular publishing schedule further hindered the ability of children to follow the continuing stories in *Atze*’s pages.²⁶ In 1955, these were largely non-issues. With the *Verordnung zum Schutz der Jugend* at least partially successful in monitoring what material crossed the inner-German border and what books East German children actually read, the earliest issues of *Atze*, and later *Mosaik*, provided a socialist alternative to western comics. Unfortunately, this alternative was not initially held to the same high standards set in other areas of East German children’s books through the development of a distinctive *Kinderkultur*. The comics published by the FDJ and its associated publishers were nominally socialist, but more often proved derivative of those same western comics against which they defined themselves.

²⁴ “‘Micky Maus’ vs. ‘Fix und Foxi’ fürs Leben gezeichnet,” *Spiegel Online*, http://einestages.spiegel.de/static/authoralbumbackground/3026/fuers_leben_gezeichnet.html (accessed 13 August 2013).

²⁵ Pfeiffer, 128 & 38.

²⁶ BArch DY 24/1581, “Konzeption für das neue Profil der Bilderzeitschrift ‘Atze,’ 3.

As was the case elsewhere, children's literature in the GDR was intended both to entertain and to educate, providing children with an intellectual challenge and stimulation. The GDR was, unsurprisingly, the first German state that took children's literature seriously as an art form with the ability and the obligation to mold East German children into the child-citizen required of state-socialism. Recognized for more than its ability to transmit ideological beliefs to the younger generation, children's literature was supposed to "mirror national progress," to borrow from Thomas DiNapoli, and as such operated in parallel to the socialist realist adult literature emerging from the East German state.²⁷ Children's literature provided direction to its readership, or so was the objective, creating a closer connection between the material children read and the society in which they lived. This relationship resulted in a literature that glorified themes of socialist heroism, turning to anti-fascism and anti-war as Cold War tensions increased with the Federal Republic throughout the 1950s.²⁸ And although the content of these children's books was controlled to varying degrees by the FDJ, their publisher *Verlag Neues Leben*, and the SED regime, J.D. Stahl suggests that active support for the production and authorship of content for children led to the development of a children's literature "officially committed to high artistic standards, humanism, internationalism, and a sense of class duty" that was hard to come by elsewhere.²⁹ Not only did this approach introduce children's literature, and comics by default into the fold of the FDJ's authority, it also provided for the editorial regime's penetration of the child's leisure time.

Long considered to be the successors of the salacious penny-dreadful in Britain and of picture books such as *Struwwelpeter* and *Kasperlgraf* in nineteenth century Germany,

²⁷ Thomas DiNapoli, "Thirty Years of Children's Literature in the German Democratic Republic," *German Studies Review* 7, no. 2 (May 1984): 282.

²⁸ Ibid, 281-9.

²⁹ J.D. Stahl, "Children's Literature and the Politics of the Nation State," *Children's Literature* 20 (1992): 197.

unfortunately comics continued to suffer throughout Europe and North America from reputations of being diversionary at best or, at worst, actively harmful to childhood development.³⁰ In his exploration of the comics medium, Scott McCloud demonstrates readers' subconscious understanding of the "gutters," those spaces left intentionally blank between comic panels, as a continuation of movement and action through a process he refers to as "closure." Through this act, the depictions of sex, violence, and death for which comics became notorious in 1940s and 1950s America and Western Europe occurred largely in the imaginations of their audiences who were dominantly perceived to be male children.³¹ While the connection between comics and the imagination is certainly an important one to be made and will be discussed in later chapters with regard to comics and *Eigen-Sinn*, a more pressing concern for the SED regime in this moment, was the counter-revolutionary nature of western comics and the danger they posed to (East) German *Kultur* (here understood as High-culture inherent to nineteenth century notions of Germanness and Germany itself as a nation of culture).

Looking back on German and Russian writers and composers such as Goethe, Beethoven, and Tolstoy, the FDJ implored East Germany's brightest artists to employ the old sources of *Kultur* to "lay the cornerstone" of a new literary canon, particularly in the areas directed toward youth, "in the service of life, freedom, and progress."³² Blaming western comics for the rise of crime in both East and West Germany, a complaint common throughout the anti-comics campaigns of the 1950s and 1960s, and for engendering militarism and imperialism among GDR youth, the regime considered western comics an imperialist weapon and mode of western

³⁰ Martin Barker, *Comics, Ideology, Power and the Critics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), 8 and Lent, 21.

³¹ Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (New York: Harper, 1993), 66-7.

³² Alan L. Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth: Historical Mythology and Youth Propaganda in the German Democratic Republic, 1945-1989* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 51.

governmental authority, poisoning East German children.³³ As such, the FDJ ironically adopted a middle-class conception of *Kultur*, drawing a clear distinction between High and Low art. This contrast was combined with socialist anti-Americanism and postwar German anti-militarism to express both the need for a distinctly socialist children's literature and a rejection of the western comic book form.³⁴ With the implementation of the *Verordnung zum Schutz der Jugend* in 1955, the GDR virtually, though not entirely, eliminated the threat posed to children by western comics, both American and Western European (*Fix und Foxi*, *Tintin*, and *Asterix*, all of which were popular in West Germany). Even as the *Ernst Thälmann* Pioneers' *Verlag Junge Welt* and the FDJ's *Verlag Neues Leben* respectively introduced *Atze* and *Mosaik* later that same year, East German comics languished as counter-revolutionary pulp, garnering little early support from the regime, comparable to the German folk and fairy tales that contradicted the precepts of socialist realist art.³⁵

Atze, Education, and the Connection between Comics and Children's Literature.

The author and publisher conference hosted in the Saxon-Anhalt chemical industrial town of Bitterfeld in April 1959 proved significant in later calls for the implementation of educational and state ideological contents in the pages of comics published by the FDJ's editorial regime.

This conference from which stemmed the artistic imperative that came to be known as the *Bitterfelder Weg*, sought to create linkages between the arts and the lived experiences of the

³³ As discussed in the Introduction, here authority is understood in the Weberian sense of power in that this "authority" is indicative of power structures that allow state power to be willingly followed as opposed to methods of coercion. This also points to the larger separation of state powers discussed throughout drawn from Mary Fulbrook's conceptual understanding of benign and malign diffusions of power and how they serve in the construction of what she dubs "the honeycomb state," which is itself founded upon these Weberian notions, and are employed and discussed at length in subsequent chapters. For further, see Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 235-249.

³⁴ Nothnagle, 49-57.

³⁵ DiNapoli, 297.

working class in state-socialism. As suggested elsewhere by Phil Leask, the conference was meant to encourage both industrial and agricultural workers to pick up the pen thus collapsing the perceived distance between the intelligentsia and the proletariat as two important segments of East German society. At the same time, requirements were leveled against established authors in their production of literary works, namely that these speak to the construction of socialism in the GDR and to the experiences of those workers themselves living in and building that socialist society.³⁶ In the realm of children's literature, Thomas Di Napoli goes on to state that this need to directly address society caused authors to directly interview children for their experience. After 1961, then, this also led to an expansion of the perceived differences between East and West Germany in children's literature with a decided turn toward solidarity within the Soviet Bloc.³⁷

In terms of the comics produced in the GDR, there is little evidence speaking to a connection to the *Bitterfelder Weg*. That said, the requirements of Socialist Realism play an important role in the argumentative threads picked up again in later chapters, particularly with regard to *Mosaik* and the understanding of Hannes Hegen and the *Mosaik-Kollektiv*'s roles as creators employed by *Verlag Junge Welt*. While the *Bitterfelder Weg* stressed the experience of the workers and the building of socialism, socialist realism, the directives taken up at the conference were largely directed toward the intelligentsia that wrote and worked with an arguable degree of autonomy from the regime. This was true at least until the creations of those

³⁶ Phil Leask, "Humiliation as a Weapon within the Party: Fictional and Personal Accounts," in *Becoming East German: Socialist Structures and Sensibilities after Hitler*, ed. Mary Fulbrooks and Andrew I. Port (New York: Berghahn, 2013), 243.

³⁷ DiNapoli, 291-3.

artists ran up against the state's unofficial censorship regime.³⁸ As far as those comics and other *Kinderzeitschriften* were concerned, there was a different notion of creative ownership and a system of story planning that exercised these imperatives from the comic-story's moment of creation. Comic writers and artists were not themselves understood in the same way as authors of "literature," thus underlining this bourgeois division between High and Low culture adopted in the GDR, but were contracted employees of the publisher. And by the mid-1970s, this perception of the comics' creators would create tensions between Hegen and *Verlag Junge Welt* over the production and use of *Mosaik* and the *Digedags*. As such, the *Bitterfelder Weg* impacted the creators themselves less obviously and less directly than it did the publishers of those magazines. One result of this was the hiring of a *Chefredakteur* (Editor-in-Chief) and an oversight body to chip away at Hegen's supposed independence in the creation of *Mosaik*.

Nonetheless, in the following year of 1960, overlapping forces in the East German political and literary spheres turned their attentions toward comics, specifically *Mosaik von Hannes Hegen*, raising the profile and visibility of the comics on par with other, arguably more legitimate forms of children's literature. Gaby Thompson-Wohlgemuth suggests that East German publishers and the FDJ acknowledged the significance of children's books as a didactic tool and attempted to raise children's literature to the same levels of artistry and quality as adult literature. In a classless society, it was assumed that children should be as involved in the construction of socialism as the previous generation. Ideological content delivered entertainingly thus encouraged children to participate in the construction of the socialist state.³⁹ In other words, entertainment in comics allowed children access to state-sanctioned political

³⁸ Censorship did not officially exist in the GDR as freedom of expression was written into the GDR's 1949 Constitution. That said, censorship existed at almost every level of production in the East German publishing industry, see Robert Darnton: *Censors at Work: How States Shaped Literature* (New York: Norton, 2014), 149-227.

³⁹ Gaby Thompson-Wohlgemuth, *Translation under State Control: Books for Young People in the German Democratic Republic* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 1-4.

messages. This in turn attuned the child-readers to the construction of socialism by associating their comic book heroes with the objectives and goals of the GDR state itself.

On 29 June 1959, then chairman of the *Ernst Thälmann* Pioneers, Robert Lehmann, wrote to the Central Committee of the FDJ. He requested approval for the transfer of publication of *Mosaik* from the publisher *Verlag Neues Leben* to *Verlag Junge Welt*. In Lehmann's estimation, the reason for this shift was that the comic was intended for children and as such needed to be tended by editors familiar and experienced with other children's newspapers and magazines in order to properly influence and intensify the socialist educational content.⁴⁰ Occupying the liminal space between image and text, the comics medium's use of pictures to tell a story and the perceived simplicity of the stories necessary to tell a story in such a manner caused the regime, and not only in the GDR but western Europe and North America as well, to understand comics, *Mosaik* included, only in terms of a children's audience.⁴¹ Lehmann's report suggested that by keeping the publication of *Mosaik* with *Verlag Neues Leben* and thus directing it toward an older youth audience, the strengths of the comic magazine as a propaganda tool missed its target audience as well as the expertise of those familiar with publishing material for the consumption of children. This is to say that *Mosaik*, and comics more generally, was ideal for the transmission of acceptable socialist ideology that was not only geared toward children, but in a manner and form eagerly sought after and digestible by its readership. More so than was possible with adult literature, the regime considered comics a more suitable delivery method for

⁴⁰ BArch DY 24/5790, "Abschrift, An den Zentralrat der Freien Deutschen Jugend Sekretariat Berlin, 29. Juni 1959."

⁴¹ For more on how those in positions of power constructed comics around an audience that was perceived to be exclusively composed of children, see Roger Sabin, *Comics, Comix & Graphic Novels: A History of Comic Art* (New York: Phaidon Press, 1996), 19-28; and in Germany, see Jovanovich and Koch, 107-13.

this socialist education as they connected visual and sensory recognition with linguistic expression.⁴²

When Altenburger submitted his report on the new profile of *Atze* to the leadership of the FDJ in July 1966, he wrote that “the focal points of the political-ideological education in *Atze* should make school children familiar with Marxism-Leninism and the revolutionary traditions of the German working class.” This approach was considered a necessary aspect of the greater development of an upbringing concerned with national citizenship among school children in which the whole of their personalities, knowledge, feelings, and abilities were mobilized toward the (SED) Party line.⁴³ In other words, East German comics became the battleground over which the struggle for national identity and citizenship in the 1960s was waged.

As editor of *Mosaik* by 1963, Altenburger adopted a diplomatic role between the *Mosaik-Kollektiv* (the group that officially succeeded Hegen for creative control of the magazine in 1961) and the FDJ, attempting to make the comic respectable in the view of the latter.⁴⁴ This occurred at the same time as the height of liberalism in youth policy influenced by Walter Ulbricht’s Youth Communiqué. Ulbricht’s address argued that modernization of the GDR could only occur through the mobilization of youth at all levels of society. The need for this active and consensual mobilization of young people required a degree of freedom in youth policy that was more than ideological rhetoric on paper.⁴⁵ Although readers considered *Mosaik* an ideology-free zone due to Altenburger’s negotiation between the creators and the regime, cited above, the influence of the Youth Communiqué served to soften that ideology, to make it more entertaining

⁴² BArch DY 24/1581, “Konzeption für das neue Profil der Bilderzeitschrift ‘Atze’,” 3.

⁴³ Ibid, 2.

⁴⁴ Lettkemann, 40.

⁴⁵ Dorothee Wierling, “The Hitler Youth Generation in the GDR: Insecurities, Ambitions, and Dilemmas,” in *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, ed. Konrad H. Jarausch (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999), 319.

and thus more palatable to its readership. However, by 12 November 1965, Helmut Müller, secretary of the Central Committee of the FDJ, pushed for the creation of more positive socialist heroes in the publications of *Verlag Neues Leben* and the associated presses of the FDJ and the *Ernst Thälmann* Pioneers, including *Verlag Junge Welt*.⁴⁶ As such, by the time of Altenburger's report on *Atze*, the battle for the engagement of East German children and youth was more overt and the continual need for responsible mobilization in society remained palpable, particularly given the shadow of the recently constructed Anti-Fascist Protection Rampart (the Berlin Wall) in August 1961 and the more recent embargo on western youth culture.

But Altenburger's report pointed to significant problems with the comic magazine, *Atze*, hindering the conveyance of important historical knowledge, political awareness, and the behavioural patterns necessary to become responsible socialist citizens. Mentioned in brief above, *Atze* fell victim to shortages in its required paper quota and as a result appeared on shelves only intermittently. Altenburger criticized this failure, complaining that the shortages fostered an environment in which the socialist message of the serialized stories became incomprehensible to the child-readership.⁴⁷ Of course this criticism says nothing of the same report's praise of comics' ability to provide children the opportunity to re-experience the content. Though Altenburger never comes to this same conclusion in order to strengthen his own position, the reason as to why comics were perceptibly better than television and film in conveying socialist educational content was precisely because stories were easily followed by rereading previous issues, refreshing the memory after long delays between printings. As East German television was still in its infancy and repeat broadcasts and home video were as yet uncommon if not unheard of, comics were a tool of the state providing a source of political

⁴⁶ McDougall, "Liberal Interlude," 151.

⁴⁷ BArch DY 24/1581, "Konzeption für das neue Profil der Bilderzeitschrift 'Atze'," 3.

entertainment for children only comparable to, though more accessible than children's books and literature.⁴⁸ Also at fault in the creation of entertaining and educational content were the language, the art, and the ways in which the two operated together.⁴⁹ It was mentioned elsewhere that Altenburger considered the language murky, failing in its "function to amplify and explain the images." At the same time, the art suffered from constant changes in processes and trends in graphic design and sometimes of the artists themselves, turning to the latest experiments in comic art and providing a lack of cohesion and consistency in the visual storytelling. Moreover, the report criticized the art as improperly depicting key figures and heroes of the German worker's movement. According to Altenburger, what these flaws meant for the comic and the conveyance of historical and political awareness more broadly was that the "motivations of the characters involved were only partially apparent" and inconsistency over the course of many installments of serialized stories made comprehension of those stories and their meanings difficult for young audiences.⁵⁰ Simply put, the lack of quality and investment on the part of the regime and the *Verlag Junge Welt* hurt the FDJ's message, its ability to encourage

⁴⁸ For more on the development of East German television and its use as a propaganda machine, or lack thereof, see Heather L. Gumbert, *Envisioning Socialism: Television and the Cold War in the German Democratic Republic* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014). Gumbert suggests that television was not initially used for propagandistic purposes, but was instead a mode of socialist realist art appealing to both the authorities and audiences by the 1960s. As such, it is unlikely that television would be understood for the educational and political purposes of the FDJ as were comics and *Kinderzeitschriften*.

⁴⁹ This interaction is imperative as it differentiates comics as a medium from all others. Comics are neither a visual art form, nor are they textual, but both coexist at the same time. Unlike painting as a strictly visual medium or literature as strictly textual, the interplay of both in the comic form is necessary for the creation of meaning in addition to and beyond that which is established by its independent parts. To fundamentally alter one of these parts or the other or the way in which the image and the textual relate to one another is to substantially affect the meaning generated by that interplay and the interpretations thus available to the reader. It is this interaction between visual and textual that makes the comics medium unique and, as suggested by comics scholar Shari Sabeti, allows the conveyance and retention of otherwise complex ideas. At the same time, comics "work to naturalize the act of interpretation." See Shari Sabeti, "The Irony of Cool Club: the Place of Comic Book Reading in Schools," *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 2, no. 2 (2011): 138 and Shari Sabeti, "Reading Graphic Novels in Schools: Texts, Contexts, and the Interpretive Work of Critical Reading," *Pedagogy, Culture & Society* 20, no. 2 (2012): 195.

⁵⁰ BArch DY 24/1581, "Konzeption für das neue Profil der Bilderzeitschrift 'Atze'," 3.

youth, and its ability to function as the mode of authority and of benign power asked of the medium by the SED state.

In order to salvage the FDJ's educational content and raise *Atze* to the same level experienced by the "much beloved" *Mosaik* at the beginning of the decade, to borrow the words of Dolores Augustine, Altenburger made suggestions that intervened on the creative controls of the publisher, the regular creators, and of Kieser himself.⁵¹ *Fix und Fax* remained the focal point of the magazine due to the comic's popularity and its proven ability to sell copies of the magazine. Around the offices of *Verlag Junge Welt*, though, attitudes suggested that if children wanted *Fix und Fax*, it was important that they accept half an issue of propaganda.⁵² To this end, through discussion between *Atze*'s new editorial board, of which Altenburger and other leaders of the *Ernst Thälmann* Pioneers were members, and the leadership of schools and youth institutions, the proposed new profile of the comic magazine required a multi-tiered solution. First, working with academic institutions, every story required a clear political concept and each installment of any serialized story had to address its main political problem from different viewpoints. Second, each story required a well thought out and clearly understood sequence of events. Third, an emphasis needed to be placed on using clean, clear language that expressed the opinions of the protagonists and their friends as the windows into socialist society.⁵³ This focus on language additionally addressed a problem that afflicted the comics medium elsewhere. Almost universally, comics were considered inferior to prose as the medium was largely based on images. Anti-comics crusaders in England earlier in the twentieth century

⁵¹ Augustine, 230.

⁵² "Propaganda in 'Atze'," DDR Comics, <http://www.ddr-comics.de/atzepol.html> (accessed 20 August 2013).

⁵³ BArch DY 24/1581, "Konzeption für das neue Profil der Bilderzeitschrift 'Atze'," 4.

associated the proliferation of comics with a decline of national standards.⁵⁴ By turning his attention toward language in the pages of *Atze*, Altenburger sought to facilitate literacy among East German children. Finally, both the interior art and the cover, stylistically influenced by both Disney and western European comics such as *Fix und Foxi* and *Asterix*, had to “positively influence the aesthetic sensibilities of children” while at the same time create better representations of historical role models and (socialist) heroes. This approach would awaken sympathy in the readers and encourage children to willingly choose sides in the revolutionary construction of socialism. In effect, this would deploy comics as extensions of the state’s power structures, conflating the political with what was perceived to be the private. Moreover, this proposal constructed comics, *Atze* in this case, as an educational space that would not only prepare children for the much more advanced story-telling devices employed in the state’s developing youth literature, but also woke children’s dormant class consciousness to their roles within the structures of state socialism. All of this was to say that the art and the accompanying text provided an “interpretation of fundamental philosophical problems” and engendered a political responsibility in children that could be applied to the daily life of socialist society (Fig. 1).⁵⁵ The new incarnation of *Atze* comics thus generated a black and white sense of justice in its readership through the comparison of the historical development of socialist society with examples of the causes and effects of (Western and German) imperialist aggression. Among children, *Atze* was hoped to create genuine enthusiasm for the “heroic deeds” and sacrifices of the working class, directing their youthful energies into socially and educationally valuable channels.⁵⁶ *Fix und Fax* remained in the magazine, but buried amidst the socialist educational content that was much more rigidly structured than in the early days of the publication.

⁵⁴ Sabin, 19.

⁵⁵ BArch DY 24/1581, “Konzeption für das neue Profil der Bilderzeitschrift ‘Atze’,” 4.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 6.

According to Altenburger's report, this new structure consisted of: a serialized story regarding the history and heroes of the socialist revolutions in the GDR and its socialist neighbours; a story about the modernization of the science and technology revered by the East German socialist state; short stories about the history of the labour movement, anti-fascist resistance during the Second World War, or current events; and *Fix und Fax*. The comic concluded with a glossary

Figure 1. *Atze* 7/1981. Page 2. Political comics were common after 1967 and often taught civic responsibility in an anti-fascist society. Notice also the separation of text and image.

of foreign and scientific terms so that the stories could be properly understood by the third to seventh grade children for whom it was directed.⁵⁷ In practice, though, *Atze* consisted of a political comic linked to the cover image, *Pats Reiseabenteuer*, editorial political contributions (until 1973 when these editorials were replaced with additional pages to the cover story), *Fix und Fax*, a letter from the editor, short comic strips (no more than two or three panels in length, appearing on the letter pages), and reader letters.⁵⁸ While the political comics featured stories such as the biographies of socialist revolutionary personalities like V.I. Lenin⁵⁹, the American invasion of Grenada following a history of East German friendship⁶⁰, and the activities of *Ernst Thälmann* Pioneer troops⁶¹, even comics such as the funny animals of *Fix und Fax* came to stress cooperation to achieve common goals over any perceived importance of individual achievement.

Significantly, this conceptualization differed from traditional western comics by re-imagining comics closer to picture books, literally *Wort-Bildgeschichte*. Normally, western European and American comics in particular, including *Mosaik* and *Atze* until 1964 and 1967 respectively, employed speech bubbles and text boxes to integrate the narrative elements of comics with the image, though never intentionally obscuring those images. Following the respective overhaul in the two dominant East German comics, however, and this applied to all of the serialized stories contained therein, these two aspects of the *Wort-Bildgeschichte* were separated on the page (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2). While the images were still sequential and oftentimes numbered for ease of reading, the text was set below each picture in a fashion similar to children's picture books. Likewise, the text now described the action in each panel and included character dialogue in a way that made the sequence of events easier to follow for young readers

⁵⁷ Ibid, 7-11.

⁵⁸ "Atze," DDR-Comics.de, <http://ddr-comics.de/atze.htm> (accessed 27 August 2013).

⁵⁹ "Der versiegelte Zug," *Atze* (Berlin, DE), Heft 1/1989.

⁶⁰ "Abschied mit Bitternis," *Atze* (Berlin: DE), Heft 9/1984.

⁶¹ "Das Gespenst auf dem Fahrrad," *Atze* (Berlin: DE), Heft 12/1986.

and, arguably, negated the need for sequential images altogether.⁶² As McCloud suggests in *Understanding Comics*, due to the nature of comics as sequential images, reader participation as a “willing and conscious collaborator” is required to fill in the gutters between panels with understood “movement” and thus to interpret and give meaning to the images contained therein.⁶³ This format presented the text in a way that superficially appeared to avoid complaints about the use of “banal” language and provided the clear German language demanded in Altenburger’s report. It also removed the need for what McCloud calls “closure” between panels; that is, the unconscious act of completing the actions drawn in the comic panel in the imagination of the reader. Simultaneously, this separation of image and narrative insisted on a single interpretation of the images.⁶⁴ The images largely became illustrations of action described in the text rather than a story-telling device unto themselves. This change was deemed appropriate in that picture books were perceived to empower children to participate in the social structures that prized literacy, here the socialist GDR. Comics, in what was understood to be the western form of the genre, were meanwhile understood as obstacles to literacy and to (East German) *Kultur*. This impediment was thought to appear through the supposed deconstruction of the book as cultural artifact that was inherently built into the comics’ form.⁶⁵ As a result, the supposedly harmful effects of comics were effaced as the comics in *Atze* no longer required

⁶² For further on the general European trend away from use of the dialogue balloon prominent in American comics, see Pascal Lefèvre, “The Battle over the Balloon: The Conflictual Institutionalization of the Speech Bubble in Various European Countries,” *Image & Narrative: Online Magazine of the Visual Narrative* issue 14, http://www.imageandnarrative.be/inarchive/painting/pascal_levevre.htm (accessed 5 June 2016). For more specifically related to the case of East Germany, see Lettkemann, 7. This perceived problem was not limited to the example of GDR comics, but was also an issue in Hungary due to the supposed problems of westernization and American influence relating to the use of dialogue balloons and the supposed problems these posed to literacy and comprehension, see András György Tóth, “Hungarian Avant-garde Comics in the 1990s,” *Stribburek. Comics from Behind the Rusty Iron Curtain*, <http://www.ljudmila.org/stripcore/burek/hungary.htm> (accessed 28 June 2016).

⁶³ McCloud, 65.

⁶⁴ Lettkemann, 38.

⁶⁵ Charles Hatfield and Craig Svonkin, “Why Comics Are and Are Not Picture Books: Introduction,” *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (Winter 2012): 431-3.

***Mosaik* and the Tensions between Ideological Inclusion and the Creation of an Ideological Free-Zone.**

In the pages of *Atze*, Altenburger and *Verlag Junge Welt* retained the aesthetics of comics, in particular the aesthetics of Carl Barks' *Donald Duck* comics and Kauka's *Fix und Foxi* in the adventures of *Fix und Fax*, but blurred the division between comics and picture books. *Mosaik*, also edited by Altenburger, followed a similar course. Beginning with the sixty-two part *Ritter Runkel-Serie* (Runkel the Knight of Rübenstein-series), *Mosaik* transitioned to this same course of images with narrative text clearly typed, as opposed to the traditional hand-lettered print, below the panels (Fig. 2).⁶⁶

But *Mosaik*'s initial encounter with the anti-comics campaign in the GDR occurred long before this transformation and took a decidedly different turn than its effects on *Atze*. After June 1961, Hegen was no longer sole creator of *Mosaik* and instead operated as part of a creative collective, though his name remained on the comics' masthead. Following the transfer of *Mosaik* from *Verlag Neues Leben* to *Verlag Junge Welt* in 1960 during which editorial duties

⁶⁶ "Die Digedags im *Mosaik*," DDR-Comics.de, <http://ddr-comics.de/digedags.htm> (accessed 27 August 2013) and Lettkemann, 37-42. Comics in Germany, broadly speaking, were judged in terms of their educational effects due to the aesthetic nature of the publications. In the postwar, comics in their Americanized form and structure thus represented a perceived threat to established aesthetic and educational forms in both East and West Germany. This, of course, ignored Germany's own history of comics publications, mirroring those American publications, in the 1920s and 1930s, describing the medium as uniquely foreign to Germany. This effect to ape the picture book aesthetic in East German comics then draws from the tradition of European comics, particularly those published in Germany but also including France and the United Kingdom, during the late 19th century. As such, in addition to simplifying the visual aesthetic of GDR comics for the purpose of conveying important educational and political information, this stylistic shift is also firmly located within East Germany's claims toward being a *Kulturstaat* and the discussed formation of a decidedly East German *Kinderkultur*. See Jovanovich and Koch, 93-9 and Sabin, 18. Following the departure of Hegen in 1975 and the introduction of the *Abrafaxe* characters to replace the *Digedags*, *Mosaik* returned to an aesthetic that proved a hybrid of the American and European comics forms as the dialogue balloons and text boxes were reintroduced into the publication. However, at this point they were squared off and moved to the borders of the panels so as not to interfere with the images themselves. This can most likely be attributed to the continued popularity of the American-style and Western comics in the GDR following *Mosaik*'s attempt to compete it Western markets and the opening of GDR markets to Western influence following the implementation of the German-German Basic Treaty in 1972.

were undertaken by Hans Ehrhardt, Wolfgang Altenburger was appointed editor in 1963. This action was undertaken by the FDJ leadership in order to protect the party line and clarify technical details left unexplained in previous stories.⁶⁷ The criticism on the part of the FDJ may be understood similarly to criticisms found in Altenburger's report on the new profile of *Atze* three years later, discussed above. At the same time, the reappearance of this criticism in terms of *Atze* may be read as Altenburger's successful attempt to gain editorial control over *Atze* and potentially save *Mosaik* from the regime's efforts to include more ideological content. That said, Altenburger acted in the role of mediator between the *Ernst Thälmann* Pioneers, the FDJ and the comics magazines, making *Mosaik* more acceptable for the leadership while attempting to keep the *Mosaik-Kollektiv* out of what Gerd Lettkemann and Michael Scholz call "patronizing ideological discussions."⁶⁸ As a result, *Mosaik* and the *Mosaik-Kollektiv* became opponents to interference in the creative and production processes by the editorial regime, forcing the regime to turn its attention and proposed ideological content toward the less successful, though still popular, *Atze*.⁶⁹ This is not to suggest that *Mosaik* was the ideology free zone that post-unification memory believes it to be. Indeed, by 1964 in the GDR and despite the forces of both the *Verordnung zum Schutz der Jugend* and the newly erected Berlin Wall that regulated the flow of western comics across the inner-German border and the youths access to those publications, it was the role of youth magazines and comics in particular that they should fight the influence of these western comics magazines on their own terms and with their own "humanistic means."⁷⁰

Dolores Augustine's monograph, *Red Prometheus: Engineering and Dictatorship in East Germany, 1945-1990*, analyses *Mosaik* in terms of its depiction of technology and how that

⁶⁷ Lettkemann, 40.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 40.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 49.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 44.

representation may be used to understand its role in GDR society. Augustine suggests that central to *Mosaik*'s storytelling was the suppression of consumer desires through a pride of place associated with industrial technologies. Perhaps inadvertently, this representation included nationalistic and imperialistic aspirations of East Germany through the rescue of "child-like natives" from the exploitation of capitalists and the rapid industrialization of the Amazon Rain Forest without thought to the ecological ramifications.⁷¹ This privileging of East Germany technology was common throughout the *Mosaik* stories as was the imperialist need to spread socialism to other cultures, demonstrating to these cultures the perceived superiority of socialism. The *Weltraum-Serie* or the *Weltraumabenteuer* (Space Series or the Space Adventures), alternately, ran from 1958 until 1962. Under the editorial guidance of Ehrhardt and *Verlag Junge Welt* for only its last two years, this was the first story to which the newly minted *Mosaik-Kollektiv* contributed in order to increase *Mosaik*'s production to monthly publication schedule. This story found the *Digedag* characters kidnapped into the middle of an inter-planetary Cold War in which an alien stand-in for the western capitalists attempted to exploit the characters following the discovery of the raw material *Digedanium*.⁷² In this, and as would be seen later in Altenburger's proposal for *Atze*, the *Digedag* characters were representatives not only of the GDR, but of Soviet-style state socialism more broadly. At the same time, the technology employed by the alien socialist society echoed developments in the East German technological sphere, suggesting that not only was socialism the superior political/economic system upon which the future would be built, but also that the technology industries that maintained this privileged space within the East German imaginary would be the basis for future technological innovations.

⁷¹ Augustine, 236.

⁷² "Die Digedags im Mosaik," DDR-Comics.de.

Additionally, Eli Rubin's study on the role of plastics in the GDR incorporates the pages of *Mosaik* in an interesting way. Whereas Augustine discusses the actual use of technology in the stories of the *Digedags*, Rubin looks to informational comics and advertising found in the magazine. The example of the former used by Rubin was of an eight panel cartoon from March 1960 featuring three nondescript characters wholly unlike the *Digedags*. In the cartoon and under the title "Coal+Calcium+Water=Synthetics: Synthetics Are Not Substitute Materials, but Rather a High Quality New Building Material," the characters went about making plastics and in doing so provided "very technical detail on the actual process" while avoiding the "dryness of ...textbook-like explanations." This advertisement had the effect of combining humour with the technology revered in the GDR as discussed in detail above while incorporating plastics into everyday life in a way that was understandable to the comics magazine's child-readership.⁷³

Also from the March 1960 issue of *Mosaik*, Rubin draws attention to a page spread entitled, "Summer Joy through Plastics." The group in this camping scene is easily identifiable as East German due to the presence of a Trabant car in the background. In the foreground, however, the campers enjoy all kinds of activities including badminton, swimming, hula hoops, and listening to records. Each of these activities is marked with stars in order to indicate exactly how prolific plastics were in East German society.⁷⁴ Although the latter cartoon evidenced greater attention to GDR consumer culture than suggested by Augustine, both of these examples demonstrated to children how socialism actively worked to better their lives and society as a whole beyond the use of ideological rhetoric. While readers may not have been initially aware of the presence of plastics, or East German technology industries more generally, in their lives, these cartoons celebrated those technologies and their roles. By extension, then, these cartoons celebrated the

⁷³ Rubin, 131-2.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 145-6.

socialist East German society that created these technologies with the children reading right there to celebrate along with the regime.

But while these contributions of socialist content in the pages of *Mosaik* appeared to correct perceived problems leveled against the comics magazine in the late 1950s, due in part to the implementation of the *Bitterfelder Weg*, they failed to address claims that Hegen irresponsibly set his stories in an historic past that lacked the proper representation of reality.⁷⁵ At the same time, due to the time during which both of these examples originally appeared, neither addressed the problem inherent to *Mosaik* as a comic adventure. In looking for a genuine style for his comics magazine when initially proposing it to the FDJ leadership and *Verlag Neues Leben*, Hegen looked toward the Disney comics and character models that proliferated in Germany following the Second World War.⁷⁶ That is, as suggested by Brad Prager in his review of Thomas Kramer's 2002 study of East German comics, *Mosaik* was created to mimic and was modelled after its western counterparts.⁷⁷ Although toeing the party line and doing so particularly under the editorial guidance of Ehrhardt, when Altenburger proposed the *Amerika-Serie* to the Central Committee of the *Ernst Thälmann* Pioneers in 1968, *Mosaik* already had a history of flirting beyond the boundaries of acceptability in a publication from socialist East Germany. This was allowed to continue and in fact expanded what was permissible despite criticisms against the comics magazine's content as *Mosaik* was groomed for an audience beyond the Berlin Wall in a way that *Atze* was never afforded.

⁷⁵ Lettkemann, 37.

⁷⁶ Catrin Gersdorf, "The Digidags Go West: Images of America in an East German Comic Strip," *Journal of American Culture* 19, no. 2 (July 1996): 36.

⁷⁷ Brad Prager, "Micky, Marx und Manitu. Zeit— und Kulturgeschichte im Spiegel eines DDR-Comics 1955-1990. "Mosaik" als Fokus von Medienerlebnissen im NS und in der DDR by Thomas Kramer. Review," *The German Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 364.

Outlined for the *Ernst Thälmann* Pioneer, FDJ and *Verlag Junge Welt* leaderships in October 1968, *Mosaik's Amerika-Serie* was intended to demonstrate the “development of a typical capitalist country” in the adventurous and educational way in which East German comics functioned since the early and mid 1960s due to criticisms made against the medium. Beginning around 1865 until a point described by those drafting the story’s brief conception to the leadership as the “emergence of American imperialism” with a focus on the American Civil War as cause and consequence of much social and societal conflict, the *Digedag* characters experienced the development of capitalism around them. Through a contract with *Deutscher Buch-Export*, the *Amerika-Serie* also represented the first foreign export of *Mosaik* to the West. Two months before launch, this test case was increased from three to six issues with twenty thousand copies of each ordered. Sales of the *Amerika-Serie* in the Netherlands, and with it an East German representation of nineteenth century and, by extension, also of the Cold War-era United States, were monitored in the hope of an increased distribution and licensing of children’s and youth presses to print *Mosaik* across western Europe in the near future. Ironically enough, at the same time that *Mosaik* ventured west in terms of both the story and the magazine, the letter requesting this increase of three to six issues suggested that the comic magazine would provide a “positive, political weight” and thus offer a bulwark against the tide of western comics on the west’s own soil.⁷⁸

Reading the American civil war era and experience as the consolidation of capitalist power in the United States, the *Amerika-Serie* emphasized the speculation, extortion, fraud, and land-grabs that was perceived to characterize an American nation divided against itself. Beginning in New Orleans in *Mosaik von Hannes Hegen* #152 “*Karneval in New Orleans*,” the *Digedag* characters learn of the lives of rich plantation owners, the exploitation of white farmers,

⁷⁸ BArch DC 9/1628.

and the suppression of African American labourers (Fig. 3). Later issues saw the *Digedags* in a steamboat race on the Mississippi where they are nearly killed due to the policies of shipping companies, the abolition of slavery and the continued persecution of African Americans, and railway companies cheating both natives and farmers for their land. As the windows into socialist society demonstrated previously in the *Weltraum-Serie* of *Mosaik* and mandated for comic stories in Altenburger's new profile of *Atze* two years earlier, the *Digedags* became the heroes of the exploited classes. Noted in the short conception of the series, the *Digedags* appeared wherever they were needed in order to prevent a catastrophe. They were friends to wage-earners and their children, aiding the victory of justice and humanity for the working classes.⁷⁹ While at a glance these qualities may not appear to resonate with the children of Western Europe, comics emerged as a visual literary form popular with the working classes based on their inexpensive price and their sale in local newsstands and in commuter train stations. Problematically, this long-time association with the working class was partially responsible for middle-class and governmental attitudes directed against the comics medium in the West and during the anti-comics campaigns in particular.⁸⁰ As such, the *Digedags* appeared in the *Amerika-Serie* as recognizable to the young readership in both East German and in the West and relatable in a way that anthropomorphized animal characters were not.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Sabin, 19. It was the association between comics and the working class and the in-built prejudices of the middle-class that categorized comics as Low culture and mass culture which was supposedly harmful to children in that the comics themselves reflected their audiences and thus were not indicative of middle-class values of the age.

Figure 3. *Mosaik* issue 156 page 21, 1969. *Amerika-serie*. While visiting the southern United States, the Digidags, and thus the child-readers, learned of the lives of plantation owners and of the African-American labourers following the US Civil War.

The *Amerika-Serie*, and East German comics more broadly since the regime's intrusion into the content and publishing of the medium and format a few years prior, thus insisted that the educational content was of significant concern to those involved in the book's creation as it would spur the young readership to feelings of equity toward those exploited in the stories and particularly the plight of the working class in capitalist, namely American, societies. It was presumed by those drafting the report that these stories would give the young readers insight into the workings and methods of capitalist states and would naturally learn to despise capitalism, its methods, and the West more generally. Children, it was thought, would be led by the stories and the protagonists, the *Digedags*, as friends to the working class and the windows into socialist society to believe not only that the actions of the *Digedags* are just in the face of the corporate and landowning exploitation suffered by the American workers, African Americans included, but though the relationship previously established with these characters, children would also understand, relate, and empathize with the socialist movement itself.⁸¹ More likely, though, many of these sentiments were included in the conception report of the *Amerika-Serie* and the letter to the Prime Minister's Press Service from *Verlag Junge Welt* at the behest of *Mosaik*'s editorial staff, the publisher, and the *Mosaik-Kollektiv*. Although the SED regime and the leaderships of both the FDJ and *Ernst Thälmann* Pioneer youth groups believed that *Mosaik* and *Atze* fulfilled these functions at home and abroad, though *Atze* was not exported until it was purchased by the *Mosaik Verlag* in the years following unification, those involved in *Mosaik* used the language of socialism when dealing with the regime in order to defend their creation and content.

Moreover, in addressing socialist concerns in a medium that was confrontational of bourgeois, Western values while also inherently associated with the West, *Mosaik* and the

⁸¹ BArch DC 9/1628.

Amerika-Serie spoke to broader concerns of East German comics and *Kinderkultur*. More so than was the case in the *Weltraum-Serie*, *Mosaik* drew direct and overt comparisons between the GDR, as represented by the *Digedags*, and the United States and the West that the GDR framed itself in opposition. As *Mosaik* underwent less radical changes in the 1960s than did *Atze*, thus preserving much of its western comics aesthetic, *Mosaik* continued to require participation from its readership in making meaning of the medium and thus the internalization of its message by the child-readers both within the GDR and without. Still, the comic's transformation in the early 1960s served to address the regime's concerns over the educational imperatives of the *Kinderzeitschrift* and thus differentiate it from those popularized in the West. The FDJ and the publisher's editorial regime considered the *Amerika-Serie* operative within the modes dictated by socialist realism, providing political education to its readership in a mode that co-opted the popularity of the arguably Western medium. At the same time, the comic demonstrated quality and clarity in all aspects of production symbolic of East German *Kinderkultur* broadly as competition to the *Schund* and *Schmutz* of Western children's literature.

Altenburger and the *Mosaik-Kollektiv* achieved this, not only by addressing the socialist content incorporated into the *Amerika-Serie*, but also by connecting the *Amerika-Serie* and *Mosaik* to the classics of American culture and thus of the *Kultur* that regime hoped East German children's literature to ultimately become. This effectively pre-empted any extension of the anti-comics campaign as already experienced by *Mosaik* in 1962 and by *Atze* in 1966. In the conception of the *Amerika-Serie* approved by the Central Committee of the *Ernst Thälmann* Pioneers, the authors' description and explanation of the series in terms of its social background suggests that the period in which the *Digedags* arrive in New Orleans in issue 152 is the same as

that described in the writings of Mark Twain and Jack London.⁸² While perhaps not perceived to be of the same caliber as the German and Russian literary greats upon which rested the GDR's conception of itself as a *Kulturstaat*, by the late 1960s both Twain and London were established as masters of the American novel form and were regularly included in secondary and post-secondary English courses in the United States and beyond. These two authors were thus arguably the pinnacle of a uniquely American literary tradition. In drawing the *Digedags* into this tradition, Altenburger and the *Mosaik-Kollektiv* suggested that the comic stories were greater than the sum of their parts in that they were told as part of an international *Kinderkultur*. Not only this, but the *Digedags* mirrored the American literary from which they were influenced, sailing down the Mississippi River, encountering the Ku Klux Klan and the repression of African American workers despite the abolition of slavery, and panning for gold and other precious metals in Nevada and Colorado.⁸³ At the same time, having the *Digedags* essentially re-enact the stories of Twain and London allowed the comics to explore socialism in the heart of western capitalism at a time during which the imperialist capitalism that emerged from the Second World War was still developing and connected East German socialism with the western experience.⁸⁴ This approach afforded children reading *Mosaik* the ability to connect at an emotional level with the anti-imperialist and socialist politics of Twain and London and with their East German homeland through the *Digedag* characters.⁸⁵

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Pfeiffer, 20.

⁸⁵ Gersdorf, 35-45. For more on comics as indicative of propaganda and specifically their uses during the Cold War in Germany, see Patrick Major, "'Smut and Trash': Germany's Culture Wars Against Pulp Fiction," in *Mass Media, Culture, and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany*, ed. Karl Christian Führer and Corey Ross (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2006), 234-50; in the Soviet Bloc generally, see Stroemberg, 63-76; in America, see John Donovan, "Parody and Propaganda: Fighting American and the Battle Against Crime and Communism in the 1950s," in *Comic Books and American Cultural History*, ed. Matthew Pustz (New York: Continuum, 2012), 110-9; Alexander Maxwell, "East Europeans in the Cold War Comic, *This Godless Communism*," in *Comic Books and the Cold War, 1946-1962*:

As the *Digedags* crossed the American continent, celebrating the perceived heroic deeds of American workers, and thus of socialism internationally, such as the clearing of the wilderness and the construction of the transcontinental railroad, they deconstructed the United States as an ideological enemy of the GDR.⁸⁶ In her article, “The *Digedags* Go West: Images of America in an East German Comic Strip,” scholar of American studies, Catrin Gersdorf, argues that the combination of fiction and historical authenticity in the *Mosaik Amerika-Serie* inverted the notion of the United States as the imperialist enemy by portraying the nation as a geographical space full of fun and adventure. In this case, The United States could not be reduced to the base components of western democratic capitalism and in doing so the *Amerika-Serie* blurred the distinction between affirmation and subversion of Soviet-style socialism in the East German state.⁸⁷ At the same time, the *Amerika-Serie* specifically and *Mosaik* more broadly drew on the influence of Karl May as a cultural touchstone in the German Democratic Republic.⁸⁸ While Karl May’s novels of the American Aboriginal Winnetou and his friend Old Shatterhand were not particularly accurate in terms of either American history or geography, their popularity demonstrated the German people’s fascination with the American continent as a frontier and the possibilities that that implied. Invoking that same fascination in the pages of *Mosaik* thus allowed East German children the ability to explore a foreign wilderness that was largely free of ideology and yet brimming with possibilities.

Toning down the socialist content mandated by the leadership of the FDJ and the *Ernst Thälmann* Pioneers, indeed obfuscating that content under the guise of American literary culture and German *Kultur* made the *Amerika-Serie* more palatable to the international readerships for

Essays on the Graphic Treatment of Communism, the Code, and Social Concerns, ed. Chris York and Rafael York (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2012), 190-203.

⁸⁶ BArch DC 9/1628.

⁸⁷ Gersdorf, 42.

⁸⁸ Prager, 364.

which *Mosaik* was, in part, marketed after 1968. Meanwhile, the linkages between American comics and the *Schundliteratur* with which comics were associated in East Germany and Western Europe were hidden or severed entirely by changes wrought across the entire medium of East German comics. Through the dissolution of the relationship between comics and Americanism, Altenburger, *Verlag Junge Welt*, and the East German youth groups sought to create a uniquely East German comic style that not only conformed to the standards and ideologies associated with the developing state-sponsored children's literature, but also avoided criticisms levelled against western, specifically American, comic books. By having comics adopt conventions typically associated with picture books, Altenburger's profile for the new *Atze*, following the reorientation of *Mosaik*'s use of speech bubbles and narrative boxes in issue 62 (1962) that continued through the *Amerika-Serie* in 1968-9, found a place within the burgeoning state-sponsored children's literature and within East German *Kultur* more broadly. This technique reinvented the East German comics medium with the intention of creating a truly mass media devoted to an entertainingly historical education, concerned with and attempting to address the different interests of children while developing their political consciousness, both within the GDR and without.

But by no means did this make *Mosaik* the ideological-free zone that Dolores Augustine suggested it to be in post-unification memory. In much the same way that *Atze* under Altenburger's direction was forced to incorporate more distinctive, obvious, and overt inclusions of ideological and socialist content into its pages due to pressures from the FDJ and *Ernst Thälmann* Pioneer leaderships, educators, and from the SED regime, so too was *Mosaik* forced to cast off its ties to the western comics form. As demonstrated above, the *Amerika-Serie* incorporated large doses of ideological and educational content into the constructions of the

Digedag stories as they journeyed across the United States. Prior to Altenburger's appointment to the position of chief editor of *Mosaik* in 1963, the comics magazine followed a more rigidly ideological course since 1961 than it did under the sole guidance of its creator, Hannes Hegen. Not coincidentally, only once the Berlin Wall was constructed in August 1961, thus regulating virtually all publications in the GDR including comics prominent in West Berlin, did the voices of educators and the youth group leaderships railing against the lack of socialist educational material in *Mosaik* and *Atze* gain traction.

Although criticisms against the comics medium were ever-present due to the perception of the medium as low-brow culture, *Unkultur*, harmful to literacy, and to the development of morality among children, comics popularity among those same children largely regulated their availability. Comics were largely problematic for the SED-regime as they proved themselves to exist outside the structures of state control, and thus beyond the SED and FDJ's ability to control and shape children toward the socialist cause, as comics were spaces children constructed independently and without the participation of parents or the state. Despite the implementation of the *Verordnung zum Schutz der Jugend* in 1955, the relative openness of the inner-German border, particularly in divided Berlin, allowed for an ease of access for children who wanted to read Western comics. The Berlin Wall thus created a very real and physical barrier to halt the transgression of borders for those *Kinderzeitschriften* and the children who wanted to read them. Quite suddenly, critics against the perceived problems inherent to Western comics and the capitalism associated with them grew louder as the supply of the offending literature dried up and would remain largely absent from the East German marketplace until the normalization of German relations in the 1970s.

Conclusion.

East German comics in the 1960s developed into tools of state authority and as unofficial extensions of the education system in their pursuits of awakening political consciousness through the historical accuracy of the stories and of the larger worker's movement and experience. This process resulted in the removal of speech balloons and the clarification of the language and its interaction with the images that defined the medium in *Atze* by the middle of the decade. But despite the inclusion of educational content in the *Weltraum-Serie*, *Mosaik* remained resistant to interference in the creative process. Lettkemann and Scholz argue that the realities of the political order and its construction of socialism and a history separate from the West in the GDR forced Hegen and the *Mosaik-Kollektiv* to yield to the inclusion of ideological content. *Mosaik* was, however, able to conceal the biases of the content in a way that *Atze* was not, simply as a result of the differences in format and mandate between the two comics. The popularity of the comic, having increased its circulation from 50 000 to 300 000 by 1964, ensured that the editorial staff remained wary of overt inclusions of ideology beyond seemingly minor alterations in the content and style.⁸⁹

When *Atze* re-launched in January 1967 under the new profile and Altenburger's editorial guidance, the problems of the publication's past were apparently resolved. *Atze* doubled its former length and was finally in control of a regular monthly publication schedule, standardized format from issue to issue, and uniformity throughout the historically conscious serialized stories. Securing larger paper quotas, distribution of *Atze* increased to 200 000 copies per month in order to turn a profit, as suggested in Altenburger's report. The comic also received a renewed state publishing license and the substantial resources necessary to conduct an extensive

⁸⁹ Lettkemann, 44-49.

advertising and promotional campaign.⁹⁰ Although 0,20 Mark was considered too high a price for the comic at the time Altenburger wrote the report in 1966, this price tag was preserved following the magazine's re-launch, justified by the increased length and overall quality of the publication under Altenburger's hand.⁹¹ This allowed the comic to enjoy wide distribution, becoming convenient and accessible to children without suffering the same shortages apparent elsewhere in East German consumer culture. The overall transformation of *Atze*, in the footsteps of its sister publication *Mosaik*, made the comic the intended mass media required to mobilize youth and prepare them for their entry into the FDJ and socialist society more broadly. Of course, the success of these efforts to prepare the socialist personalities of the East German youth remains in question. A survey conducted in 1967 regarding the new serials in *Atze* demonstrated that the political comics (the biographies of socialist heroes, titled *Kämpfer der Revolution*, intended as role models for *Atze*'s readership) were not only the least popular, but received little more than ten percent of the votes received by *Fix und Fax*.⁹² Arguably, this was then the most significant change undertaken by the comic and its publisher until the Berlin Wall fell in 1989.

Despite any newly won popularity following *Atze*'s 1967 re-launch, the comics magazine continued to lag behind *Mosaik* in real terms as a result of its inability to conceal its own ideology. It was precisely for this reason, then, that *Mosaik* was used as a test case for export in 1968. Unlike *Atze* and despite efforts to cut ties to the western European and American comic book cultures, *Mosaik* remained, by and large, westernized. The comics magazine responded and adapted to criticisms brought against it during the anti-comics campaign in East Germany, all the while largely maintaining the adventurous spirit first created by Hegen in the style of Barks' globetrotting adventures of Donald Duck and his three nephews (Huey, Dewey, and

⁹⁰ BArch DY 24/1581, "Konzeption für das neue Profil der Bilderzeitschrift 'Atze'," 5.

⁹¹ Ibid, 3.

⁹² Lettkemann, 50.

Louie) in the pages of Disney's comics. That *Mosaik* was also able to naturally maintain a large audience, as opposed to the artificially created numbers from Altenburger's report on *Atze* suggesting that a circulation of 200 000 was required to ensure the comics profitability, spoke to the genuine enthusiasm that East German children had for western style comics. At the same time, *Mosaik* was an eastern comic much as was *Atze*, possessing the same picture book approach with narrative and dialogue text set apart from images clearly depicting the actions of the characters and avoiding violence as a solution or resolution that afflicted American comics. As demonstrated above, *Mosaik* also connected itself to the East German notions that governed the development of a *Kinderkultur* in children's literature and the new profile of *Atze*. To this point, however, Altenburger and the *Mosaik-Kollektiv* drew on the historic German fascination with the American frontier from the novels of Karl May and the more respected works of Mark Twain and Jack London. This association may not suggest the High culture considered in the German term *Kultur* or in the notion of the GDR as a *Kulturstaat*, but firmly established *Mosaik's* connection with its own traditions in the penny dreadful, German picture books, and popular and working class culture generally. While the educational content on which the regime insisted was most certainly present in *Mosaik*, the *Weltraum-Serie*, and the *Amerika-Serie*, it conveyed its bias subtly so as to convince its readership of the heroicism of its characters and thus of the socialist worldview they represented.

With virtually all western influence and competition in the comic market controlled by the combined forces of the *Verordnung zum Schutz der Jugend* in 1955 and the Berlin Wall in 1961, the FDJ and the *Ernst Thälmann* Pioneers were not required to update or improve either of their comic magazines, *Atze* and *Mosaik*. That they did and also heavily invested in them as Foucauldian tools toward youth's responsible participation in the construction of socialism is

demonstrative of the FDJ's support of comics as a viable model of the children's literature and *Kultur* endorsed by the SED regime. Recruiting authors of adult literature to write for children and honouring those authors with national awards maintained high standards among literature meant for children, promoting the moral and cultural values of the GDR.⁹³ Problematically, though, these improvements also contributed to a culture in which authors continually propelled the standards of children's literature, fearing this burgeoning literature insufficient to keep pace with the political consciousness of the next generation. Children's literature in the GDR thus became embedded within the national literature and could be read by either adults or children. Oftentimes, however, these books overwhelmed and intimidated the children for whom they were intended.⁹⁴ While this literature was still marketed toward its juvenile audience, the content and standards mandated by the regime and the publisher created an environment in which children's literature was no longer suitable for its readership. As such, the political awakening built into the developing national children's literature went over the heads of the children for whom it was intended, undermining the efforts of the regime.

As suggested above, it is difficult to accurately judge the effect East German comics had on fostering the socialist personality required by the SED regime and the leaderships of the FDJ and *Ernst Thälmann* Pioneers. That said, by exploring the inclusion of ideology in the pages of both *Atze* and *Mosaik* in the development of a unique East German comics form and the respective real popularity of those books, it is possible to suggest the extent to which ideology was acceptable to the readership of these magazines. Even after the launch of *Atze*'s new profile in 1967, *Mosaik* had a significantly higher circulation and paper quota. That this was the case also suggests that *Mosaik* regularly outsold its sister publication. This may be attributable to the

⁹³ Stahl, 198.

⁹⁴ Thomson-Wohlgemuth, 35-39.

stories contained in each or the way in which the ideology was presented, but more likely this had to do with the way the ideology affected the stories told within. As quoted above, during the re-profiling of *Atze*, the offices of *Verlag Junge Welt* were abuzz with the notion that if children wanted *Fix und Fax*, they would have to deal with a half issue of ideology. A year later in the report on the *Amerika-Serie* appearing in *Mosaik* from issue 152, ideology was featured prominently, but rather than feature stories on socialist heroes and role models and East German friendship with Grenada before American intervention the *Digedags* were primarily about adventure and fun as they celebrated the achievements of workers and the socialist international. This perception may be further understood in *Mosaik*'s appearance as an East German export beginning with the *Amerika-Serie* in 1968. While *Mosaik* bore connections with and expressed itself in terms of the East German *Kulturstaat*, it remained western enough in its representation to be palatable not only to the East German children longing for the American comics denied them by the Berlin Wall and the *Verordnung zum Schutz der Jugend*, but also for children in western Europe. Though they were products of the burgeoning *Kinderkultur* fostered by the regime, East German comics, especially *Mosaik*, rose above the children's literature that was rapidly becoming incomprehensible to the children for whom it was intended. By incorporating the ideology demanded by the regime and packaging it in a form demanded by its audience, East German comics were in fact able to deliver educational content in a way and to a degree that children's literature more broadly, perhaps, was not.

Chapter Two.

Comics Culture, Demonstrations of State Power, and Capturing the East German Zeitgeist.

The previous chapter discussed the transformation of the East German comics *Mosaik* and *Atze* largely under the leadership and editorial guidance of Comrade Wolfgang Altenburger in the early to mid-1960s. That chapter spoke to a discussion surrounding East German literature and specifically the place of children's literature within the burgeoning East German canon. In her 2009 monograph, *Translation under State Control: Books for Young People in the German Democratic Republic*, German Studies scholar Gaby Thomson-Wohlgemuth argued that due to the importance of children and childhood development to the future of socialism, children's literature was given pride of place in the GDR. This is to say that as children were as responsible as adults for the continued construction of socialism and children's books were an integral part of the educational system under socialism, it followed that the SED-regime, the Free German Youth, and the *Ernst Thälmann* Pioneers youth group promoted the advancement of children's literature as integral to the overall formation of the socialist state.¹ Nonetheless, the subject of power in the East German state remains largely unaddressed despite the implication that the comics were tools of the regime in the construction of the socialist personality.

Here, beyond the Foucauldian notions of structures that allow for the creation and maintenance of governance, power in the GDR is also understood here in terms of Mary Fulbrook's conception of state authority enabled through practices of benign and malign demonstrations of power. In her 2005 monograph, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker*, employing a theoretical model developed by the German philosopher

¹ Gaby Thomson-Wohlgemuth, *Translation Under State Control: Books for Young People in the German Democratic Republic* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 1-4.

Max Weber, Fulbrook differentiates power from authority as the “capacity to exert one’s will over others” versus the likelihood that commands from those in power will be obeyed. As such, Fulbrook suggests, the difference between the malign and benign forms of power in the GDR may be understood as the “coercive and manipulative means of exerting power” and the “more routine, widely accepted methods” of power to which average people rarely gave “conscious thought.”² In addition to the concepts of power employed by Fulbrook, this chapter also looks toward the notion of the *durchherrschte Gesellschaft* (thoroughly ruled society) cribbed from Jürgen Kocka and discussed by German historians Konrad Jarausch and Michael Geyer in their collaborative work, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories*. In this, Kocka, as understood by Jarausch and Geyer, conceives of the GDR as a state “entirely permeated by politics...to emphasize its relative modernity along with its repression.”³ This chapter then seeks to explain comics and practices related to their content and culture in the GDR as modes of Fulbrook’s benign power that were, arguably, without criticism from the child readers or their parents as controlling influences. At the same time, comics such as *Mosaik* and *Atze*, though not limited to these two as the discussion in this chapter will demonstrate, brought SED and FDJ power and socialist educational practice into those aspects of life in East Germany traditionally assumed to be free from state intervention.

West German journalist and diplomat Günter Gaus conceptualized the GDR as a “niche society;” that is, a society in which the private and the political appear compartmentalized

² Mary Fulbrook, *The People’s State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 236.

³ Konrad H. Jarausch and Michael Geyer, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 80.

through the conduct of the citizenry.⁴ The home and dacha were the foremost of these niches. Regardless of the realities of Stasi surveillance, the private and domestic sphere was largely considered refuge from the regime, especially during the Honecker era as superficial loyalty to the state become the only requirement of citizenship. As comics provided light entertainment for children, though often criticized as harmful to children and their development as readers and as functioning members of society more generally, their contents were often overlooked or misunderstood by parents, supervisors, or authority figures. When the contents of these comics were co-opted by the FDJ, made possible by the absence of western comics as legitimate competition for children's attentions, comics had the ability to penetrate these private niches and areas of political vacuum with socialist politics and ideology. Part of this infiltration came through the child-readers actively consuming these publications within the domestic space and, in doing so, transforming the home into the ersatz public sphere as a site of open political criticism as developed from the work of Jürgen Habermas as will be taken up to form the crux of the following chapter. Another part as to how these comics were co-opted came through their incorporation of the cultural zeitgeist to generate legitimate interest in the *Kinderzeitschriften* (magazines for children) that had little to do with the coercion associated with state power under a perceived totalitarian regime. As such, comics proved their ability to penetrate the everyday lives (*Alltag*) of the child-readers, creating enthusiasm for the contents and the culture that translated into enthusiasm for the FDJ and the state as producers of those comics. Comics thus became a space that was neither part of the public or the private, yet was both, in which the regime and the child-readers could describe and define their own roles and the expectations of

⁴ Mary Fulbrook, "'Normalisation' in the GDR in Retrospect: East German Perspectives on Their Own Lives," in *Power and Society in the GDR, 1961-1979: The 'Normalisation of Rule'?*, ed. Mary Fulbrook (New York: Berghahn, 2013), 309.

the other within society.⁵ In doing so, comics initiated a dialogue between the child-citizen and the state as ideology and reader interest and taste created a two-way conduit of communication.

This chapter addresses the uses of comics by the FDJ, examining three distinct aspects of East German comics and comic culture since 1961 to interrogate the issue of benign power and that power's ability to penetrate the East German *Alltag*. Expanding upon the new profile of *Atze* put forward by Altenburger in 1966 and implemented in the following year, this chapter will discuss the role of historical accuracy and the importance of socialist content in comics. These aspects of editorial control over story content in *Atze* will then be applied to *Mosaik* which underwent a similar transformation earlier in the 1960s. Specifically, the chapter will unpack aspects of *Mosaik's* *Weltraum-* (Outer-Space) (1958-1962) and *Amerika-Serie* (1969-1974), how they demonstrated the importance of historical accuracy while at the same time demonstrating the significance of the socialist utopian future, and how ideology informed these multi-year stories without interfering with the entertainment they provided. Finally, this chapter turns to the *Frösi-treff* (meet with *Frösi*, a *Kinderzeitschrift* that contained comic strips and articles of interest to its child-readership. The title was derived from a compression of *Fröhlich sein und singen*, in English "Be happy and sing") hosted by the publishers of the children's magazine in 1981. Treated as a type of variety show for readers of the magazine in attendance at the *Theatre im Palast* (TiP) inside the *Palast der Republik* (the seat of East Germany's *Volkskammer* [Parliament] and multi-function public building) in Berlin's *Mitte* district, the *Frösi-treff* gave fans and their attending parents and chaperones the opportunity to participate in drawing classes, engage with the creators of the magazine, and listen to political speeches. These elements of the *Frösi-treff*, as with the stories under examination from *Mosaik*, drew from those aspects of *Atze's*

⁵ Paul Betts, *Within Walls: Private Life in the German Democratic Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 173-192.

1966 profile as significant factors in East German comics, socialist education and the formation of the socialist personality more broadly. Through these examples, this chapter argues that comics and the culture surrounding the medium itself were deployed by the regime in order to educate and persuade East German children in acceptance, tolerance, and understanding of socialist ideology thus providing for the voluntary participation necessary to legitimize socialism in the GDR.

Hannes Hegen, sole creative voice behind the most popular comic book published in the GDR at the time, *Mosaik*, drew criticisms from the *Deutsche Lehrerzeitung* (German Teachers' Times) in 1960. These teachers were concerned by the lax role taken by *Mosaik*'s editorial board and the poor educational quality of the comics while demanding that teachers be included in this editorial process. It is important to note that much of these criticisms over the comics' educational content stemmed from the misrepresentation of reality in the comics' depictions of the past (the *Digedags*, the trio of gnome-like characters who starred in the magazine during Hegen's tenure, typically had adventures set in historically significant periods with little to no explanation as to how this time travel occurred), the perceived use of violence or feigned violence (using toy guns rather than real) to bring about conflict resolution, and what was considered the banal language with which the comics were written.⁶ These criticisms coincided with the comics' move from *Verlag Neues Leben*, where it resided since its creation in 1955, to *Verlag Junge Welt* as the latter publisher catered to children's magazines and thus had more experience editing for that youthful audience.⁷ This move consolidated periodical publications for children, including *ABC-Zeitung*, *Bummi*, *Die Schulpost*, and *Atze*, under one publisher in

⁶ Gerd Lettkemann and Michael F. Scholz, "*Schuldig ist schließlich jeder...der Comics besitzt, verbreitet oder nicht einziehen läßt*" *Comics in der DDR-Geschichte eines ungeliebten Mediums, 1945/49-1990* (Berlin: MOSAIK Steinchen für Steinchen Verlag, 1994), 37-8.

⁷ BArch DY 24/5790.

order to foster a “uniform ideological, political and organizational approach” to those magazines and comics.⁸ As children’s literature and the children’s press more generally were understood by the FDJ and the SED-regime in terms of Michel Foucault’s conceptualization of state power, that is, as a tool in service of the socialist state as both source of political agitation and education in the development of the socialist personality in order to turn readers toward communal service, these criticisms forced the Central Committee FDJ and the *Thälmann* Pioneers to action as the organizing bodies of *Verlag Neues Leben* and *Verlag Junge Welt*, respectively.⁹

Comics in the Shadow of the Berlin Wall and the Scientific-Technological Revolution.

While Hegen and *Mosaik* never came as completely under the thumb of the youth groups in the same way that *Atze* did in 1966, by mid-1961 Hegen was no longer the sole voice in *Mosaik*’s creation as Hans Ehrhardt was recruited as *Mosaik*’s new Chefredakteur (Editor-in-Chief) and head of the *Mosaik-Kollektiv*.¹⁰ Wolfgang Altenburger, a loyal party member and editor of the magazine *Junge Welt*, took over this position from Ehrhardt two years later.¹¹ Already in the late 1950s, *Mosaik* saw the introduction of longer, more ideologically driven stories, such as the *Weltraum-Serie*. While not set in the past as many of the early story-arcs tended to, the *Weltraum-Serie* saw the *Digedags* sent off into space and, presumably, the utopian future promised by socialist rhetoric in order to combat western incursions via comics through their own “humanistic means.”¹² Beginning in 1959-60, educational supplements were included with each issue of *Mosaik*. Titled “*Steinchen auf Steinchen* (stone by stone),” these leaflets addressed the problem of building up socialism in the GDR and demonstrated the successes of

⁸ BArch DY 26/173, “Die Entwicklung der Pionierorganisation—die Verlage des Jugendverbandes,” 49.

⁹ BArch DY 26/173, “Funktion und Aufgaben der Kinderzeitungen und -zeitschriften in der DDR,” 8.

¹⁰ Lettkemann, *Schuldig*, 40.

¹¹ BStU, AIM, Nr. 9409/69 and BArch DY 26/114, “Dokumentation zur Bilderzeitschrift ‘Mosaik’,” 26.

¹² Lettkemann, *Schuldig*, 44.

the East German state.¹³ Following Altenburger's ascension to the position of Editor-in Chief, he largely dealt with matters pertaining to the educational content of *Mosaik*, making the comic palatable to the FDJ while maintaining that the required educational content existed in service of the story. As such, much of the overt ideological content of East German comics was found in *Atze*, leaving *Mosaik*, Hegen, and the *Mosaik-Kollektiv* relatively free from what Hegen considered, "endlessly patronizing ideological discussions."¹⁴

Beyond these alterations and additions to both *Mosaik* and *Atze*, comics in the GDR provided a space perceived to be subversive to the parent/child relationship and thus allowed the influence of the FDJ to penetrate the home. This disruption acted in addition to and separately from the perceived problematic nature of the contents of comics, and here we speak not only of the GDR, but of the anti-comics campaigns of the 1940s, 50s, and 60s more broadly. As understood by comics scholars Mark Berninger, Jochen Ecke, and Gideon Haberkorn in the introduction to their 2010 volume, *Comics as a Nexus of Cultures: Essays on the Interplay of Media, Disciplines, and International Perspectives*, they describe and understand comics to provide a connection or link between "the public and the private, the social and the personal..." and are "uniquely suited to describe the multiple fragments of human experience."¹⁵ In addition, comics provided a "semantic space" in which the relationship between words and pictures opened comics to a multiplicity of meaning and a flexibility of interpretation.¹⁶ This is to say that comics can be interpreted in a number of ways determined by the experiences of the reader

¹³ BArch DY 26/114, "Dokumentation zur Bilderzeitschrift 'Mosaik'," 5.

¹⁴ Lettkemann, *Schuldig*, 40.

¹⁵ Mark Berninger, Jochen Ecke, and Gideon Haberkorn, "Introduction," in *Comics as a Nexus of Cultures: Essays on the Interplay of Media, Disciplines, and International Perspectives*, ed. Mark Berninger, Jochen Ecke, and Gideon Haberkorn (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2010), 3.

¹⁶ Matthew P. McAllister, Edward H. Sewell, Jr., and Ian Gordon, "Introducing Comics and Ideology," in *Comics & Ideology*, ed. Matthew P. McAllister, Edward H. Sewell, Jr., and Ian Gordon (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 4.

and based on this word/picture relationship. In doing so, comics as a mass medium, negotiated through private experience, were able to speak to public and social concerns and thus establish commonalities and thematic continuities between those and the reader's personal experience. As much of comics' meaning is conveyed between panels in the "gutters," the interpretation of comics reading occurs in the imagination of the readers, strengthening this bond between the public message and its internalization.¹⁷

Comics also represent a form of children's literature that is not necessarily dependent upon the parents to be brought into the private sphere. Due to the relatively low cost of comics compared to other children's literature and picture books, as the medium most directly comparable to comics, children can and frequently did purchase these comics using pocket money, without the knowledge or permission of their authority figures. As suggested by Roger Sabin, comics constructed a private space for children in which children bonded amongst themselves over the comics and characters, negotiating ways around and through parental power and authority.¹⁸ Presumably, then, this also applies to constructions of state power and the comic book as allowing children a means of negotiating authority at the same moment that power is employed through comics to instruct the child-reader as to the proper roles for children under state-socialism and in the construction of socialist society. While this relationship with the publications suggests that comics reading was an individual experience, comics were also often consumed by groups of children, providing a topic of playground conversation from which adults were excluded.¹⁹ These group identifications also facilitated the trading and borrowing of a form

¹⁷ Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: the Invisible Art* (New York: Harper, 1993), 66-9.

¹⁸ Roger Sabin, *Comics, Comix & Graphic Novels: a History of Comic Art* (New York: Phaidon Press, 1996), 28.

¹⁹ Jacqueline Danziger-Russell, *Girls and Their Comics: Finding a Female Voice in Comic Book Narrative*, Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. (2013), 5.

of media that was traditionally considered to be disposable once read.²⁰ This construction of identity separate from authority fostered the notion that comics provided a safe space for the socialization of children around the subject of comics, to read and discuss their favourite characters, stories, or publications.²¹ As such, comics and comics readership created children as a group that was not only versed in the understanding and interpretation of comics, but created a space for them to share experiences from which parents, adults, and the SED-regime were excluded as outsiders lacking this insider knowledge. As Martin Barker suggests, through Shari Sabeti, comics create a space in which readership groups develop their own mechanisms of belonging and these mechanisms marginalize those who do not understand the comics references within the group.²² Through this construction of group identification and belonging, comics thus functioned to create the ersatz public sphere that evolved within the domestic space resulting from the notion of *Eigen-Sinn* as a means of negotiating FDJ and SED constructions of state power.²³

As such and as was the case in the Western world, comics in the GDR provided children their own constructions of space free from the influence of the regime or other authority figures. Once western competition was removed from the East German comics landscape due to the combined forces of the *Verordnung zum Schutz der Jugend* (Regulations for the Protection of Youth) in 1955 and the much more physical barrier afforded by the Berlin Wall in 1961, the

²⁰ In determining how many children read comics in 1930s and 1940s America, publishers often assumed that as many as five children read a single issue of any given comic. While this number may be skewed toward the high end, it certainly speaks to the sociability associated with comics in the construction of comics as a space accessible only to the child-readers that predated modern collector cultures. See Bradford W. Wright, *Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 31.

²¹ Shari Sabeti, "The Irony of Cool Club: the place of comic book reading in schools," *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 2, no. 2 (2011): 144.

²² Ibid, 148.

²³ Betts, *Within Walls*, 14 and Alf Lüdtkke, "Cash, Coffee-Breaks, Horseplay: Eigensinn and Politics among Factory Workers in Germany circa 1900," in *Confrontation, Class Consciousness and the Labor Process: Studies in Proletarian Class Formation*, ed. Michael Hanagan and Charles Stephenson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1982), 81-2.

FDJ's hand was free to steer the content of *Mosaik*, *Atze*, and the comic strips found in publications like *Frösi*, *Bummi*, and *ABC-Zeitung* while still providing publications to fill the perceived appetites of young readers, despite comics status as *Schmutzliteratur* (rubbish literature) and *Unkultur* (non-culture). As visits to the GDR by West Germans, permissible under the German Basic Treaty, only made smuggling of western comics possible by the mid-1970s, the intervening years allowed the FDJ opportunity to make strong linkages between East German comics publications and the basic tenants of socialist education.²⁴ As a result, the reorientation of policy toward East German comics co-opted these “free” spaces, introducing ideology into the comics and thus to these readership groups and the private sphere more generally in a way that was much more overt than previously possible. While comics never held the same pride of place as did other, more “serious,” forms of children’s literature largely due to the stigmas long attached to the medium itself, as a result of comics’ ability to transcend the boundaries between public and private spaces and their ability to operate within the imaginations of their readers, it was necessary to recover these publications for the purposes of state socialism and the development of the socialist personality following the introduction of Ulbricht’s Youth Communiqué in 1963.²⁵

Uta Poiger suggests elsewhere that the depoliticization of American popular culture in West Germany meant that East German youth could no longer appropriate American music and fashion as an act of resistance officially condoned by the West. The Youth Communiqué stressed the importance of youth engagement, attempting to liberalize socialism as a space in

²⁴ Goran Jovanovic and Ulrich Koch, “The Comics Debate in Germany: Against Dirt and Rubbish, Pictorial Idiotism, and Cultural Analphabetism,” in *Pulp Demons: International Dimensions of the Postwar Anti-Comics Campaign*, ed. John A. Lent (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1999), 94.

²⁵ Dorothee Wierling, “Youth as Internal Enemy: Conflicts in the Educational Dictatorship of the 1960s,” in *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Life and Politics*, ed. Katherine Pence and Paul Betts (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 160-4.

which youth participated voluntarily and enthusiastically. In order to achieve this involvement, Poiger points out, leisure time was reinvented as a space “free” from state politics.²⁶ In much the same way that comics were being associated with youth criminality in the western world during the 1950s and 1960s, reforms introduced under the auspices of the Youth Communiqué were understood to be causing youth misbehaviour due to the “critical cultural environment” fostered by Ulbricht’s youth policy. In other words, they fostered the conditions necessary to the creation of a legitimate public sphere. It was as a result of these conjectures, the perceived failures of the Youth Communiqué, and Ulbricht’s weakened position in the SED Politburo from the New Economic System (NÖS), that in November of 1965 Helmut Muller pushed for the creation of more positive socialist role models in the publications of *Verlag Neues Leben* and *Verlag Junge Welt*, including the comics *Mosaik* and *Atze*.²⁷ Although the Youth Communiqué sought to reinvent youth leisure time and activity as a space free from political influence as suggested by Poiger, this renewal did not apply in the same way to publications for children, particularly comics. In the late 1950s and the start of the *Weltraum-Serie* in the pages of *Mosaik* and more officially with the comics’ official new profile under the guidance of Ehrhardt and Altenburger in 1961 and 1963, respectively, comics as an element of children’s leisure time and education integrated aspects of ideology to deflect the perception of comics as degenerate literature.

As such and although the changes wrought to *Atze* in 1966 may be understood as resultant of the failure of the Youth Communiqué in the preceding year, FDJ policy surrounding the publication of comics in the GDR was consistently conservative, if not openly repressive, in its demonstrations of socialist society and the child’s role in it. The implementation of

²⁶ Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 214-5.

²⁷ Alan McDougall, “The Liberal Interlude: SED Youth Policy and the Free German Youth (FDJ), 1963-65,” *Debatte* 9, no. 2 (2001): 151.

Altenburger's proposals for *Atze* was not emblematic of new measures to quell youthful rebellion, but part of larger processes that brought comics into the fold of the FDJ's larger plans for children. Part of the reasoning behind this differing approach to youth policy may be attributed to the age groups targeted by the Youth Communiqué and the comic books respectively. However, more can be made of the SED's erratic youth policy and the FDJ's inability or outright reluctance to follow these sometimes contradictory course corrections.²⁸ The FDJ's approach to comics, and particularly how the youth group approached the subject of children as citizens in the GDR, remained relatively consistent throughout the 1960s despite the rise and fall of Ulbricht's NÖS, the Youth Communiqué and its accompanying reforms with specific regard to youth and the consumption of music and other Western media, and the perceived failure of the *Bitterfelder Weg*, all ending between 1964 and 1967.²⁹ Through the creation and maintenance of comic books and a relative comics culture in the GDR, the FDJ proved more successful in targeting children for the building of socialism than the SED and their own focus on older youth and young adults as the future of the state through the artificial construction of a state-sanctioned Beat movement.³⁰ Moreover, the FDJ's reasonably consistent approach to comics since the beginning of the 1960s, reflective of the organization's overall stagnation of youth policy, is at the same time demonstrative of its relative autonomy under the Ulbricht regime and its own power in the *Volkskammer* and within East German society more

²⁸ Angela Brock, "Producing the 'Socialist Personality'? Socialisation, Education, and the Emergence of New Patterns of Behaviour," in *Power and Society in the GDR, 1961-1979: The 'Normalisation of Rule?'*, ed. Mary Fulbrook (New York: Berghahn, 2009), 221-3.

²⁹ Ulbricht considered the enthusiasm and participation of youth in the GDR as inherently connected with the economic policies of the state. It thus follows that the reforms spearheaded by the Youth Communiqué collapsed after Ulbricht's failure to maintain the NOS and the subsequent weakening of his own position in the SED. See McDougall, "Liberal Interlude," 129-34.

³⁰ Fulbrook, *People's State*, 127-35. This does not suggest the FDJ ever won the complete support of youth and was, indeed, more popular among school children than of the older youth and young adults targeted by the Youth Communiqué.

generally.³¹ During the later Honecker era, this perceived gap between the SED and the FDJ was minimized as Honecker declared the construction of the socialist personality the primary task of the state, although the definition of that socialist personality differed from that under Ulbricht's leadership. At the same time, as Minister of People's Education and Erich Honecker's wife, Margot Honecker provided a tangible bridge between the SED's and the FDJ's approach to children and youth policies and the importance of *Kultur* and its ties to education.³²

That said, in advance of *Atze's* new profile proposal, the comic was considered "flat" in terms of its educational content in a manner similar to those comics produced in the West. As Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart accuse in their perhaps overly scathing critique of Disney publications and American influence in Chile, *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic*, the inclusion of politics in "the domain of childhood" via entertainment threatens to introduce perversity disguised as happiness. And while this realization led to a ban on Disney comics in the attempted development of a socialist Chilean state, as it accurately implied the projection of adult values onto children and this domain of childhood, this irony was lost on the FDJ as policy directed toward comics in the GDR meant the replacement of one set of

³¹ McDougall, "Liberal Interlude," 126-9. While this says nothing of the FDJ's relative stagnancy during the 1950s and 1960s, Ulbricht sought to marginalize the FDJ's control of youth policy under the assumption that the leadership remained out of touch with trends in youth activity that could actively generate support for the SED-state. Although this assessment may not have been inaccurate as the FDJ was never ever to completely rally older youth who typically left the group after joining the labour force, SED efforts to speak to the younger generation appeared less successful in maintaining youth interest over the long term exactly because these policies were quick to change. Moreover, and with few exceptions, the creation of DT64 arguably being one, SED youth policies rarely generated the same level of support and popularity among children apparent in the FDJ's sales figures for *Mosaik* and *Atze* consistent throughout the GDR's existence. For further, see Alan McDougall, *Youth Politics in East Germany: The Free German Youth Movement, 1946-1968* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004). For more on the SED's, and to a lesser extent the FDJ's, inability to construct and maintain a "thoroughly ruled society" as a result of stagnating policy based on consent and coercion, see Jürgen Kocka, "Eine durchherrschte Gesellschaft," in *Sozialgeschichte der DDR*, ed. Hartmut Kaelbe, Jürgen Kocka, and Hartmut Zwahr (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1994), 547-53.

³² Brock, 224-8 and Jeanette Z. Madarasz, *Conflict and Compromise in East Germany, 1971-1989: a Precarious Stability* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2003), 64-6.

values for another.³³ As these Disney comics such as *Uncle Scrooge* by Carl Barks involved Scrooge and his three nephews, Huey, Duey, and Louie, travelling across the globe in search of treasure, comics in the GDR equally involved the characters in a globetrotting search of adventure. Arguably, *Mosaik* was the worst of the offenders here as the adventures of the *Digedags* took them not only around the globe, but also through time.³⁴ Early issues of the comic had the *Digedags* visiting the Far East, the South Seas, and Imperial Rome as their own stories alternated with unconnected “funny animal” tales. In 1958, the *Digedags*’ adventure turned to space, the *Weltraum-Serie*, as two of the heroes were abducted into space and the comic became dedicated entirely to the *Digedag* characters. This turn dropped any pretence at temporal logic as the new story quite obviously occurred in a modern, if not futuristic, setting in the tradition of Socialist Realist science fiction works, despite the historical settings of past issues.³⁵ In order to entertain, these early issues gave little thought to perceptions of historical accuracy as the medium itself was considered disposable. Bradford Wright suggests that comics, during the interwar period and through the end of the Second World War were indicative of the accessibility, disposability, and appeal to instant gratification that formed the “core of modern

³³ Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart, *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic*, trans. by David Kunzle (New York: International General, 1975), 29-30.

³⁴ In terms of this conversation, discussion is limited to the stories published in *Mosaik* and *Atze*. While *ABC-Zeitung*, *Bummi*, and *Frösi*, to name only a few of the magazines published for children, contained comics with recurring characters, *Mosaik* and *Atze* were the only two dedicated comic books. The others, while running regular comic strips and features, were children’s magazines and not comics in the modern sense.

³⁵ “Die Digedags in Mosaik,” *DDR-Comics.de*, <http://ddr-comics.de/digedags.htm> (accessed 15 December 2015). Sonja Fritsche suggests that all science fiction in the GDR, and the Soviet Bloc generally, was utopian fiction in order to comply with the dictates laid down by socialist realism. As was necessitated by the genre and its required connection with realism, then, it differentiates itself from fantasy in how the genre made the irrational rational through the inclusion of technology that was so prized throughout the Soviet Bloc since Stalin’s emphasis on heavy industry in the late 1920s. See Fritsche, *Science Fiction Literature in East Germany* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006), 67-102. See also, Gerd Lettkemann, “Comics in der DDR,” in *Fortsetzung folgt: Comic Kultur in Deutschland*, ed. Andreas C. Knigge (Frankfurt aM: Ullstein, 1986), 317-361, particularly chapter 4.7 “Science Fiction: Analyse der Neos-Serie aus Mosaik;” and for science fiction and socialist realism in the Soviet Bloc more generally Patrick L. McGuire, *Red Stars: Political Aspects of Soviet Science Fiction* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1985); Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); and Darko Suvin, *Russian Science Fiction 1956-1974: a Bibliography* (Elizabethtown, NY: Dragon Press, 1976).

consumer culture.”³⁶ Given the low profit margin for these publications then, publishers sought ideas that were easily reproducible in order to quickly generate as much income as possible. Comics thus did not represent life as it was, but as the child-readers imagined it should be.³⁷ Prior to the *Weltraum-Serie* at the end of the 1950s, little was done to educate children in the pages of these comics as they were written off as American “*Primitivkultur*.” Rather, comics in the GDR followed the patterns established by their American counterparts, providing quick entertainment that did little to obviously adhere to the ideological and historical educational principles of socialism. While the FDJ and the *Thälmann* Pioneers seemed uninterested in the same profit motivations that formed this diversionary and unfulfilling comics culture in the mid-decade, publishers showed little interest in the medium as a whole prior to the *Bitterfelder Weg* and socialist realism as an artistic imperative and the Berlin Wall to regulate the flow of American *Schmutzliteratur*.³⁸

Beyond the required adherence to quality controls in the comics’ production, the *Atze* profile from 1966 required that the comic be transformed to assist in the formation of a Marxist-historical perspective and awareness among its readership, children. Comics, *Atze* in particular though *Mosaik* was affected as well, were tasked with spreading socialist tenets and historical knowledge in an entertaining way. Thomas Di Napoli and Gaby Thomson-Wohlgemuth agree that this policy of “edutainment” was consistent throughout the realm of publishing for children and in some instances proved a little cumbersome and marginalizing for its child-readership.³⁹ Through this edutainment and the inclusion of story suggestions from educators, it was thought

³⁶ Wright, xiv.

³⁷ Ibid, xv-xvi.

³⁸ Lettkemann, “Comics,” 321-7.

³⁹ Thomas DiNapoli, “Thirty Years of Children’s Literature in the German Democratic Republic,” *German Studies Review* 7, no. 2 (May 1984): 287-91 and Gaby Thomson-Wohlgemuth, “About Official and Unofficial Addressing in East German Children’s Literature,” *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 34-7.

that *Atze* would help with children's sense of "justice," their "spontaneous sense of 'good' and 'bad' through information, facts, and experience from a fixed class perspective," and generate "genuine enthusiasm for the heroic deeds of the children of the working class." To achieve this fervor, each issue of *Atze* featured serialized stories set in the history of the working class. This struggled against the conceptualization of comics as a form of bourgeois pulp entertainment by positioning the perceived heroes of the socialist movement as heroes in these stories for children.⁴⁰ In this way, Marshall Georgy Zhukov and the Red Army's victory at Oderbruch during the Second World War (Fig. 4), the Soviet's protecting German civilians from the Fascist aggressors, and an FDJ Collective travelling to the Ukrainian SSR in May 1975 to help build the Orenburg gas pipeline became stories palatable to comics and, subsequently, their readership.⁴¹ These stories highlighted German-Soviet friendship, socialist heroes and martyrs including Lenin and Ernst Thälmann, and FDJ participation for the betterment of society. And although none of the potential stories listed in the proposal for *Atze*'s new profile included women as their heroes per se, the proposal itself strongly suggested that women and girls should be represented as the main characters of these stories more frequently than was the case in the past.⁴² Typically, the stories contained in the new *Atze* skewed toward addressing basic concerns clearly rendered in the 1966 proposal for the depiction of historically-based stories which became a staple of the comics as it was elsewhere in socialist children's literature.⁴³ These placed significance on those who created history, how they were responsible for making that history, and making clear how history may be understood as a story of the working class. In doing so, *Atze* made comics an

⁴⁰ BArch DY 24/1581, "Konzeption für das neue Profil der Bilderzeitschrift 'Atze'," 4 & 6-7.

⁴¹ *Atze* 6/1975, *Atze* 5/1976, *Atze* 9/1977.

⁴² BArch DY 24/1581, "Konzeption für das neue Profil der Bilderzeitschrift 'Atze'," 7.

⁴³ J.D. Stahl, "Children's Literature and the Politics of the Nation State," *Children's Literature* 20 (1992): 197-8.

Frühling im Oderbruch

Frühjahr 1945 im Oderbruch. Die faschistischen deutschen Truppen haben die Dörfer und Städte des Oderbruchs in Festungen verwandelt. Die Bevölkerung wird vertrieben, das Vieh abgeschlachtet. Hitler hat den Befehl erteilt, die Rote Armee um jeden Preis aufzuhalten.

Hitler und seine Generale haben befohlen, die Kirchen, Windmühlen und Fabrikschornsteine zu sprengen, damit die sowjetische Artillerie keine Zielmarkierungen findet. Die Kirchtürme in Seelow, Golzow, Zechin und die Kreuzmühle fielen seinem Wüten zum Opfer. Zur gleichen Zeit setzen im Morgengrauen die ersten sowjetischen Stoßtrupps über die Oder.

Figure 4. *Atze* issue 6/1975, page 2. Stories in *Atze* were often used to depict the lives of socialist heroes as well as to generate associational relationships between East German anti-fascism and Soviet friendship.

important space for young and inexperienced readers to achieve an understanding of the struggle in which their socialist homeland was embroiled.

It was thought that challenging the old state-bourgeois educational system in this format required much long term planning and as such, the proposal for *Atze* included topics for future stories extending into 1971. This preparedness also helped with reader groups tasked as oversight committees on the creators' adherence to the Party-line.⁴⁴ While no details were provided beyond the thematic focus or historical moment, these suggestions laid the future outline and direction of *Atze*, and *Mosaik* by extension, as this proposal set the limits of acceptability and permissibility in GDR comics.⁴⁵ This presumably allowed the writers and artists working under Altenburger room to draft stories in the way they deemed best and most suited to the medium, while retaining the foreknowledge that drafts of both the stories and art were ultimately subject to the approval of the publisher and of the Central Committee of the FDJ. Political stories were thus demonstrative of this new educational impetus injected into the pages of *Atze* and GDR comics more broadly. That is to say that the stories suggested by the consulted educators at the behest of the FDJ reflected the ideal that education in comics should tell stories about socialist heroes in a way that emphasized the notion of history as a history of the working class.

In addition, *Atze*'s new profile looked to the future of socialism through the socialist realist lens of utopian fiction. While attempting to maintain historical accuracy necessary to representations of the past in these comic stories, they also extrapolated on existing technologies

⁴⁴ Robert Darnton, *Censors at Work: How State Shaped Literature* (New York: Norton, 2014), 157.

⁴⁵ BArch DY/1581, "Konzeption für das neue Profil der Bilderzeitschrift 'Atze'," 8. This speaks to a larger conversation on the perceived limits of permissibility and mass culture and consumption, including the consumption of comics, in the GDR as a focal point for questions on the nature and degree of control exercised by the SED. The problem of these perceived state controls and the limits of permissibility comes as they encounter the "self-assertion of recipients and consumers," or, as has been characterized elsewhere in this essay, the *Eigen-Sinn* as constructing the limits of dictatorship. See Jarausch and Geyer, 297-9.

in the Soviet Bloc. Building on trends in industry and agriculture, serialized stories explained the science and technology of the far-off year 1990. This trend paralleled developments in children's literature elsewhere in the GDR and the Soviet Union.⁴⁶ While the inclusion of science fiction immediately suggests the influence of the *Weltraum-Serie* appearing in *Mosaik*, larger trends are suggested elsewhere with particular emphasis on the use of plastics by Eli Rubin. Specifically, Rubin points to the demonstrations apparent in publications such as *Jugend und Technik* (Youth and Technology) and *Unsere Welt von Morgen—Der Mensch und seine Welt* (Our World of Tomorrow—the People and their World, 1959) by Heinz Handschick, a colourist with the *Mosaik-Kollektiv* who concurrently worked on the *Weltraum-Serie*. Here, plastics and indeed many modern GDR technologies found continued existence in the socialist future.⁴⁷ This direction was praised as important by a researcher at the state planning commission not only in its ability to educate and allow the imaginations of children to predict future technologies and the future of socialism itself, but also as it steered children's thoughts and feelings towards socialism. In other words, this was considered an appropriate direction in the implementation and fostering of the socialist personality among children as it taught them the value of labour and aware of the problems the construction of socialist society was likely to face in the future.⁴⁸ Likewise, later issues of *Mosaik* found the *Digedags*, and the *Abrafaxe* after Hegen's departure, using advanced technology to help "Third World" peoples. This

⁴⁶ During a research trip to the *Comic Bibliothek Renate* in Berlin in 2010, the author came across examples of such, published by *Kinderbuchverlag-DDR* in 1984. This comic was without a front cover and thus is impossible to cite properly as what remained lacked a title and creator credits. The story effectively follows a group of FDJ members who are whisked into space where an advanced alien race are attempting to aid a primitive species, known as Gronks, on the planet Klirr with their advanced technology and agriculture.

⁴⁷ Eli Rubin, *Synthetic Socialism: Plastics & Dictatorship in the German Democratic Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 108-10.

⁴⁸ BArch DY 24/1581, "Konzeption für das neue Profil der Bilderzeitschrift 'Atze'," Appendix, 3. These comments were among many attached to the proposal from researchers and educators. These specific comments were attributed to Dr. Winde, *Abt. Forschung und Technik der Staatlichen Plankommission*.

representation stands in direct opposition to the *Uncle Scrooge* comics that inspired Mosaik. In the capital imperialist world populated by Disney characters, technology was often used to

Figure 5. Unknown Socialist Realist comic. Kinderbuchverlag, 1984. Here, a near death experience causes a group of Pioneers to wake aboard a spaceship. After journeying through space, they wake on a beach having been rescued by their dog.

exploit the local populations for profit, these sometimes implied to be the same peoples later helped by the Digedags.⁴⁹ These stories rarely provided detailed explanations as to how space-travel or prolonged living conditions in space were achieved. And just as often, experiences with space-travel were attributed to the dreams of the individuals as rational explanation for an irrational situation (Fig. 5). Nor were the details significant to the story or the message conveyed. Rather, science-fiction in the *Atze* and *Mosaik* was intended to spark creative interest in the development of future technologies, agricultural methods, and the socialist society more

⁴⁹ BArch DY 24/1585, "Information über die weiterführung der Bilderzeitschrift 'Mosaik'," 3.

broadly among readers by drawing on the cultural zeitgeist surrounding the East German involvement with the Soviet space program.⁵⁰

The proposed improvements to the quality of *Atze*, which was more than a little uneven for the first eleven years of its publication, particularly with regard to the clarity of language, of images, and of text placement, was meant to collapse the perceived gap between text and image that makes comics a unique medium.⁵¹ Criticisms surrounding *Atze* did not stem from depictions of violence or sex as was the case with the anti-comics campaign in Western Europe and the United States, but as a result of the problems of interpretation which the comics medium represented. While the proposal addressed concerns regarding the content of the stories published in the comics-magazines and publications for children generally, the proposal took extreme care in reformulating the tropes of the comics medium itself. Altenburger indicated the problem of graphical inconsistencies of the comics and the need for clean, clear language of the text was central to the new *Atze*.⁵² In both *Atze* and *Mosaik*, the removal of dialogue balloons and text boxes uncluttered the art and allowed the child-reader to focus on the significance of the images. Favouring descriptive narratives that appeared entirely outside the panels directed the reader. Rather than allow children the opportunity to develop their own interpretation of depicted events as happens in comics in the gutters and the transition from one panel to the next as argued by Scott McCloud and taken up in the writings of Richard Ivan Jobs, Martin Barker, and most notoriously by Fredric Wertham in his 1953 book, *Seduction of the Innocent*, such a

⁵⁰ BArch DY 24/1581, "Konzeption für das neue Profil der Bilderzeitschrift 'Atze'," 9 and Rubin, 104-110.

⁵¹ "Atze," DDR-Comics.de, <http://ddr-comics.de/atze.htm> (accessed 17 December 2015). See also Will Eisner, *Comics and Sequential Art: Principles & Practice of the World's Most Popular Art Form* (Paramus: Poorhouse Press, 1985), 10-28 and McCloud, *Understanding*, 6-20.

⁵² BArch DY 24/1581, "Konzeption für das neue Profil der Bilderzeitschrift 'Atze'," 3.

narrative structure guides readers in how depicted events may be interpreted.⁵³ In other words, the proposal suggested a fundamental change in the definition and structure of the comics medium in order to narrow the range of interpretation generated by the stories depicted and how those stories were read, perceived, and understood by children. Changing the content of these comics, as has been discussed at length, was ultimately meaningless without this concurrent change in the delivery of narrative.⁵⁴

Through the restructuring of *Atze*, the textual elements of the comic became essential to an interpretation of the images. These alterations made the publication more akin to picture-books than to the classic comics mold and in doing so effectively removed the sequential nature from the sequential art of the comics, thus removing the perceived interdependency between text and image suggested by McCloud.⁵⁵ Beginning with the comic's relaunch in 1967, the picture-stories contained within the comics magazine required the narrative text in order for a comprehension of the image as there was no longer the semblance of narrative progression found in the images. Rather, the images, their meaning, and how they were connected with the images and actions before and after in the sequence were described in the textual narrative appearing beneath the comics' frame. An interpretation of the image beyond what was explicitly stated in the text was thus prevented as the image no longer possessed meaning outside of that text.

⁵³ McCloud, *Understanding*, 66-7; Richard Ivan Jobs, "Tarzan Under Attack: Youth, Comics, and Cultural Reconstruction in Postwar France," *French Historical Studies* 26, no. 4 (Fall 2003): 691-2; Martin Barker, *Comics: Ideology, Power, and the Critics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), 279-81; and Fredric Wertham, *Seduction of the Innocent* (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1954).

⁵⁴ John A. Lent, "Introduction: The Comics Debate Internationally: Their Genesis, Issues, and Commonalities," in *Pulp Demons: International Dimensions of the Postwar Anti-Comics Campaign*, ed. John A. Lent (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1999), 21-5. Here, Lent suggests that the comic-picture book developed exactly due to the perceived lack of educational value inherent in comics, particularly in the German example.

⁵⁵ McCloud, *Understanding*, 63-6.

Mosaik was less affected by these structural changes, although it was never the ideology free-zone it was sometimes considered by its readers.⁵⁶ The sequential nature of the art remained a necessary component of *Mosaik*'s storytelling. Narration boxes were not entirely done away with, as they were with *Atze*, but were limited, relying on the progression of the images and the dialogue of the characters to propel the story forward. Whereas *Atze*, as the more controlled of the two comics due to Hegen's influence over and Altenburger's willingness to run interference for *Mosaik* with the FDJ's Central Committee, removed dialogue bubbles entirely and incorporated that dialogue into the narrative below the panel, *Mosaik*'s editors moved these dialogue bubbles to the margins of the panels, squaring them off to create the perception of new borders for those panels.⁵⁷ This change was presumably the result of complaints leveled against the perceived clarity of the images as those similar complaints were made against *Atze*. This allowed the gutters to retain their significance in the reading of comics as well as maintaining the notion that "reading" comics was an exercise distinct from either the reading of text or the viewing of an image in its understanding of iconography over the concrete.⁵⁸

During the 1960s, *Mosaik* was almost constantly under attack for its adherence to the western comics tradition and what was perceived to be bourgeois culture derived from those working on the publication. Indeed, according to Stasi observations and complaints made by the FDJ and *Thälmann* Pioneers, the comics under the direction and guidance of Hegen were considered to follow western tendencies since their inception right through the end of the *Weltraum-Serie* when Hegen's voice as sole creative influence was diminished. On numerous occasions, the regime considered the dissolution of *Mosaik* and the firing of its staff for

⁵⁶ Dolores L. Augustine, *Red Prometheus: Engineering and Dictatorship in East Germany, 1945-1990* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), 230.

⁵⁷ Lettkemann, *Schuldig*, 40-9. *Mosaik* did for a time in the 1960s implement the comic-picture book format adopted by *Atze*, though this did not last long.

⁵⁸ McCloud, *Understanding*, 39-49.

following the western trappings of the comics genre. However, this action never came to pass as a result of the magazine's popularity and its ability to sell copies. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, *Mosaik* proved an important economic pillar for its publisher, *Verlag Neues Leben* and after 1960 *Verlag Junge Welt*.⁵⁹ But if *Atze* was forced to comply with the demands of the FDJ and the SED regime, why was *Mosaik* not also made to follow suit? The answer to this may be found with the relationship between the 1955 *Verordnung zum Schutz der Jugend*, the physical and seemingly permanent inner-German border and the conditions under which *Mosaik* was created at that time.

Although the 1955 Regulations made the possession of western comics in violation of GDR law, those comics still existed and could not be regulated by GDR authorities outside their own jurisdiction. Without the actuality of the Berlin Wall, and to a lesser extent the mined and patrolled inner-German border between the GDR and the Federal Republic, youth had the opportunity for the cross-border consumption of comics just as they did western music, film, and other media. In fact, Gerd Lettkemann notes that during this time and as a result of the open border in Germany and comics-smuggling was rife, particularly along Berlin's S-Bahn line through Schönhauser Allee station in the East-Sector of the city. Here, East Berliners could purchase all manner of reading material including western children's books and comics.⁶⁰ This is not to suggest rebellion or subversion on the part of youth, though in some cases it was undoubtedly the case, but the lack of physical division made consumption and influence a potential threat that the regime could not easily control. As suggested by Dorothee Wierling, the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 and the previous closure of the inner-German border in the early 1950s were intended to regulate this real and imagined cross-border cultural

⁵⁹ BStU, MfS, HA II Abt. 3, AP, Nr. 10321/64.

⁶⁰ Lettkemann, "Comics," 321-2.

consumption and convince those youth skeptical of socialist development in the East.⁶¹ Of course, comics were not the only form of western influence that worried the regime, but as both the SED and the FDJ maintained the Stalinist-era notion of the socialist personality as the mandate and ideological corner-stone in the larger development of state-socialism, the regulation of Western comics became a focus of East German cultural policy related to youth and children.⁶² While the Regulations may have prevented many instances of comics possession by East German children, and with that the possession of other examples of West German *Schmutzliteratur*, the Berlin Wall put western comics beyond the reach of most East German children until the implementation of the Basic Treaty in 1972.⁶³

Despite the perceived threat posed by western comics, their popularity fostered the initial creation of *Mosaik* itself. Upon its creation in 1955, Hegen's *Mosaik* was intended to combat these western comics using capitalism's own weapons. In "The Digedags Go West: Images of America in an East German Comic Strip," American Studies scholar Catrin Gersdorf states that Hegen looked toward Disney's character models in his search for a genuine style for *Mosaik*. This comics magazine was thus meant to direct the impulses of child readers, fulfilling their need for romanticism and adventure, traits that operated outside of the model socialist realism mandated four years later, while also demonstrating and educating on a perceptibly socialist worldview and morality. The *Digedags* apparent ability to travel through time was therefore, according to Gersdorf, meant to impart the necessary historical consciousness, though it lacked

⁶¹ Wierling, 157-161.

⁶² Lettkemann, "Comics," 322.

⁶³ Jovanovich and Koch, 94. This is not to suggest that the German-German Basic Treaty considered the regulation and sale of comics between the two states, but with the normalization of relations that went with the treaty came the resumption of smuggling, including comics and children's literature, across the inner-German border.

the appropriate representation of class struggle.⁶⁴ Although this inconsistency appears problematic, the perceived failings of *Mosaik* to impart the Marxist worldview to its child-readership stemmed from the FDJ's and *Verlag Neues Leben*'s original intentions for the comics. The decision to pursue Hegen's proposal for the *Digedags* came as the result of the FDJ ordering the publishing director of *Verlag Neues Leben* to create a socialist counterpart to Mickey Mouse.⁶⁵ Moreover, the first issue of *Mosaik* featuring the *Digedags* was titled "*Die Jagd nach dem Golde* (The Hunt for the Gold)."⁶⁶ This title is far removed from the appropriate socialist worldview upon which *Mosaik* was purportedly founded and which the FDJ sought to promote. Rather, the title alluded directly to the Carl Barks' Disney comics made available by American occupation troops.⁶⁷ While later issues of *Mosaik* demonstrated the *Digedags* helping "child-like" natives from imperialist thieves in these early issues, the *Digedags* proved closer to Disney's treasure hunting ducks.⁶⁸

In essence, *Mosaik*, attempted to lure children away from western comics precisely by emulating those comics. *Mosaik*, and by extension the FDJ, thus found itself in an unenviable position after 1961. The comic was founded as a competitor to the influence of Disney and capitalism in the GDR, employing the trappings of tropes of the comics genre in the Western world. It was these western tropes that drew children to *Mosaik* in numbers that greatly outpaced

⁶⁴ Catrin Gersdorf, "The Digedags Go West: Images of America in an East German Comic Strip," *Journal of American Culture* 19, no. 2 (July 1996): 36.

⁶⁵ Reinhard Pfeiffer, *Von Hannes Hegen bis Erich Schmitt: Lexikon der Karikaturisten, Presse- und Comic-Zeichner der DDR* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf Verlag, 1998), 38 & 128.

⁶⁶ *Mosaik* von Hannes Hegen 1/1955.

⁶⁷ "Four Color #62," *Grand Comics Database*, <http://www.comics.org/issue/4095/> (accessed 29 December 2015) and "The Complete Carl Barks Library #14—Walt Disney's Uncle Scrooge: The Seven Cities of Gold," *Grand Comics Database*, <http://www.comics.org/issue/1264699/> (accessed 29 December 2015). In January 1945, Carl Barks published a story titled "Frozen Gold" in *Four Color* comics and "The Seven Cities of Gold" in *Uncle Scrooge* in September 1954.

⁶⁸ Augustine, 236.

Atze, at least until Altenburger assumed control of *Atze* in 1966.⁶⁹ To significantly change fundamental aspects of *Mosaik* could potentially threaten the comics' audience. This amounted to the same reason why the regime refused to dissolve *Mosaik* entirely as doing so would undercut the economic base of the publisher. This did not equate to freedom from ideological influence, but brought youth squarely, albeit superficially, under the influence of educators.⁷⁰

Following complaints regarding its poorly perceived representation of history and character ethnicity during the *Digedags*' early adventures, the *Weltraum-Serie* emerged in December 1958 as the most ideological story to date, driven by the increasing interest in space and technology in the late 1950s fostered by the successful orbital launch of the Sputnik satellite.⁷¹ The story itself revolved around the kidnapping of Dig and Dag, two of the three main characters of *Mosaik*, to the planet Neos.⁷² Their adventures over the next two years served to introduce children to the science and technology essential to the construction of socialism in the East German state as the comics were peppered with "textbook-like explanations of technology."⁷³ As Dolores Augustine suggests in her monograph, *Red Prometheus: Engineering and Dictatorship in East Germany*, at the behest of the regime and the importance placed on their "scientific-technological revolution," *Mosaik* demonstrated alien technologies identical to those found in the GDR (Fig. 6). The use of these technologies thus followed the assumption that technology and design were universal. Part of this rationale stemmed from the pride of place afforded industrial technologies under socialism and the perceived importance of

⁶⁹ Lettkemann, *Schuldig*, 44.

⁷⁰ Wierling, 157.

⁷¹ BArch DY 26/114, "Dokumentation zur Bilderzeitschrift 'Mosaik'," 3; Augustine, 230; and Rubin, 104.

⁷² *Mosaik von Hannes Hegen* 12/1958.

⁷³ Augustine, 232.

technology in the elevation of East Germany's international status.⁷⁴ This favouritism may be attributed to the ideology of the Cold War itself and the space race in particular.⁷⁵ At the same

Figure 6. *Mosaik* issue 38, page 10, 1960. The *Weltraum-serie* introduced readers to alien technologies remarkably similar to those used in the Soviet Bloc. Capitalizing on interest in the space-race initiated by the successful launch of Sputnik in 1957, Dig and Dag used technology similar to that used in the Soviet space program.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 230 & 244.

⁷⁵ "Die Digidags in *Mosaik*," DDR-Comics.de, <http://ddr-comics.de/digidags.htm> (accessed 15 December 2015).

time, this interest spoke to a decidedly East German interest and pride surrounding the Soviet space program. Recent research discredits the Sputnik satellite as being German built, but German engineers were in part responsible for the technological know-how behind the early successes of the Soviet program. This pride only grew as the East German military technologies combine, *Zeiss*, became heavily involved in manufacturing for the Soviet space program and Sigmund Jähn became the first German man in space, both in the latter half of the 1970s.⁷⁶ In the meantime, the *Weltraum-Serie* allowed *Mosaik*'s new writer Lothar Drägar, whose father was an engineer and was an avid reader of stories with "apolitical" engineers in his youth, to convey scientific information regarding discoveries in space, the harsh conditions experienced by humans during space travel, and the history of modern aerospace and transportation technologies.⁷⁷ While this informational content addressed some of the educational concerns surrounding the comics, the FDJ thought the creators of the comics took too long implementing the ideological educational demands made upon them.⁷⁸

As such, the *Weltraum-Serie* was largely considered to be uninspired as far as science-fiction stories go, despite the inclusion of scientific facts and the appearance of historical figures in the stories.⁷⁹ The 1966 proposal for the introduction of *Atze*'s new profile meanwhile praised science fiction as a means of predicting the future of life under socialism as spurring the creativity of youth to its successful construction.⁸⁰ Eli Rubin suggests this shift toward science or utopian fiction in *Mosaik* and elsewhere in children's literature stemmed from scientific

⁷⁶ Augustine 3-9 and 306-7.

⁷⁷ Thomas Kramer, *Micky, Marx und Manitu* (Berlin: Weidler Buchverlag, 2002), 210-2.

⁷⁸ BArch DY 26/173, "Der Bildgeschichte in den Kinderzeitungen und -zeitschriften," 197.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 197. One blogger likens the use of flying taxis (*Raumtaxis*) with their more recent appearances in Western films such as *Star Wars* and *The Fifth Element*. See Alex Zander, "Die Digidags sind die Beatles aller deutschen Comics," *Freestland Vorpommern: Wo die Ostsee am süßesten ist*, <https://freestland.wordpress.com/2012/04/01/die-digidags-sind-die-beatles-des-deutschen-comics/> (accessed 8 June 2016).

⁸⁰ BArch DY 24/1581, "Konzeption für das neue Profil der Bilderzeitschrift 'Atze'," A3.

developments out of the Soviet Union. Breakthroughs in chemical engineering spread through all branches of East German media and effectively replaced the iconography of Communism with the imagery of science, including rocket ships, as markers of the new technological-scientific zeitgeist in the SED-state.⁸¹ Drafts of the proposal presented to the FDJ suggest that the main characters of *Atze* guide the reader through the science and technology of the future, with only slight disparities between the drafts. The draft of August 1966 clearly states that the characters of *Atze*, here the name of a character and not the title of the *Wort-Bildergeschichte*, and his sister should lead the child-readers through the scientific advancements up to the year 1990.⁸² The draft discussed and decided upon in the Secretariat of the Central Committee in October 1966 removes mention of those characters and suggests a much nearer time-frame of “the next 15 years.”⁸³ In both cases, however, importance was placed upon the use of science fiction in *Atze* to excite children about the technological utopian future of socialism and how that technology would take shape as the child-readers came into their own in society. While *Mosaik’s Weltraum-Serie* played to the interests of children through its inclusion of East German inspired technology, it often ignored the role of citizens through the bizarre absence of consumer and household technologies.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Rubin, 32.

⁸² BArch DY 24/1581, “Konzeption für das neue Profil der Bilderzeitschrift ‘Atze’,” 9.

⁸³ BArch DY 24/1585, “Die Geschichte der Productivkräfte in Zukunft und Vergangenheit,” 6.

⁸⁴ Augustine, 234. Augustine here suggests that *Mosaik* contributed to the suppression of the consumer desires of East German citizens and of the child-readers themselves by privileging industrial technologies. At the same time, however, and somewhat uncritically, Augustine cites an *Amazon.de* review of a *Mosaik* collected edition as evidence of *Mosaik’s* freedom from ideology. This tends to ignore the gap between the inclusion of material for propagandistic purposes and the reader’s perception of that propagandistic and ideological educational material. See Augustine, 256 (note 65).

***Mosaik*, Western Influence, and Depictions of the “Wild West.”**

Discussed in the meeting of the Secretariat of the Central Committee FDJ held on 4 October 1966 were notes for the continued publication of *Mosaik*. The notes of this discussion framed *Mosaik* as a “funny, entertaining picture magazine,” but one of which the profile and direction could not be significantly changed due to the popularity of the comic. It was suggested that the motivations of the *Digedags* needed to result from their role as folk heroes “that act in word and deed on the side of the people against the ruling class and their lackeys, and always help the poor and exploited.” At the same time, the secondary characters were required to demonstrate greater awareness of their situation and their class-based roles in the world at large. It was also suggested that the setting itself required a drastic overhaul. In the two series preceding the *Weltraum-Serie* and the *Ritter Runkel-Serie* (Knight Runkel series) that followed, the stories were located in kingdoms and castles where the *Digedags* hobnobbed with royalty. As such, the notes suggested that the adventures of the *Digedags* be removed from these grandiose settings, with which *Mosaik*’s young readership could supposedly not relate as children of the proletariat, and relocated to areas occupied by the working-class. This shift in locales allowed stories to focus on the production of material goods and the socialist struggle.⁸⁵ In other words, the notes addressed those aspects of the comics that could be turned toward the development and socialist, ideological education imperative to the socialist personality, as the FDJ employed the comics and the surrounding culture in service to the state and the educational regime, without undermining that which was thought to make *Mosaik* popular and unique with its audience.

As a result, the continuation of *Mosaik* required the formation of a reading group formed by the publishing director of *Verlag Junge Welt* and answerable to Altenburger as Editor-in-

⁸⁵ BArch DY 26/1585, “Information für die Weiterführung der Bilderzeitschrift ‘Mosaik’,” 2-3.

Chief, marking a further decrease in the amount of control Hegen had over his own creation. This reading group was tasked with examining forthcoming issues of the comic for their ideological content, historical consciousness, and the perceived ethical behaviour and motivations of the characters within. Moreover, Hegen and the *Mosaik-Kollektiv* provided the reading group with annual plans regarding the continuation of current story-series.⁸⁶ These provided the group with an ideological blueprint of how the comics were suppose to be read and understood. Annual plans allowed the reading group to pinpoint issues or aspects of the stories that potentially deviated from the proposed ideological format and content. This policing effort, such as it was and such as the publishers were able to employ without fundamentally changing *Mosaik*, sought to ensure that these comics were not simply mirrors of the western *Schundliteratur* upon which they were based. This oversight brought East German comics, *Mosaik* in particular, more closely in line with the publishing practices, the unofficial censorship regime, and processes of negotiation between creation and publication prominent in other areas of GDR literature as discussed by Robert Darnton.⁸⁷

Following the Central Committee's discussion regarding the continuation of *Mosaik* and the need to monitor the socialist and educational content and nature of the comics, 1968 saw the submission of a proposal for what would become the *Amerika-Serie*. Approved by the FDJ's Central Committee on 10 October, this proposal was a result of the decision taken two years earlier that required the *Mosaik-Kollektiv* to submit annual plans for the benefit of the assigned reading group.⁸⁸ The *Amerika-Serie* effectively spun the required implementation of ideology in *Mosaik* in a way that was not nearly as heavy handed as some of the overt ideology-driven stories appearing in *Atze*. One of the immediate effects of this was the perceived lack of

⁸⁶ Ibid, 2-3.

⁸⁷ Darnton, 151-7.

⁸⁸ BArch DC 9/1628, "Kurzkonzeption der 'Mosaik' -Reihe, Berlin 10.10.1968," 1-2.

ideology in the comic and the resultant arguments made by both Augustine and Gersdorf above. The *Amerika-Serie* explored the recent past in the United States and the development of what the authors framed as a “typical” capitalist state. In keeping with the imperatives set forth by the FDJ in establishing comics as a perceived extension of the classroom, the purpose of the series was to educate *Mosaik*’s child-readers on the development of capitalist society at the end of the American civil war in 1865. The proposal said little regarding the details of individual issues or of the series generally, but summarized the overall purpose and arc of the entire series in a finite space. As such, the ideology is much more apparent in this condensed form than in the decompressed story-telling of the completed six year story (1969-1974). The historical accuracy of the series required of the comic was thus filtered through the Marxist-socialist lens of the state. In this way, the American civil war was represented as the consolidation of capitalist powers, painting exploitation in northern factories and southern plantations in broad strokes and with the same brush.⁸⁹

In casting the social background for this series, the United States is posited as a wilderness, a frontier to be conquered by the people living with and working the land, but also a frontier that played to the German imaginary. While notions of speculation, fraud, extortion, land grabs, and sensational journalism are suggested to be the means through which the capitalist exploiters secure and strengthen their positions in American society, these problems are constructed against a backdrop which includes “adventurers and gunslingers...in the world of the railroad workers, black and white farmers, and the betrayed American indigenous population.” It is important to note here that the authors thought to include reference to what was considered the American “wild west.” Not only this, but railroad companies and gold prospectors are characterized as thieves and cheats while the deeds of those workers in clearing the land,

⁸⁹ Ibid, 1-2.

building that same exploitative railroad, and westward expansion in general are heroicized.⁹⁰

This latter point is somewhat problematic as it concurrently attempts to denounce the perceived exploitation of the working class and justifies and even romanticizes the American imperialist project across the North American continent. More important, perhaps, this representation tapped into a cultural zeitgeist, discussed above in regard to the East German fascination with space travel since the launch of Sputnik, by directly connecting *Mosaik* and the *Digedags* to the fictional work and legacy of German author Karl May as a “cultural touchstone of adventure narratives,” as suggested by Brad Prager in his review of Thomas Kramer.⁹¹

As the proposal itself claims that “this period is described in the books of Mark Twain and Jack London,” the *Amerika-Serie* drew upon the adventurous spirit of the American nineteenth century as it appeared in literature.⁹² Neither Twain nor London was particularly socialist in their politics, but followed through with varying degrees of social activism. However, each author famously represented the American experience which was then couched in the necessary socialist humanism and moralistic qualities appreciable to the comics’ editorial board. These authors wrote of the average man, the exploited classes, particularly in the cases of Twain’s characters of Huck, Jim, and Injun Joe, as they struggle against their environment and the rules made to keep them from wresting power from the bourgeoisie.⁹³ Perhaps more important insofar as German literary traditions are concerned, the suggestion of adventurers and

⁹⁰ Ibid, 1-2.

⁹¹ Brad Prager, “Mickey, Marx und Manitu. Zeit- und Kulturgeschichte im Spiegel eines DDR-Comics 1955-1990. Mosaik als Fokus von Medienerlebnissen im NS und in der DDR by Thomas Kramer. Review,” *The German Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 364. Robert Darnton notes that Erich Honecker, who came to power while the *Amerika-Serie* was in mid-publication, was a great fan of the Karl May westerns and hoped to see DEFA films made of them. See Darnton, 168.

⁹² BArch DC 9/1628, “Kurzkonzeption der ‘Mosaik’ –Reihe, Berlin 10.10.1968,” 1.

⁹³ Myra Jehlen, “Banned in Concord: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and Classic American Literature,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Mark Twain*, ed. by Forrest G. Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 111 and Ku’ualoha Meyer Ho’omanawanui, “Hero or Outlaw? Two Views of Kaluaiko’olau,” in *Navigating Islands and Continents: Conversations and Contestations in and Around the Pacific*, ed. by Cynthia Franklin, Ruth Hsu, Suzanne Kosanke (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i, 2000), 244.

gunslingers as opponents to the American proletariat recasts the westerns of May. A popular late nineteenth century writer from the German state of Saxony, May was arguably best known for his series of *Winnetou* novels. These were set in the American Old West prior to and during the period of American westward expansion and starred an American indigenous chief, Winnetou, and his German blood-brother, Old Shatterhand.

Like the novels of London and Twain, May's writings tapped into the man versus nature and the man versus his oppressor and exploiter conflicts that the *Mosaik's Amerika-Serie* attempted to address. At the same time, these writings, the *Amerika-Serie* included, sought out the uniquely German fascination with the American experience and the conquering of the North American continent. This fascination may potentially be attributed to the German lack of a similar reference point.⁹⁴ Given the relative newness of American settlement compared to that of Europe, tales of and the idea of the unconquered frontier remained fresh in the collective imaginary. This perceived fascination serves to explain why May, a contemporary of both Twain and London, wrote about an American indigenous character and his gun-slinging blood-brother, though not visiting the American continent until much later in his career.⁹⁵ Likewise, by the time the *Amerika-Serie* went to press, the SED regime already employed the image of the American "Indian" in state-sanctioned histories as that of a people victimized and resisting the imperialist manifest destiny of the fledgling United States' westward expansion. East Germans identified with those indigenes, themselves struggling to prevent their own identity from being subsumed by their Western neighbours. This interest also led to the expansion of hobbyists clubs in the GDR dedicated to the American "Indian" as "freedom-loving hero" and serves to explain

⁹⁴ See H. Glenn Penny, *Kindred by Choice: Germans and American Indians since 1800* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

⁹⁵ Jan Fleischhauer, "Germany's Best-Loved Cowboy: The Fantastical World of Cult Novelist Karl May," *Spiegel Online International*, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/marking-the-100th-anniversary-of-german-cult-author-karl-may-s-death-a-824566.html> (accessed 5 January 2016).

why they were popular in the (East) German consciousness and marketplace.⁹⁶ The persisting popularity of American indigenous people worked well in terms of official representations of the United States as imperialist aggressors and conflicts between the two found form in fiction and films.⁹⁷

As such, the *Amerika-Serie* entertained by addressing this fascination with frontiers and overcoming them that served as a backdrop to the political, ideological narrative that grounded the stories. If the *Weltraum-Serie* attempted to demonstrate the potential of the socialist utopia common to Marxist thought in a setting the grasped the imaginations of youthful readers, the *Amerika-Serie* followed in a similar fashion. Jettisoning the notion of the Marxist utopia for this story, the *Digedags* adventures in America unbalanced the socialist status quo by visiting the capitalist state. After this, the story operated in much the same way as the *Weltraum-Serie* by overlaying and addressing of the fundamental tenets of socialism in a landscape and environment already popularized in German collective imagination, as happened in Red Westerns such as *Die Söhne der großen Bärin* (The Sons of the Great She-Bear) with much more socialist oriented scripts than the Karl May films produced in the Federal Republic.⁹⁸ By employing genres that were already popular among children and youth as framing devices for the stories in *Mosaik*, the writers and the creators rendered the required ideological components in service to those stories and their entertainment value, though not entirely invisible to the child-readers. In each case,

⁹⁶ Penny, 1-24 and Nancy Reagin, "Dances with Worlds: Karl May, 'Indian' Hobbyists, and German Fans of the American West since 1912," *Participations: Journal of Audience & Reception Studies* 13, no. 1 (May 2016): 567.

⁹⁷ The Red Western has its own history in the GDR arguably beginning with the production and release of *Die Söhne der großen Bärin* (The Sons of the Great She-Bear) in 1966. Contrary to Hollywood westerns, these films cast American indigene as the heroes and the white men as villains, causing them to be dubbed "revisionist." West German produced films based on the books of Karl May, while not distributed in East Germany, were often viewed by tourists in the neighbouring Czechoslovak SSR. See Daniela Berghahn, *Hollywood Behind the Wall: The Cinema of East Germany* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2005); Colin G. Calloway, Gerd Gemunden, and Susanne Zantop, eds., *Germans and Indians: Fantasies, Encounters, Projections* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002); Christian Heermann, *Old Shatterhand Ritt Nicht im Auftrag der Arbeiterklasse: Warum war Karl May in SBZ und DDR 'Verboten'?* (Dessau: Anhaltische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1995).

⁹⁸ Reagin, 567.

frontiers were employed to engage children with a sense of discovery and wonder, drawing on that discussed German fascination, suggesting to the children that they, as readers, were the first to discover these alien, in both the cosmic and foreign senses, landscapes alongside *Mosaik*'s protagonists (Fig. 7).

Beginning their journey in New Orleans and the Mississippi River, arguably one of the more important landscapes in the post-civil war America, the *Digedags* won out over the plantation owners, insurance agents, the Ku Klux Klan, and the sheriffs of the bourgeoisie with use of their "important weapons...wit, resourcefulness, courage, and sense of belonging to the working people."⁹⁹ As Patrick Major suggests, in the mid to late 1950s, violence in comics and fiction replaced sex as an indicator of American "pulp" and *Unkultur* that ran up against assertions of a unique postwar identity on both sides of the inner-German border.¹⁰⁰ This non-violent approach to conflict resolution in East German comics, specifically *Mosaik*, resulted from complaints made against the comics in 1960 as a means of conflict resolution.¹⁰¹ Officially, all pulp literature, including comics, was an "affliction of western capitalism," particularly due to the overwhelming use of sex and violence, but also because these forms of *Schundliteratur* were useful in describing "western notions of personal freedom."¹⁰² By the *Amerika-Serie* in 1968, the *Digedags* were representative of the pacifism preached by socialist propaganda when fending

⁹⁹ BArch DC 9/1628, "Kurzkonzeption der 'Mosaik' -Reihe, Berlin 10.10.1968," 1-2.

¹⁰⁰ Patrick Major, "'Smut and Trash': Germany's Culture Wars against Pulp Fiction," in *Mass Media, Culture, and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany*, ed. Karl Christian Führer and Corey Ross (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2006), 243-6. The growing presence of sex and violence in comics, not only in divided Germany, but throughout Western Europe and North America, ultimately caused uproar among parents, educators, and medical professionals linking the actions on the comic page with the perceived rise in juvenile delinquency. As around 95% of all children in the United States read comics, such causal relationships were impossible to prove. This did not stop critics of comics like Fredric Wertham from pursuing these accusations. While these same arguments were echoed in Europe, including the Soviet Bloc, other more pressing arguments focused on the influence of American culture on the state, "control over cultural power" through the child-readers, and questions of national identity and civilization in an ideologically divided world. See, James Chapman, *British Comics: a Cultural History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011), 46-9; Danziger-Russell, 6-10; Jobs, 695-704; Jovanovich and Kock, 98-110; Wright, 87-96.

¹⁰¹ Lettkemann, *Schuldig*, 38.

¹⁰² Major, 244-5.

off the violence and exploitation of the American frontier. After Mississippi, the *Digedags* followed the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad westward across the Rocky Mountains and into Nevada and Colorado.¹⁰³ This trajectory embraced the discovery and exploration that was inherent to both the *Weltraum*- and *Amerika-Serie* as not only did it follow the course of American imperialism from East to West across the continent, but similarly followed the construction of the railway as the great unifier of the United States as a capitalist political and economic entity.¹⁰⁴

As the proposal suggested that the civil war allowed capitalism to solidify its grasp over the proletariat that quite literally built the American nation, overall the *Amerika-Serie* taught its readership how that capitalism flourished in the wake of war. In doing so, the aspects that popularized the genres employed by the *Amerika-Serie* made representatives of the bourgeoisie antagonistic toward the *Digedags* as the readership's perspective characters. This in turn made the plantation owners, the entrepreneurs, the gunslingers, and the prospectors that were often heroicized in American literature and comics, antagonistic toward the East German children themselves as was often the case in the tradition of the Red Western. As H. Glenn Penny recently argues, reversing the dynamic of the Hollywood western, Red Westerns located evil within "a small group of men," not unlike the ideological thrusts made in *Mosaik*.¹⁰⁵

In "The Digedags Go West," Gersdorf suggests that the *Amerika-Serie* provided both a real and mythical depiction of the United States through its combination of the *Digedags* fictional journey combined with the historical accuracy demanded by the FDJ. In doing so, this

¹⁰³ BArch DC 9/1628, "Kurzkonzeption der 'Mosaik' -Reihe, Berlin 10.10.1968," 2.

¹⁰⁴ Ronald E. Robinson, "Introduction: Railway Imperialism," in *Railway Imperialism*, ed. Clarence B. Davis and Kenneth E. Wilburn, Jr. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1991), 1-7.

¹⁰⁵ Penny, 177.

representation inverted the notion of the United States as imperialist enemy as the story recreated America for children as a place of fun and adventure by drawing upon the fascinations with

Figure 7. Coloured Warriors/Sioux-Indians. *Amerika-serie* design drawings by the Mosaik-Kollektiv.

frontiers within the German psyche. Gersdorf continues that the *Amerika-Serie* exemplified the problematic interaction between that historical accuracy and ideology in *Mosaik*. In positioning the *Digedags* in the heart of the United States at a point in history when the American nation was truly rebuilding itself as a united entity, the *Amerika-Serie* affirmed East German socialism as much as it subverted that system. The critique of the United States and of American culture was integral to the *Amerika-Serie*. Moreover, this critique was essential for the educational aspects of comics in the GDR and to the FDJ's acquiescence toward the publication of the series.

Depositing the *Digedags* on the American continent, however, allowed the writers to deconstruct the monocular notion of the American people and landscape being synonymous with the perceived capitalist and militarist imperialism of the United States as it appeared in East German

and Soviet rhetoric. At the same time, according to Gersdorf, this demonstrated that western capitalist imperialism, led by the United States and built on the backs of the American working class, was not in the process of imminent collapse as the regime often touted in speeches, literature, and in the pages of *Kinderzeitschriften* such as *Atze*.¹⁰⁶

In this, Gersdorf suggests that *Mosaik* provided numerous avenues by which readers could enter into and engage with the stories and the characters, providing ample opportunity to subvert the intentions of the FDJ just as much as other, contradictory modes of engagement served to support the state, the regime, and its methods.¹⁰⁷ That is to say that *Mosaik* was both a space of private interaction and a tool of the state's educational and ideological imperatives, allowing for a sense of voluntary participation with socialism through the perception of limited individualism and criticism of the authorities. The FDJ's inability to reconcile the tyranny of the producers and the heroism of the working class as both laboured toward the construction of the United States via the transnational railroad, the *Amerika-Serie* typifies Gersdorf's multiple paths of childhood identification in *Mosaik*. And while the proposal for this series construed capitalists and imperialists as clear antagonists to the *Digedags*, the American proletariat, and the African-American peoples, the writers allowed for this to not always appear the case as the lines between capitalist and socialist were blurred and sometimes inverted. On their journey across America, the *Digedags* acquire travelling companions as they go: a Southern plantation owner turned philanthropist and his daughter, American indigenous people, and a frustrated US army officer "fed up with the frontier."¹⁰⁸ This representation provides the United States, more generally, the ability of redemption through the turn toward socialism. Meanwhile, the army officer's disillusionment with the frontier attempts to subvert the romantic ideal of the American

¹⁰⁶ Gersdorf, 42.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 42.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 41.

west and of westward expansion and imperialism that enthralled the youthful imaginary not only in the *Amerika-Serie*, but also the mentioned works of Twain and London and the popular writings of May. This demonstrated that, although capitalism may not be on the verge of collapse as socialist leaders have argued since Lenin's time, not all capitalists are evil and capitalism itself can change through the application of socialist education and the demonstration of socialist will.¹⁰⁹ This depiction turned the United States into a place that was not inherently bad as independently suggested by Gersdorf and Penny, while still demonstrating socialism as saviour of the exploited through cooperation and education.

As the FDJ insisted upon this coexistence of education and entertainment in the comics published by *Verlag Junge Welt*, the historical nature of the comics' backdrop, or technological accuracy in the case of the *Weltraum-Serie*, drew readers to socialism by tapping into the cultural zeitgeist. Gersdorf argues that this historical backdrop allowed children to access multiple paths of meaning in *Mosaik*, effectively demonstrating the notion of *Eigen-Sinn* in their readings of the comics, as the use of that backdrop deconstructed two-dimensional notions of the United States and of capitalism apparent in SED and FDJ rhetoric. While Gersdorf is correct in her assertion, this does not detract from the socialist educational nature of the comics and its importance to the state or to the child-reader's development within the state. Rather, the appearance of accuracy in the historical backdrop and the multiple paths of meaning espoused by this serves to obfuscate the perception of East German comics, *Mosaik* specifically, as sites of oppression and rigid ideology. Discussed above, the 1960s saw a fundamental shift in the presentation of comics as a

¹⁰⁹ This notion speaks to what Penny said above regarding evil in the Red Western being attributable to a handful of men rather than society at large. Moreover, the notion of capitalism's redemption through socialism looks toward Marxist thought with socialism as the end of history and the ultimate and unshakable future of the crumbling capitalist state. As Augustine notes, the *Digedags* were often able to win out their antagonists through the application of education and their practical ability to get the job done through hard work, represented by the "dominant, pragmatic, experience-based school of engineering." See Augustine, 230.

medium of children's literature in the GDR. This transformation streamlined and controlled medium-specific aspects of the comics in order to narrow the range of meaning that could be taken away by the child-reader. The potential subversion of the socialist cause, suggested by Gersdorf, thus presents the illusion of individual interpretation as readers were continually guided through the *Amerika-Serie* by the disillusionment of former representatives of the bourgeoisie apparent in the gutters of the comics where that disillusionment was intended to penetrate the readers' imaginations. As such, the child-reader's interpretation of *Mosaik* through the notion of *Eigen-Sinn* constructed the comics' space as site of dialogue between child-tastes and interests and the intended message of the FDJ. That said, the range of interpretation was still delimited by the regime through the manipulation of the comics' form itself.

***Frösi* Meets Sigmund Jähn and the Red Western.**

The *Amerika-serie* was not the only instance where the regime tapped and inverted the tropes of the American western to entice the child-readership of East German comics. In late March 1981, the *Kinderzeitschrift Frösi* hosted a gathering of children, their parents, entertainers, and artists associated with the magazine. This *Frösi-treff* (meet-up with *Frösi*) allowed fans of the magazine and its comics to participate in a ninety minute stage show that included music and dancing from the students of the *Haus der Jungen Talente Berlin* (House for Young Talents in Berlin), famous East German writers, and hosted by the television personality, Adi, from the children's program *Macht mit, mach's nach, mach's besser*. Amidst the music, the inevitable political agenda, and the opportunity to interact with a number of people responsible for the more popular comic strips found in the pages of *Frösi*, such as *Käpt'n Lütt* by Horst Alisch and *Otto und Alwin* by Jürgen Günther, children were treated to an appearance by the

Serbian actor, Gojko Mitić. Mitić was perhaps best known for his role in the popularization of the Red Western, or the *Ostern* (East western), in the 1960s and 1970s. Appearing in *Die Söhne der großen Bärin*, Mitić was typecast as the heroic, indigenous chief in numerous films produced by DEFA (*Deutsche Film Aktiengesellschaft*), the East German state-owned film production company.¹¹⁰ And although Mitić's role in the *Frösi-treff* was relatively minor, he came on stage performing the songs "Lösch das Feuer" (Quench the Flame) and "Ein Mann kann viel erzählen" (A Man Can Tell Us Much) with some banter between himself and Adi between and before leaving again, his appearance was significant as the Dramaturge and the Production Director costumed him in indigenous American garb from the DEFA costume department.¹¹¹ As such, Mitić was not appearing as the actor come to greet his fans, but as the character(s) that tapped into the imaginations of the children, and perhaps also the parents, in the audience (Fig. 8).

Mitić's appearance in costume shared thematic similarities to *Mosaik's Amerika-Serie* comics that were released around the same time that the Red Westerns were coming into their own in the GDR. The *Amerika-Serie* made the point of the educational aspects of the stories through the inversion of the good/evil dichotomy typically associated with stories of the American frontier. This included, but was not limited to, the comics' representation of indigenous Americans as an exploited though heroic people with whom the *Digedags* cooperated to vanquish the perceived evils of the early American West and bourgeoisie. Similarly, Mitić's roles, at least in terms of his output in those Red Westerns, were constantly of indigenous Americans as tenacious, determined, and selfless heroes.¹¹² It is not coincidental then that these

¹¹⁰ F.B. Habel, "Biografie-Gojko Mitić—Schauspieler, Stuntman, Autor, Regisseur," *Cinegraph—Lexikon zum deutschsprachigen Film*, http://www.cinegraph.de/lexikon/Mitic_Gojko/biografie.html (accessed 14 January 2016).

¹¹¹ BArch DC 207/686, "Zu klärende Probleme für die Frösi-Veranstaltung."

¹¹² Habel.

Red Westerns appeared in East German popular culture at around the same time as the *Amerika-Serie*. Both attempted to capitalize on a western genre that boomed in the decades following the

Kopie aus dem Bundesarchiv

Figure 8. Gojko Mitić in full costume at the *Frösi-treff, TiP*, 23 March 1981. The actor, often cast as indigenous Americans in DEFA's Red Western, is here associated with his onscreen personas and thus with the German fascination with the American 'Wild West.'

Second World War.¹¹³ And although the comics' audience in 1981 was perhaps unfamiliar with the *Amerika-Serie* as *Mosaik* was officially intended for children nine to sixteen years,

¹¹³ Films such as *Spur der Steine* (Traces of Stone, 1966), one of the unfortunate "Rabbit films" banned at the Eleventh Party Plenum, tapped into this imagery of the western movie to "occupy a place in the East German civic imaginary similar to that of westerns in American self-understanding." It is not coincidental that this film was

approximately coinciding with the transition of youth from the *Thälmann* Pioneers to the FDJ, the fascination with the American West and the frontier persisted in the East German imaginary through the continuation and popularity of the Red Western as a genre.¹¹⁴ In both instances, though, the representation of the indigenous American, and at the *Frösi-treff* through the appearance of Mitić in full costume, played to this in-built fascination, maintaining the interest of the children in the audience while at the same time making a political statement about the evils of western imperialism.

Likewise, as Germany's first cosmonaut aboard the Soviet *Soyuz 31* mission in 1978, Sigmund Jähn's name and image were invoked at the *Frösi-treff*. His visage, and thus the presence of space travel and exploration, was projected above the stage as Adi and the cartoonist Gerhard Vontra quizzed members of the audience. The photo was published in *Frösi* for the anniversary of Jähn's flight and Vontra asked some general questions regarding the cosmonaut's identity and the details of the photo's publication.¹¹⁵ As happened in *Mosaik* in the late 1950s with the *Weltraum-Serie*, the *Frösi-treff* drew upon East Germany's participation and successes with the Soviet space program and the general enthusiasm youth held for the frontiers of space to transfix the attention of the children in the audience. The appearance of Jähn summoned memories of his achievements and the possibilities he represented to the East German state as a whole. He served as a symbol, not only of the possibilities of socialism in the continuance of those successes, but also of the utopian future promised by socialism more broadly. Paul Cooke

produced during the rise of the Red Westerns and the early developmental cycle of the *Amerika-Serie* as they all tapped into this same cultural milieu. See Joshua Feinstein, *The Triumph of the Ordinary: Depictions of Daily Life in the East German Cinema 1949-1989* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 185-6.

¹¹⁴ BArch DY 26/42, "Verlag Junge Welt, Bereich Produktion/Technik, Die Kinderzeitschrift 'Mosaik', Berlin August 1983," 1.

¹¹⁵ BArch DC 207/686, "Teilnehmer, Mitwirkende an der Veranstaltung FRÖSI-TREFF im Tip-Theater," 2. Jähn was supposed to attend the event and Adi's script mentioned Jähn seated in the audience. However, his name and information are struck from the guest list suggesting that this was perhaps a last minute cancellation.

argues that the recent film by Wolfgang Becker, *Good-Bye Lenin!*, employed similar devices as “[t]he importance of this utopian version of the state’s ideology is symbolized throughout in the motif of space travel, and in particular the figure of Sigmund Jähn.”¹¹⁶ Quizzing the children additionally demonstrated that by tapping into the genuine interests of those children and the cultural zeitgeist, the publisher and the creators of *Kinderzeitschriften* could educate without the need for overbearing propaganda campaigns.

While this educational agenda must certainly be considered given the mission statement of East German comics since the reorientation of *Mosaik* and *Atze* in the early to mid-1960s, sometimes entertainment was provided to obfuscate those educational moments as “the political meaning... is often carefully hidden under the entertaining fabric or clad in the garb of heroic adventures.”¹¹⁷ This does not suggest a sinister motive on the part of the FDJ in the attempted formation of the socialist personality within East German youth. Rather, it was important to the regime and to educators that comics take on a role valuable to society and to the development of children for no reason other than that they believed in the ideological discussions Hegen found so patronizing. Often, *Mosaik* was praised for its ability to entertain and, in doing so, to pass along the regime’s historical education.¹¹⁸ But this was not without precedent elsewhere. During the anti-comics campaigns in France, largely revolving around the issue of national identity, concerned groups were convinced of the need to intervene in the reading habits of children and thus provide a “solid education that would form citizens conscious of their

¹¹⁶ Paul Cooke, *Representing East Germany since Unification: From Colonization to Nostalgia* (Oxford: Berg, 2005), 132-3.

¹¹⁷ BArch DY 26/173, “Zu den allgemeinen Aufgaben der Kinderzeitungen und -zeitschriften einer sozialistischen Gesellschaft,” 5.

¹¹⁸ BArch DY 24/8674.

duties.”¹¹⁹ At the same time, West Germans questioned the educational and ethical impact of American comics and the implications this had on children, comparing their violence and morality to the Grimm fairy tales in light of the recent experience with Nazism.¹²⁰ At the *Frösi-treff* in March 1981, then, entertainment was understood to be at the forefront of proceedings as this served to bring the audience into willing participation with the educational components and the perceived socialist personality.

But the appearance of both Mitić and Jähn were included and explored at the *Frösi-treff* for their pedagogical value. Indeed, with a twang attributable to the Red Westerns or even the American western movies that inspired it, Mitić’s song *Löscht das Feuer* is more evocative of the frontier and of the American old west than it is to FDJ ideological influence. Superficially about a man returning home, riding across the desert, Mitić’s song seems influenced more by his own adopted persona and typecasting as an indigenous American than it is about an obvious expression of socialism. And while the songs performed may not have spoken of socialism or encouraged the audience to think or act in a particularly socialist way, the appearance of Mitić in costume looked toward the German fascination with the American indigene and the zeitgeist surrounding such as well as the FDJ’s own insistence upon an East German identification with their plight as victims of imperialism and anti-fascist fighters.¹²¹ Likewise, the talk of Sigmund

¹¹⁹ Richard Ivan Jobs, “Tarzan Under Attack: Youth, Comics, and Cultural Reconstruction in Postwar France,” *French Historical Studies* 26, no. 4 (Fall 2003): 690.

¹²⁰ Jovanovic and Koch, 98. Similarities may also be drawn to the American experience as education remained an imperative for critics of comics, including Wertham. As comics appealed to and largely targeted the working classes since the turn of the twentieth century, there also existed a class-based bias surrounding comics and education that linked comics with the unsophisticated and poorly educated, see Wright, 86-91. This, despite that comics were employed as literacy tools, Shari Sabeti, “Reading Graphic Novels in Schools: Texts, Contexts, and the Interpretive Work of Critical Reading,” *Pedagogy, Culture, & Society* 20, no. 2 (2012): 191. In East Germany, one of the FDJ’s primary tasks was the socialist political education of youth that was inherently bound by notions of national identity and often created events purposefully to combine indoctrination and recreation, see Madarasz, 62-3 and Corey Ross, *Constructing Socialism at the Grass-Roots: The Transformation of East Germany, 1945-65* (Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 2000), 73.

¹²¹ Reagin, 567.

Jähn and the publication of his picture in *Frösi* indicated an educational understanding of a significant moment in East German history specifically connected to the GDR's scientific-technological revolution linked to the development of East German heavy industry, computer technologies, and material goods as argued by Rubin and Augustine.¹²² Quizzing children on the accomplishments of Sigmund Jähn had no inherent entertainment value, but served to remind children of space exploration at the same time that it echoed the GDR's own involvement with those achievements and with the Soviet space program. Similarities may be drawn here to the case of East German television. Quoting the SBZ (Soviet Occupation Zone) regulations concerning the development of programming, Heather Gumbert writes that

in the television studios the first Propaganda-cadres of this 'airwave offensive' are being educated. Instead of 'steamroller tactics' [they] will henceforth attempt to fascinate the West German television audience with humor, sex, and jazz.¹²³

This approach was a decided attempt to appeal to western sensibilities, taking the perceived entertainment war on the offensive. Further, this demonstrates distinct similarities to the approach taken in comics and comics' culture, particularly with reference to the FDJ's use of the zeitgeist as political tool and as argued throughout. Without overt reference to the state, these examples refreshed information learned in other environments and contexts such as the classroom, thus underscoring the comics' unofficial linkages to socialist educational policy, doing so by drawing upon the perceived popularity of the western and sci-fi genres within the popular imaginary.¹²⁴

¹²² Augustine, 230-2 and Rubin 30-2 and 71.

¹²³ Joseph Naftzinger, "Policy-making in the German Democratic Republic: The Response to West German Trans-Border Broadcasting" (PhD diss., University of Maryland at College Park, 1994), cited in Heather Gumbert, *Envisioning Socialism: Television and the Cold War in the German Democratic Republic* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014), 34.

¹²⁴ Alan L. Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth: Historical Mythology and Youth Propaganda in the German Democratic Republic, 1945-1989* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 60-83. Nothnagle here suggests that the FDJ and *Thälmann* Pioneers specifically turned to representations of anti-fascist heroism in popular culture and fairy tales as children were thought to be too young to properly understand the "classics" of

Conclusion.

As a result, the *Frösi-treff* was demonstrative of attitudes toward children and childhood that steadily permeated East German society since the mid-1960s and particularly since Erich Honecker dethroned Walther Ulbricht as leader of the SED in 1971.¹²⁵ In her monograph, *Honecker's Children: Youth and Patriotism in East(ern) Germany, 1979-2002*, Anna Saunders suggests that, as the socialist personality infiltrated youth pedagogy from the Soviet Union and the FDJ came to dominate youth policy in the GDR, between the mid-1960s and the 1970s there was a shift from the scientific, materialist worldview to issues of citizenship and the development of a GDR consciousness. The concept of *Eigen-Sinn*, developed by Alf Lüdtke and Thomas Lindenberger, represents a negotiation and a dialogue between power and the masses in the formation of identity and the pursuit of one's interests.¹²⁶ As such, the *Frösi-treff* may be understood in the terms described here by Saunders. Assuming the development of identity is a metaphoric conversation between youth and the powers in charge of youth policy, the interests of children influence the development of policy as much as the policy is responsible for the formation of a childhood identity. In terms of the *Frösi-treff*, and more generally speaking the representation of ideology in the pages of *Mosaik* or *Atze*, children's interests are as responsible for how ideology is transmitted and demonstrated. As a result, the perceived lack of ideology on display at the *Frösi-treff*, is attributable to the reader perception of comics as a relative

German *Kultur*. This then worked in hand with larger FDJ practices to develop a dedicated *Kinderkultur* of high quality.

¹²⁵ Elsewhere, Benita Blessing writes of DEFA films for children, suggesting that these employs stories of folk tales and fantasy, essentially tapping into the zeitgeist of childhood discussed in this chapter, as a means of disseminating state ideology and education. This had the effect of bringing the classroom into film as the FDJ similarly brought comics into the classroom and made films as much for adults as for children as they provided as much documentary as distraction. See Benita Blessing, "DEFA Children's Films: Not Just for Children," in *DEFA at the Crossroads of East German and International Film Culture*, ed. Marc Silberman, Henning Wrage (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2014), 243-62.

¹²⁶ Anna Saunders, *Honecker's Children: Youth and Patriotism in East(ern) Germany, 1979-2002* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 10-15.

ideological free-zone identified above by Augustine. Not only did this serve to highlight changing youth policy toward the development of GDR consciousness and the socialist personality, but it also emphasized those moments of ideology and solidarity as they appeared in a relative vacuum of such. This effectively bridged the space between the private and the public and addressed the negotiation between power and the masses suggested by the notion of *Eigen-Sinn*.

Likewise, the unification of the classroom and the zeitgeist of popular culture echoed developments in West German educational reforms in and around the same time. As argued elsewhere by Brian Puaca, in developing an educational system independent of the authoritarianism of the previous Nazi regime, many of these changes were implemented from the ground up and from within by the educators and administrators and, more importantly, from the students themselves. In this, film and radio programming played an important role in the classroom development of these West German pupils and became the basis of those students' political education, sparking debates on numerous topics to demonstrate the youths' own political awareness. The students themselves took the initiative in organizing film screenings, trips to concentration camps, and meetings and "school-wide discussions of political problems."¹²⁷ Moreover, in a combined effort to ease tensions with the East Germany, to demonstrate an impression of the West different than that suggested by the SED and the FDJ, and as part of West Germany's larger campaigns against 'smut,' a theme paralleled in the GDR's own comic culture and in terms of the perceived American influence in both Germanies, the *Berliner Schülerparlament* (Berlin Student Parliament) introduced Bill 399 in 1958 (the same year *Verlag Neues Leben* began publication of the *Weltraum-Serie*) to discourage the number of

¹²⁷ Brian M. Puaca, *Learning Democracy: Education Reform in West Germany, 1945-1965* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 121-2.

“Wild West” films shown in theatres along the border.¹²⁸ This action suggests that West German students employed popular culture, and in some cases discouraged that same popular culture, as a means of mediating their own processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past). The supposed resistance to change in educational policy demonstrated by West German officials in the early postwar, suggested by Puaca, necessitated that those involved in the education system find their own way to negotiate reform, conducted through the critical public sphere described by Habermas.¹²⁹ This may similarly be understood with the formation of the Grand Coalition under Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger in 1966 and the subsequent development of the *Außerparlamentarische Opposition* (Extra-parliamentary opposition) as a youth-led public sphere to provide the critical opposition absent in the Bundestag. Although the cultural zeitgeist and popular culture, including film and comics, played substantial roles in educational policy in both German states, the inclusion of these cultural trends in policy stemmed from different points of origin as the East German example emerged from the FDJ itself as coercive, if arguably invisible, measures over children. However, it was ultimately the students, the youth, and the children themselves that were effectively able to steer the direction of the cultural inclusions in education.

This chapter demonstrates how the FDJ co-opted East German comics and comics culture in order to advance state sanctioned ideological and educational imperatives toward the formation of the socialist personality among the child-readers of these publications. At the same time, emphasis was placed on the fact that this assimilation was not malicious nor was it intended to detract from the entertainment value of those comics. *Mosaik* was subjected to

¹²⁸ Ibid, 142-3.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 37-40. See also, Werner Bergmann, *Antisemitismus in öffentlichen Konflikten: Kollektives Lernen in der politischen Kultur der Bundesrepublik 1949-1989* (Frankfurt aM: Campus Verlag, 1997), particularly “II. Die Wiederkehr des Themas Antisemitismus 1958-1961,” 187-278.

criticisms regarding its perceived lack of educational content, at least in so far as a historical consciousness was concerned, as Hannes Hegen tended to play fast and loose with historical accuracy when drafting his *Digedag* stories. The presence of the Berlin Wall as a supposedly impermeable barrier between East and West, at least until the normalization of trade relations following the German-German Basic Treaty in 1972, gave educators and youth groups the opportunity to affect the course and the content of the children's publications without the need to compete with the themes, tropes, and characters found in their western counterparts. However, in its new found freedom to alter the course of these publications, *Verlag Junge Welt* and the FDJ, as the overseeing editorial bodies of these *Kinderzeitschrift*, retained much of what made these publications popular among children prior to 1961 in order to maintain that popularity as a means of conveying the educational agenda of the state.

As was the case with the *Frösi-treff* in 1981, the stories in *Mosaik* and *Atze* demonstrated a significant step on the part of the FDJ to provide entertainment that looked specifically toward the interests of the children considered fans of these publications.¹³⁰ Space travel, the American

¹³⁰ Arguably the most widely researched and easily comparable area of East German popular culture is music and the perceived threat to youth and the state posed by American 'beat' music and culture. Despite the presence of the Berlin Wall and regulations regarding what music was acceptable to the East German authorities, the Wall itself proved remarkably porous in allowed Western music culture and influence through to the East as represented in Leander Haußmann's 1999 film, *Sonnenallee*. Walter Ulbricht's Youth Communiqué and the reforms that accompanied it were, in part, attempts to bring children and youth back to the fold of the FDJ and the greater support for socialism and for the GDR generally. As such, the FDJ organized guitar band competitions and the 'beat' radio station DT64 in time for the *Deutschlandtreffen der Jugend* (Germany's Youth Summit) in the mid-1960s. DT64 was able to play Western and American rock 'n' roll and 'beat' music under the condition that sixty percent of the stations content was produced in the Soviet Bloc. As youth were less interested in the music produced in the East, with some exceptions, than they were of that coming out of the West, DT64 manipulated this requirement, playing covers of Western songs by Eastern European artists and bands. Regardless, Western music, associated with American *Unkultur* broadly, was long considered contradictory to the ideological imperatives of the state and of the FDJ throughout the 1960s. With the weakening of Ulbricht's position following the failure of the NOS, both the SED and the FDJ took the initiative in youth policy and with regard to Western 'beat' culture, reversing many of the reforms implemented through the Youth Communiqué. Western music remained popular, however, and as a means of retaining much of the good will generated toward youth in the 1960s, DT64 continued and thrived right up to the end of the East German state itself, demonstrating what Patrick Major suggests to be an effort to steer youth's rebellious adoption of Western culture into safer currents upon the realization that the SED-regime could not overcome American influence and popular culture in the minds of youth.

West, exploration, and frontiers were themes that constantly came up in East German entertainment for children. And it is important to note that these themes were not strictly limited to GDR comics or even exclusively found in entertainment for children, but included the Red Westerns and socialist realist science fiction from Yugoslavia, the Czechoslovak SSR, and the USSR among others as providing fertile ground for the creation and representation of superior forms of socialism and their potential for developing a utopian society. Entertaining children was never mutually exclusive of education. Rather, important steps were taken to educate in a manner that was also entertaining for the exact reason of maintaining children's interest to foster the socialist personality and consciousness considered necessary by the FDJ. Comics, and comics culture by extension and similar to what has been written above with regard to other areas of youth interest, experience, and popular culture, provided a malleable space in which numerous genres overlapped and were employed and ideas represented without overt need for discussion stemming from the text/image relationship. In this, the moral and historical imperatives of the state were subtly explored without drawing attention from the entertaining nature of those comics. Thus the content of the comics and of the *Frösi-treff* was the ideology. Moreover, these themes and ideological imperatives constructed the space of comics as one that supported and maintained the acknowledged authority of Foucauldian institutions of governance.

Meanwhile, comics and comics culture in the GDR transgressed the perceived separation between the public and the private domains. Children's enthusiasm for these publications meant that they were reading them in their time away from classes and, presumably, other officially organized daily events happening outside the home. Comics were taken and read in "free time" as, despite the inclusion of their educational mandate, they were not part of the sanctioned

See Fulbrook, *People's State*, 130-5; Major, 245-7; McDougall, "Liberal Interlude:" 139-50; Josie McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism: Intimacy and Sexuality in the GDR* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 24-6; Ross, 139; and Wierling 162-6.

schooling nor were they intended to replace the approved East German textbooks. Comics were extra-curricular entertainment. That said, they still operated within the boundaries of state education as children were encouraged to bring what they read in the comics and *Kinderzeitschriften* into the classroom as an extension of conversations held in schools such as the GDR's solidarity with other socialist states. In doing this, then, the comics' contents, the characters' personalities and designs, the settings, and the stories, spoke to the interests of youth as the FDJ, the comics' publishers, and their creators negotiated a niche for these comics within the regime's educational, ideological, and moral space. It is these questions of space, state power, and the ersatz public sphere as negotiated through the notion of *Eigen-Sinn* of youth that the next chapter seeks to address.

Chapter Three.

Power, *Eigen-Sinn*, and the Construction of Space through Comics and *Kinderzeitschriften*.

The previous chapter discussed East German comics and comics culture as the regime deployed them as a space in which to lay the foundations of a socialist education. Specifically, the changes made to *Atze* in the mid-1960s, the stories found in *Mosaik* in the early 1960s and the early 1970s, and the *Frösi-treff* in 1981 were considered in relation to Mary Fulbrook's conceptualization of benign power. This was defined as those aspects of power present in everyday life which typically went unnoticed by the population. In the examples provided here, we have examined the thematic underpinnings found in comics published by *Verlag Junge Welt* and their use by the FDJ in the construction of socialism in the state and the development of the socialist personality among its citizens. In employing these power structures in the comic books designed for the consumption of children, as these books targeted those children too young for membership in the Free German Youth, state influence transgressed the perceived isolation of the private or domestic sphere.¹ However, in order for children to bring these comics into the home or otherwise engage them in what would be understood as "free" time away from the socialist educational structures and institutions of the FDJ and the SED (Socialist Unity Party)-regime, comics needed not only to retain the aspects of western comics that popularized titles such as *Mosaik* prior to the construction of the Berlin Wall, but also to maintain those levels of genuine popularity, in essence to "win over" their readers, afterward. Tapping the cultural zeitgeist in its comic stories, the regime largely rendered the socialist educational nature of the comics invisible to the reader. This is to say that the use of popular themes gave child-readers the opportunity and ability to overlook the ideology, while still aware of it. By co-opting the

¹ BArch DY 26/42, "Verlag Junge Welt Bereich Produktion/Technik, Berlin August 1983," 1.

interests of children and catering to those interests in order to clothe education in entertainment, the FDJ blurred the divisions between the public and the private spheres and permeated the boundaries of what is often considered to be the niche, compartmentalized society that was the German Democratic Republic.

As a result, the notion of the niche society, as the GDR has been characterized by former West German Representative to the GDR, Günter Gaus, seems insufficient to capture the essence of the state and of the East German *Alltag* (everyday life). The preceding chapter, and indeed this one as well, attempts to describe comics and comics culture in the GDR as the product of the *durchherrschte Gesellschaft* (thoroughly ruled society) as originally argued by Jürgen Kocka and expanded by Konrad Jarausch and Michael Geyer. Moreover, comics here are understood through the Foucauldian lens as aspects of the state's authority that allow for the perpetuation of governance. At the same time, it is also necessary to understand comics in the GDR in terms of Alf Lüdtke and Thomas Lindenberger's concept of *Eigen-Sinn*. As it is understood by Anna Saunders in *Honecker's Children: Youth and Patriotism in East(ern) Germany, 1979-2002*, as much as *Eigen-Sinn* may be thought of simply as "doing things one's own way," it is also a construction of space negotiated between state power and the population so that that population can live "normally" and arguably free of the state's influence, interference, and observation. This constructed space is then inherently tied to processes of identity formation and individual interests and pursuits. While Gaus' conceptualization of the niche society highlights the importance assigned to identity formation through the widely argued retreat into the private sphere, the "niche" fails in demonstrating the significance of interactions between the revered private sphere and the much more studied public sphere of the SED-regime.² *Eigen-Sinn* thus

² Anna Saunders, *Honecker's Children: Youth and Patriotism in East(ern) Germany, 1979-2002* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 10-15.

suggests that identity in the GDR was a give and take relationship between the state and the population from which those in authority were desperate for popular legitimacy. Saunders goes on to say, borrowing from modern European historian Corey Ross, that *Eigen-Sinn* provides a means of connecting the perceived divisions between dissent and conformity “by emphasizing how the pursuit of one’s interests... is integrally related to social and political circumstances.”³ And, Saunders concludes, this interaction was essential to the formation of the loyalties demonstrated by children and youth.⁴

This chapter moves beyond what appeared in the actual comics themselves and the, at times, literal dialogue between the *Verlag Junge Welt* as proxy to the FDJ and the children who read the comics and *Kinderzeitschriften* (magazines for children). In the introduction to *Mass Media, Culture, and Society in Twentieth Century Germany*, Ross and Karl Christian Führer point to a problem regarding a history of the German media, though this should by no means be considered limited only to the media in Germany, that is the perceived shortage of sources resulting in a relatively thin scholarship. This problem stems from the fact that these sources are in the hands of private companies and publishers reluctant to open their archives to historians. In the East German case, this is further problematized by German (re)unification in 1990, the privatization of East German firms, and the mishandling of that mission by the *Treuhandanstalt* (trust agency set up for the task by the East German *Volkskammer*). Further, the history of and connection to socialism that these publications have may make these new owners more reluctant to allow researchers access, even if these sources survived the process of privatization. Führer and Ross continue, suggesting that the scholarship on the German press and genres of East German mass media are subject to a reliance on sources produced by the state. As such, there is

³ Corey Ross, *The East German Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of the GDR* (London: Arnold, 2002), 124 cited in Saunders, 228.

⁴ Saunders, 228.

a tendency toward drafting political histories of the German press.⁵ While this chapter, and this dissertation more generally, is faced with the same limitations, it is the hope to overcome this obstacle by asking what these government produced sources have to say about the children, and also some adults, reading and influenced by these publications.

Thus, this chapter analyses reports compiled concerning letters written to the *Kinderzeitschriften*, *Atze* and *Frösi* and to the publisher more broadly, in 1972. These reports were compiled for the editorial boards of *Mosaik* and *Atze*, brought under the same editorial umbrella in 1966 by Wolfgang Altenburger, and *Frösi* and *Trommel* with the purpose of assessing the contents of letters sent in to those publications by their readers and who those readers were. These reports intended to demonstrate if readers engaged with those ideological educational aspects of the comics and *Kinderzeitschriften*. The reports then suggested how this engagement was manifested by the child-readers. Without doubt, this demonstrates a level of control across comics and children's publications as these reports compiled data observed in the letters written to the editors. And while it is not the purpose here to argue against the perception of the GDR as a thoroughly ruled society, and of which this point may provide evidence, the existence of these reports is broadly indicative of the FDJ and the publisher's desire to understand its readership and their interests.

These reports demonstrated that children understood these comics and *Kinderzeitschriften* in ways similar to how their parents' generation understood the private sphere and privacy in GDR society. East German comics, and thus the FDJ's political influence, possessed the ability to transgress the perceived boundaries between the public and the private as a combined result of their contents and popularity among youth. While children responded to the

⁵ Karl Christian Führer and Corey Ross, "Mass Media, Culture, and Society in Twentieth Century Germany: an Introduction," in *Mass Media, Culture, and Society in Twentieth Century Germany*, ed. by Karl Christian Führer and Corey Ross (Houndsmills: Palgrave, 2006), 15.

socialist content of these publications in their letters to the publishers and editors, these aspects are, more often than not, overlooked in favour of more obviously entertaining content. This does not suggest that the more overtly socialist content was consciously ignored by the readership. Indeed, there are strong indications that not only did children engage with this material, but they did so in ways similar to those hoped for by the FDJ, incorporating what they read into aspects of their state-sanctioned education in schools. However, children understood these comics not entirely in the terms mapped out by the FDJ and often without the conscious awareness of the power enacted on them. As such, within the space afforded by comics, children constructed their own understanding of what comics meant and how they engaged and interacted with those comics. This is not to say that state power went wholly unrecognized, but that comics were understood in terms of and as part of the domestic sphere in which they were consumed. The spaces these comics constructed thus enabled points of interaction between the FDJ and children as each co-opted and reinterpreted the other's meaning and intent.

The “Niche” and the Permeability of Privacy.

In 1986, the West German journalist Theo Sommer wrote of the GDR, citing Günter Gaus, that: “the private sphere serves as a place of refuge where one can escape the reach of politics.” In this way, then, Gaus’ conceptualization of the “niche society” is understood and defined as “the preferred space in which people there leave everything [...] behind...and spend time with family and friends” without either thought given to state or the acknowledgement of the state’s intrusion into that space.⁶ This is to suggest that, for the individual and/or their family, the state ceased to exist at the entrance of the domicile. Of course this perception does

⁶ “A Liberal Western Journalist Praises the Progress of the GDR (1986),” German History in Documents and Images, http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/docpage.cfm?docpage_id=44 (accessed 1 February 2016).

not reflect the reality of the situation as East German literature, news reporting, and television provided constant reminders of the SED-regime's presence in the daily lives of the population.⁷ But the "niche society" allowed GDR citizens the ability to choose what aspects, if any, of the East German state were consumed by the individual. In this sense, historian Paul Betts understands the "niche" of privacy in the GDR as a "semi-permeable refuge from public life and prescribed collective identity," meaning that within the domicile citizens were relatively free to inscribe themselves with their own constructions of identity.⁸ At the same time, however, and somewhat unlike the broader understanding of the "niche society," Betts recognizes the abilities of the state to penetrate the borders of the domicile as the strength of the regime can be found through the perceived invisibility of its power. Moreover, the home represents a key instance of *Eigen-Sinn* in that privacy allowed the individual the construction of one's own self-identity and self-identification. This does not suggest dissent or resistance in and of itself, but more properly suggests the ability to express longings, desires, and anxieties unrelated to the collective constructions of the state. Building on Fulbrook's notion of the honeycomb state, that is the compartmentalization of East German society and identity formations, Betts contends, the

⁷ See Jürgen Kocka, "Eine durchherrschte Gesellschaft," in *Sozialgeschichte der DDR*, ed. Jürgen Kocka and Hartmut Zwar (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1994), 547-53 and Alf Lüdtke, "'Helden der Arbeit' – Mühen beim Arbeiten. Zur mißmutigen Loyalität von Industriearbeitern in der DDR," in *Sozialgeschichte der DDR*, ed. Jürgen Kocka and Hartmut Zwar (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1994), 188-213. Both authors suggest here that the *durchherrschte Gesellschaft* functions through the perceived conflation of state and society. This was not always the case, however, and the notion of this conflation was sometimes stronger and more omnipresent than the reality. At the same time, through the *Eigen-Sinn* and as will be discussed in this chapter, the domestic space was often indicative of the both the public's willful avoidance of the state's use of power to shape and control its citizens. As such, this suggests something of a blind spot on the part of the state, unwilling to acknowledge those spaces free from its reach, and the public, unwilling to acknowledge the state's intrusion into the domestic space. See also, Annette F. Timm, *The Politics of Fertility in Twentieth-Century Berlin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁸ Paul Betts, "Building Socialism at Home: The Case of East German Interiors," in *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics*, eds. Katherine Pence and Paul Betts (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 114.

private is never entirely separate from the power structures of the SED state, but run through by those constructions.⁹

Meanwhile, Andrew Port makes mention in his monograph *Conflict and Stability in the German Democratic Republic* that apathy and disillusionment toward the SED regime and the unfulfilled promises of socialism fueled this retreat into the “niche.”¹⁰ Privacy and the domicile had no inherent or determined political meaning but depended upon the situation and individual. This suggests that privacy still challenged the notion that it was simply a matter of repression and withdrawal from that repression in GDR “niche society.”¹¹ Had the state chosen to politicize this retreat to the private, to effectively characterize withdrawal as a political act, this would have, undoubtedly, created the GDR population as a society of “heroic resistance fighters.” Instead, in the home as was often the case elsewhere in GDR society, functionaries avoided confrontation through the attempted satisfaction of workers’ and, in the case under discussion throughout this dissertation, children’s demands and interests.¹² The “niche” speaks to this withdrawal from East German social and public life, but fails to address why this withdrawal was necessary beyond the perceived repressions of the SED regime. Likewise, the “niche” does not seek to address the permeability made apparent by Betts or the negotiation important to the states’ efforts to placate the needs of the GDR population. From this, then, it is possible to understand the consumption of comics in terms of *Eigen-Sinn* constructed by these tensions between the state and the individual and the discussed retreat into the private as the construction of space in which the desires of children were pursued.

⁹ Paul Betts, *Within Walls: Private Life in the German Democratic Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 13-4.

¹⁰ Andrew I. Port, *Conflict and Stability in the German Democratic Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 4.

¹¹ Betts, *Within Walls*, 14-5.

¹² Port, 275-81.

The “niche” as a permeable and negotiated space understood by Betts as the home or private space has thus far been addressed in terms of the physicality of the space in which the child reader occupied. It is suggested above and in the preceding chapter that comics had the powerful ability to transgress the boundaries between the public and the private as a result of their popularity, the reading of comics in a setting outside of school and officially organized activities in what constituted “free time,” and children’s ability to purchase or trade comics on their own and often without the knowledge or permission of their parents. As Anne Rubenstein contends in her study of comics in Mexico, this absence of authority gave comics the ability to “provoke” as anything imagined could be drawn, and drawings were simpler to digest and understand than words on the printed page.¹³ The FDJ understood this as well in a letter nominating the editors of *Mosaik* for a gold *Medaille für hervorragende Leistungen bei der sozialistischen Erziehung in der Pionierorganisation ‘Ernst Thälmann’* (medal for outstanding achievements toward the socialist education in the ‘Ernst Thälmann’ Pioneer Organization), suggesting that *Mosaik*, and comics more generally, developed the reader’s imagination through their graphical style and colourful design in a way that television or literature could not specifically as the result of the confluence of text and image inherent to the medium. They represented socialist humanist and educational objectives while providing an important counter to the imperialist *Schund- und Schmutzliteratur*.¹⁴ But perhaps most important, it was understood that the power of the comics medium lay in the imaginations of the readers not only

¹³ Anne Rubenstein, *Bad Language, Naked Ladies & Other Threats to the Nation: a Political History of Comic Books in Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 7.

¹⁴ BArch DY 24/8674, “Vorschlag zur Auszeichnung der Redaktion der Zeitschrift ‘Mosaik’,” 1-2.

due to the perceived ease with which drawings were interpreted and given meaning, but in the gutters that the FDJ fought to control.¹⁵

In *Understanding Comics: the Invisible Art*, Scott McCloud suggests that in comics' readership the audience is a conscious collaborator in the creation of meaning between the text and image and the connection between the two is never made explicit. Rather, image and text exist as a series of symbols which may be given meaning by an audience that possesses an understanding not only the symbols themselves but also of how those symbols are intended to function together. This focuses the reader's attention through the universality of the symbols.¹⁶ The gutters are spaces in which nothing is happening and "human imagination takes two separate images and transforms them into a single idea" in a very conscious, consensual, and deliberate way.¹⁷ The suggestion here is that the child-readers were active participants, making their own meanings of the socialist educational, humanistic, and moral content present in their comics. For exactly this reason, comics were problematic in postwar North America and Western Europe as the violence, sex, and language they contained, as well as other perceived threats to childhood development, was thought to occur within the imaginations of the readers where it could take the

¹⁵ Jonathon David Tankel and Keith Murphy, "Collecting Comic Books: A Study of the Fan and Curatorial Consumption," in *Theorizing Fandom: Fans, Subculture, and Identity*, ed. Cheryl Harris and Alison Alexander (Cresskill: Hampton Press, Inc., 1998), 62-3. Tankel and Murphy here suggest that the messages given form in the comic book narrative have a tendency to shape the reality of the readership. Moreover, sharing these themes across the group, in this instance American comics readers and collectors, draws the individual in to that group wherein they begin to identify with the larger group reality and symbolically converge with that group. It is to this end that the FDJ attempted to control the message in comics and its deliver in order to bring child-readers into the larger group of socialist society. In *Comic Books as History*, Joseph Witek argues that comic book reading requires discipline from the reader. In addition, the artistic controls with which the comic is imbued by its creator shape how the reader perceives narrative structure. As such, the changes wrought to the East German comic industry in the 1960s not only affected and altered the content on a rudimentary level, but also attempted to shape how that content was understood and how children interacted as a group and in society as a result of their reading experiences. See Joseph Witek, *Comic Books as History: The Narrative Art of Jack Jackson, Art Spiegelman, and Harvey Pekar* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1989), 7-9.

¹⁶ Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: the Invisible Art* (New York: Harper, 1993), 30-1.

¹⁷ Ibid, 66 & 68.

strongest hold and do the most damage.¹⁸ McCloud continues, arguing that “between panels, none of our senses are required at all. Which is why all of our senses are engaged.”¹⁹ As such, comics were able to transgress the boundaries between the public and the imaginary. That is to say, the ultimate private space in which the individual is thought to be alone within him or herself.²⁰

As a result when considering comics and the notion of *Eigen-Sinn*, it is important to recognize this interaction and the level of that interaction between the audience, in this case the child-readers, and the FDJ.²¹ Comics affected their audience in a way that television could not, largely due to the perceived passivity associated with the consumption of television programming and content. For this reason, McCloud recognizes, as did the FDJ in the mid-1960s, the suggested superiority of comics in their ability to transmit information and audience retention.²² As *Eigen-Sinn* insists upon the negotiation between citizen and state in the pursuit of one’s interests, comics provided a space more effective and conducive to the interaction of these two parties. In the examination of letters written by readers, or more precisely the analysis reports of those letters, children’s engagement with this project and thus their perceived level of interaction with the regime and the state may be understood. It is in this engagement that the penetration of the state into the private sphere, into the individual child-citizen’s privacy, and

¹⁸ Richard Ivan Jobs, “Tarzan Under Attack: Youth, Comics, and Cultural Reconstruction in Postwar France,” *French Historical Studies* 26, no. 4 (Fall 2003): 692.

¹⁹ McCloud, 89.

²⁰ Martin Barker suggests that no encounter with media is passive as the audience will actively choose what is consumed. That said, the act of watching television requires less from its audience as that audience cannot affect or influence the narrative or its meaning. As such, Shari Sabeti, drawing from Barker, contends that comics foster a symbiotic relationship with their readership. See Martin Barker, *Comics: Ideology, Power and the Critics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 11 and 244 and Shari Sabeti, “The Irony of Cool Club: the Place of Comic Book Reading in Schools,” *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 2, no. 2 (2011): 144.

²¹ For more on the relationship between state and subject and how it is negotiated through the notion of the *Eigen-Sinn*, see Thomas Lindenberger, “SED-Herrschaft als soziale Praxis—Herrschaft und ‘Eigen-Sinn’: Problemstellung und Begriffe, in *Staatsicherheit und Gesellschaft. Studien zum Herrschaftsalltag in der DDR*, ed. Jens Gieseke (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 23-47.

²² McCloud, 68-9; BArch DY 24/1581, “Konzeption für das neue Profil der Bilderzeitschrift ‘Atze’,” 3.

into the “niche” may be examined as comics provided the FDJ a medium able to reach children on all these levels regardless of the supposed retreat from public life, particularly prevalent after Erich Honecker’s rise to power in 1971.²³

Comics, the Classroom, and the Culture of Complaint.

For the year 1972, during which these analysis reports were compiled, it was noted that most *Kinderzeitschriften* including comics typically received only a few hundred letters, some significantly fewer. The exceptions here, in the case of *Atze*, were for their continuing stories of *Pats Reiseabenteuer* (Pat’s Travel Adventures) by Wolfgang Altenburger and Jürgen Kieser’s *Fix und Fax*.²⁴ In January, the publisher *Verlag Junge Welt* received in excess of 14,000 letters for which 9,000 were written for *Fix und Fax* and 4,000 for *Pats Reiseabenteuer*. The following month, this number was inverted as *Pats Reiseabenteuer* drew in more than 10,000 of a total 11,800 letters. For the entire second half of the year, then, *Pats Reiseabenteuer* was noted as having received more than 27,000 letters from readers. This is not to suggest that Altenburger’s comic strip became more popular than Keiser’s. Rather, something else was happening within the comic strips that generated a response from the readership. As the report noted elsewhere, the *Volkspolizei-Preisausschreiben* (People’s Police competition) and the *Feuerwehr-Preisausschreiben* (Fire Department competition) each received more than 9,000 and 13,000 reader letters respectively. The numbers for *Fix und Fax* from January 1972 were received specifically for the *Fix und Fax-Preisausschreiben*. Another 8,700 letters were noted as received in April for the *Druschba-Preisausschreiben* (Friendship-competition).²⁵ As such, it appears the

²³ Betts, *Within Walls*, 10-2.

²⁴ BArch DY 24/23769.

²⁵ Ibid. The word for friendship here derives from the Russian as the competition itself spoke to the notion of the East German-Soviet relationship in the postwar.

FDJ regularly employed competitions and sweepstakes in the publications of *Verlag Junge Welt* to engage the child-readership not only with the comics-stories themselves, but also with the regime.

Similar observations may be made for *Pats Reiseabenteuer* which regularly drew in a few thousand letters per month, vastly outpacing the average letters received for other stories appearing in *Atze*. Written by Altenburger with illustrations by Harry Schlegel, *Pats Reiseabenteuer* followed the adventures of a wandering journeyman as he travelled throughout Germany during the latter half of the nineteenth century, meeting famous historical figures and getting into “political turmoil.” This feature appeared regularly in a four-colour, two-page center spread in *Atze* from 1967 until 1991 when production of *Atze* ceased in the wake of German (re)unification.²⁶ At the bottom of this feature was printed, often, though not always, in red in order to stand out against the black text of the story: “What did not exist at the time? Write or draw it on a postcard and send it to ATZE.” Three small prizes were then offered for children sending in the correct response, some educational, others for entertainment purposes.²⁷ Each issue of *Atze* then had an *Atze Post* feature inside the back cover where, among the heavily edited reader letters and an address from *Atze*’s editorial staff, winners names were printed along with the correct answer from a previous issue under the heading *Pat-Auflösung* (Pat-Solution).

²⁶ BArch DY 26/42 and “*Pats Reiseabenteuer*,” *DDR Comics*, <http://ddr-comics.de/pat.htm> (accessed 7 February 2016). Four-colour refers to the early process of colouring comics whereby Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Black were used to create the complete spectrum of colour in comics. Due to cost considerations, *Atze* was not printed entirely using the four-colour method, but its sixteen pages were split between this and two-colour colouring. Consistently, *Fix und Fax* and *Pats Reiseabenteuer* were printed in four-colour while, significantly, the political cover story was printed in only two. This indicated awareness on the part of the publisher, the editors, and the FDJ as to which aspects of the books were favoured among children and which should receive the most attention.

²⁷ For example, the March 1984 issue offered *Abrafaxe* (main characters of *Mosaik* following Hannes Hegen’s departure from the comic in 1975) puzzles. By contrast, the September 1984 issue offered globes and the December 1986 issue featured *Kinderlexia* [children’s encyclopaedias].

Not only did this contest serve to keep children engaged with the material, but also maintained readers from month to month as those children that wrote in to the publication hoped to be selected as winners. Asking children to identify aspects of the comics that did not belong to the time period depicted required that children possess or acquire knowledge of both their history and their present in order to fully engage with the content of the comics (Fig. 9). The *Pat-Auflösung* for the July 1984 and October 1986 issues, for example, respectively stated that

Figure 9. *Pats Reiseabenteuer* detail. *Atze* issue 6/1975, page 9. Although the lighter was invented in the early 19th century by Johann Wolfgang Döbereiner, modern cigarette lighters like the one depicted here were a product of the 20th century.

neither latex paint nor hair-dryers existed during Pat's time. This point alludes to observations made by historian Eli Rubin regarding the inclusion of plastics in various aspects of *Mosaik*. Specifically, latex paints and hairdryers, regardless of their lack of context in *Pats Reiseabenteuer* spoke to the perceived "cult of technology" in the GDR and, as with plastics in *Mosaik*, indicated a larger celebration of socialist achievement and the use technology to create a

utopian future.²⁸ At the same time, the contents in *Pats Reiseabenteuer* maintained that *Atze* was part of a larger educational agenda by ensuring an engagement with the material.

Despite the potential significance of these letters and postcards relating to contests run in both *Atze* and *Frösi* and the demonstration of the perceived success of the socialist educational program in East German comics and *Kinderbildzeitschriften*, these contest letters, and letters about *Pats Reiseabenteuer* and *Atze* more generally, garner very little attention in the reports made to the FDJ.²⁹ The authors of the report recognized Pat's popularity stating that as of the sixty-sixth episode in the series, approximately half-way through 1972, "Pat is consistently the most popular character in our magazine." And although the character is praised for "always urging the reader toward new perspectives," commentary on the feature suggests potential future inclusion such as the deeds of the Lenin Pioneers during the Great Patriotic War (World War II), Vietnam, and Thomas Müntzer, rather than an assessment of why *Pats Reiseabenteuer* was popular.³⁰ Indeed, many of the potential future stories suggested for *Pats Reiseabenteuer* did not fit the nineteenth century setting of the comics, demonstrating some degree of ignorance toward the contents of the stories themselves and why they remained admittedly popular. The exception here was two excerpted letters in the report at the top of a series of excerpted letters. Both of

²⁸ Eli Rubin, *Synthetic Socialism: Plastics & Dictatorship in the German Democratic Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 32-3 & 118.

²⁹ This despite the fact that Matthew Pustz suggests elsewhere that American publishers used letter columns in the 1940s and 1950s, particularly with regard to EC comics, consolidating their audience by creating a sense of cooperation between reader and creator. Further, letter columns created a window into questions of readership and reader interaction and identification through the formation of a perceived meeting site in which readers can address creators and other fans that speaks Habermas' public sphere and to the larger creation of fan culture and community not unlike that demonstrated in Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983). Matthew J. Pustz, *Comic Book Culture: Fan Boys and True Believers* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1999), xi-xiii and 155-7; Jessamyn Neuhaus, "How Wonder Woman Helped My Students 'Join the Conversation': Comic Books as Teaching Tools in a History Methodology Course," in *Comic Books and American Cultural History*, ed. Matthew J. Pustz (New York: Continuum, 2012), 15-7.

³⁰ Thomas Müntzer was a reformer during the Protestant Reformation and rebel leader during the Peasant's War in Thuringia (1524-5). Twentieth-century Marxists consider Müntzer an early leader of bourgeois revolution against feudalism toward a classless society, see "Thomas Müntzer," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Thomas-Muntzer> (accessed 9 February 2016).

these, and these were the only two specifically mentioning *Pats Reiseabenteuer* or the Pat character, from confessed long-time readers, framed their love of the character and of the comics in terms of the socialist worldview and the perceived formation of the socialist personality. The first letter, from a female reader, suggested that Pat was her favourite “because he always thought of the poor and helped them” while the second letter, from a male reader this time, made similar claims, calling Pat “exemplary of fighters who fought for freedom and justice in the previous century.”³¹ In doing this, the authors of these letters understood it to be necessary to speak the socialist language of the regime in order for their opinions and their love of the character and his adventures to be recognized by those compiling the reports.³² The letters that followed these consisted of children writing about their experiences in school, with the *Ernst Thälmann* Pioneers, or with their *Patenbrigades* with little or no mention of *Atze* or the characters contained therein.³³

As with the letters specifically invoking *Pats Reiseabenteuer* as point of discussion, these letters spoke to the regime employing its own rhetoric, in order to give the child audience voice. As these letters appeared largely uncritical of the regime, in an obvious sense, they framed problems in a way that suggested opening a discourse with the FDJ in order to find solutions. The authors of the reports suggested that the children voice confidence and trust in the

³¹ BArch DY 24/23769, Jan-June 1972, 7-9.

³² This is indicative of SED policy following the ascension of Erich Honecker in 1971 that scaled back indoctrination practices and required only that citizens outwardly demonstrate loyalty to the regime regardless of practices within the home pertaining to the ersatz public sphere and of the *Eigen-Sinn* that allowed for the relative reduction of tensions between citizen and state. Although under Honecker’s leadership the SED supposedly opened itself to public criticisms in an effort to ease give the impression of freedom within the state, as was partially necessitated by outgoing negotiations toward the German-German Basic Treaty (1972), this was coupled with an unprecedented enlargement of the Stasi and of the state’s observational regime. See Peter Grieder, *The German Democratic Republic* (New York: Palgrave, 2012), 10-4 and Saunders, 50-104.

³³ BArch DY 24/23769, Jan-June 1972, 7-9. *Patenbrigades* were children’s collectives sponsored by factory, agriculture, or other worker organizations, sometimes even the *Nationale Volksarmee* [National People’s Army], with the intention to give children work related experience as part of the regime’s educational mandate, see Mary Fulbrook, *The People’s State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 121-2 & 225-7.

Kinderzeitschrift Atze as well as awareness that the publication provided them a source of aid, advice, and suggestions for dealing with the socialist world around them. In this way, letters received from the readers of *Atze* and their use of socialist language was reflective of the East German practice of *Eingaben*. In *Within Walls: Private Life in the German Democratic Republic*, Betts called these petitions a substitute for a limited public sphere that demonstrated the centrality of the private sphere as the point of interaction between the state and society.³⁴ Echoing Betts, Mark McCullough then suggests that the failures of the Honecker-led SED regime to fulfill the population's consumptive desires created the conditions whereby citizens felt emboldened enough in their frustration to shed perceived anonymity to affect change through these *Eingaben*.³⁵ The letters written to *Atze* and compiled for the report discussed here caught the attention of the publishing regime exactly because of the trust demonstrated in addressing the magazine. By approaching perceived problems of the classroom and Pioneer groups in a conversational way that did not suggest failure on the part of the FDJ or of the GDR state more broadly, the publishing regime responded in a manner that suggested pursuing the problems experienced by the child-readers with the intent to correct them. Promising to answer each letter individually, the report's authors suggested rather that for problems affecting the student-teacher relationship, it was important to involve parents and advisory bodies in order to help the Pioneers and strengthen these relationships.³⁶ This approach did not constitute the FDJ's admission of failure or of a flawed approach, but, more accurately, described a desire to maintain the children's expressed trust and demonstrate that said trust was deserved. As such, the child-

³⁴ Betts, *Within Walls*, 174.

³⁵ Mark McCullough, "The Sword and Shield of Consumption: The Police-Society Relationship in the Former East Germany," *Past Tense: Graduate Review of History* 1 (2012): 75.

³⁶ "Bei schwierigen Problemen, die das Lehrer-Schüler-Verhältnis betreffen, wird immer versucht, den Pionieren zu helfen, ein gutes Verhältnis zu ihren Lehrern und Erziehern herzustellen, die Eltern einzubeziehen und auch die Autorität der Gruppenrät zu stärken," see BArch DY 24/23769, Jan-June 1972, 9.

readers understood their own letters and their interactions with the publishers in ways similar to practices of complaint taken up by their parents. In this way, they treated and perceived their comics as extensions and products of the private space in which they were consumed and thus of the ersatz public sphere it represented, as argued above.

These letters, written to voice a perceived approval of the contents of *Atze* and, concurrently, delineate what their young author's understood as problems in the student-teacher relationship and the socialist educational program in general, constructed a sense of space for these children to express themselves and, in so doing, deconstruct an important perception of distance between citizen and state necessary to Gaus' "niche" society. Typically, the letters were not a laundry list of complaints against educators or *Thälmann* Pioneer group leaders. Rather, the letters appeared more conversational, not as though the children addressed schoolyard friends, but as children recounting experiences to their parents or others in obvious positions of authority. These children spoke of what was learned in their classes or at their Pioneer meetings, including information and names the FDJ would consider significant.³⁷ As such, and while the children do not openly complain about the content, activities, or practices of the classroom or youth groups so far as the excerpts available in the report demonstrate, it is clear that the children reading *Atze* were comfortable discussing aspects of their public lives with the editorial staff and, by extension, the regime. Not only this, but in writing in to the editorial of these comics,

³⁷ For example, one letter mentions the struggles of the heroic peoples of Vietnam and the war against American imperialism as taught in school. Another discusses Angela Davis, a noted leader of the Communist Party USA, as part of the American protest movement against US military actions in Vietnam. Davis visited the German Democratic Republic the following year, 1973, to participate in the 10th World Festival of Youth and Students in East Berlin. Known as the "Red Woodstock," this festival was organized by the left-wing groups World Federation of Democratic Youth and International Union of Students. A third letter discusses recent youth group activities and names their Pioneer leader while a fourth child wrote about a visit from two representatives from the *Patenbrigade* to their classroom. See BArch DY 24/23769, Jan-June 1972, 6-10 and "10th World Festival of Youth and Students, East Berlin, 1973," *University of Warwick Library, Media Resource Centre*, <https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/explore/further/filmvideo/worldfestival/> (accessed 10 February 2016).

children established connections between comics, access to the regime, and their own sense of *Eigen-Sinn*. The space that children thus created for themselves here marks a distinction as to what is considered public and what is private in that the private does not appear to be discussed in these excerpted letters. But still, the engagement with comics brings the public into private life and the private sphere insofar as the children are necessitated to transgress the boundaries between the public and private in their reading of comics and the production of their own, though arguably limited, *Eingaben*.³⁸

That said, these letters regarding contests found in *Pats Reiseabenteuer*, or respondents to contests in other comics and features for that matter, held demonstrably little significance in these reports. This perception serves to explain why, in a section of the report clearly demarcated to provide opinions about the book (*Meinungen zum Heft*), here meaning *Atze* and *Pats Reiseabenteuer*, the authors chose to focus on and excerpt those letters that mentioned the comic only in passing in order to favour letters regarding the educational and ideological agenda of the FDJ.³⁹ In the assessment and extracts from letters from readers (*Einschätzung und Auszüge aus Leserschriften*) for the reports, then, while the opinions of the readers regarding Pat comes first, this assessment is dominated by concerns about preparations for the fiftieth anniversary of the Lenin Pioneers, solidarity with Vietnam, experiences in the classroom and youth group including concerns regarding discipline and sponsorship relationships with the

³⁸ For the centrality of consumption in both the public and private spaces and then the differentiation between the two, see Konrad H. Jarausch and Michael Geyer, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 274-297. For more on the *Eigen-Sinn* as negotiating the space and difference between public and private spaces, see Jan Palmowski, "Between Conformity and *Eigen-Sinn*: New Approaches to GDR History," *German History* 20, no. 4 (2002): 494-502. Also see Thomas Lindenberger, "Alltagsgeschichte und ihr möglicher Beitrag zu einer Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR," in *Die Grenzen der Diktatur: Staat und Gesellschaft in der DDR*, ed. Richard Bessel and Ralph Jessen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 298-325

³⁹ BArch DY 24/23769, Jan-June 1972, 7.

Patenbrigades, and the approaching International Children's Day.⁴⁰ In this way, the authors of the reports and the FDJ leadership conflated the comics with issues of ideological significance to the regime as the child-readers themselves demonstrated in the excerpted letters above.⁴¹ Indeed, the authors here were concerned with the contents of *Atze* only so far as they served socialist educational agendas, chastising the publication for its perceived insufficient ability to produce the appropriate socialist personality amongst its readership.⁴² And while this point indicates that the letters regarding *Pats Reiseabenteuer* were perhaps more heavily edited than suggested above, it holds that the children authors were nonetheless able to adopt the language and positions of the regime in order to give themselves voice in the construction of their own limited *Eingaben* culture centred on these comics.

This was not, however, limited to the pages of *Atze* as other reports on letters received from readers of *Trommel* and *Frösi* for the first half of 1972 bears striking similarities in both ideological objectives and reader responses. Perhaps more importantly, here letters were not only categorized by the subjects of those letters as an indicator of the popularity of a feature in the *Kinderzeitschriften*, but also by the readers' genders, locations, approximate age including whether the authors were children or adults (parents, educators, or other interested parties), and whether these letters came from individuals or collectives such as a particular *Thälmann* Pioneer group, with additional categories for individual issues.⁴³ These magazines were not dedicated comic books as was *Atze*, but children's magazines closer to familiar North American

⁴⁰ Ibid, 2.

⁴¹ Although the reports for the second half of 1972 fail to provide a clear assessment of the contents of the report and a breakdown of the findings of letters written in to the publisher, these reports find similar focus as the reportage of January-June 1972 on issues concerning solidarity with Vietnam, *Patenbrigades* and Pioneer meetings and stories in *Atze* that polemicize the socialist morality of West German television, see Ibid, 2-6. Also see Heather L. Gumbert, *Envisioning Socialism: Television and the Cold War in the German Democratic Republic* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014), 153-4. Gumbert also speaks here of the Rabbit Films banned at the Eleventh Plenum in 1965 as representative of a morality that was decidedly un-socialist in spirit.

⁴² BArch DY 24/23769, July-Dec 1972, 6.

⁴³ BArch DY 24/23769, "*Trommel Statistik*," 3-4 and "*Analyse Bild des Monats*," 1.

publications like *Owl* (Owlkids Publishing, Toronto, 1976-present) and *The Electric Company* (Children's Television Workshop, New York, 1972-1987) that included comic strips such as *Mäxchen und Tüte* (in *Frösi*) in addition to other edutainment feature articles.⁴⁴ That these *Kinderzeitschriften* were not proper comics did not make them more obviously ideological than *Atze* or even *Mosaik*. Indeed, following the changes made to *Atze*'s content and format in 1966, stories such as "The Sealed Train" (*Der versiegelte Zug*) and "The Soldier from Treptow" (*Der Soldat von Treptow*) made *Atze* every bit as ideologically driven as other aspects of FDJ policy.⁴⁵ But this pattern indicates the intersection discussed throughout between the notion of *Eigen-Sinn* as demonstrated through the limited *Eingaben* of the child-reader and a confluence of the state's malign and benign diffusion of power as described elsewhere by noted German historian Mary Fulbrook.⁴⁶ It is to this interaction between the public and private, the state's use of power in

⁴⁴ Joseph Witek contends that readers of comic strips do not bare the same stigmas as readers of comic books as, and although comic strips are typically gag based, they target both children and adults with their humour. At the same time, comic strips are not assumed to have the same psychological impact as comic books and, as a result, do not suffer the same criticisms, though this also means that more of the academic literature is geared toward those strips, see Witek, 5-9. However, due to this perception of the comic strip as the "funnies," as it were, social significance is often dismissed within these strips. That said, both comic strips and books rank higher on the cultural hierarchy in countries such as France, Belgium, Italy, and Japan, than in either the United States or Germany. Matthew P. McAllister, Edward H. Sewell, Jr., and Ian Gordon, "Introducing Comics and Ideology," in *Comics & Ideology*, ed. Matthew P. McAllister, Edward H. Sewell, Jr., and Ian Gordon (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 3-5. In the third chapter of *Envisioning Socialism*, Heather Gumbert discusses how the *Deutsche Fernsehfunk* (DFF) balanced entertainment and education necessary to East German television programming in the 1950s, particularly following the 1953 Uprising in the GDR. These efforts were again redoubled following the Hungarian Uprising in 1956. See Gumbert, 60-80. Joshua Feinstein makes similar connections in relation to DEFA films, including the Rabbit Films, suggesting that the "problem was education and was inseparable from the conceptualization of state authority itself," particularly in the wake of the Eleventh Plenum. See Joshua Feinstein, *The Triumph of the Ordinary: Depictions of Daily Life in the East German Cinema 1949-1989* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 71-3, 80, and 171-3. As such, and given this perceived inseparability of education and the state, particularly after the mandate of socialist realism in the arts following the *Bitterfelder Weg* in 1959, it is unsurprising that comics and *Kinderzeitschriften* followed this model of edutainment as the same largely permeated East German popular culture in one form or another. For more on ideology and comics specifically and GDR popular culture generally, see Thomas Kramer, *Mickey, Marx und Manitu: Zeit- und Kulturgeschichte im Spiegel eines DDR-Comics 1955-1990: "Mosaik" als Fokus von Medienlebnissen im NS und in der DDR* (Berlin: Weidler Buchverlag, 2002).

⁴⁵ *Atze* 12/88 and 11/84.

⁴⁶ Fulbrook, *People's State*, 235-249.

Kinderzeitschriften, and the child-reader's often unconscious resistance to state authority in the construction of identity and voiced preferences that this chapter now turns.

In the reports on *Frösi* and *Trommel* for the first six months of 1972, the authors clearly laid out the obligations of the *Thälmann* Pioneers and FDJ-lers and, in doing so, the responsibilities placed upon the *Kinderzeitschriften*. As explained by the authors of the reports, the publications were intended to meet the pioneers' duty to become engaged in the classroom, suggesting that the pioneers who wrote to the editors typically demonstrated exemplary results in this area. However, this was not always the case as:

It turns out that it is often impossible in the classroom to respond to each child and help their individual progress. Oftentimes grades are the most important thing, rather than the effort to awaken in each child the self-confidence that they are able to improve their performance. From the letters, it can be seen that the children themselves are often left with poor grades as they do not discuss what they must do and when in order to improve their performance. In many instances, praise and the sense of achievement did not work enough.⁴⁷

As such, it was the responsibility of comics and *Kinderzeitschriften* not typically associated with the classroom to fill the educational void left by the system. As children struggled and educators were unable to help all on the required individual basis in the classroom, the importance of the educational and ideological content of the publications for children became central to the FDJ's educational policy platform.⁴⁸ As such, a majority of the letters written to the publications that received replies addressed concerns regarding class trips, work in schools such as learning

⁴⁷ BArch DY 24/23769, *Halbjahresanalyse der Redaktion "Frösi,"* 1-2.

⁴⁸ This was not the only instance where education was a policy taken up by both governments, educators, publishers, and the church as a means to influence children and youth, especially in the immediate postwar and during the height of Cold War tensions between the United States and the Soviet Bloc. See Heike Elisabeth Jüngst, *Information Comics: Knowledge Transfer in a Popular Format* (Frankfurt aM: Peter Lang, 2010); Alexander Maxwell, "East Europeans in the Cold War Comic *This Godless Communism*," in *Comic Books and the Cold War, 1946-1962: Essays on Graphic Treatment of Communism, The Code, and Social Concerns*, ed. Chris York and Rafael York (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2012), 190-203; Mark McKinney, *The Colonial Heritage of French Comics* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011); Fredric Stroemberg, *Comic Art Propaganda: a Graphic History* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2010); and Allen L. Woll, "The Comic Book in a Socialist State: Allende's Chile, 1970-1973," *Journal of Popular Culture* 9, no. 4 (2004): 1039-45.

experiences, help with that learning, classroom discipline, and the completion of group projects (*Erfüllung der Gruppenplanes*). While the reports allowed room for letters written regarding the content of the publications themselves, this typically implied the publications' ideological content such as the fiftieth anniversary of the Lenin-Pioneers or pointed criticisms directed toward that content.⁴⁹

It must be understood that these reports demonstrate a specific ideological skew directed by the authors of these reports and thus by the FDJ itself to describe the importance of the regime's educational objectives of their publications and make the appearance that readers engage with the magazines. One reader requested the inclusion of quick and easy recipes, noting that her mother suffered from a repetitive motion injury (*Sehnenscheidentzündung*) and she had to help around the house. Another asked that the editors include, in every second or third published issue of *Frösi*, a map of different cities throughout the German Democratic Republic with a few pictures of highlighted attractions and natural resources in the area. Yet a third suggested that trivia contests about cities and *Länder* be incorporated into *Mäxchen und Tüte*, a four panel comic strip in *Frösi* that already taught readers about littering and bicycle safety among other things.⁵⁰ This request linked *Mäxchen und Tüte* to the previous letter in its request for geographical education, thus explaining its inclusion in the report. At the same time, the suggestion of a contest connected the comic strip to the precedent set by *Pats Reiseabenteuer*,

⁴⁹ BArch DY 24/23769, "Trommel," 4-5.

⁵⁰ BArch DY 24/23769, *Analyse der Redaktion "Frösi"*, 18. It should be noted that the German term, *Länder*, means both states within the Republic and countries. Although edited, the context of the letter places *Länder* in relation to cities, suggesting the former translation and as such this is the used here. While an understanding of the word as to mean countries does not specifically fly in the face of the education and ideology put forward by the FDJ, it potentially suggests an intellectual border crossing and an interest in travel as made clear in comics such as *Mosaik* and *Pats Reiseabenteuer*. Though it is not believed to be the case here, there does exist the possibility that this may, in fact, be representative of an internal *Republikflucht* demonstrated elsewhere in the watching of western television as part of the retreat into the domestic sphere, see Betts, *Within Walls*, 144 & 214-5. Betts also suggests here that the television was instrumental in teaching children the importance of the private sphere.

providing prizes that tested readers' historical knowledge. These requests, categorized as "wishes" in the reports, were not critical of the publication's content, but suggested the addition of content that served the educational objectives of the FDJ and the overall formation of the socialist personality. While these reader suggestions were brought together by the regime in order to demonstrate the connections between the regime's planning and the readership's desires for what was read, they also suggested that children were making these connections themselves and arguably without the perceived influence of the editorial regime.

These same reports indicate complaints made in these same reader letters. From time to time, the publishers included in issues of *Frösi* instructions for crafts projects for the children to complete. These would include pre-coloured, designed, and decorated templates that the readers could cut out from the magazine, not unlike similar templates adorning the back cover of western children's magazines or western cereal boxes. The templates receiving the brunt of complaints here were for a box printed on sheets, perforated to presumably aid children with removing them from the publication and cut along predetermined seams and holes without need of scissors. Throughout the letters, children complained of holes being too small and pieces of the sheet jutting at odd angles once the box was constructed so that the completed craft was unattractive and not at all what was promised in the instructions. The letters do not make broad, political complaints against the FDJ or the regime.⁵¹ Instead, these letters focused on deficiencies in the execution of the plan as opposed to the potential failures of the plan, and thus the failures of the construction of socialism and the socialist SED state itself not unlike practices elsewhere in popular culture.⁵²

⁵¹ BArch DY 24/23769, *Analyse der Redaktion "Frösi,"* 19.

⁵² Heather Gumbert points to *Eingaben* in relation to East German television and viewer interest and interaction with the programming. Although her monograph opens with an example of an individual writing in with a proposal for a vigilante-style action show more suited to West German or American television, perhaps

This continued the culture of *Eingaben* found elsewhere in the child's construction of *Eigen-Sinn* as they engaged with these *Kinderzeitschriften* to develop their own interests and in their own ways.⁵³ In his monograph, *After the Wall: East Meets West in the New Berlin*, John Borneman suggests that *Eingaben* was the "personification" of deprivation and "yearning" in the East German state.⁵⁴ However, this practice allowed for participation with the regime in an actual, though limited, public sphere, as defined by Jürgen Habermas, which concurrently restructured the domestic as a space of freedom and resistance through the redefinition of socialism and its boundaries through the consumerization of politics.⁵⁵ The letters and petitions found in these reports, termed "critical notes regarding the perforated template" (*kritische*

indicating where the viewer's interests lay, this is followed later in the book with numerous examples of *Eingaben* and the culture of complaint discussed here. Importantly, she indicates complaints made regarding the DFF's inability to transmit live creating a chasm between when a *Fußball* match was played and when it would be viewed by the television audience, rescheduling the Black Channel so child-viewers could watch as it was popular with their demographic, and political complaints made against a televised play despite the same radio play being so well received by the regime. None of these examples leveled complaints against the DFF or criticized the SED-regime itself. What was brought to the attention of officials here was the audience's perceived right to televised entertainment and the population's ability to engage with the regime through the medium of television. As such, an argument can be made regarding the ways in which East Germans understood and consumed entertainment and how that is influenced by supposed freedoms enjoyed across the East-West divide. Moreover, the culture of complaint emerging in East German comic culture was not limited to that medium, but spread throughout popular culture generally and suggested how entertainment informed citizen engagement with the regime. See Gumbert, 52, 196n12, and 123. Likewise, Esther von Richthofen warns that *Eingaben* should be treated carefully as they are constructed to fulfill a specific agenda by the author. As such, they are not indicative of the true thoughts and feelings of those authors, but demonstrate "what people had come to expect from the SED." Esther von Richthofen, "Communication and Compromise: The Prerequisites for Cultural Participation," in *Power and Society in the GDR 1961-1979: The 'Normalisation of Rule'?*, ed. Mary Fulbrook (New York: Berghahn, 2009), 144-5; Felix Mühlberg, "Konformismus oder Eigensinn? Eingaben als Quelle zu Forschung der Alltagsgeschichte der DDR," *Mitteilungen aus der kulturwissenschaftlichen Forschung* (February 1996): 331-45; and Ina Merkel and Felix Mühlberg, "Eingaben und Öffentlichkeit," in *Wir sind doch nicht die Meckerecke der Nation! Briefe an das Fernsehen der DDR*, ed. Ina Merkel (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2000), 15. See also, Alf Lüdtke, ed., *Akten, Eingaben, Schaufenster: Die DDR und ihre Texte. Erkundungen zu Herrschaft und Alltag* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997); see particularly within: Katherine Pence, "Schaufenster der sozialistischen Konsums: Texte der ostdeutschen 'Consumer Culture'," 91-118; Uta G. Poiger, "Amerikanischer Jazz und (ost)deutsche Respektabilität," 119-36; Thomas Kramer, "Die DDR der fünfziger Jahre im Comic Mosaik: Einschienenbahn, Agenten, Chemieprogramm," 167-88; Dorothee Wierling, "Der Staat, die Jugend und der Westen. Texte und Konflikten der 1960er Jahre," 223-40; and Ina Merkel, "'...in Hoyerswerda leben jedenfalls keine so kleinen viereckigen Menschen.' Briefe an das Fernsehen der DDR," 279-310.

⁵³ Saunders, 10.

⁵⁴ John Borneman, *After the Wall: East Meets West in the New Berlin* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 79.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 80-1.

Hinweise zur Lochschablone) by the report's authors, expressed disappointment in the promises of the publication and the provided craft activity as much as they appear critical of the deficiencies of the template provided.⁵⁶ As such, readers criticized the FDJ in terms of the consumerized politics suggested by Borneman. This underscored the significance of the domestic as a space which allowed for the interaction of the citizens and the state. And although Gary Bruce offers that this culture of complaint generated through the *Eingaben* did not, in fact, allow East Germans a "voice," as it were, those letters permitted different and various means by which children created their own sense of space in which they were able to give the state the necessary participation that allowed for the continuation and acceptance of the FDJ and the SED's structures of power.⁵⁷

At the same time, these letters addressed exactly the educational concerns that educators and the FDJ concerned themselves with since the early 1960s. While it immediately seems that these templates were intended for entertainment purposes, their instructions suggested that the templates be used to craft a box for Teacher's Day, as recounted by the author of one of the letters. The author lamented that, due to the problems associated with the template, "I cannot craft a nice box for Teacher's Day. That is too bad." Another wrote that "the perforated sheet for the hole decoration was a little too small. My classmates also complained. *Frösi* is the best regardless."⁵⁸ While these voiced the complaints of the child-readers, those complaints were not explicitly directed at the regime or the FDJ. Rather, these complaints were framed in terms of the child-readers' intention and ability to engage with the educational-ideological content provided in the pages of *Frösi* and *Trommel*, not to mention *Atze* or *Mosaik*. In addition, complaints leveled against the deficiencies of this craft project were discussed in terms of the

⁵⁶ BArch DY 24/23769, *Analyse der Redaktion "Frösi,"* 19.

⁵⁷ Gary Bruce, *The Firm: The Inside Story of the Stasi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 183.

⁵⁸ BArch DY 24/23769, *Analyse der Redaktion "Frösi,"* 19.

direct connection made by the publishers themselves between the *Kinderzeitschriften*, the craft project, and the classroom. These letters thus established the perceived effectiveness of the educational nature of the *Kinderzeitschriften* and the child-reader's desire to participate in the classroom, and with the regime more broadly speaking, on a level beyond the rudimentary student/teacher relationship.

Comics, the Construction of Space, and the Private Sphere.

Of course, the act of letter-writing does not suggest the actuality of such a desire to engage with the FDJ or the regime, only the perception of such. It has been mentioned that the culture of *Eingaben* provided a substitute for a legitimate public sphere around which citizens voiced complaints to the SED regime in a limited way, acceptable within the regime's framework of the "welfare dictatorship" as delineated in Konrad H. Jarausch's chapter, "Care and Coercion: The GDR as Welfare Dictatorship." Built upon Jürgen Kocka's concurrent notions of the GDR as both a *durchherrschte Gesellschaft* and a "modern dictatorship" by way of explaining the contradictory forces at work in the organization of the East German state, the "welfare dictatorship" understands the SED regime in terms of patriarchal politics that "demonstrated [their] concern for a powerless population" buttressed by Stasi surveillance and bureaucracy.⁵⁹ In this way, Jarausch suggests the GDR and thus the SED regime was dependent upon its social policies, including education, "social services, material policy, and artistic cultivation," to generate support from the population that was fundamental to Honecker's "unity of economic and social policy."⁶⁰ This support, in turn, became largely conditional upon the

⁵⁹ Konrad H. Jarausch, "Care and Coercion: The GDR as Welfare Dictatorship," in *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, ed. Konrad H. Jarausch (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999), 60.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 60-1.

state's ability to fulfill the material needs of its population, creating what Jarausch terms "reluctant loyalty."⁶¹ While this "reluctant loyalty" does not precipitate the retreat into the domestic discussed elsewhere by Betts, it was an acceptable and not unwelcomed by-product of the warranted outward demonstrations of loyalty which became unofficial state policy with Honecker's ascension to the SED leadership in 1971.

This made the domestic a space of increased personal freedom while at the same time creating a confluence of what Betts calls "alternative identity formation" and state anxiety and surveillance.⁶² In terms of the comics and *Kinderzeitschriften* discussed here, the child-readers used their own variation of the *Eingaben* petitions to affect change to their situation based on the perceived deficiencies of the material goods provided them. They made the conscious decision to engage with the publishers on their own terms, understanding the crafts project available to them as part of their engagement in the classroom and thus as part of their educational regiment. Issuing complaints over the failings of this project suggests that the child-readers recognized these deficiencies as failure of the material promises issued by Jarausch's "welfare dictatorship." As such, the child-readers express their problems with the regime, via the publication, in terms of their disappointment. While the children still demonstrated this "reluctant loyalty," professing that *Frösi*, and thus the regime, was still great, their letters spoke to the regime's inability to deliver the material goods required for the continuation of their support of the FDJ and its educational campaign.⁶³

⁶¹ Ibid, 62.

⁶² Betts, "Building Socialism," 114. Sheila Fitzpatrick has made much of similar ideas in the context of Stalinist Russia, suggesting that "the normal posture of a Soviet citizen was passive conformity and outward obedience," see Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism. Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 222.

⁶³ Katherine Pence, "Women on the Verge: Consumers between Private Desires and Public Crisis," in *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics*, ed. Katherine Pence and Paul Betts (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 296-300. In a slightly different context, Pence suggests that *Eingaben* were not only used for the population to make their needs and desires known, but also that these were employed as an

It must be made clear, however, that this culture of complaint fostered by the *Eingaben* and discussed above is in no way representative of the majority of letters received.⁶⁴ A detailed breakdown for the month of August 1972 indicates that, of the more than 47 000 letters received, only sixty were categorized as criticism, wishes, or praise. As a result, the child-reader's engagement with the FDJ's *Kinderzeitschriften* cannot be understood solely in terms of the "reluctant loyalty" located in the significance of the domestic. More often was the case that children used these publications, and here we may arguably include the likes of *Atze* and *Mosaik*, as spaces in which to voice their individual interests. In this way, these children's magazines may be understood as an extension of the domestic or private sphere in which the child-readers themselves engaged with the publications in a variety of ways. As was the case with *Atze* and *Pats Reiseabenteuer* above, most of the letters received responded to the *Drushba-Quiz* (12 934) or else were directed to pen pals either within or outside of the East German state (*Briefspartner—Ausland* – DDR 13 152; *DDR – Ausland* 8 287). Other notable topics included what the authors of the report categorized as "Art Connoisseurs" (*Kunstkenner*) (3 117), the *SL-*

indicator of loyalty as women often established connections between those desires and the relative health of the state. As such, there exists a correlation between the perceived happiness of the individual citizen and their willingness to participate and engage with the regime.

⁶⁴ Elsewhere, Jonathon Grix indicates that, for East German elections, the use of *Eingaben* as a release valve for popular discontent was used with growing frequency and resultant threats of non-participation constituted the majority of those letters, see Jonathon Grix, "Non-Conformist Behaviour and the Collapse of the GDR," in *East Germany: Continuity and Change*, ed. Paul Cooke and Jonathon Grix (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), 75. Judd Stitzel meanwhile suggests that the practice of complaint was prolific and often directed toward manufacturers, trade organizations, and the editorial boards of magazines and newspapers including comics and *Kinderzeitschriften*. Beginning in the 1960s, the television show *Prisma* requested these *Eingaben* and often responded to them on air. Judd Stitzel, "Shopping, Sewing, Networking, Complaining: Consumer Culture and the Relationship between State and Society in the GDR," in *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics*, ed. Katherine Pence and Paul Betts (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 265. In the context of children, Mike Dennis and Jonathon Grix suggest that children were enthusiastic to participate in this complaint culture and went to great lengths to do so when there was a legitimate concern, see Mike Dennis and Jonathon Grix, *Sport under Communism: Behind the East German 'Miracle'* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2012), 75-6. As complaints made against *Verlag Junge Welt* regarding these publications were relatively few, this may arguably be indicative of genuine support for the *Kinderzeitschriften* by the child-readers. Although children demonstrated that they understood the domestic in terms of the ersatz public sphere similar to their parents, this demonstrates that children's understanding of complaint and their own roles in socialist society were still developing, influenced by both their parents and their interactions with the state.

System (*Schnell Lade* or speed loading, a cassette film camera made by the *ORWO* company in Wolfen, GDR based on a *Agfa Karat* design with 2 753 letters), and *Mini-Max* (a comics supplement to *Frösi* starring the *Mäxchen* character; 1 620). Other letters are spread across a number of other subjects ranging from Pioneer work (803) and work for the FDJ (7) to holidays (234) and sport (25), with numbers typically between a few dozen and a few hundred, though never challenging those leading categories.⁶⁵ With such a wide range of categories spread across a great number of reader-letters, the report's figures suggest that children understood this space of letters as more than a site of complaint, but rather as a space in which they were free, within understandable limits, to express thoughts and desires normally reserved for the domestic space.⁶⁶ Or, as Betts understands Habermas through the importance associated with the private, as a space that was in and of itself without political meaning but served as an accepted substitute for a public sphere.

This perceived extension of the domestic or private sphere is evidenced through the ways in which these child-readers chose to engage with the *Kinderzeitschriften*, the publishers, or the regime. While a decided minority wrote in with criticisms of the publication's supposed deficiencies with its craft template for a Teacher's Day box, many others wrote of subjects that were either not typically associated with the content of *Frösi* or else were beyond the scope of topics deemed ideologically relevant by the FDJ. The authors of the report themselves considered this an unusual month for reader letters attributing not only the high volume, but also the abundance of letters regarding holidays to the increased free time afforded the child-readers by the school summer break. And although the report's authors chose to focus on the claims to

⁶⁵ BArch DY 24/23769, *Redaktion "Frösi" Analyse August 1972*, 2.

⁶⁶ Roger Sabin makes similar suggestions regarding the significance of fan letters and letter columns in comics in 1960s and 1970s Great Britain and America, stating that these served to generate a sense of belonging among the child-readership thus increasing loyalty toward certain publications, see Roger Sabin, *Comics, Comix & Graphic Novels: A History of Comic Art* (New York: Phaidon Press, 1996), 33.

good or bad grades made in these letters, thus further associating the *Kinderzeitschriften* with the perceived success of its educational mandate, they consider these letters and their authors very testimonial in their accounts (*beschäftigt sie auch sehr das Zeugnis*), honest and open (*ehrlich und offen*).⁶⁷

Further, it must be mentioned that the child-readers engaging in the “wishes” wrote to the publications as though writing to and making requests of friends. Requesting the creation of a trading-corner in *Frösi*, the child-reader writes: “In addition, could you arrange a small exchange-corner in *Frösi*.” Another child-reader asked, “can you not include contests about cities and states in the adventures of *Mäxchen* and *Tüte*.”⁶⁸ In these examples, and indeed in all the excerpted letters where the child-readers make requests of the publishers, the children address the *Kinderzeitschriften*, their creative and editorial staffs, and by extension the FDJ, using the informal “*du*.” Although it is difficult to draw too many conclusions from this word usage given the relatively small number of letters published in the reports, this tends to suggest that children understood the editorial regime in terms of the publications themselves. This is to say that comics and the *Kinderzeitschriften* discussed here were considered part of the private sphere in which they were consumed rather than the public sphere of the “welfare dictatorship” that produced them. As such, when children wrote to these publications, they did so with the conception that the editorial regime was on their side in such a manner that allowed them to discuss not only those subjects that occurred in the public sphere that were of particular interest to the FDJ, but also of those other subjects that would otherwise have remained behind closed doors.

⁶⁷ BArch DY 24/23769, *Redaktion “Frösi” Analyse August 1972*, 5.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 18.

This is not to suggest that children treated these publications the same or that they responded to them in the same ways. While, generally speaking, it is considered that those child-readers who engaged with the editorial regime through these letters did so in a way that blurred the distinctions between the public and the private, the political and the domestic, this group is dominantly female. Of the excerpted letters provided in the reports in any category, only the one requesting the formation of an exchange corner, cited above, was written by a boy. While this in itself is not enough to make this assertion regarding the gender of these young letter-writers, the authors of the reports note that East German girls typically wrote to the publications in greater numbers than boys for the years 1972 and 1973. In the month of June 1972, of the 467 submissions received regarding the question of *Frösi*'s "picture of the month," those sent in by girls accounted for more than twice as many as those from boys (326 *Mädchen*, 141 *Jungen*). Likewise, received letters regarding the question "where is your workspace" numbered forty submissions from girls while boys accounted for only nineteen.⁶⁹ In the second quarter of 1973 (April, May, and June), across all categories of letters received, those letters written by girl-readers numbered more than 1400. Boys, on the other hand, accounted for a paltry 449 by comparison.⁷⁰ Of course, these numbers may not hold since the debut of *ABC-Zeitung* (1947), *Frösi* (1953), or the launch of *Atze* and *Mosaik* in 1955. That is not suggested here. But in the period under discussion, girls engaged with the editorial regimes of these publications more often and in a larger variety of ways than did boys.

In and of themselves, these numbers do little to explain why girls appeared to be more inclined to engage with these publications. This cannot be attributed to concerns regarding

⁶⁹ BArch, DY 24/23769, *Redaktion "Frösi" Analyse Juni 1972, Analyse „Bild des Monats,” 1 and Analyse „Wo ist dein Arbeitsplatz“*. Here, *Arbeitsplatz* is translated to mean "work space" as opposed to "work place." Given that the answers given in these letters are from children and encompass answers such as desk [*Schreibtisch*] and living room [*Wohnzimmer*], contextually this seemed most appropriate.

⁷⁰ BArch, DY 24/23769, *Redaktion "Fröhlich sein und singen" Analyse der Leserpost im II. Quartal, 4*.

chores in the home or cooking, although these subjects made themselves apparent, nor was this suggestive that girls were somehow more interested in the publications than boys. *Mosaik* was itself a very male-oriented publication having little interaction between the genders and when men and women did interact, women were by no means in positions of authority.⁷¹ However, as Paul Betts points out, gender difference is crucial to privacy and the domestic as women wrote most of the *Eingaben* and more often dominated campaigns for improvement in the localities social, cultural, educational, and organizational lives.⁷² These *Kinderzeitschriften* were brought into and, more often than not, consumed within the domestic. As such, they were arguably considered part of that private sphere as demonstrated through the suggested conflation of the public and the private generated by the reader-letters themselves. Donna Harsch writes that women's experience with the domestic created a female consciousness that resisted the regime through private challenges made in the domestic sphere.⁷³ This consciousness manifested in the *Eingaben*, to name but one means, as a private challenge to the regime couched in the regime's own rhetoric of gender equality and female emancipation, not unlike those letters written in to *Verlag Junge Welt*. In the similar context of Soviet Russia, Diane Koenker suggests that women in socialist societies carved niches for themselves within these domestic concerns as a space in which these women themselves had power.⁷⁴ With the associations made by the readers in their letters and in the practices of reading the publications themselves, and with the regime's efforts to penetrate the domestic with these publications, the reader-letters created the ideal space for

⁷¹ Dolores Augustine, *Red Prometheus: Engineering and Dictatorship in East Germany, 1945-1990* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), 230.

⁷² Betts, *Within Walls*, 15-16. This plays an important role in the Wolfgang Becker film, *Good Bye, Lenin!* (2003). Christine (Kathrin Sass) is a loyal Party member and Pioneer leader who also engages in the writing of complaint letters on behalf of her neighbours, Wolfgang Becker, dir., *Good Bye, Lenin!*, DVD (Berlin: X-Filme Creative Pool, 2003).

⁷³ Donna Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic: Women, the Family, and Communism in the German Democratic Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 7-8.

⁷⁴ Diane P. Koenker, "Men against Women on the Shop Floor in Early Soviet Russia: Gender and Class in the Socialist Workplace," *The American Historical Review* 100, no. 5 (Dec. 1995): 1451 & 1457.

young girls to engage with state-sanctioned aspects of their private lives, like the educational and Pioneer activities that occupied their everyday lives, through the domestic sphere and in ways endorsed by the FDJ.

At the same time, the FDJ and the publisher's of these *Kinderzeitschriften* responded to these letters in roughly equal proportions to the genders of the letter writers themselves although in nowhere near the same volume. In August 1972, of the more than 47 000 letters received, only 504 of these received direct responses from the editors of *Frösi*. Of these, then, 365 responses were addressed to girls with another 133 to boy-readers. While these numbers are relatively proportionate to the approximate numbers in which letters were received, overall they addressed the more pressing concerns of the regime, the FDJ, and of the publishers themselves in terms of the content of these comics and *Kinderzeitschriften*. That is, these responses to the readership were grouped into only four thematic categories: Pioneer work (187), FDJ work (19), school (67), and opinions regarding *Frösi* both as a whole and as individual issues (242).⁷⁵ In terms of the gender division among the reader-letters and the regime's decision to respond with roughly proportionate representation, an argument can be made regarding women's perceived niche within the private sphere and the regime's own desire to blur its distinction from the public and the political. Women employed the domestic space as resistance in ways inaccessible to men or else in ways that men themselves did not pursue. However, the reports do nothing to support such an assessment of the publisher's motivations when responding in the numbers that it did. Neither does this suggest that girls read *Frösi* in greater numbers than boys nor that the regime felt it necessary to target girls more directly in their ideological campaigning. Simply, these publications were associated with the private and, as such, girls interacted with them in

⁷⁵ BArch DY 24/23769, *Redaktion "Frösi" Analyse August 1972*, 3-5. The authors of the report account for the discrepancy in the numbers, suggesting that some reader-letters address more than one of the four categories and thus count twice in the report.

ways that boys did not, arguably as a result of girls' and women's perceived roles within the domestic.

But the motivations of the FDJ and of the publishers coincided with larger machinations within the regime more broadly. The first chapter described the uses of comics as the FDJ entertained new concepts and formats for *Mosaik* and *Atze* in the early to mid-1960s to address the concerns of both the regime and of educators over the perceived insubstantial content of these publications. The magazines for children such as *Frösi*, *Trommel*, and *ABC-Zeitung* which were not comics per se, but included comic strips in addition to other content, were not as problematic to the FDJ as were the western-influenced comics largely due to this diversity of content.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, the motivations and transitions within the ranks of those children's publications may, in part, be attributed to Margot Honecker's appointment as Minister of Education in 1963, around the same time *Mosaik* and *Atze* both underwent drastic transformations of form and function, and her hard-line belief that educational work should foster an emotional bond between youth and the state in support of SED policy.⁷⁷ More properly, though, this approach to child-reader's interaction with the publications of the FDJ may

⁷⁶ Here we also must not forget the weekly youth publication, *Neues Leben* (New Life), published by the Central Committee of the FDJ in which Erich Honecker served as both founder and chairman when the publication first launched in 1946 and then when it was relaunched in 1955. Honecker's role in the FDJ prior to his leadership of the SED sixteen years later in addition to his direct influence over not only youth policy, but also publications intended for youth, suggest the extent to which Honecker valued youth participation and the importance of youth indoctrination into the socialist system. Of course, this does not explain Honecker's reluctance toward his mentor's, Walter Ulbricht's Youth Communiqué and tolerance of western influence in the early 1960s. Nor does it explain Honecker's adoption of those same influences following his rise to power and his promises toward the fulfillment of the material desires of East Germans as expressed during the SED 8th Party Congress in 1971. In this instance, however, it is important to note Honecker's influence over these youth publications, his long-standing interests in steering the energies of East German youth, and the tolerance coupled with increased surveillance that characterized the "thaw" associated with the early period of Honecker's term in office, see Fulbrook, *People's State*, 131; Alan McDougall, "The Liberal Interlude: SED Youth Policy and the Free German Youth (FDJ), 1963-65," *Debatte* 9, no. 2 (2001): 124 & 155; and Alan L. Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth: Historical Mythology and Youth Propaganda in the German Democratic Republic, 1945-1989* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 48-51.

⁷⁷ Jeanette Z. Madarasz, *Conflict and Compromise in East Germany, 1971-1989: A Precarious Stability* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2003), 66.

be understood with Erich Honecker's assumption of SED authority from Walter Ulbricht in 1971. In "Producing the 'Socialist Personality'? Socialization, Education, and the Emergence of New Patterns of Behaviour," Angela Brock characterized East German youth policy as stabilizing only after the implementation of the Act on the Integrated Socialist Education System of 25 February 1965, two years after Margot Honecker's appointment. However, it was at the SED 8th Party Congress in 1971, shortly after Erich Honecker's rise to power, where he declared efforts to forge the socialist personality among East German youth to be the primary task and duty of the SED state. It was at this moment, Brock suggests, that publications for children were inundated with images of the unfaltering anti-fascist hero, "led by the air-brushed and very popular Ernst Thälmann," or 'Teddy' as he was known.⁷⁸ Here, the socialist personality was understood to encompass "socialist awareness" over the focus on community and social order that characterized this same concept during the 1950s and 1960s when *Mosaik* and *Atze* underwent their respective transformations toward a clarified educational strategy under the direction of Wolfgang Altenburger.⁷⁹ This is to say that the significance of the socialist personality continued through the transition of power from Ulbricht to Honecker, but this appearance of continuity was in name alone as youth policy under the Honecker-led SED embraced the outward demonstration of this socialist awareness at the expense of a greater foundation or building-up of socialist society as a whole.

Efforts to draw children and youth to the socialist project during the Honecker era were thus characterized less by honest attempts to win youth loyalty than they were by pragmatic

⁷⁸ Angela Brock, "Producing the 'Socialist Personality'? Socialization, Education, and the Emergence of New Patterns of Behaviour," in *Power and Society in the GDR, 1961-1979: The 'Normalization of Rule'?* ed. Mary Fulbrook (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 227.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 223-7.

efforts to win loyalty through material goods.⁸⁰ This was, in turn, accompanied by an increase in surveillance, not only among the dissidents or youth sub- and countercultures, but among children as well. Children understood these comics and *Kinderzeitschriften* in terms of constructions of self and in responding to questions and quizzes posed within the publications themselves, but also to those publications more generally, created a space perceived to be an extension of the domestic and thus supposedly free of the influence of the regime. At the same time, these letters and specifically the reports under discussion here marked a shift in the perception surrounding these publications and the supposed division between the public and the private, the political and the domestic. These reports were compiled for the publication years of 1972 and 1973, although others exist in limited form for *Atze* in 1971 seemingly for comparative purposes, and as such fall immediately after the implementation of policies enacted in the wake of the SED's 8th Party Congress. As these reports tended to compile large amounts of data associated with the child-readership via these letters, they represent pervasive and intrusive forms of surveillance that tread softly the distinction between Fulbrook's benign and malign forms of power.

The publications themselves typically demonstrated a conceptualization of benign power in that they promoted the FDJ's ideological and educational concerns in ways that, on the whole, went unnoticed by the child-readers. *Mosaik's Amerika-Serie* provides a prime example of this overlooked use of ideology through the use of the comics medium and the adventures of the *Digedags* travelling across the United States in a manner not unlike Disney's Uncle Scrooge comics; and, indeed, as a direct response to those "funny animal" comics. Even the frequent inclusions of the *Volksarmee* (People's Army) in these publications went largely unnoticed

⁸⁰ McDougall, "Liberal," 155.

among readers and did nothing to change attitudes when it came time for compulsory service.⁸¹ This obfuscation of the regime's intent allowed the comics and *Kinderzeitschriften* to penetrate the domestic at the same time that they were recreated as a space of identity as children engaged with these publications in their own way, perceptibly rendering these magazines harmless. That said, the authors of these reports compiled information regarding the readers' genders, ages, school districts, and home addresses. Not only this, but the purpose of these reports was to delineate for the FDJ leadership, in a digestible form, the thoughts and feelings of the readership toward the *Kinderzeitschriften* in order to determine the overall effectiveness of the ideology printed within their pages.⁸² In writing letters to the publications and engaging with the publications in ways that asserted their own sense of *Eigen-Sinn* within what was understood or assumed to be private, the child-readers gave the FDJ the tools required for their own surveillance. As such, and as suggested in the introduction by way of Foucault, these comics and *Kinderzeitschriften* acted as constructions of the state to invisibly enable SED rule.

Although understood in terms of the private sphere by the child-readers, it was suggested above that these publications moved between those forces of benign and malign power demonstrated by the regime. Mary Fulbrook understands malign power to be those "repressive, coercive and manipulative means of exerting power." That is to say that malign power is attributable to the vast state bureaucracy, the perceived omnipresence of the Stasi, and the systematic series of carrots and sticks employed to keep the East German population in line, if not active participants within the state. Conversely, benign power structures are those methods that tend to go unnoticed by the targeted audience and thus allow for more active and open

⁸¹ Brock, 234.

⁸² BArch DY 24/23769, *Halbjahranalyse der Redaktion "Frösi" über die Leserpost*, 1-5; *Redaktion ATZE/Mosaik Leserpostanalyse für das 2. Halbjahr 1972*, 1-7; *Redaktion "Frösi" Analyse August 1972*, 1-6; *Statistik der Leserpost im II. Quartal 1973*, 1-6.

engagement from that audience.⁸³ Perhaps more importantly, the power exercised in these *Kinderzeitschriften* is indicative of Foucault's governmentality thesis as permitting and perpetuating the SED-state through the engagement of the child-readers. While typically this would suggest that these reports represent the malign conception of East German power structures, they were created out of processes of open engagement with the regime as a result of the influence of benign power traditions. These reports were not drafted with the intent of repression or of surveillance, but more properly to examine those aspects of the publications to which the children responded on an emotional level in order to further promote the goals of the regime. Nor is there evidence to support any supposition that these reports were, indeed, malicious and used as a means of surveillance. As such, the notion of deploying state-sanctioned malign power through these reports in order to coerce or manipulate child-readers into adhering to specific ideological tenants or educational objects seems not only unlikely, but unnecessary.

However, as discussed above, the editors of *Frösi* drafted 504 responses to reader letters and questions for those received in August 1972. In categorizing these responses, the FDJ and *Frösi*'s publishing regime attempted to channel the dialogue and interaction with those child-readers in a direction beneficial to the *Kinderzeitschriften* and to the goals of the creators, publishers, and educators involved. Arguably the editorial regime had no intent beyond a belief in the socialist project and formation of the socialist personality. Wolfgang Altenburger was himself an ideal and loyal party member, believing in and supporting the ideological/educational work of these comics and *Kinderzeitschriften* during his tenure as editor-in-chief of *Atze* and

⁸³ Fulbrook, *People's State*, 236. For further examples of this in the context of GDR comics, specifically the presence and reader response to the inclusions of plastics and technologies in *Mosaik*, see respectively Eli Rubin's *Synthetic Socialism: Plastics & Dictatorship in the German Democratic Republic* and Dolores Augustine's *Red Prometheus: Engineering and Dictatorship in East Germany, 1945-1990*.

Mosaik.⁸⁴ Rather, in following the directives laid out before them by the FDJ, the publications' editorial staff focused on areas of interest and discussion that fostered this sense of the socialist personality in all its nebulous forms. It was important then that these conversations were carried out through interest in the publications and the children's interactions with them. Engagement with ideological aspects of the FDJ and youth policy was endorsed in the pages of *Frösi*, *Trommel*, *Atze*, and the other *Kinderzeitschriften* and comics published in the GDR, though it was difficult to measure the level to which these messages were received, responded to, and internalized. Responding directly to those children who elected to engage with the political components of the publications allowed the FDJ access into the private, the domestic sphere, and the mental space in which the readership understood their comics and magazines. While this interaction bore aspects of the regime's malign power as described above, those strong-arm ideological forces were largely subsumed by interactions with those child-readers already engaging with the socialist educational content in their own ways of understanding, in their own spaces, and on their own terms.

Conclusion.

The comics and *Kinderzeitschriften* discussed in this chapter were thus never subject to a single meaning by either their publishers or by the children reading them. Though it must be understood that this information was filtered through the editorial regime of the publications and

⁸⁴ BStU, MfS, AIM, Nr. 9409/69. This is part of the reason why Altenburger was thought to be an ideal candidate for recruitment as one of the Stasi's informants (*inoffizielle Mitarbeiter* or IM) in May 1960. Altenburger also had family living in the Federal Republic of Germany and this, it was thought, made both Altenburger and his wife, Christina, perfect for gathering information from and about the West. However, there is a period of inactivity in Altenburger's file of nearly five years (September 1964-April 1969), during which time he was apparently not contacted by the Stasi. During this time and by the admission of the Altenburgers' handler, the Altenburgers rethought their relationship with the Stasi, though the records provide no insight as to what triggered this. While the Altenburgers apparently provided information regarding coworkers at *Verlag Junge Welt*, the handler reported a genuine reluctance to provide information regarding much else or of value. At the beginning of July 1969, the Altenburgers' handler recommended severing ties with Wolfgang and Christina Altenburger.

by the authors of the reports, the reports still demonstrate a variety of interpretation of the publications. The publications themselves occupied a liminal space between the desires of those parties involved not only in their creation, but also in their consumption. As such, comics and *Kinderzeitschriften* moved between and were understood in terms of both the public and the private sphere, often at the same time. These publications were created as part of the public sphere and, at least since the early 1960s, addressed the educational and ideological needs of the FDJ through the reorganization and streamlining of content and the ways in which that content was delivered, particularly with regard to comics. However, due to the nature of these publications and the ways the child-readership interacted with them, they were also part of the private sphere. Largely these publications were read during those moments that went unregulated by either the FDJ youth group or by the GDR's educational regime. Although the comics and magazines addressed concerns dealt with in school and in youth groups such as East German friendship with Vietnam, solidarity with the Soviet Union, or developing the child-readership's socialist personality more broadly, the methods of consumption associated these publications with leisure, privacy, and the domestic more than with the official FDJ institutions with which they interacted.

This largely feminized the space of letter-writing to these publications for children. As with the notion of the *Eingaben* themselves as suggested by Paul Betts, due to the social constructions of the state, the perceived gender divisions and masculinisation and feminization of roles and spaces within society, privacy and the domestic space were typically associated with women. This is not to suggest that girls were the only ones reading and interacting with these publications for children. Many boys also wrote to the editors and many more than that read *Kinderzeitschriften* and the masculinised space within the stories of *Mosaik*. However, in the

reports compiled for 1972 and 1973 and discussed here, publications for children were accepted as part of the domestic and girls interacted with them in terms of these letters to a far greater degree than did boys. As a result of this interaction between the child-readers, the FDJ, and the comics publications, *Kinderzeitschriften* were a feminized space of childhood and childhood interaction due to the domestic space with which they were associated. These publications were transported into the feminized space of the domestic which then co-opted those publications for the purposes of consumption and engagement. As such, the perceived linkages between these comics and magazines and the private space as a site of consumption and engagement through the practice of *Eingaben* gave children the ability to separate those publications from the masculine spaces and constructions of state authority. As such, discussion surrounding the interactions between child-readers and the FDJ, particularly with regard to *Eigen-Sinn* and the child-readers abilities of self-expression from within the private sphere, must be located within the larger historiography of the role of the domestic space and Fulbrook's honeycomb state.

Although the FDJ and the publishers attempted to use the space created through letters as a means of engaging the readers and attempting to steer how those readers understood and interacted with the content, the publishing regime interacted with the readership in terms of the everyday as much as with the publications' ideological/educational content. Letters addressing the contests in *Pats Reiseabenteuer* or requesting recipes in *Frösi* in order to help around the home suggested that the readers of these publications understood and internalized the purposes of their content and what was required of the socialist personality even though this was not openly discussed. As such, the FDJ was required to respond to these letters in ways that, often, did not suggest the repressive tendencies of the SED state demonstrated more readily outside the domestic space. This reaction allowed the private to develop as a perceived niche within East

German society, but also encouraged the child-readers development of *Eigen-Sinn* as this negotiation between the needs of the regime and the needs of the readers themselves found expression within this domestic space.

Chapter Four.

Travel, Cultural Imperialism, and the Socialist Ideal in *Mosaik* and *Atze*.

Comic books in the German Democratic Republic were always about travel in that travel was necessary to deposit the main cast into an exotic location in order to demonstrate the differences between the protagonists and the perceived antagonists of the stories. Hannes Hegen developed the *Digedags*' adventures to emulate those found in the Disney comics available and popular in West Germany and, until the early 1960s, throughout divided Berlin. Specifically, these adventures followed the tropes and story-beats found in the *Donald Duck* and *Uncle Scrooge* comics by Carl Barks whose name is synonymous with those characters and much of their mythology.¹ Moreover, *Verlag Neues Leben*, the original publisher of *Mosaik*, accepted Hegen's proposal for the comic shortly after the Free German Youth issued a directive to create a counterpart of Mickey Mouse.² And while *Mosaik* and the *Digedags* followed the lead of Uncle Scrooge, and more precisely they followed Scrooge's nephews in both form and function, more so than they did Mickey Mouse, this prescription gave the publication and comics in the German Democratic Republic more broadly the impetus and the endorsement to allow their characters the freedom of movement denied to the population at large.

¹ Barks' he was considered the "Good Duck Artist" even after his identity was discovered by fans. His comics were largely popular throughout Europe, not only divided Germany. Barks was also responsible for the creation of the Scrooge McDuck, the Beagle Boys, and Magica De Spell characters, Duckburg, and the Junior Woodchucks scout troop to which Donald's nephews, Huey, Dewey, and Louie, were members. These are, of course, only a handful of the more well known additions to the comic lore for which Barks was responsible. Many of these found a new audience and popularity in the animated series *Ducktales* (1987-1990), following the adventures of Scrooge McDuck and his grand-nephews, Huey, Dewey, and Louie and based on the Barks' comics, see Thomas Andrae, *Carl Barks and the Disney Comic Book: Unmasking the Myth of Modernity* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2006).

² Reinhard Pfeiffer, *Von Hannes Hegen bis Erich Schmitt: Lexikon der Karikaturisten, Presse- und Comic-Zeichner der DDR* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf Verlag, 1998), 128.

This course was passively pursued by the FDJ and the publishers as a means of providing a perceived socialist alternative to those American and western European comics available in the capitalist-imperialist sectors of the postwar, divided state and to combat those trash and filth (*Schund und Schmutz*) publications for children that came across the inner-German border. With no small degree of irony, this made comics in Europe as much travellers as the characters and adventures depicted in their pages. As such, travel was literally and metaphorically necessary in order to mobilize the values of the state and, especially after 1961, the combined educational and ideological agendas of the FDJ's publishing regime toward the formation of the socialist personality. Much has already been said of this point in previous chapters just as much has already been made of *Mosaik* and *Atze* and their relative appeals among their child-readers. And although these are points to which we must ultimately return, it should suffice here to say that comics and other publications for children were undervalued and would not provide a real alternative to those western publications until after the construction of the Berlin Wall. Until that point, comics in the GDR and *Mosaik* in particular were little more than mirrors of their western counterparts despite regulations regarding their sale and consumption in the East and the perceived immorality of their content in the West.³ That said, as much as the *Digedags* emulated

³ Although *Atze* was published and, indeed, launched a few months prior to the publication of *Mosaik*, for the first decade of its existence *Atze* was plagued by quality issues over its content, production, and publication schedule. These issues were addressed in Wolfgang Altenburger's proposal for the publication upon his appointment as Editor in Chief in the mid-1960s. See the first chapter for a larger discussion of *Atze*'s transformation that followed in 1966. As such, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and aside from the comic strips that appeared in other publications for children such as *Frösi*, *ABC-Zeitung*, or *Junge Welt* (acting as the FDJ's mouthpiece in much the same way that *Neues Deutschland* was for the SED-regime), our discussion here must focus on *Mosaik* as not only the most popular GDR comic at the time, but also as, arguably, the only GDR comic appearing with any degree of frequency. For more on West Germany's campaign against the perceived sex, violence, and the imposition and importation of American *Unkultur* (absence of culture) in comics, see Goran Jovanovic and Ulrich Koch, "The Comics Debate in Germany: Against Dirt and Rubish, Pictorial Idiotism, and Cultural Analphabetism," in *Pulp Demons: International Dimensions of the Postwar Anti-Comics Campaign*, ed. John A. Lent (Cranbury: Associated University Presses Inc., 1999), 93-128 and Patrick Major, "'Smut and Trash': Germany's Culture Wars Against Pulp Fiction," in *Mass Media, Culture, and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany*, ed. Karl Christian Führer and Corey Ross (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2006), 234-50.

the western characters for which they were created, travel was ultimately employed as a means of spreading a socialist worldview to both the Western and the developing world as they existed on the printed page.

Following the construction of the Berlin Wall in August 1961 and after the transformations that occurred in the pages of and among the editorial and creative staffs of both *Mosaik* and *Atze*, travel in comics took on new dimensions and significances for the FDJ and the child-readership. Despite the *Verordnung zum Schutz der Jugend* (Regulations for the Protection of Youth) in 1955 and the initial publications of *Atze* and *Mosaik* as means by which to regulate the infiltration of western publications for children and youth in the fledgling German Democratic Republic, the inner-German border remained permeable to most aspects of western youth culture including comic books. Elsewhere, Uta Poiger argues that the Socialist Unity Party (SED) and the FDJ considered the American influence colonizing West German culture to be barbarous to German youth as it destroyed German culture and made youth prone to fascism and fascist tendencies.⁴ Arguments between adolescents and the authorities in both Germanies thus ballooned into debates over moral, cultural, and political authority. As such, the cultural consumption of the populations in both East and West Germany became central platforms for the respective authorities.⁵ In the East, certainly, comics emerged as extensions of the state itself, representative of SED power structures while they perpetuated and maintained the regime in the Foucauldian understanding of state institutions and governance. It was not, however, until after the construction of the Wall and the false perception of its impenetrability that those authorities

⁴ See also Dr. Fredric Wertham's association between comics and European dictatorships following World War II, in Bradford W. Wright, *Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 154-64.

⁵ Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 1-2.

in the GDR were able to master, although never completely, the cultural consumption of youth given the drought of American and western publications for children and comics that followed.

At the same time that the Berlin Wall arguably staunched this cultural import from West to East, the Wall quite literally halted the movement of bodies across the inner-German border, limiting travel of GDR citizens to those states friendly to both the GDR and their Soviet allies and overseers. Prior to 1961, East Germany suffered from what has been termed elsewhere as both a refugee crisis and as a brain drain that ebbed and flowed from the end of the Second World War until the summer of 1961.⁶ Massive numbers fled from East to West in the early postwar years. In Berlin, the relative ease with which the population could cross from one sector of the divided city to another allowed many residents to work in the West for higher wages, benefits, and consumer choices while living in the East to enjoy SED subsidies on housing and staple foodstuffs.⁷ Following the tightening of the inner-German border in 1946 and more harshly and significantly in 1952 to stem this tide of migration, Berlin remained an escape hatch in the otherwise, though arguably, secure socialist German state.⁸ When the Wall was built by the SED regime at the insistence of Party Secretary Walter Ulbricht and with the approval of the Soviet Politburo, East Germany effectively sealed itself from the West in terms of the physical movement of populations and of cultural products.⁹ Although this imprisonment did not stop East Germans from travelling entirely, they were still able to vacation throughout the Warsaw Pact allied states, or from successfully emigrating to the West, legally or otherwise, the Berlin

⁶ Frederick Kempe, *Berlin 1961: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Most Dangerous Place on Earth* (New York: Berkley, 2011), 46-8.

⁷ Hope M. Harrison, *Driving the Soviets up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-1961* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 145-50.

⁸ Fabian Rueger, "Kennedy, Adenauer and the Making of the Berlin Wall," (PhD diss., Stanford: Stanford University, 2011), 93-5.

⁹ This does not suggest that the Berlin Wall was entirely impenetrable as western culture was still able to slip through cracks in the Wall via West German television and radio, western visitors to the East, and parcels sent from western relatives, see Patrick Major, *Behind the Berlin Wall: East Germany and the Frontiers of Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 188-90.

Wall brought an end to unimpeded movement across the inner-German and inner-Berlin borders for both the population and desired consumer goods.¹⁰

The Wall saw the FDJ provided the ability to reconceptualise and reimagine comics as a more fundamental aspect and extension of the child-readers' educational and formative experience as a GDR citizen. This transformation, however, did not directly or noticeably impact the comic-characters' ability to travel or transgress inner-German, international, or temporal borders and boundaries. Rather, the Wall and the new-found inclusion of a dedicated ideological and educational purpose in these *Kinderzeitschriften* (publications for children) encouraged the perceived mobility of those characters. As a result, the *Digedags* and later the *Abrafaxe* of *Mosaik* and Pat from *Pats Reiseabenteuer* (printed in the pages of *Atze* after 1967) were socialist figures transporting that ideology and political awareness wherever they went. Their travels and adventures thus condoned and encouraged the spread of socialism as the responsibility and obligation of those travellers, effectively taking up the role vacated by the Soviet-led Communist International (Comintern) upon its dissolution in 1943 toward educating the world-wide proletariat through less violent though still revolutionary means. The concept of socialism thus carried abroad by these characters was as much composed of education and ideology as it was of idealism as these characters brought with them a representation that effaced the political and social repressions of the East German secret police, the Stasi, and the SED regime in favour of a whitewashed socialism that was demonstrative of the state's officially

¹⁰ Here, Corey Ross suggests that the border closure was of only limited use in the regulation of youth as youth were most likely to protest the decision. Although this action allowed for the physical regulation of bodies, particularly that of youth, and their movement, as a political move this turned against the FDJ as 300 000 members left the youth group in the immediate aftermath of the Wall's construction, see Corey Ross, *Constructing Socialism at the Grass Roots: The Transformation of East Germany, 1945-65* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2000), 174-7. Elsewhere, Edith Sheffer describes this process of creating division between East and West and how the citizens themselves ultimately bought into the state's political ideology (on both sides of the border), intensifying those divisions in a space that was previously unified through economic, industrial, and even familial bonds, see Edith Sheffer, *Burned Bridge: How East and West Germans Made the Iron Curtain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

sanctioned anti-fascism, anti-imperialism, and pacifism. These aspects found more traction after the turn of the 1960s and the East German variety of the larger anti-comics campaigns. The characters reacted against perceived class-based oppression, regardless of the identity constructions of race or religious difference, lending aid when such aid was required. Socialism, German socialism and Soviet-style communism more generally, were thus understood and demonstrated as both spatial and temporal universals serving to improve the qualities of private and political life throughout history not only of the oppressed, but also the oppressors when educated about the error of their previous imperialist or fascist tendencies.

Although much has already been made of *Mosaik* and *Pats Reiseabenteuer*, this chapter re-examines those comics and stories in terms of how each used travel as an educational tool toward the socialist personality that was so fundamental to these publications in terms of the perpetuation of the state and the SED's ability to govern. Not only did travel demonstrate what socialism could be, perhaps attempting to make it more appealing than the lived reality of shortage and unfulfilled promises, but it also served to make the Berlin Wall itself invisible. This does not suggest that the Wall or the entirety of German division was rendered impermanent, but instead it revealed the permeability of the Berlin Wall and the constructed nature of the Cold War division through both intention and accident. For the FDJ and the publishing regime, travel in the pages of children's comics provided the ability to demonstrate the potentials of socialism in a way that was both acceptable for and accepted by the East German child-readership. For the readers themselves, the travels of comic characters provided children the occasion for "inner emigration," envisioning a world without Cold War divisions and through the associations made between those comics and the private sphere. Taking this into account, this chapter argues that through the demonstration of socialism's potential, the travel

depicted in *Verlag Junge Welt*'s most popular children's publications created expectations among the readership that the regime could never fulfill. While the FDJ attempted to foster the socialist personality amongst the readership, constructing genuine support for East German socialism, these comics provided escape, both literal and figurative, that lured children away from the lived experience of socialism even as it attempted to draw them close. Moreover, travel in East German comics demonstrated that freedom of movement was neither counterintuitive nor was it a threat to the existence and perpetuation of state-socialism.¹¹

The *Digedags* in *Mosaik* (1955-1975), Cultural Imperialism, and the Superiority of International Socialism.

Debuting in December 1955, the first issue of *Mosaik* introduced East German children to the *Digedags* in a story entitled, "On the Hunt for Gold" (*Auf der Jagd Nach dem Golde*), following tropes established in Carl Barks' Duck comics for Disney. Over the next thirty-five years of its publication, *Mosaik* as a socialist comic operated in the funny animal tradition in that

¹¹ Likewise, Heather Gumbert suggests that the character of the Sandman, from the children's program *Unser Sandmännchen* (Our Little Sandman, 1959-1989), "whisked children away on exotic adventures...like travelling to the moon. But he was just as comfortable in—and familiarized children with—territory closer to home in the GDR." Arguably in this way, the Sandman was emblematic of the children themselves who often crossed the border to "buy comics and 'trash' literature, or to check out the latest American film at the cinema," see Heather Gumbert, *Envisioning Socialism: Television and the Cold War in the German Democratic Republic* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014), 85-6 and 88. For further, see also Major, *Berlin Wall*, 93-96. Moreover, the makers of the program were sometimes given stern warnings from the regime for some of the program's content. During an African excursion, the Sandman drove "a west-European car" and enjoyed "a cold beer to help him cope with the heat." Depictions such as this perhaps made the Sandman less than the ideal socialist role model, but made the character representative of the East German wanderlust (desire for travel). Nor did this affect his popularity. In this way, the Sandman and the *Digedags* were indicative of the frustrated desire for travel manifesting in popular culture, as seen in Kate Connolly, "The Sandmannchen, Germany's cutest communist, turns 50," *The Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/nov/23/sandmannchen-germany-communist> (accessed 15 June 2016). This was especially true of popular culture for children as Gaby Thompson-Wohlgemuth considers that to be a site of the state's initiatives toward social progress, see Gaby Thompson-Wohlgemuth, *Translation Under State Control: Books for Young People in the German Democratic Republic* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 2-4.

its predominant mode was humour aimed at younger readers.¹² Bypassing the animal portion of the genre, the *Digedags* maintained the allegorical purpose of the characters in order to deconstruct or reverse traditional tropes of the “beast fable” and of the comics medium more generally.¹³ Pioneering comics scholar, Joseph Witek, suggests that the characters’ difference evaporate as the readers internalized and normalized that difference. The “animalness” of the characters, or goblin-esque (*Kobold*) nature of the *Digedags*, became what Witek refers to as “furniture” that allowed the reader to “see past the banality of the setting and conversation to the real-life situation it depicts.”¹⁴ This is to say that the characters’ difference, while simultaneously recognized and ignored by the reader highlighted the importance of the perceived banality of the everyday precisely as a result of their supposed outsider status. The *Digedags* were thus able to point out and explore the “problems” of the non-socialist world because, visually, they were not a part of that world.

At the same time, the *Digedags* were locked into the roles of explorers and adventurers largely due to their relationship with the Disney comics by Barks. While the FDJ characterized the *Digedags* as motivated by the improvement and advancement of those around them with intelligence, wit, and guile, it was impossible to do so without also critiquing their attachment to traditional and “clichéd” figures and ideas detrimental to the *Digedags* socialist purpose. The *Digedags* were character “types” as far as the FDJ was concerned and, as such, character development was inconceivable (*die Entwicklung von Charakteren ist nicht denkbar*) and the

¹² Joseph Witek, *Comic Books as History: The Narrative Art of Jack Jackson, Art Spiegelman, and Harvey Pekar* (Jackson University of Mississippi Press, 1989), 110. *Mosaik* targeted those children involved with the *Thälmann* Pioneers and through the first year or so following their transition into the FDJ youth group after which they would appear as adults in the estimation of the regime.

¹³ Early issues of *Mosaik* featured “funny animal” stories alongside the adventures of the *Digedags*, though this was gradually eliminated as the *Digedags* gained popularity, see BArch DY 26/114, “Dokumentation zur Bildzeitschrift ‘Mosaik’,” 2.

¹⁴ Witek, 110-11.

characters, themselves, interchangeable.¹⁵ This perceived problem prompted the FDJ to draw unintentional comparisons with the western comics and tropes that originally inspired the *Digedags*. The same report that criticized the *Digedags* suggests that Uncle Scrooge, here mentioned by name, is a monopoly capitalist and only exists for love of profit. Similarly, Donald Duck is unlucky and remains in the stories only to understand his position within the family. The FDJ discussed the characters in regard to their perceived “types,” regardless of Barks’ characterizations, by way of explaining the *Digedags* own inability to evolve as personalities and, arguably, their inability to develop the required socialist personalities. As such, the FDJ recognized the *Digedags* connection not only to the Disney comics, but also to larger comic tropes. As such, the first twenty-five issues of *Mosaik* were understood as a series of masked balls, pirates, and treasure hunts while history and language, and presumably also the socialist ideological and educational impetus, were played fast and loose for the sake of a punch line.¹⁶

The acknowledgement of *Mosaik*’s western roots, particularly in terms of Barks’ *Donald Duck* and *Uncle Scrooge* comics following the titular characters’ transition toward the globe-trotting adventurers, also demonstrated a confluence of unease and acceptance of the *Digedags*’ collective role in the comics. Some problems originated from the FDJ and the publishing regime’s criticisms of the comics medium generally. Here, though, the regime’s concerns with the characters stemmed from their apparent lack of individuality as the FDJ reported that the trio

¹⁵ The *Digedags* are separated in issue 25 as Dig and Dag are abducted at the beginning of the *Weltraum-serie*, leaving Digedag behind. At the end of the first part of the *Weltraum-serie* with issue 44, the story begins jumping back and forth between *Digedags* adventures on Earth since the beginning of the *Weltraum-serie* and the continuation of Dig and Dag’s planet hopping adventures from issue 45-73. All three characters were not reunited again until issue 141 at nearly the beginning of the *Amerika-serie* ten issues later.

¹⁶ BArch DY 26/173, “5.6.5. *Die Bildgeschichte in den Kinderzeitungen und -zeitschriften*,” 195-6. The much more ideologically driven *Weltraum-serie* began at this point.

were not only identical (*identisch*), but a single entity spread across three similar bodies (*eine Gebilde in gedrittelter Form*) (Fig. 10). While an argument could be made to conflate the

Figure 10. *Wie alles begann*. *Mosaik* issue 1, page 12, 1955. As the FDJ accused the *Digidags* of essentially being the same character, here the *Digidags* literally sell copies of themselves in the marketplace.

Digedags with the perceived and idealized East German collective, the FDJ itself drew different conclusions, indicating the characters' similarities as a reason against their potential growth and thus their inability to learn from a situation. The stagnation of the *Digedags*' personalities affected their ability to be heroes within their own stories, in the FDJ's estimation, necessitating their accompaniment by other characters native to the situation and who were individuals themselves, not associated with the perceived sameness of the *Digedag* characters. This lack of individuality and the need for the other character as hero within the situation was necessitated by the comics' focus on travel as a theme and as an educational storytelling device.¹⁷ Because of both their homogeneity as a trio and their obvious difference from those around them, the *Digedags* were perpetual outsiders to every situation they encountered. They thus required that the hero character was embedded in the surroundings of the story to articulate that situation for the *Digedags* (Fig. 11). At the same time, the *Digedags*' foreignness served to explain the situation, the history, and the character relations for the audience as the *Digedags* acted as proxy to the child-reader. This also made travel a mandate in *Mosaik* in that it created opportunity for the state-sanctioned educational content.¹⁸

¹⁷ Ibid, 195-7.

¹⁸ The most famous example of this type of character native to his surroundings is the Knight Runkel von Rübenstein, appearing in the eponymous *Ritter Runkel-serie* (*Mosaik von Hannes Hegen* issues 90-151). Drawing inspiration from "classic East German travel literature," Runkel himself is a combination of a crusader and Don Quixote and is on a quest when he encounters Dig and Dag. As these latter are themselves on a quest to find their friend, Digedag, travel through the Middle Ages is essential to the progression of the overall story, but also as a means of transitioning from one arc to the next. Runkel's own quest, one for gold that again draws comparison to the *Uncle Scrooge* comics, takes the characters to Italy, Dalmatia, Byzantium, and finally to China. Along the way and in earlier stories, Dig and Dag found traces of their missing comrade (the second volume is titled "On the Trail of Digedag") and Runkel accompanies them down the Euphrates to the Persian Gulf before returning to Germany and his beloved. See, "Die Digedags im Mosaik," DDR-Comics.de, <http://www.ddr-comics.de/digedags.htm> (accessed 16 June 2016) and "Die Digedags und Ritter Runkel," DDR-Comics.de, <http://www.ddr-comics.de/digbuch4.htm> (accessed 16 June 2016). Likewise, in the *Amerika-serie* that followed, Colonel Springfield is a retired military man accompanying the widow Victoria Jefferson on an excursion across the United States when they encounter the *Digedags*. With his long goatee and striped pants, Springfield resembles the cartoon figure of Uncle Sam and as such is indicative of the American landscape across which he travels. Moreover, as he is both able to get up after being injured and somewhat disillusioned with the military itself, Catrin Gersdorf suggests that Springfield "moved on a narrow line between affirmation and subversion" of socialism, deconstructing the

Figure 11. *Ritter Runkel*-serie. Mosaik issue 90, page 24 (back page), 1964. The knight, Runkel von Rubenstein was the *Digedags*' first official companion, part of the backdrop of the story while the *Digedags* themselves were the point-of-entry characters for the readership.

In his encyclopedic *Von Hannes Hegen bis Erich Schmitt: Lexikon der Karikaturisten, Presse-, und Comic- Zeichner der DDR*, Reinhard Pfeiffer suggests that the title of the first story featuring the *Digedags* (issues 1-4), “On the Hunt for Gold,” was reminiscent of the Barks’ Duck comics that inspired it including, “Donald Duck Finds Pirate Gold” and the Uncle Scrooge comic “Back to the Klondike.”¹⁹ Nor was this by accident. Due to the permeability of the German-

thesis of capitalism’s collapse, see Catrin Gersdorf, “The Digedags Go West: Images of America in an East German Comic Strip,” *Journal of American Culture* 19, no. 2 (July 1996): 42.

¹⁹ Reinhard Pfeiffer, *Von Hannes Hegen bis Erich Schmitt: Lexikon der Karikaturisten, Presse- und Comic- Zeichner der DDR* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 1998), 128.

German border in the mid-1950s and particularly the relative openness of Berlin until the summer of 1961, these western comics were readily available to children in the fledgling GDR.²⁰ Creating the *Digedags* as an ideologically opposed treasure hunter to the monopoly capitalist of Uncle Scrooge and his nephews, allowed the publishers to have their characters effectively eradicate the exploitation left in the wake of Uncle Scrooge's own adventures. Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart's seminal work, *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic*, though perhaps heavy handed in its criticisms of Disney comics in revolutionary Chile, posit children as a "biologically captive, predetermined audience" for comics that were written and created by adults based on their notion of what childhood should be and what those children should represent for society, broadly speaking. Children are "conditioned by magazines and the culture which spawned them" as a result.²¹ The *Digedags* were thus intended to be treasure hunters similar to Barks' Duck characters only insofar as they exploited the genre in order to upend its meaning, as Witek suggests is the entire purpose to the "funny animal" genre. While the FDJ grew critical of the lack of individuality between Dig, Dag, and Digedag, this was partially to provide point-of-view characters for the child-readers themselves.²² Even the publication's title, *Mosaik*, does not suggest the *Digedags* to be the primary focus of the stories, but part of a larger tapestry. As outsiders to the character relations and to the depicted history,

²⁰ Gerd Lettkemann, "Comics in der DDR," in *Fortsetzung folgt. Comic-Kultur in Deutschland*, ed. Andreas C. Knigge (Frankfurt am: Ullstein, 1986), 321-6.

²¹ Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart, *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic*, trans. David Kunzle (New York: International General, 1975), 30.

²² Shari Sabeti suggests that as comics as a medium operates on multiple levels, they provide equally multiple entry points for readers from a pedagogical stand-point. Moreover, due to the spatial organization of comics, readers are encouraged to find their own point of entry and construct their own meanings in regard to the educational message. Characters are but one of these entry points, providing a blank slate in the comic's surroundings upon which secondary characters and actions may then inscribe knowledge and meaning. See Shari Sabeti, "The 'strange alteration' of Hamlet: Comic Books, Adaptation, and Constructions of Adolescent Literacy," *Changing English: Studies in Culture and Education* 21, no. 2 (2014): 182-5.

the *Digedags* provided a lens through which the child-readers defined themselves rather than being defined by preconceived notions of childhood.

This conceptualization of the characters also built travel into the foundations of *Mosaik* in that those characters were meant to explore a world entirely new and foreign to them. Pfeiffer's work makes similar suggestions, pointing to the "funny animal" genre upon which the *Digedags* were based, even though they are not animals themselves, as a means by which the characters explored their world.²³ While this does not necessarily imply the physical exploration of the world, it certainly does not preclude the possibility. Moreover, Americanist Catrin Gersdorf suggests that although not considered an appropriate depiction of the socialist class struggle, the *Digedags* travelled through time and geographic space in an effort to develop the historical consciousness of those they met.²⁴ But as the western comics the *Digedags* emulated employed travel so frequently and without political issue, it was necessary for the *Digedags* to do the same, particularly under this guise of the antithesis of Disney's Uncle Scrooge. The first dozen issues, collected in the three volume "How It All Began" (*Wie alles began*) and containing the stories "On the Hunt for Gold," "The Frantic Fan-Boat" (*Die Rasende Seemühle*, issues 5-8), and "Uproar in the Jungle" (*Aufruhr im Dschungel*, issues 9-12), saw the *Digedags* in the Middle East, attacked by pirates, and lost in a jungle on a island as part of the Orient-South Seas series.²⁵ Here, the *Digedags* conceptually follow Barks' Ducks, effectively rectifying problems left by their capitalist influence in the previously mentioned "Donald Duck Finds Pirate Gold" and the

²³ Pfeiffer, 127.

²⁴ Gersdorf, 36.

²⁵ *Seemühle* literally translates to Sea-(wind)mill. The image on the cover of the *Mosaik* issue 8 (1957), also the cover used for the collected volume, uses an drawing of the *Digedags* in what appears to be a flat-bottom boat with a windmill mounted at the back and turning the boat's paddles. As such, Fan-boat seemed a better translation than the literal, see "'Mosaik' Heft 8: Strichzeichnung—Seite 1 (Titelseite)," *Stiftung Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, <http://sint.hdg.de:8080/SINT5/SINT/?wicket:interface=:1:14:::> (accessed 11 March 2016).

Uncle Scrooge story “Race to the South Seas” (*March of Comics* #41, 1949).²⁶ Fredrick Stroemberg argues that the Barks’ comics created horizontal levels in society without hierarchic order except that imposed by money. The financial ordering of this society demonstrated Duckburg, the society in which the characters lived and by extension the society of the reader, as one without solidarity, but almost entirely defined by competition and magnified by those comics in which Donald, Scrooge, and the nephews travelled abroad. Stroemberg rightly contends that these comics were not only perceived to spread American ideology, but that their creators were “active agents” of the same.²⁷ As the socialist by-product of those Disney comics, then, the *Digedags* and Hannes Hegen both spread socialism despite the FDJ’s reservations over how that message was packaged, delivered, and received. Travel was thus necessary for the *Digedags* to compare and compete with Barks’ Ducks in the marketplace and in the imaginations of East German youth.

Not only this, but the travel incorporated into the pages and panels of *Mosaik* was instrumental due to the construction of the *Digedag* characters themselves as much as it borrowed from the tropes employed in *Donald Duck* and *Uncle Scrooge* and the perception of “adventure” comics stories. Addressing the line of thought began in Dorfman and Mattelart’s *How to Read Donald Duck*, Martin Barker’s *Comics: Ideology, Power, and the Critics* posits Disney as, first and foremost, a carrier, if not *the* carrier, of American cultural imperialist ideology. Although Barks employed the perceived American obsession with money as a means of relating how that “deceived and destroyed” people, this ultimately led to an inability to progress on the part of both the characters and of the readers in order to maintain the status quo

²⁶ In the respective stories, Donald and his nephews race perpetual Disney villain Black Pete to a lost treasure and Uncle Scrooge is stranded on an island where the natives wait on him like servants while Scrooge runs his business.

²⁷ Fredrick Stroemberg, *Comic Art Propoganda: A Graphic History* (New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 2010), 69.

of the world inhabited by the Ducks.²⁸ As such, Dorfman and Mattelart suggest that the readers are trapped in a perpetual state of childishness as the comics, and Disney products more generally, mask open imperialism and an equally childlike representation of Third World peoples with comedy to distract the readers.²⁹ The *Digedags* were thus locked into this process of cultural imperialism as they emerged from a western tradition of spreading so-called “eternal values” determined by power and money through what the FDJ considered brutal, racist, and anti-communist.³⁰ *Mosaik* provided a bulwark against this influence of Americanization, relaying humorous, interesting circumstances (*humorvolle, interessante Gegebenheiten*) in graphic narratives suitable for the socialist awareness and arousal of the poor and oppressed (*die Armen und Unterdrückten*).³¹ Travel not only allowed the *Digedags* to mimic the perceived imperialism of capitalism and of their Disney progenitors, but also demonstrated the characters as spreading the socialist worldview in a way inversely similar to how those Disney stories were interpreted by the FDJ. Problematically, these echoes represented indigenous and Third World peoples in the same light as those Disney stories (Fig. 12). That is to say these populations were infantilized and in need of the socialist influence brought by the *Digedags* whether to encourage socialist spirit or spread the supposed superiority of technology.³² Emerging from the “funny animal” genre of comics as a means of exploring the everyday world of the reader and inverting its meaning, as argued by Witek, the *Digedags* employed travel and particularly similar adventures to those undertaken by Barks’ Duck characters as a means by which to subvert the

²⁸ Martin Barker, *Comics: Ideology, Power, and the Critics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), 286.

²⁹ Dorfman, 48-60 and Tom Andrae, Carl Barks and the Disney Comic Book: Unmasking the Myth of Modernity (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2006), 9-12.

³⁰ BArch DY 26/173, “5.6.5 Die Bildgeschichte in den Kinderzeitungen und –zeitschriften,” 190.

³¹ BArch 26/114, “Dokumentation zur Bildzeitschrift ‘Mosaik’, 1976,” 2.

³² BArch DY 26/173, “5.6.5 Die Bildgeschichte in den Kinderzeitungen und –zeitschriften,” 197 and Dolores L. Augustine, *Red Prometheus: Engineering and Dictatorship in East Germany 1945-1990* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), 236 & 243-4.

perceived cultural imperialism already familiar to child-readers through their ease of access to Disney comics prior to the border closure in 1961.³³

Figure 12. *Wie alles begann*. *Mosaik* issue 9, page 10, 1957. As with Disney comics, *Mosaik* represented Third World populations as technologically backward and in need of socialist civilization.

³³ Gersdorf, 40 and 42.

At the same time, through the *Digedags* inability to change as a point of criticism from the FDJ, the characters suggest an endorsement of the perceived status quo. In terms of *Mosaik* and the roots of its creation, this validates the western (cultural) imperialism at play in Disney comics and narratives as discussed above.³⁴ However, it is this perceived defense of the supposed imperialist status quo that allows *Mosaik* to subvert the expectations of that narrative as well as the underlying narrative of socialist superiority.³⁵ By the FDJ's own admission, the *Digedags* represented character types and as such remained impervious to change in their own stories. Despite this, the *Digedags* became agents of change in the status quo of the comic book world. Elsewhere, Danny Fingeroth and James Lees have independently written on the immutability of western comics versus the perception of change. In terms of the American superhero narrative, although the stories create the illusion of change to the character and to the world around them, the superhero character, like the *Digedags*, remains a fixed point so as to maintain the telling of stories over the long term. Effectively, the western superhero is itself a "type" and thus while affecting change, does not change itself. Or if change does occur for the sake of a story, the status quo is reasserted by the end of the tale. While this device establishes the notion of change necessary to story-telling, the illusory nature of that change ensures that the

³⁴ Indeed, much the same can be argued of the comics medium more generally and its perceived connections with American culture and society. For more on (American) cultural imperialism, comics, and how those narratives take specific cues from their Western forebears, see Mila Bongco, *Reading Comics: Language, Culture, and the Concept of the Superhero in Comic Books* (London: Routledge, 2000), 1-18; Nandini Maity, "From Comic Culture to Cyber Culture: Cultural Imperialism and its Impact on Youth since 1960s," in *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 8, no. 4 (Mar.-Apr. 2013): 10-4; and Suchitra Mathur, "From Capes to Snakes: the Indianization of the American Superhero," in *Comics as a Nexus of Cultures: Essays on the Interplay of Media, Disciplines and International Perspectives*, ed. Mark Berninger, Jochen Ecker, and Gideon Haberkorn (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2010), 175-86.

³⁵ Chris York and Rafael York, "Introduction: Frederic Wertham, Containment, and Comic Books," in *Comic Books and the Cold War, 1946-1962: Essays on Graphic Treatment of Communism, the Code, and Social Concerns*, ed. Chris York and Rafael York (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2012), 14.

stories remain accessible to new readers and familiar to long-time fans.³⁶ Much the same can be made of Barks' Duck characters as Uncle Scrooge does not spend or lose his wealth, unless such happens in the context of a story in which case everything is restored by the end. Rather, he is in a perpetual loop of acquiring money and sitting on or swimming through his vaulted fortune. In a twist to the formula upon which the *Digedags* are based, Dig, Dag, and Digedag employ travel to quite literally change the world in which they exist in a fundamental way without the reversion of the perceived status quo. They are accompanied through their adventures by characters that can, in fact, change as dictated by the rules of story-telling and before that world can fall into a state where the *Digedags* are required to help yet again, and perhaps affect the same change a second time, they are whisked off to a new setting with a new cast of secondary characters.³⁷ While this is arguably the closest to change the *Digedags* themselves come, it also suggests the permanence of the changes wrought over the previous issues and adventures.

The *Digedags*' Successors, the *Abrafaxe* in *Mosaik* (1975-1990) and the Acceptance of Stagnation.

By late 1975, this travel and constant change of venue from story to story was a staple of the adventures in *Mosaik* and, despite the FDJ's apprehensions over the problematic representation of history and the struggle of the working class, was characterized as precipitating the joyful experience of reading an issue of *Mosaik*.³⁸ As such, these aspects were continued when Hegen departed the publication and the *Digedags* were replaced by the *Abrafaxe* (Abrax,

³⁶ Danny Fingeroth, *Superman on the Couch: What Superheroes Really Tell Us about Ourselves and Our Society* (New York: Continuum, 2005), 36 and John Lees, "On Comics Custodianism and the Illusion of Change," *Johns Lees Comics*, <https://johnleescomics.wordpress.com/2014/07/17/on-comics-custodianism-and-the-illusion-of-change/> (accessed 13 March 2016).

³⁷ BArch DY 26/173, "5.6.5 Die Bildgeschichte in den Kinderzeitungen und -zeitschriften," 197.

³⁸ BArch DY 24/8674, Letter from the Central Committee FDJ on the 20th anniversary of *Mosaik*.

Brabax, and Califrax) in January 1976. Indeed, much was retained in the transition from the earlier version of *Mosaik* such as the preservation of those tropes employed by visual language and identification of the characters.³⁹ So much, in fact, was held-over in the visualization and depiction of the *Abrafaxe* characters, created by Hegen's co-writer Lothar Dräger and *Mosaik-Kollektiv* cartoonist Lona Rietschel, that Hegen and the publisher spent the remainder of the GDR's lifespan engaged in copyright litigation over the characters and use of the *Mosaik* name. That said, as far as the FDJ was concerned, these new characters continued the traditions of

socialist attitudes and behaviours, partisanship, love for the working people, sense of justice, solidarity, but also diligence, courage, resourcefulness, humour, and optimism to broaden and expand their readership⁴⁰

in ways the old *Mosaik* never did. Though, it was never clearly defined how this would be the case. Typically, the publishing regime considered the new comics to be more historically, culturally, and educationally valuable than their predecessors as a result of the *Abrafaxe*'s inclusion and the new venues that formed the foundation for the series' new direction.⁴¹ Though it was always the intention of *Kinderzeitschriften* in the GDR to publicize the objectives of the *Thälmann* Pioneers and to spread the socialist ideals and values of the FDJ and the SED-regime, *Mosaik* employed travel specifically to stimulate children's interests and imagination in history and culture and to awaken respect for the accomplishments of other peoples (*anderer Völker*).⁴² The twin goals of demonstrating the spread of socialist ideals and the "elicitation of children's feelings for the exploited and oppressed proletariat in various stages in the development of

³⁹ Like the *Digedags*, the *Abrafaxe* trio was composed of leprechaun-like individuals. Similarly, one was a blonde, the second a brunette, and the third a red-headed to provide a sense of continuity from one character grouping to the next.

⁴⁰ BArch DY 24/8674, Letter from the Central Committee FDJ on the 20th anniversary of *Mosaik*.

⁴¹ Ibid, Proposal to award the editors of the magazine '*Mosaik*' with the 'Medal for outstanding achievements in socialist education in the Pioneer Organization *Ernst Thälmann*' in gold, 31 October 1975.

⁴² BArch DY 26/173, "2.2. Funktion und Aufgaben der Kinderzeitungen und -zeitschriften in der DDR," 11 and BArch DY 26/42, "Die Kinderzeitschrift '*Mosaik*,'" 1. Jim Willis also suggests that fostering child groups and friendships at home and internationally was one of the primary tasks of socialist education and of the Young Pioneers specifically, see Jim Willis, *Daily Life Behind the Iron Curtain* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2013), 68.

human society” and particularly how this occurs in those states beyond the closed borders of the GDR could thus only be conveyed to child-reader through the humorous travels and the mobility found in *Mosaik*.⁴³

In doing this, the *Abrafaxe* became cultural ambassadors of the German Democratic Republic; and not only of the GDR, but of Soviet-style state-socialism more broadly. They visited seventeenth century Dalmatia and freed slaves from the nearby Ottoman Empire (issues 1-12/1976, 1-5/1977) before going to Venice with their first companion Harlequin (*Harlekin*) in “The Italian Comedy” story (specifically the title of issue 9/1977). By the end of the 1970s, the *Abrafaxe* were involved in the War of Spanish Succession, visiting eighteenth century Austria and Hungary.⁴⁴ As suggested by Dolores Augustine, both before and after the transition from the *Digedags* to the *Abrafaxe*, the characters rescued “child-like” natives from capitalists looking to exploit natural resources. They imported nuclear power as a constructive tool of socialism rather than the perceived destructive force it was under capitalist imperialism. In doing so, however, and particularly due to their status as East German ambassadors and bearers of socialist culture, the characters in *Mosaik* often paralleled the understood racism of the West and West Germany

⁴³ BArch DY 24/8674, Proposal to award the editors of the magazine ‘*Mosaik*’ with the ‘Medal for outstanding achievements in socialist education in the Pioneer Organization *Ernst Thälmann*’ in gold, 31 October 1975.

⁴⁴ Jan Fleischhauer suggests that Karl May created adventure fiction, located in the German fascination with travel literature, as a means to “dream his way out of the narrow confines of his real life” through a combination of genius and triviality. This capitalized upon a desire to see and experience distant places that was as appealing in May’s time as in the present. Moreover, Tim Bergfelder suggests that May’s America is one of allegory that doesn’t so much dwell on the notion of the frontier as it does “present an enclosed utopian Arcadia” diverging from the American western through its frequent use of white cowboys, engineers, and oil barons as villains. May’s Wild West was fantasy grounded in the cultural trappings that the author and his readers shared. *Mosaik* operated in much the same fashion. Both the *Digedags* and the *Abrafaxe* filled the desire of youth to see that which was new and foreign to them, providing them the vicarious ability to transcend their own lives through a combination of historical “triviality” and high adventure. As such, and beyond the linkages made her regarding Western comic book tropes and traditions, *Mosaik* can be situated within a larger and longer tradition of German adventure and travel literature. See Jan Fleischhauer, “Germany’s Best Loved Cowboy: The Fantastical World of Cult Novelist Karl May,” *Spiegel Online International*, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/marking-the-100th-anniversary-of-german-cult-author-karl-may-s-death-a-824566.html> (accessed 16 June 2016) and Tim Bergfelder, *International Adventures: German Popular Cinema and European Co-Productions in the 1960s* (New York: Berghahn, 2005), 177.

in particular and became guilty of those aspects of capitalism criticized in these publications for children.⁴⁵ Although these claims cannot be made of all the stories found in the pages of *Mosaik*, specifically because travel allowed the characters access to locales not necessarily populated by these “child-like” natives, that same ability to travel afforded the *Digedags* and the *Abrafaxe* the opportunity to represent socialism in a setting to which it was entirely foreign. As such, socialism was demonstrated as a productive and important voice for change not only in the Third-World, but also in those parts of the world as developed as the GDR itself. At the same time that this depiction demonstrated the perceived superiority of the socialist system, through these cultural representatives it also poised the GDR to demonstrate itself as a world power, regardless of the reality of such a claim.⁴⁶

This suggests that, unlike the other comics, *Mosaik* was never intended to draw attention to Germany’s Cold War division. From its beginnings, *Mosaik*’s purpose was to spread socialist ideology and education and the publication accomplished this objective on two fronts. First, the characters involved, whether they were the *Digedags* or the *Abrafaxe*, quite literally spread this message beyond the borders of those states friendly to Soviet-style communism through their physical travels around the world and throughout history. Second, and at the same time, these stories had the effect of imparting socialist wisdoms to their child-readerships while travel served as but one device that obfuscated that educational content in the minds of readers and created the perception of *Mosaik* as an ideologically-free space.⁴⁷ Of course the publication demonstrated difference in the perceptions and representations of socialism and capitalism and touted socialism as the vastly superior of the two as it acted solely in service to society, improving

⁴⁵ Augustine, 236-43.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 244.

⁴⁷ Augustine, 230 and Christoph Richter and Kate Bowen, “East German Comic Celebrates 400 Editions of Slapstick Adventure,” *DW Deutsche Welle*, <http://www.dw.com/en/east-german-comic-celebrates-400-editions-of-slapstick-adventure/a-4156898> (accessed 18 March 2016).

conditions through the sharing of technologies, the removal of exploitation, or the demonstration of the evils of profit-motivations. In doing so, however, *Mosaik* often fell into the same patterns as the trash and filth (*Schund und Schmutz*) western children's comics against which it positioned itself. The comic employed many of those same tropes and devices in attempts to foster the socialist personality among children. This also meant that both *Mosaik* represented Third World peoples as either a threat or as inferior to those characters.⁴⁸ As such, through the use of travel as a means of exporting socialist ideology and "aid" in the stories, *Mosaik* oftentimes effaced the actual difference between the socialism of which it was demonstrative and the capitalism it criticized. The political differences remained, but moral ground upon which the comic stood seemed less stable as it often understood the Developing World in the same terms as the antagonistic capital-imperialists.⁴⁹

***Pats Reiseabenteuer* in *Atze* (1967-1990), the Socialist German Empire, and Bringing the Past into the Present.**

By comparison, *Pats Reiseabenteuer* was a fairly recent creation and, as such, was not influenced to the same degree by those western publications for children. A continuing series that appeared in the *Atze* comic, *Pats Reiseabenteuer* was a product of the post-*Bitterfelder Weg* and post-Berlin Wall period and the subsequent processes of normalization and stabilization that

⁴⁸ Barker, 282 and Augustine, 243.

⁴⁹ Indeed, in the immediate postwar and during the decline in popularity of the superhero genre of the 1930s and the war years, one of the more popular comic genres to emerge was that of the "Jungle comic." As with comics such as Tarzan, this genre was typified by infantilized indigenous populations ruled and protected by a white-skinned and blond-haired lord or queen. Needless to say that to draw in young boys, however, more often than not the protagonist of the "Jungle comic" was a scantily-clad queen such as Camilla or Sheena. Although the cast of *Mosaik* never took up the mantle of Jungle King or Lord, they were often frustrated by the failure of groups, defined racially in the comics, to modernize, see Augustine, 243. For the racism apparent in American comics and for the "Jungle comic" genre more broadly, see Wright, 72-5 and 90-5.

followed, to borrow from Mary Fulbrook.⁵⁰ As part of *Chefredakteur* (Editor-in-Chief) Wolfgang Altenburger's proposal to reinvigorate *Atze* in 1966, the adventures of Pat through nineteenth century Germany emerged under conditions vastly different than those influencing the creation of *Mosaik*. Though the Berlin Wall was not nearly as impermeable as the SED hoped, FDJ officials and educators sought to demarcate a uniquely East German comic book in the post-Wall space that addressed the needs of the regime and of the child-readers in the construction of the socialist personality. *Atze* was renewed under Altenburger's guidance specifically to fill the gap that *Mosaik* left in the ideological education of children. This meant that the comic adventures of Pat were indicative of a greater degree of historical accuracy and employed travel in a way that hewed more closely with the motivations and goals of the FDJ's publishing regime.

In "Youth as Internal Enemy: Conflicts in the Educational Dictatorship of the 1960s," German historian Dorothee Wierling suggests that the Berlin Wall gave East German politics the freedom to expand at the same time that they addressed the concerns of a now captive population. This implied an expansion of internal openness through the offer of engagement with the state. Through Walter Ulbricht's Youth Communiqué, participation within the state constructed the perception of freedom for youth tempered by discretion and under the condition that this supposed freedom did not hinder East German modernization or modernity. The control and planning of youth leisure time had "both real and symbolic meaning" for securing the ideological border as westernized attitudes among youth persisted after 1961.⁵¹ The Eleventh Plenum of the Central Committee of the SED brought about a renewed period of controls

⁵⁰ 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 Books, 2013), 12-13.

⁵¹ Dorothee Wierling, "Youth as Internal Enemy: Conflicts in the Educational Dictatorship of the 1960s," in *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics*, ed. Katherine Pence and Paul Betts (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 166.

surrounding East German society and culture, particularly relating to those films produced by the GDR film corporation, DEFA (*Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft*), and the repeal of most of the reforms passed in the wake of Ulbricht's Communiqué. As this liberalization was, in part, intended to placate the "border-crossing attitudes" of youth by catering to the "western" interests and influences of those youth, the controls introduced at the Plenum drove youth further into the domestic or private sphere and made the social spaces of youth, including comics, accessible to FDJ officials and educators.⁵² At the same time, this retreat into the private and the perceived impermeability of the Berlin Wall fostered a desire for adventure and travel among those youth.⁵³ As much as this applied to youth of FDJ age, and thus supposedly too old for the children's publications and comics, the same can be said of the children who actually read those *Kinderzeitschriften*.⁵⁴

Moreover, the state's expansion of the Stasi in the shadow of the Berlin Wall's construction placed a premium on the domestic space as the perceived last bastion of freedom despite the state's efforts to penetrate and infiltrate the private sphere. But the resulting retreat into the private among youth as a means of escaping the state's control over leisure time also meant that the FDJ never won the hearts and minds of East German youth despite the organizations' massive membership numbers (about 86% in 1987).⁵⁵ And although the private sphere was never ideologically recognized by the state, its existence was important as a space in which the individual, meaning the child-reader of these *Kinderzeitschriften*, could expand their

⁵² Ibid, 164.

⁵³ Ibid, 160-7.

⁵⁴ This does not suggest that youth or even adults did not read western or GDR comics. The FDJ noted that there was an audience for these publications beyond the suggested age range, cited above, though the vast majority of readers recognized by the regime were less than sixteen years of age and thus still considered children in East German society.

⁵⁵ Alan McDougall, *Youth Politics in East Germany: The Free German Youth Movement 1946-1968* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 234 & 240.

own sense of self and their imaginary without the formal influence of the state or the organized activities of the FDJ. Within the literature, this retreat is often characterized in terms of resistance and certainly in some instances this was indeed the case.⁵⁶ As Paul Betts argues, however, more often the withdrawal into the private was apolitical and driven by individual *Eigen-Sinn* in order to effectively live an ordinary life away from the intrusions of the state.⁵⁷ And this apolitical disengagement is no different in terms of the effects of comics and *Kinderzeitschriften* on child-readers within the domestic space and how those publications fostered this retreat.⁵⁸

Most often in the wake of the Berlin Wall, West German television was invoked as providing East Germans the ability to emigrate to the West on a nightly basis. Indeed, the SED regime and the FDJ were not oblivious to this function of the domestic as the FDJ employed its members to turn western facing television antennae as part of a campaign against those who

⁵⁶ Wolfgang Kaschuba, "Popular Culture and Workers' Culture as Symbolic Order: Comments on the Debate about the History of Culture and Everyday Life," in *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life*, ed. Alf Lüdtke, trans. William Timpler (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 169-97. Kaschuba here discusses the operation and overlap of popular and proletarian cultures and how each informs the other through their mutual intersection point of everyday life. At the same time, Kaschuba warns that, in recognizing this and the *Eigen-Sinn*, there is no single or simple definition or representation of the *Eigen-Sinn* as it is an individual experience negotiated by "'culture,' conceived as a constant process of communication and interaction."

⁵⁷ Paul Betts, *Within Walls: Private Life in the German Democratic Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 9-14. See also, Thomas Lindenberger, "SED-Herrschaft als soziale Praxis—Herrschaft und 'Eigen-Sinn': Problemstellung und Begriffe, in *Staatsicherheit und Gesellschaft. Studien zum Herrschaftsalldag in der DDR*, ed. Jens Gieseke (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 23-47.

⁵⁸ Corey Ross argues that in the wake of youth criminality in the border areas of Berlin, prior to the Wall's construction, the FDJ attempted to further organize itself and make itself more attractive to youth. However, the youth group found the dual task of proselytizing socialism and convincing youth of Western evils to be impossible. Ross contends that this paired with youth's perspective that the FDJ was only interested in youth when it had something to gain caused the rise of subcultures outside the control of and dangerous to the FDJ's organization of leisure time and activities. Efforts to increase this organization only added to the attraction of western popular culture as that culture was further politicized. See Ross, 140-2. As Uta Poiger then suggests that, as the SED-authorities had the power to organize and control culture and economics and which aspects of those were consumed by youth, the state's politicization of leisure time and the *Eigen-Sinn* constructed identities of resistance within youth culture. See Poiger, 222-6.

chose to watch imperialist bourgeois programming.⁵⁹ This campaign extended to comics publications as polemics were published in the pages of some issues of *Atze* during the 1970s, which stands against the watching of western television and the perceived development of false consciousness that resulted from such activity and specifically targeting those child-readers.⁶⁰ In restructuring *Atze* in the mid-1960s, the FDJ sought to channel the desires of the readership. Fully aware of what the private sphere politically represented to the state regardless of children's apolitical understanding of the domestic space, the purpose of comics was to generate genuine enthusiasm from the readers toward the protagonists on the page. This approach, ideally, harnessed the child's own desires for travel and adventure which was then supposed to direct the child-readers toward educationally valuable avenues.⁶¹ As children sought out comics as escapist fiction, and retrospective interviews with *Deutsche Welle* suggest an imaginary accompaniment of the characters on their adventures, the FDJ understood this desire in terms of its ability to educate and effectively socialize those readers within the supposedly untouchable sphere of the private.⁶²

Pats Reiseabenteuer thus emerged in *Atze* in 1967 within this environment of increasing controls over youth leisure time and state security, torn between its obligations to the FDJ as educational and historically relevant children's literature and to appear to the child-readers as

⁵⁹ Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 129.

⁶⁰ BArch DY 24/23769, "Leserpostanalyse für das 2. Halbjahr 1972," 5.

⁶¹ BArch DY 24/1581, "Vorlage an das Sekretariat des Zentralrates der FDJ, 22.7.66," 6. H. Glenn Penny argues that an essential component to the German desire for education and acculturation (*Bildung*) was "the corresponding desire to gain and demonstrate a sense of worldliness." In this, Germans were encouraged to consider the interconnectivity between people and places encountered through travel and how they related to the place of Germans and their origins. This "promoted open-minded voyages of self-discovery as well as explorations of foreign territory" demonstrated in GDR comics. See H. Glenn Penny, *Kindred by Choice: Germans and American Indians since 1800* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 33.

⁶² Richter and Bowen, "East German Comic Celebrates 400 Editions of Slapstick Adventure," *DW Deutsche Welle*, <http://www.dw.com/en/east-german-comic-celebrates-400-editions-of-slapstick-adventure/a-4156898> (accessed 18 March 2016).

apolitical entertainment. As part of the new profile of *Atze* adopted in the previous year, Altenburger argued that comics were more effective than either film or television in their ability to transmit the motivations and feelings of the stories protagonists. A continuing series in addition to the popular, but politically lacking *Fix und Fax* (also published in *Atze* alongside *Pats Reiseabenteuer*) was recommended to employ adventure as a means of serving the interpretation of socialist philosophy in a way understandable to the child-readers.⁶³ Although this proposal did not make explicit the need for travel in the stories, travel allowed *Pats Reiseabenteuer* to fulfill the required interpretation of the political situation. Altenburger's 1966 proposal for *Atze* stressed the importance of clarity of both word and image on the comics' pages as a means of expressing the ideological positions not only of the characters, but of the publishing regime.⁶⁴ Comics scholar Shari Sabeti suggests that comics are effective in conveying complex political ideas to children as the visual nature of the medium affects the child's imaginary in more long-lasting ways than the written word. The medium's visuality creates retention that then makes it easier for the child to recall and discuss the material, regardless of their awareness of the political content.⁶⁵ This aspect was significant to the FDJ as it was thought that children typically accepted the political indoctrination apparent in comics, *Kinderzeitschriften*, and children's literature without question. The supposed lack of ideology in those publications was thus a marker of the effectiveness of comics to transmit the regime's educational requirements.⁶⁶

⁶³ As discussed in the first chapter, *Atze* was an anthology comic that contained different comics and articles in every issue. While some of these stories were told over the course of a number of issues, aside from *Fix und Fax*, none ran long enough to be considered 'ongoing.' *Pats Reiseabenteuer* filled this void in terms of both an ongoing comic story and political education, running from 1967 until 1991 when the magazine folded in the wake of unification.

⁶⁴ BArch DY 24/1581, "Vorlage an das Sekretariat des Zentralrat der FDJ, 22.7.66," 4.

⁶⁵ Shari Sabeti, "The Irony of Cool Club: The Place of Comic Book Reading in Schools," *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 2, no. 2 (2011): 138.

⁶⁶ Angela Brock, "Producing the 'Socialist Personality'? Socialization, Education, and the Emergence of New Patterns of Behaviour," in *Power and Society in the GDR 1961-1979: The 'Normalization of Rule?'*, ed. Mary Fulbrook (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 250.

Travel thus allowed Pat as a character to retain a central purpose that reflected the required clarity in the interplay of image and text. Although not created in an environment that necessitated mimicry of western comic tropes, *Pats Reiseabenteuer* employed the concept of travel as a means of transplanting socialism. As one of the few constants in *Atze*, Pat was indicative of the values and morality of the GDR and state-socialist society more generally. By the early 1970s, readers praised the character for his desires to always think of and help the poor, underprivileged, and exploited people encountered in his travels and as an example of those (socialist) revolutionaries of the nineteenth century.⁶⁷ As the embodiment and representative of East German socialism, Pat wandered the nineteenth century Central German countryside where he was constantly embroiled in political turmoil (*politische Wirren*) arising from conflicts between Pat and the problems of the poor.⁶⁸ Travelling streamlined the story as only Pat and his (socialist) outlook on the world remained a focal point for the reader.

In *The Colonial Heritage of French Comics*, French Imperial historian and comics scholar Mark McKinney suggests that France made a massive effort to draw its colonies into the consciousness of the mainland's population through educational and propagandistic literature while, at the same time, maintaining those colonial others in subordinate roles. Comics were thus included in this role as they targeted not only children, but also lower- and working class citizens who had reduced access to reading material and lower literacy rates during the height of the French colonial project. As such, McKinney continues, colonialism and imperialism were central to the French comics tradition, particularly prior to the early 1960s. This construction of the perception of empire is then represented throughout by the voyage from and return to the centre of colonial authority as, what McKinney terms, a “ceremony of reappropriation” of the

⁶⁷ BArch DY 24/23769, “Leserpostanalyse für die Monate Januar bis Juni 1972 Redaktion ATZE/Mosaik,” 7.

⁶⁸ “Pats Reiseabenteuer,” DDR-Comics.de, <http://www.ddr-comics.de/pat.htm> (accessed 16 March 2016).

colony or the colonial possession.⁶⁹ Moreover, this idea of the voyage demonstrated recurring themes of mistaken identity and representation between the European protagonists and the colonized others that was bound up and reproduced in the learning processes of the child-readers. This representation of the colonial past deployed tropes of colonial racism, focusing on the exoticism of the body and the perceived grotesqueness and deformation of that body in relation to the representation of the white body.⁷⁰ While often done to comedic effect, this trend spoke to much larger traditions and understanding of Euro-centrism, exploitation, and the other. At the same time, though, fans were allowed to participate in the nationalist and imperialist comfort of an earlier France while the comics themselves, their creators and marketers, engaged in a struggle for control of the cultural capital contained therein.⁷¹

Not guilty of following this representation of the colonized other in the same way as Uncle Scrooge or French comics such as *Tintin*, *Pats Reiseabenteuer* limited itself to the German countryside.⁷² This did not mean, however, that the stories written by Altenburger did not employ these same tropes of European imperialism and representation. Set during the nineteenth century, *Pats Reiseabenteuer* borrows from this European, particularly Franco-Belgian, tradition

⁶⁹ Mark McKinney, *The Colonial Heritage of French Comics* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011), 8.

⁷⁰ This is particularly true of the representation of Muslims and the indigenous populations of the South Sea Islands in "*Wie alles begann.*" That said, this Eurocentric and cultural imperialist racialized view of the bodies of the other remains constant through the modern era as the *Abrafaxe* search for the missing Califrax in the British Colony of New South Wales at the end of the 18th century. The indigenous people they encounter here are typically short, thick-lipped, wide-nosed people with stylistically deformed body types. Usually this means the figures are drawn with round bellies. By comparison, the European navy-men are drawn a full head taller and, unless stylized for comedic purpose, broad shouldered and slim. *Mosaik* no. 438 (Berlin: MOSAIK Steinchen für Steinchen Verlag, Juni 2012).

⁷¹ McKinney, 4, 8-10 & 15-24 and Bart Beaty, *Unpopular Culture: Transforming the European Comic Book in the 1990s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

⁷² Tintin's adventures, by the Belgian illustrator Georges Remi (Hergé), often took the reporter to exotic locales, many of which were designed as educational propaganda by the publisher. Following *Tintin in the Land of the Soviets*, Hergé published *Tintin in the Congo* (1930-1) as part of this process of education and generating interest in the Belgian Congo. In the study of *Bande Dessinée*, it is often cited as one of the more influential examples of colonialist ideology in comics, see McKinney, 3 and Pierre Assouline, *Hergé, the Man Who Created Tintin*, trans. Charles Ruas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 24-9.

of story-telling through the lens of empire, though here the empire is the land empire forged by the 1848 revolutions and German unification in 1871.⁷³ That said, and although it avoided the exoticism and disfigurement of the colonized body as exemplified elsewhere, *Pats Reiseabenteuer* addressed a socialist representation of German colonialism in that it employed the voyage, delineated by McKinney, as a reappropriation of the perceived “colonies.” Pat’s journey spoke directly to the FDJ’s desires to stir the historical consciousness of children through an education in proletarian history.⁷⁴ But in situating the stories in the German past, specifically in the previous century, *Pats Reiseabenteuer* addressed East German concerns over a unified and socialist German state at the same time that it engaged the desires for travel and adventure that Wierling suggests partially defined youth motivations in the post-Wall present.⁷⁵ This journey positioned (East) Berlin as the centre of an implied historic German socialist empire, one that not only effaced the Cold War division and the Berlin Wall from the reality of the child-readers, but also removed a history of imperialist and fascist war from the German landscape. As Pat constantly found himself in “political turmoil” that fueled the political and educational thrust of the stories, Pat acted as representative of the proletariat, socialism, and, perhaps more importantly, FDJ youth policy, and the SED’s ideology over a potential future (re)unified Germany.

⁷³ It should also be noted that this is around the same time in which the Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels first saw publication.

⁷⁴ Jeanette Madarasz argues that the FDJ fostered connections between this historical, humanist based education with a broad array of youth culture wherein responses to the desires of youth were shaped by specific political and educational goals, see Jeanette Z. Madarasz, *Conflict and Compromise in East Germany, 1971-1989: a Precarious Stability* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2003), 62-5. For similar arguments in relation to more specific areas of culture, see Alan McDougall, “The Liberal Interlude: SED Youth Policy and the Free German Youth (FDJ), 1963-65,” *Debatte* 9, no. 2 (2001): 123-55; and Poiger on the influence of Western music in divided Germany; H. Glenn Penny, “Red Power: Liselotte Welskopf-Henrich and the Indian Activist Networks in East and West Germany,” *Central European History* 41, no. 3 (Sept 2008): 447-76 for the American “Wild West” in GDR films; and Gaby Thompson-Wohlgemuth, “About Official and Unofficial Addressing in East German Children’s Literature,” *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 32-52 for Children’s Literature in the GDR.

⁷⁵ Wierling, 167.

In order to facilitate this, *Pats Reiseabenteuer* notoriously incorporated elements of the modern world into Pat's adventures. These were used for contest purposes and as a means of gauging the child-readers' engagement with the stories and, specifically, its educational and ideological content.⁷⁶ They spoke to a larger conversation regarding the importance of technology in the GDR not only in the establishment of industry, but as a construction of East German identity and its role within the Soviet Bloc. Eli Rubin suggests that plastic was understood along the lines of soft or benign power in that it operated through the trappings of everyday life and was difficult to resist as a result. Much the same was made of comics as they operated and brought ideology within the perceived confines of the domestic space. More importantly, plastics fostered an "ersatz consumer culture" wherein technology and science compensated for the shortcomings and shortages of a state poor in natural resources.⁷⁷ Likewise, Dolores Augustine argues that Germans are associated with modernity, locating science and technology at the very centre of German identity constructions. As such, these notions of modernity and modernization suited constructions of a decidedly East German identity as socialism, like technology, was capable of making the world better. Technology was thus only able to bring about a utopian future hand-in-hand with socialism.⁷⁸ But with relation to *Pats Reiseabenteuer* and its role within *Atze*, these objects of the East German *Alltag* (everyday life) established an associational connection between the idyllic *Heimat* of the nineteenth century countryside and the GDR's socialist present. Through the ideological ramifications of the

⁷⁶ These items were seemingly random and innocuous, ranging from a hair-dryer (*Haarfön*, *Atze* 10/86), to latex paint (*Latexfarbe*, *Atze* 7/84), to a shirt with MMM printed on it (*Atze* 1/84). MMM stood for *Messe der Meister von Morgen* (Masters of Tomorrow Exposition) and was a trade fair, of sorts, and youth competition designed to generate youth interest and, if you will, enthusiasm towards technology and the sciences. Comparable to the *Junge forscht* (Youth Research) in the Federal Republic after 1965, the MMM was created by the FDJ and held annually in the GDR from 1958 until 1990.

⁷⁷ Eli Rubin, *Synthetic Socialism: Plastics & Dictatorship in the German Democratic Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 5 & 10.

⁷⁸ Augustine, 242-3.

development of socialism toward a utopian future, and Pat's task of spreading socialist humanism across this rendered landscape, his comic-adventures arguably established the perceived past of a unified, socialist Germany as a potential future projected into the imaginations of child-readers.

Already children and adults alike employed different sets of skills to decode the meaning and narrative of comics. But the addition of these modern and presumably common objects into *Pats Reiseabenteuer* forced child-readers to perform close readings of these comics.⁷⁹ These inclusions taught children to identify objects that were seemingly misplaced within the comics and, at the same time, expected that child-readers possessed at least a partial, historical knowledge of nineteenth century and of the modern (East) German state in order to do so. Beyond the pure ideological educational work derived from the imposition of Pat's helpful, socialist worldview on Germany's past landscape, meaning and interpretation was made available through the child-reader's ability to decode the text/image narrative as made apparent in separate works by both Will Eisner and Scott McCloud.⁸⁰ The contest portion of *Pats Reiseabenteuer* thus made visible how the scientific technology of the GDR directly impacted and improved the lives of those living under socialism. The presence of these items in (East) Germany's past century affected a form of time travel in *Pats Reiseabenteuer* that brought the present to the past for the child-reader for the supposed benefit of those living without the technological improvements possible through socialism.

⁷⁹ Augustine, 232-4.

⁸⁰ Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (New York: Harper, 1993), 27-36, 58-9, & 68-9; Will Eisner, *Comics and Sequential Art: Principles & Practice of the World's Most Popular Art Form* (Paramus: Poorhouse Press, 1985), 7, 8 & 24; and Charles Hatfield, "Comic Art, Children's Literature, and the New Comic Studies," *The Lion and the Unicorn* 30, no. 3 (September 2006): 343-4.

Conclusion.

Travel in each of these publications, while demonstrating and celebrating the achievements of socialism, effaced the perceived omnipresence and repressiveness of the SED-regime and the Stasi. Of course, rarely do comic book villains ruminate on their evilness just as supposed real world “villains” typically do not consider their actions evil, but these comics specifically removed the characters and thus the child-readers from the lived reality of East German “real existing socialism” and Cold War division to produce fantasy on the page.⁸¹ Earlier chapters cast these publications for children as a form of benign or soft power through the relative innocuousness of their presentation and representation of socialism, socialist ideology, and the socialist worldview and the resultant difficulty with which these representations may be resisted by the child-readers. Argument is made above for the relative ease with which the content of *Pats Reiseabenteuer* penetrated the understanding and outlook of its child-readership and was instrumental to the SED exercising power over that readership. The ability of these publications to transgress the supposed safety and apolitical nature of the domestic space, largely perceived by the East German population as a space free of state intervention and arguably treated as such, speaks to this notion of soft power and governmentality at the same time that it undermines the supposed separation of the public and private necessitated by Günter Gaus’ conceptualization of the GDR as a “niche society.” Nor is this the only instance in which the reasonably simplified notion of the “niche society” has been unpacked, deconstructed, or complicated by historians. For example, see Fulbrook’s “honeycomb state” or Konrad

⁸¹ This is not to suggest the SED and the FDJ publishing regime were evil, per se. They were undeniably repressive and an increasing amount of literature on the subject points to this. However, evil and villain are relative terms based on the perspective of the protagonist observer. During the Cold War, Western assumptions undoubtedly cast these terms across the entire Soviet Bloc, there is no evidence to suggest the child-readers of East German comics and *Kinderzeitschriften* considered the regime using the same terminology. The terms are used here to draw a comparative between the regime and comic book villains, suggesting a sense of doing evil for the right reasons or, more simply, an obliviousness surrounding the perceived wrong-doing of one’s actions.

Jarausch's "thoroughly-ruled society" (*durchherrschte Gesellschaft*) and the "welfare dictatorship," to name only two of the more prominent examples.⁸² But in removing the characters from the GDR, both temporally and geographically, the publishing regime demonstrated to the child-readers the perceived ideal socialism, arguably closer to its nineteenth century roots, without sacrificing any of the publications' cultural capital.

As these characters traveled to and fro across the invisible borders of Europe, the comics and the stories found within treated Cold War division as a non-phenomena. That is to say that the publications themselves tended to ignore divisions and the difficulties surrounding East-West travel in the German twentieth century despite the realities of the Berlin Wall, the inner-German border, and the SED's travel restrictions on the population. Moreover, as the protagonists of these publications were, in effect, ambassadors of East German socialism, they demonstrated a cultural imperialism beyond the larger appearances of imperial influence apparent, albeit cloaked in socialist rhetoric. Symbolically, this ambassadorial status made manifest the porousness of the Berlin Wall itself and the constructed nature of the Cold War division of Germany more broadly as the characters, characters that the regime demanded be made relatable to those child-readers, spread familiar cultural and ideological tenets to those points of the globe inaccessible to East German children. Still, this cultural influence was decidedly one-way in its representation, that is socialist influence was spread throughout the non-socialist world. The characters as they were written, and especially those appearing in *Mosaik* given the much discussed interchangeable nature of those characters and the lack of individual characterization, sought to educate those they encountered, exploited and exploiter alike, though they remained permanent fixtures within the series. Their characters were never influenced by those they educated, nor

⁸² Fulbrook, *People's State* and Konrad H. Jarausch, "Care and Coersion: The GDR as Welfare Dictatorship," in *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, ed. Konrad H. Jarausch (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999), 47-69.

could those imperialists mount sufficient course to have the *Digedags*, the *Abrafaxe*, or even Pat question the core beliefs written into their personalities, such as they were. Nonetheless, the export of ideology demonstrated that ideas could not be contained despite the promises and threats made over the construction of the Berlin Wall as an anti-fascist protection rampart.

Perhaps more importantly, this approach to the characters and the comic stories provided children a perceived escape from the demands and restrictions of the SED, the Stasi, and the FDJ's publishing regime. It is true that comics, like western television, provided escape for many child-readers.⁸³ Not only in the East German context, but as part of the anti-comics campaign more generally, comics were in part criticized as escapist and thus inconsequential in terms of a literary art form.⁸⁴ Certainly the FDJ, *Verlag Junge Welt*, and *Verlag Neues Leben* were concerned that the escapism provided by western comics served no purpose and was thus considered dangerous, contributing to the perception that western publications for children, comics specifically, were "trashy" literature. These publications were thought to turn children toward crime and hooliganism more than it turned them toward socialism.⁸⁵ That said, as argued elsewhere, escapism through comics is exactly what children required to develop through imaginative play.⁸⁶ But this escapism was arguably more than the "inner emigration" in that *Mosaik* and *Atze* both demonstrated that movement beyond the artificially constructed borders of

⁸³ In this way, an argument can be made that even East German cultural productions provided escapist for the child (and adult) audience. Heather Gumbert suggests that *Unser Sandmännchen* provided escapist fantasy as the program and the character fostered dreams of travel while whisking children into the arms of sleep. Likewise, television programming produced by DFF (*Deutsche Fernsehfunk*) fostered border crossing mentalities with shows such as *Tele-BZ* (a variety show in the tradition of a political *Kabarett*) and *Blaulicht* (The Blue Light) which explored pan-German themes. Particularly in the example of *Blaulicht*, the show occupied the "liminal space between East and West Berlin" prior to the construction of the Berlin Wall. After that, the show continued to foreground the themes of the border, division, and "criminality arising from the German-German Cold War," see Gumbert 85-6 & 90-3.

⁸⁴ Barker, 246.

⁸⁵ Alan L. Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth: Historical Mythology and Youth Propaganda in the German Democratic Republic, 1945-1989* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 57-60.

⁸⁶ Richard Ivan Jobs, "Tarzan Under Attack: Youth, Comics, and Cultural Reconstruction in Postwar France," *French Historical Studies* 26, no. 4 (Fall 2003): 716.

the GDR was possible. The characters transcended borders in what could be construed as adventures of cultural colonialism (Fig. 13). This development suggested to the child-readers that physical movement beyond the confines of the Berlin Wall was possible through the socialist personality itself, just as the comics demonstrated the movement of socialist ideas beyond the East German border. As such, adherence to an arguably more universal conceptualization of socialism, as the beliefs made obvious by the protagonist characters, allowed for movement beyond the Soviet Bloc. Though, it is debatable whether this

Figure 13. *Amerika-serie. Mosaik Dagedags as American Indians, 1969. While guilty of cultural imperialism and the spread of socialism to developing peoples, the Dagedags were equally guilty of cultural appropriation.*

obedience implied a dyed-in-the-wool commitment to socialism or merely the outward demonstration of commitment that grew more prominent and acceptable during the Honecker years. Travel was thus not to be considered counterintuitive to Soviet-style communism as demonstrated in these publications for children. Rather, travel was shown to operate hand-in-hand with the spread of that ideology and was represented in a form easily and readily digestible

by children as the ideal means of inciting global revolution regardless of official rhetoric regarding border closures and the construction of the Berlin Wall.

Chapter Five.

Western Influence in *Mosaik* von Hannes Hegen, Popular Taste, and the Limitations of the FDJ's Publishing Regime.

When Hannes Hegen approached *Verlag Neues Leben* in 1955 with his idea for *Mosaik* and the *Digedags*, he appeared to have a relatively clear idea of the characters he wanted to create and the journey on which they were to go. Much has already been said concerning the inspiration Hegen drew from the Disney comics that were popularized in both halves of divided Germany in the decade following the end of World War II.¹ Some of this inspiration came from the Free German Youth (FDJ) itself, having issued orders to the publishing director of *Verlag Neues Leben* to create a socialist counterpart to Mickey Mouse.² Presumably, this directive served to include other characters such as Donald Duck and Uncle Scrooge in the wake of the Europe-wide popularity of Carl Barks' work with those characters.³ However, the apparent similarities in these perceived starting points for the *Digedags* and their globe-trotting adventures, not to mention their forays through both time and space, is not to suggest that Hegen and the FDJ were ever of the same mind in terms of the direction and contents of the comic book, *Mosaik*.

This chapter follows developments within *Mosaik* from the early 1960s through Hegen's departure from the publisher in 1975. Arguments have already been made in terms of the socialist content found in the publication despite observers' suggestions that East German comics

¹ John A. Lent, "Introduction: The Comics Debate Internationally: Their Genesis, Issues, and Commonalities," in *Pulp Demons: International Dimensions of the Postwar Anti-Comics Campaign*, ed. John A. Lent (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1999), 21.

² Reinhard Pfeiffer, *Von Hannes Hegen bis Erich Schmitt: Lexikon der Karikaturisten, Press- und Comic-Zeichner der DDR* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf Verlag, 1998), 128.

³ Brian Cronin, *Was Superman a Spy?: And Other Comic Book Legends Revealed* (New York: Plume, 2009), 198.

were sites free from ideology and propaganda. Of course, many of these observations were made after (re)unification as former East Germans sought to reclaim an identity thought lost during the processes of westernization in the former-German Democratic Republic (GDR), adopting domestic and private spaces and the everyday (*Alltag*) as sites supposedly free of the SED-regime's influence.⁴ As such, this chapter does not seek to argue that this is similarly the case with *Mosaik* or with East German comics more broadly. Instead, it explores the often tumultuous relationship between Hegen and the editorial regime of *Verlag Junge Welt*, to which the publication licence for *Mosaik* was transferred at the beginning of 1960, and the FDJ.⁵ This point of departure was not selected randomly, but as a decided turning point in Hegen's relationships with his creation and with the publishers and organizations responsible for the approval, mediation, and distribution of those comics to their child-readership. As with the transformation undertaken by *Atze* in 1966, this chapter begins with a similar transformation in *Mosaik* as the publication and its creative team came under fire from the FDJ and educators in the GDR.

Despite the FDJ's connection between the comic and education and the overall growth of the publication, the comics and the adventures of the *Digedags* were rarely the ideological tools requested and required by the regime. Early stories found the *Digedags* in the Arab states, South Sea Islands (*"Wie alles begann"*), and ancient Rome (*Römerserie*), often associating with royalty and drawing the ire of the publishing regime. By the mid-1960s, the *Digedags* motivations required clarity in their role as "funny folk heroes" (*lustige Volkshelden*), helping the exploited and the poor against the nobility and their lackeys. They needed to demonstrate the production of materials and their appropriation by the ruling classes and to represent the ideological and

⁴ Paul Cooke, *Representing East Germany since Unification: From Colonization to Nostalgia* (Oxford: Berg, 2005), 93-4.

⁵ BArch DY 26/114, "Dokumentation zur Bilderzeitschrift 'Mosaik' Berlin den 23.9.76," 3

historical principles, in actions and behaviour, of the SED-regime.⁶ In other words, the FDJ required that *Mosaik* embody the socialist educational content necessary for their comics and other publications for children (*Kinderzeitschriften*). The inclusion of ideology was not a new demand, but one that had long been marginalized, if not outright ignored, by Hegen. As such, and as the ideological demands of the regime grew alongside the demands of a rigorous publishing schedule, Hegen chafed in his role as creative voice and director of the *Mosaik-Kollektiv*.

Despite the socialist, cultural policies promoted during the author's conference of the *Mitteldeutschen Verlages* (Central-German Publishers) in Bitterfeld in 1959 in the wake of the Fifth Party Congress of the SED the previous year, *Mosaik* remained something of a holdout of western comics tradition and influence and of relative ideological freedom among the bevy of East German children's publications. Even after the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 and the subsequent control of western publications in the East German marketplace, *Mosaik* remained less ideologically motivated than some of its contemporary publications such as *Frösi*, *Junge Welt*, and even *Atze*. Of course this relative absence of ideology does not suggest that *Mosaik* was ever completely free of this ideological impetus.⁷ And yet *Mosaik* continued to draw the FDJ's criticisms and, perhaps more importantly as far as Hegen was concerned, its interference. At the same time, though, it should not be concluded that the SED-regime, the FDJ, or *Verlag Junge Welt* were wholly responsible for the growing chasm between publisher and creator. This chapter thus argues that the regime, via the FDJ and *Verlag Junge Welt*, were not interested in seeing through their particular form of ideology when it came to *Mosaik*,

⁶ BArch DY 24/1585, "Information über die Weiterführung der Bilderzeitschrift 'Mosaik'," 2-4.

⁷ See Gerd Lettkemann, "Comics in der DDR," in *Fortsetzung folgt: Comics Kultur in Deutschland*, ed. Andreas C. Knigge (Frankfurt aM: Verlag Ullstein, 1985), 317-61 and Sebastian Unterrainer, "Comics in der DDR," in *Comic-Kunst vom Weberzukulus zum Bewegten Mann Deutschsprachige Bildeschichten des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Dietrich Grünewald (Koblenz: Görres, 2004), 26-7.

partially due to the internal conflicts among the editorial collective, but also because the genre itself did not support it. In this instance, the perceived tastes of the child-readership, channeled and constructed by Hegen, won out over propaganda. This is then responsible for the supposed ideologically-free zone constructed around GDR comics and the *Alltag* in the post-unification period as suggested by historian Dolores Augustine.⁸

Perhaps nowhere are the perceived limits of dictatorship more noticeable or important than among East German children and youth given the significance the regime placed upon their role in society and the model of the socialist personality.⁹ As a comic creator and, for the first five years of *Mosaik*'s publication, nearly the sole creative voice behind the *Digedags*, Hegen was on the frontlines of constructing the socialist personality even as he sought simply to entertain. As such given the restrictions on western children's publications, *Mosaik* was indicative of the supposed socialist alternative not only among comics publications, but within the sphere of children's and youth culture and of socialism and Soviet-style communism as a superior tool in the upbringing of those child-readers. Regardless, *Mosaik*'s popularity can be traced to its emulation of the western comics tradition, here largely influenced by the United

⁸ Dolores L. Augustine, *Red Prometheus: Engineering and Dictatorship in East Germany, 1945-1990* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), 230. See also the discussions of nostalgia and its association with misremembering of an a-political private space and attachments to popular culture in Daphne Berdahl, "Good Bye, Lenin! Aufwiedersehen GDR: On the Social Life of Socialism," in *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, eds. Maria Todorova and Zsuzsa Gille (New York: Berghahn, 2010), 177-89; John Borneman, *After the Wall: East Meets West in the New Berlin* (New York: Basic Books, 1991); Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001); Paul Cooke, *Representing East Germany since Unification: From Colonization to Nostalgia* (Oxford: Berg, 2005); Eli Rubin, "Understanding a Car in the Context of a System: Trabants, Marzahn, and East German Socialism," in *The Socialist Car: Automobility in the Eastern Bloc*, ed. Lewis H. Siegelbaum (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 124-40; and Elizabeth A. Ten Dyke, "Memory and Existence: Implications of the Wende," in *The Work of Memory: New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture*, eds. Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 154-69.

⁹ For further, see Angela Brock, "Producing the 'Socialist Personality'? Socialisation, Education, and the Emergence of New Patterns of Behaviour," in *Power and Society in the GDR, 1961-1979: The 'Normalisation of Rule'?*, ed. Mary Fulbrook (New York: Berghahn, 2009), 220-52 and Anna Saunders, *Honecker's Children: Youth and Patriotism in East(ern) Germany, 1979-2002* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

States, and in spite of the FDJ's intentions for the publication, changing the comics formula was not nearly as simple as it was with *Atze*.

This chapter examines the twenty-year history of Hegen's direct involvement with the creation of *Mosaik* and the development of his relationship with the publishing regime that led to the introduction of the *Abrafaxe* characters in *Mosaik* in January 1976 after Hegen's departure a year earlier.¹⁰ The ultimate goal of this chapter, then, is to address the publishing regime's perceived inability to bring Hegen under the thumb of the FDJ and its ideological agenda and impetus. Despite the various forms of power at the disposal of the regime, Hegen was largely allowed to continue not for the sake of his art, but for the comic book itself, the characters, and what they meant and represented to both the FDJ and the child-readers. Even after the publishers arguably forced Hegen from his own comic, the publication continued in a form recognizable to its readership in order to maintain that relationship while, at the same time, continuing those meanings and representations for all involved.

The Effects of the *Bitterfelder Weg*, Socialist Realism, and *Verlag Junge Welt* on *Mosaik* von Hannes Hegen.

Held at the *Elektrochemischen Kombinat Bitterfeld* (Bitterfeld state-owned electro-chemical plant) in the eponymous town in Saxony-Anhalt on 24 April 1959, the *Mitteldeutschen Verlagen* brought together East German writers and artists with the intention of introducing the literary arts to the shop floor. The point to this conference was to construct a program for the creation of the arts in the GDR that would tear down the perceived divisions between the artistic

¹⁰ As will be discussed below, East German copyright and contract laws supported Hegen's claim to ownership of the *Digedags* that appeared in *Mosaik* between 1955 and 1975. When Hegen issued a letter refusing to renew his contract with *Verlag Junge Welt* in 1974, this required the publisher to create new characters if they wanted publication of *Mosaik* to continue uninterrupted.

process and the proletariat through the establishment of literary and artistic circles within the factories. According to Phil Leask, writer and Germanist at University College London, the directives established in Bitterfeld encouraged the production of the arts by industrial and agricultural workers in an effort to make East German *Kultur* (civilizing culture) accessible to the workers and create a truly working class art and literary scene. At the same time, this program levelled requirements and restrictions on professional writers in that they were “expected to write about the work of building socialism” through time spent alongside workers in these literary circles and to actively demonstrate their continued party loyalty.¹¹ All of this followed the already established principles of Socialist Realism imported from the Soviet Union. Novels emerging in the wake of this conference and following the course described by the *Bitterfelder Weg* prescribed the ideal way a committed socialist citizen of the GDR and SED Party member would act and think through the construction of the socialist personality. Often the protagonists achieved this goal through the negative reinforcement of Party-endorsed humiliation, suggested by Leask.¹² The effects of this program were evident throughout the East German arts and arguably nowhere more so than in the children’s literature of the day. While raising the bar for the production of children’s literature to follow, by the mid-1970s this had the unintended side-effect of creating highly praised works, the meaning of which escaped or eluded the young audience for which it was intended.¹³

The effects of the *Bitterfelder Weg* on GDR comics are more difficult to ascertain as such connections to the conference or the perceived compression of space between the shop floor and

¹¹ Phil Leask, “Humiliation as a Weapon within the Party: Fictional and Personal Accounts,” in *Becoming East German: Socialist Structures and Sensibilities after Hitler*, ed. Mary Fulbrook & Andrew I. Port (New York: Berghahn, 2015), 243.

¹² Ibid, 243.

¹³ Gaby Thompson-Wohlgemuth, “About Official and Unofficial Addressing in East German Children’s Literature,” *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 37-40.

the literary circles are not explicit. More than that, prior to the drastic changes made to East German comics in the shadow of the Berlin Wall, those comics were largely ignored, considered irrelevant and derivative at best or a continuation of western *Schund- und Schmutzliteratur* (trash and filth literature) at worst. That said, the timing of the East German variety of the anti-comics campaign circulating through the capitalist world and calls for changes to *Mosaik* appears suspect. In the mid-1960s, around the same time that similar recriminations were made against *Atze*, criticisms were levelled against *Mosaik* with particular attention to the motivations of the *Digedags*, the differentiation between their characterizations and respective personalities, and perhaps most importantly the perceived accuracy of historical representation in the stories found in the comics. Likewise, comics were intended to develop a space central to the construction and formation of the socialist personality among children. While these specific criticisms came down on *Mosaik*, Hannes Hegen, the *Mosaik-Kollektiv*, and the publication's editor Wolfgang Altenburger then, similar accusations were previously directed toward the publication in 1960 when Hegen came under sudden attack from the FDJ and East German educators.¹⁴ As such, and although the creators and editors of *Mosaik* and *Atze* were not included in the *Bitterfelder Weg* nor were comics at the time even considered part of a children's literary scene that required this perceived closure between the creators and the working class, the decisions taken as part of the *Bitterfelder Weg* extended beyond the realm of literary "arts" to the harmful influence (*schädlicher Einfluß*) of bourgeois comic books.¹⁵

Despite *Mosaik*'s early objectives to provide a socialist bulwark against the influence of American comics illegally crossing the border and the perceived public outcry in both halves of

¹⁴ Gerd Lettkemann and Michael F. Scholz, *Schuldig ist schließlich jeder...der Comics besitzt, verbreitet oder nicht einziehen läßt: Comics in der DDR—Die Geschichte eines ungeliebten Mediums (1945/49-1990)* (Berlin: MOSAIK Steinchen für Steinchen Verlag GmbH, 1994), 37-8.

¹⁵ BArch DY 26/173, "5.6.5. Die Bildgeschichte in den Kinderzeitungen und -zeitschriften," 190-1.

post-war Germany, *Mosaik* followed its American inspiration more closely than the dictates of the FDJ.¹⁶ According to Augustine, it was precisely due to this perceived lack of ideology that had children purchasing approximately a quarter million issues of the comics every month by the late 1950s.¹⁷ After the initial stories of the *Digedags*, Hegen began the *Weltraum-serie* in 1958. Though not stemming directly from the tenets put forward at the conference in Bitterfeld primarily due to the *Weltraum-serie* launching the year before, the *Weltraum-serie* arguably shared similar goals as the *Bitterfelder Weg* in that it demonstrated alien technologies that appeared suspiciously similarly to those found in the GDR. Here, *Mosaik* privileged industrial technologies at the expense of consumer desires through the inclusion of “text-book like explanations of technology.”¹⁸ Not only did this serve the FDJ’s educational objectives that came to the forefront among the comics’ editorial mandate during the 1960s, but also addressed a scientific-technological revolution that set about the construction of an East German and decidedly socialist education and identity while still being both nationalistic and imperialistic in character and representation (Fig. 14).¹⁹

However, following the introduction of the *Bitterfelder Weg* the previous year, in 1960 *Mosaik* and Hegen specifically came under attack not only for the contents of the publication, but on a personal level that alienated Hegen from the FDJ and *Verlag Junge Welt*. This was a transitional moment for the publication having moved from its original publisher, *Verlag Neues Leben* in June 1959 as Robert Lehmann, Chairman of the *Ernst Thälmann* Pioneers, thought the

¹⁶ Ibid, 191; BStU Zentralarchiv MfS Zentralarchiv Allg. P. Band 10321/64, *Hauptabteilung II –Abteilung 3 – Bericht Betr. Werksbungskandidaten Reitzel, Egon –österreichischer Staatsbürger, Berlin, den 17.1.1964*; and Lettkeman, “Comics in der DDR,” 320-2.

¹⁷ Augustine, 230.

¹⁸ Ibid, 232.

¹⁹ Ibid, 230-9.

comics should be tended by editors familiar with and responsible for the production of suitable works for children. At the same time, it was suggested that this change in editorial management

Figure 14. *Weltraum-serie*. Mosaik issue 26, page 20, 1959. Alien technology in the *Weltraum-serie* was reminiscent of existing technologies in the GDR, privileging the scientific-industrial technologies that spoke to East German identity constructions over consumer goods.

would influence the content of *Mosaik* and intensify the sense of socialist education.²⁰ This preceded suggestions that the inclusion of educational leaflets into the issues of *Mosaik* provide child-readers with demonstrations of the GDR's success in those areas relevant to the comics' stories. These leaflets, *Steinchen auf Steinchen* (stone on stone) as they were called in official parlance for their role in the construction of socialism among children, emphasized the educational aspects of the stories in ways the comics themselves lacked, providing technical and historical information. And despite the additions of Lothar Drägar, Gisela Zimmermann, and Horst Boche to *Mosaik* in 1958 to prepare the groundwork for a monthly publication schedule and to bring the publication in line with criticisms already emerging from the Pioneer organization, it was considered by the FDJ and by Wolfgang Altenburger (in a retrospective of Hegen's association with *Mosaik* drafted in 1975 following Hegen's departure) that Hegen placed a premium on the fable aspects of the stories at the expense of the socialist educational content. Moreover, the FDJ contended that Hegen's contract with *Verlag Junge Welt* was in non-compliance with statutes pertaining to the responsibilities of the publishers and editors in that Hegen was permitted to overturn demands placed upon his artistic influence within the publication.²¹

By this point, the *Digedags* had travelled from the Arab states in the Middle-East, to the South Sea Islands, Ancient Rome, and into Outer-Space, where they would remain for another few years following this transfer of editorial authority. And while the stories had the required educational aspects, the *Digedags* encounters with indigenous populations paralleled western

²⁰ BArch DY 24/5790, "Abschrift an der Zentralrat der Freien Deutschen Jugend—Sekretariat—Berlin, 29. Juni 1959."

²¹ BArch DY 26/114, "Dokumentation zur Bilderzeitschrift 'Mosaik,'" 3-5.

comics' implications of racism and cultural imperialism.²² Hegen arguably drew upon these tropes of western "schlock" due to the perceived popularity of genres such as science-fiction and the detective thriller among young readers.²³ Regardless, in 1960 the *Deutsche Lehrerzeitung* (German Teacher's News) questioned the role of *Mosaik*'s editorial board in the proper construction of the comics' ideological function as Hegen himself came under suspicion of having a bourgeois background and being part of a remote campaign to undermine the GDR through its children. The editor of *Frösi*, another *Kinderzeitschriften*, argued that Hegen was irresponsible when setting his stories in the past without the proper representation of reality. As a result of these attacks against Hegen and the perceived role of *Mosaik* for East German children and society more broadly, Hegen's contract was amended. While fundamentally similar, Hegen's consolidated influence within the children's publication was reduced as his role was immediately subjugated to the editorial authority of Hans Erhardt, later Wolfgang Altenburger, and Hegen himself became director of the *Mosaik-Kollektiv*, although his name remained on the masthead of the publication.²⁴

Although the guiding principles of the *Bitterfelder Weg* and its direct effects over literature and the arts in early-1960s East Germany should not be wholly attributed to the changes wrought in *Mosaik* or to the accusations shouldered by Hegen as a result, the spirit of those principles was definitely felt among the various publishing houses in the GDR. Not only was the *Bitterfelder Weg* intended to close the gap between the intelligentsia and the proletariat,

²² Augustine, 242-4. For further on racism in western comics, see Pierre Assouline, *Hergé, the Man Who Created Tintin*, trans. Charles Ruas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 24-9; Mark McKinney, *The Colonial Heritage of French Comics* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011); and Bradford W. Wright, *Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 30-55 & 86-108.

²³ Robert Darnton, *Censors at Work: How States Shaped Literature* (New York: Norton, 2014), 151 & 167-8. In the early 1980s, even Erich Honecker expressed his love of the American western novels of the author Karl May, inquiring with the East German Ministry for *Kultur* as to the possibility of adapting them into DEFA (the state-owned film production firm) produced films.

²⁴ Lettkemann, *Schuldig*, 37-8.

but also to create literature that addressed the experience of the working class in the model of Socialist Realism. The accusations brought against both *Mosaik* and Hegen suggested that both operated outside of this ideological framework. *Mosaik* failed to maintain the standards expected of a publication for children in the GDR, having been created as a valuable socialist alternative to the educational void of American and West German comics crossing the inner-German border. Hegen, likewise, was understood as bourgeois, representing the comics as the creation of individual ability, talent, and practice as he drew upon decidedly western comics' tropes and traditions in his stories. As the *Bitterfelder Weg* insisted on the consistent representation of the working class to promote and describe the experience of the construction of socialism, and subsequently the accurate representation of history necessary for the socialist historical consciousness, Hegen was brought into the program through the criticisms leveled against him and the restrictions placed upon his influence within the publication. Although criticisms later in the decade cannot be directly compared to those warranted by the *Bitterfelder Weg* given its perceived failure in the mid-1960s, a similar spirit was attributable to those further criticisms relating to the educational imperatives incorporated into comics. Hegen was thus marginalized within his own creation, by the principles of the Party, in order to preserve what the FDJ understood as *Mosaik's* role in and obligation to GDR society.

Sidelineing Hegen in this way may be understood in terms of Leask's study of humiliation as a weapon of the SED. The arguable effects of Hegen's marginalization within the publication may be described as the "exercise of power caus[ing] a perceptible...extreme change for the worse in the position of the victim and... his relationship to the world." Leask necessitates that this humiliation comes through the arbitrary exercise of power outside the law and accepted

norms causing the unbalance of the victim's position within the Party.²⁵ In Hegen's case, however, this power was not necessarily arbitrary. While Hegen contravened no perceptible law in his stewardship and production of *Mosaik*, his failure to toe the Party line in terms of these publications was previously chastised through the hiring of Drägar, Zimmermann, and Boche in 1958. Arguably this dilution of Hegen's influence resulted in the more noticeably ideological leanings of the *Weltraum-serie* compared to those adventures that came before. As such, the loss of status endured by Hegen as *Mosaik* was transferred to *Verlag Junge Welt*, a publisher with experience producing magazines for children, came from an established set of norms acceptable and expected from East German children's literature, but particularly comics magazines in this case. The *Bitterfelder Weg* represented the codification of norms that were previously understood though perhaps not explicitly stated, even in the publication of comics.²⁶ Specifically, the work of the publishers, comics publishers included, through the enforcement of these ideals toward representation in *Mosaik* became a struggle to maintain a high level of culture, or *Kultur*, in the construction of socialism. This combated the negative and consumerist influences of western comics before the Berlin Wall significantly reduced the availability of those children's publications.²⁷

For Hegen, this radical shift in the publisher's approach to *Mosaik* meant the supposed end to his monopoly over the creative direction of the comics. As *Verlag Junge Welt* brought Erhardt on board as editor of the publication, Hegen, Drägar, Zimmermann, and Boche were incorporated into the *Mosaik-Kollektiv* in June 1960, initially under the leadership of the *Thälmann* Pioneers, but quickly coming under the influence of the Central Committee of the FDJ

²⁵ Leask, 238-9.

²⁶ For further see, Lothar Köhn, "Von der Formalismus-Debatte zum <<Bitterfelder Weg>>," in *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart: Zweite, aktualisierte und erweiterte Auflage*, ed. Wilfried Barner (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck: 2006), 287-306.

²⁷ Darnton, 163.

as the managing editorial board.²⁸ These changes were meant to chastise Hegen's supposed bourgeois tendencies and eliminate *Mosaik's* western influence, bringing the comic back in line with the directives of the publisher and the FDJ, regardless of the outside influence from the *Bitterfelder Weg* earlier in the year. Although perhaps perceived by Hegen as a threat given his loss of status in the publication and potentially also in the estimation of the publisher, the FDJ, and the Party, the use of the FDJ's power should have been expected given *Mosaik's* previous history of criticism and the youth group's continued concerns regarding the contents of the *Kinder-Bilderzeitschriften*. At the same time, this censure suggested the FDJ's desire to bring *Mosaik* into the ideological and educational fold of East German educators given the *Deutsche Lehrerzeitung's* concerns regarding the children's publication and the desires of FDJ functionaries and educators to have greater influence over the space afforded by comics to penetrate children's otherwise unregulated leisure time.

But this change came in the middle of an existing story that was already planned. Whether or not plans for the *Weltraum-serie* originally envisioned it to continue four years, and given subsequent developments adopted by the publication and the gradual return of the Digedag character while Dig and Dag remained in space at the advent of the *Erfinder-serie* (Inventor-series) this appears unlikely, little could change immediately regardless of changes made to Hegen's contract or the expansion of the *Mosaik-Kollektiv*. The *Weltraum-serie* was itself a product of Hegen's reduced influence with these editorial changes. Stories previous to this concerned the *Digedags* effectively, though not explicitly, following Scrooge McDuck across the globe, practicing a form of cultural imperialism and racism through that same perceived

²⁸ Lettkemann, *Schuldig*, 38-40.

superiority of East German politics, society, and culture.²⁹ The *Weltraum-serie* marked a significant movement away from the fantasy and historical inaccuracies criticized in the earlier stories. Though not of the socialist realist model described by the *Bitterfelder Weg*, Dig and Dag's abduction into space demonstrated a socialist worldview and dedicated antifascism necessitated in East German fiction, including science-fiction and comics.³⁰ That said, little immediately changed after the official formation of the *Mosaik-Kollektiv* due to the ongoing episodes of the *Weltraum-serie*. But as that series concluded in 1962, Erhardt passed his title and authority as Editor-in-Chief to Wolfgang Altenburger in the following year.³¹ Though tasked with broadening the appeal and expanding the readership of *Mosaik*, Altenburger proved something of a collaborator to Hegen when and where he could, even if he was not exactly an ally.

²⁹ Dorfman and Mattelart mark numerous examples of this in the pages of *Donald Duck* and *Scrooge McDuck* written by Carl Barks, arguing that Barks' Duck characters negatively impacted those peoples they encountered due their material exploitation and capitalist cultural imperialism. As this was the example that the FDJ wished to follow with *Mosaik's* creation, it comes as little surprise that Hegen employed the Western tropes demonstrated by Disney. Although perceived as a "socialist alternative," *Mosaik*, for all intents and purposes, was a reflection and derivative of those same Western comics against which it supposedly protested. See Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart, *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic*, trans. by David Kunzle (New York: International General, 1975), 96-8. This is particularly the case in the *Sudsee-serie* (part of *Wie alles begann*), and aspects of the *Amerika-serie* (well after the formation of the *Mosaik-Kollektiv*) involving the American indigenous population, but continuing through the era of unification through the representation of island populations as primitive, child-like, and racial stereotypes on the cover of *Mosaik: die unglaubliche Reise der Abrafaxe* 438 (the unbelievable journey of the *Abrafaxe*, June 2012).

³⁰ Darnton, 153-4 and Sonja Fritzsche, *Science Fiction Literature in East Germany* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006), 80-5. Fritzsche argues here that due to the nature of science fiction in a socialist state, the representation of the future as dystopic was impossible. Moreover, she suggests that much of the science fiction was influenced by and incorporated elements from earlier authors including Jules Verne, Hans Dominik (a science journalist, engineer, and novelist, publishing during the interwar period), and Karl May. Fritzsche specifically notes the example of the East German children's science fiction novel *Das Weltraumschiff* (The Spaceship, 1952) by Arthur Bagemühl.

³¹ BStU MfS AIM 9409/69, "Ermittlungsbericht—Altenburger, Wolfgang, Berlin, den 4.12.1959," 1 and BStU MfS AIM 9409/69 Zentral Archiv, "Hauptabteilung II/1C, Bericht über Kontaktaufnahme, Berlin, den 23.2.1960," 1-2; "Lebenslauf—Wolfgang Altenburger;" and "Hauptabteilung II/1c, Vorschlag zur Werbung als DA, Berlin, den 17.5.1960," 1-6. Altenburger already enjoyed success as an editor with *Verlag Junge Welt*. He was a dedicated and reliable Party member, having joined the SED in 1948 while a member of the FDJ since the end of the Second World War. Like so many, he was recruited as an IM for the Stasi because of a retired uncle living in the United States.

Editorial Influence and the FDJ's Exercise of Power.

At the conclusion of the *Erfinder-serie* in 1964, which allowed the FDJ and the comics' editorial regime to demonstrate the GDR's penchant toward scientific and technological progress around which they could rally constructions of an East German identity, Hegen returned the *Digedags* to settings more familiar, the medieval courts and journeys through the Middle-East during the Crusades of the *Ritter Runkel-serie*.³² In this same moment, the FDJ declared that the ideological role of *Kinderzeitschriften*, including *Mosaik*, was to "fight against western comics with distinct, humanistic means," particularly those comics from the United States.³³ This goal suggests that the FDJ understood and represented East German comics as their tool to fight the influence of westernization, Americanization, and the consumerism that penetrated the supposedly impervious Berlin Wall, the real permeability of which has been argued at length elsewhere.³⁴ This struggle would be met through a cultural confrontation with the likes of Scrooge McDuck and *Fix und Foxi*, a West German funny animal comic, on one side against the perceived superiority of socialist morality demonstrated in the pages of comics published by *Verlag Junge Welt*. Moreover, comics, particularly *Mosaik* as the bestselling publication of its kind among children in the GDR, was the regime's most potent weapon in this regard apparent through the publication's increased paper quota and circulation from 50,000 to 300,000 copies.³⁵ Despite accusations that *Mosaik* followed western patterns and tendencies far too closely even before the completion of the *Erfinder-serie*, it was this perceived adherence to those western

³² Augustine, 230.

³³ Lettkemann, *Schuldig*, 44.

³⁴ April Eisman, "East German Art and the Permeability of the Berlin Wall," *German Studies Review* 38, no. 3 (October 2015): 597-616; Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); and Alan McDougall, "The Liberal Interlude: SED Youth Policy and the Free German Youth (FDJ), 1963-65," *Debatte* 9, no. 2 (2001).

³⁵ Lettkemann, *Schuldig*, 43.

tropes that endeared the publication to its child-readers and began to replace American and West German comics in the minds of that readership after the Wall's construction.³⁶

When Altenburger was brought on board *Mosaik*, he was able to use his position as writer and *Chefredakteur* of *Atze* to deflect regime attention from *Mosaik*. In his monograph *Censors at Work: How States Shaped Literature*, Robert Darnton suggests that East German authors often used flagrant political statements in their writings to attract the attention of the censors, thus keeping eyes away from the more subtle criticisms that peppered their works. At the same time, Darnton argues that the editors and the publishing houses were often as much authors of the work as were the authors themselves.³⁷ This does not suggest that Altenburger assisted Hegen with the scripting of *Mosaik*.³⁸ Rather, Altenburger used the glaring deficiencies of *Atze* to obfuscate some of those same problems in *Mosaik*, maintaining *Mosaik* in a form recognizable to its readership. By the mid-1960s *Atze* was an uneven publication with questionable quality in terms of writing, art, and how the two operated in conjunction. Some conventions of the comics' form, deriving from the Americanization of the medium, were considered intrusive to the images and interfered with the child-readers' ability to understand the required political meaning. In this regard, it was thought that *Atze* suffered more than *Mosaik*, particularly due to the irregular publishing schedule, murky artwork, the creators' insistence upon experimentation, and the lack of a politically-driven continuing story to carry readers not only through the comic, but from one issue to the next. As such, in their first decade of publication, East German comics failed to meet the FDJ's expectations as their own reports regarding the comics medium suggested the

³⁶ BStU Zentralarchiv MfS Zentral-Archiv Allg. P Band 10321/64, "Hauptabteilung II—Abteilung 3—Bericht, Betr: Werkungskandidaten Reitzl, Egon—österreichischer Staatsbürger-, Berlin, den 17.1.1964," 1-2.

³⁷ Darnton, 183-4.

³⁸ Since the late 1950s, Lothar Dräger was the official co-writer of *Mosaik*. BArch DY 26/114, "Dokumentation zur Bilderzeitschrift 'Mosaik'," 3.

form's superiority to the likes of television given the relative permanency and readability of comic books compared to children's programming.³⁹

At the same time, Altenburger assumed *Mosaik*'s policy matters in an effort to have the publication conform to the declared objectives of the FDJ and of SED youth policy more broadly. Not only did Altenburger's involvement give *Mosaik* the veneer of acceptability among the FDJ leadership, but also served to keep Hegen, and to a lesser degree Drägar, out of the politics of the publication and kept discussion of politics and ideology to a minimum within the comic. And despite the *Digedags*' past role as social and cultural conveyers of East German socialism in their adventures, the greater burden of this now fell to *Fix und Fax*.⁴⁰ This perception of *Mosaik*'s acceptance was accomplished through the early conceptualization of stories by Altenburger and *Verlag Junge Welt* publishing director, Rudolf Barbarino, often years in advance and beginning with *Auf den Spuren der Marco Polo* (On the Trail of Marco Polo, appearing as part of the *Ritter Runkel-serie*) in 1964. While this editorial influence constituted significant interference with Hegen's creative process, it avoided last minute and often impossible changes to the fundamental design of the comics.⁴¹ Due to the interconnections

³⁹ BArch DY 24/1581, "Vorlage an das Sekretariat des Zentralrates der FDJ, Betr. Konzeption für das neue Profil der Bilderzeitschrift 'Atze', Berlin, den 22.7.66," 1-4. Moreover, Heather Gumbert suggests that television was particularly popular among children and youth and although authorities hoped it would prevent a latchkey kid phenomenon and keep youth out of Western cinemas, the variety of entertainment available in Berlin would not hold youth attention for long. At the same time, Gumbert contends that programming was relatively irregular and as such, few shows had the chance to become cornerstones of a programming schedule. *Unser Sandmännchen* was one of the exceptions generating popularity on both sides of the inner-German border, though children's entertainment only accounted for 8.9% of DFF's total programming in 1960. Heather Gumbert, *Envisioning Socialism: Television and the Cold War in the German Democratic Republic* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014), 56-7, 78, & 85.

⁴⁰ Lettkemann, *Schuldig*, 40-3.

⁴¹ In regard to the GDR's broader publishing culture, Darnton suggests that editors and publishers left intentional gaps in the publishing Plan so as to allow the insertion of books deemed too "hot" for publication at the last minute, if desired, as approval from the Ministry of Culture was more forthcoming on an ad hoc basis. However, if the Central Committee was unhappy with what went on in a publishing office, restricting resources to the publishing office was a frequent punishment as that hobbled the publisher's ability to function on a daily basis. Advance planning, not only with regard to *Mosaik* but with East German publications largely speaking, this dealt with potential political problems well in advance. Darnton, 151, 159 & 162.

between the text and image in comics and the *Mosaik-Kollektiv* often working up to deadlines, changes required of the comics on political grounds or historical accuracy were often difficult, if not impossible to carry forward. The implementation of this policy not only allowed the publisher, and thus the FDJ, more input into the creation of the stories for *Mosaik* in terms of the political and educational content mandated by the regime after the mid-1960s, but gave Altenburger a larger role in *Mosaik*. Only minor corrections were then required between the publisher and printer as Altenburger acquired responsibility over the publication's overall direction and content.⁴²

Regardless of the benefits experienced by Hegen as responsibility for the content of *Mosaik* was lifted from his shoulders, which was most certainly not what Hegen wanted as this chapter makes clear below, the actions of *Verlag Junge Welt*, the FDJ, and specifically of Wolfgang Altenburger represented a most blatant exercise of the SED-regime's power and authority over the comics and Hegen's influence over his own creation. The regime's influence over East German comics has been characterized earlier as benign power as the political, ideological, and educational mandates of the FDJ were largely concealed in the bright colours and funny stories of the *Digedags*, *Pats Reiseabenteuer*, or *Fix und Fax*. A more thorough analysis than can be made here is found in the third chapter with regard to the notion of *Eigen-Sinn* and the convergence of the public and private spheres through the reading of and the interaction and participation with East German comics, particularly *Atze* and *Frösi* in that context.⁴³ In this instance, however, there is the obvious use of power designed to restrict

⁴² BArch DY 26/114, "Dokumentation zur Bilderzeitschrift 'Mosaik'," 5-6.

⁴³ See also, Christa Lorenz, ">>Bummi<< und der Weg ins Leben: Erziehung zur Gesellschaft in einer Kinderzeitschrift," in *Fortschritt, Norm und Eigensinn: Erkundungen im Alltag der DDR*, ed. Andreas Ludwig (Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag, 1999), 211-32.

Hegen's room to maneuver within the interests of the publication through means that do not attempt to obfuscate that use of power.

Criticism came down upon Hegen and his collaborators on *Mosaik* since 1958 and the beginning of the *Weltraum-serie* despite that story's perceived inclusion of ideological, educational content through the portrayal of the analogous Cold War conflict and the creation of a utopian future. These criticisms were drawn in part from *Mosaik*'s perceived adherence to the tropes and traditions of western comics. As a result, the *Mosaik-Kollektiv* itself was thought to move in bourgeois circles and to come from petite-bourgeois (*kleinbürgerlich*) backgrounds. The FDJ considered this perceived westernization a problem large enough that they considered the dissolution of the publication completely. Of course this did not happen as *Mosaik* was also *Verlag Junge Welt*'s financial backbone and the publisher's continued existence depended upon the comic as a revenue source. And yet, the comic continued to draw the ire of the regime for suggesting western tendencies in a publication that was viewed as an aid toward child-rearing and the child's humanist and moral educational development.⁴⁴ Introducing Altenburger to the *Mosaik-Kollektiv* introduced a lever of control that had been absent from the publication and granted *Mosaik* a new degree of respectability from the regime.

The FDJ agreed that, due to its content and peculiarities, *Mosaik* could not be substantially changed and still maintain its existing readership.⁴⁵ This impotence did not, however, mean that change could not occur in the offices of *Verlag Junge Welt* or within the *Mosaik-Kollektiv*. And in this regard, regardless of his position as creator of *Mosaik* and of the *Digedags* or as the perceived director of the *Mosaik-Kollektiv*, Hegen was treated more as an employee of the state, a work-for-hire comic creator if you will, rather than as an autonomous

⁴⁴ BStU Zentralarchiv MfS Zentral-Archiv Allg. P Band 10321/64, "Hauptabteilung II—Abteilung 3—Bericht, Betr: Werkungskandidaten Reitzl, Egon—österreichischer Staatsbürger-, Berlin, den 17.1.1964," 1-2.

⁴⁵ BArch DY 24/1585, "Information über die Weiterführung der Bilderzeitschrift 'Mosaik'," 2-4.

author or artist.⁴⁶ In such a case, which appears to apply in the East German context despite Hegen's criticisms and accusations following his departure from *Mosaik* in 1975, copyright of a work remains with the employer, or publisher, rather than the artist or author of that work. While *Mosaik* was pitched by Hegen in the mid-1950s and was thus created by him, the publisher was mandated to find or create characters to combat the influence of Disney from the West. As such, it could be argued and was by the editorial regime, Hegen was contracted to provide his work on *Mosaik*.⁴⁷ With the changes affected over the first half of the 1960s, in particular the drafting of story ideas for *Mosaik* well in advance by Altenburger and Barbarino and an attempted break with *Mosaik*'s series publication model, *Verlag Junge Welt* demonstrated a firmer grasp over what would and would not be allowed in the pages of *Mosaik*. Moreover, understanding Hegen as a contracted employee of *Verlag Junge Welt*, with contracts initially renewed on an issue by issue basis having no previous experience with comic book contracts, serves to explain how the publisher followed the dictates of the *Bitterfelder Weg* without the apparent consent of Hegen.⁴⁸

Among the changes wrought to the publication in the middle of the 1960s, the FDJ mandated that a reader group be organized by *Verlag Junge Welt* for the benefit of *Mosaik*. This reader group was appointed by the Publishing Director, in this case Kurt Feitsch who took over

⁴⁶ "Circular 9—Works Made for Hire," United States Copyright Office—Library of Congress, <http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ09.pdf> (accessed 28 April 2016). Work for hire means a work that is created by an author or artist as part of the job for which they were hired by an employer. This is often current practice among American publishers such as Marvel and DC so that copyright over the characters and stories remains with the publisher.

⁴⁷ BArch DY 24/5790, "Abschrift—Pionierorganisation 'Ernst Thälmann,' Berlin 29. Juni 1959"; and BArch DY 26/114, "Dokumentation zur Bilderzeitschrift 'Mosaik', Berlin den 23.9.1976," 1-2.

⁴⁸ BArch DY 26/253, "Standpunkt zum Schriftsatz von Johannes Hegenbarth," 1. As *Verlag Neues Leben* had prior experience publishing comic books, initial contracts with Hegen were drawn up along the lines of published books and on an issue by issue basis. While ownership of the characters thus remained with Hegen as it would with any novelist, Hegen's presence on the publication and subsequent issues were published at the pleasure and discretion of the publisher and the FDJ.

for Barbarino in 1965, but it remained under the direct authority of Altenburger.⁴⁹ The group was tasked with examining the text and graphics of each issue, and, in consultation with Hegen, drew attention to issues of ideology and historical inaccuracies as requested by the FDJ. At the same time, the group ensured that the guiding principles and ethical behaviour of the characters appearing in the books, here implying the *Digedags*, was made clear to the reader as this obscurity was a problem often pointed out in the past. This meant that although the FDJ was good enough to mention Hegen as, ultimately, the creative force behind the comics, this was the last of Hegen's influence within the publication.⁵⁰ The formation of this group also had the effect of bringing *Mosaik* closer to East German publishing practices carried out in the areas of fiction and *Belles-Lettres* as the first line of censorship, even before manuscripts were vetted by the *Hauptverwaltung Verlage und Buchhandel* (Office of Publishers and Booksellers) or HV in the Ministry of Culture. To the publication's benefit, this shift meant that by the mid-1960s *Mosaik* was being treated by the editorial regime as part of a larger movement towards an internationally respected form of children's literature. Moreover, the introduction of a reading group to effectively oversee the production of *Mosaik* was intended to subvert Hegen's influence alongside the perceived bourgeois elements within the *Mosaik-Kollektiv*, tendencies of which included the use of western comics tropes and "schlock" in the adventures of the *Digedags*. As Darnton suggests, the first step of censorship in the GDR, a state in which censorship did not officially occur given the inclusion of freedom of speech in the East German constitution, came from planning.⁵¹ And during the meeting of the Secretariat of the Central Committee FDJ of 4 October 1966 in which *Mosaik*'s reading group was mandated to Altenburger, who sat in

⁴⁹ "Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv—Verlag Junge Welt, DY 26," Jugendwerkhof-Treffen.de, http://www.jugendwerkhof-treffen.de/CMS_FILES_2.1/images/content/doku/organisation_ddr/junge_welt.pdf (accessed 28 April 2016).

⁵⁰ BArch DY 24/1585, "Information für die Weiterführung der Bilderzeitschrift 'Mosaik', 1966," 2-4.

⁵¹ Darnton, 149-51.

attendance as a consultant on the publication, and *Verlag Junge Welt*, the FDJ required that annual plans be drafted for the editorial board and the reading group in order to smooth the progress and process of the *Kinderzeitschriften*.⁵²

Publishing in the GDR often involved deals made between authors and publishers and proxies for those in the HV behind closed doors as opposed to what was considered the standard procedure that occurred in the offices. This was the case for authors such as Volker Braun, Christa Wolf, and Christoph Hein, to name a few, in order to pass their works through the various levels of East German (unofficial) censorship to receive a publishing license and still produce a text that, for the most part, reflected the author's original intent.⁵³ This system of "negotiation, accommodation, resistance, and compromise" remained greatly untouched throughout the entire lifespan of the GDR, despite the effects of *glasnost* (openness) slowly trickling in from the Soviet Union from the mid-1980s until the final collapse of the SED-regime in 1989.⁵⁴ However, this approach was arguably not the case in *Verlag Junge Welt*'s early dealings with Hegen.⁵⁵ In *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker*, historian Mary Fulbrook describes malign power as the obvious and direct intervention into the life of an individual with adverse effects for that person and potentially also their family members.⁵⁶ The implementation of these policies with regard to *Mosaik* largely removed Hegen

⁵² BArch DY 24/1585, "Protokol Nr. 169 der Sitzung des Sekretariats des Zentralrats der Freien Deutschen Jugend an 4. Oktober 1966," 1-4; and "Information für die Weiterführung der Bilderzeitschrift 'Mosaik', 1966," 4.

⁵³ Darnton, 212-3.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 227.

⁵⁵ Lettkemann and Scholz suggest that due to the existing political order and the construction of the GDR as an independent state with its own history separate from that of the Federal Republic and the need to support and develop this history, Hegen was forced to yield to those criticisms made against him in the mid-1960s. Lettkemann, *Schuldig*, 44-6.

⁵⁶ Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 284.

from the creation of his own comics by placing restrictions on his abilities to create.⁵⁷ That said, Hegen grew generally resistant not only to these changes, but to any further alterations of the publication. As a result, the publisher was forced to make concessions that would make dealings with Hegen easier and smoothed over the changes required of the publication itself. Attention was thus turned to Altenburger as *Verlag Junge Welt* constructed *Atze* as the ideological backbone of comics publishing in the GDR.⁵⁸

Altenburger shifted the FDJ's attention to *Atze* through the creation of *Pats Reiseabenteuer* as an ideological adventure exploring the history of socialist struggle, revolutionary heroes, and the socialist worldview. Meanwhile, *Mosaik* continued in a form that, despite the changes to the presentation of historical accuracy and ideological content, appeared largely unchanged from what came before. Since before the publication of the first issue of *Mosaik*, the SED charged the FDJ with the systematic education of youth as part of their recruitment into the military and their larger participation in socialist society.⁵⁹ This imperative, particularly with regard to the youth publishers controlled by the FDJ, was renewed in the wake of the *Bitterfelder Weg* as publishers endorsed a program toward a uniform representation of East German socialism across the arts.⁶⁰ Throughout the 1960s and particularly following the construction of the Berlin Wall and the failure of Walter Ulbricht's Youth Communiqué in the middle of the decade, the FDJ was in a stronger position than just a few years earlier with their

⁵⁷ At the same time, both Hegen and his wife, Edith, were monitored by the Stasi right up until the end of the 1980s, though this does not seem to have impacted their work on *Mosaik*. Rather, Stasi interest can be determined through Hegen's work and the perceived level of influence he held over East German youth via the pages of his comics, see BStU MfS HA VIII Nr. 2608.

⁵⁸ Lettkemann, *Schuldig*, 49.

⁵⁹ Corey Ross, *Constructing Socialism at the Grass Roots: The Transformation of East Germany, 1945-65* (Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 2000), 73.

⁶⁰ Heather Gumbert, "East German Television and the Unmaking of the Socialist Project" (PhD diss., Austin: University of Texas, 2006), 135-6.

position in the *Volkskammer* and as a mass party organization firmly established.⁶¹ Despite the FDJ's increased visibility, the *Digedags* continued to travel across Europe, the Middle East, and Asia as the youth group understood its own inability to fundamentally reshape the publication without affecting the reader's perception of security and privacy within the space afforded by comics. The need to revitalize *Atze*, particularly with regard to the bar of quality established by *Mosaik*, allowed Altenburger the opportunity to draw attention from *Mosaik* as he corrected *Atze*'s failings.⁶² This did not completely conceal *Mosaik* or Hegen from the FDJ's interests, but made permissible the publication's continuation with Hegen's reduced influence.

The *Amerika-serie* and the Problems of Export to the West.

By the end of the 1960s, *Mosaik* was arguably at its most successful point publishing hundreds of thousands of copies domestically, but also expanding publication to include exports to Western Europe, specifically the Netherlands. The numbers in this endeavour were modest, only 20 000 copies licensed for the initial shipment in July 1969, coinciding with the debut of the *Amerika-serie*, but hopeful to gain a successful foothold in the western European market.⁶³ The publisher approved the requested allocation of precious paper, being in constantly short supply throughout the existence of the GDR, finding the timing favourable due to the launch of the *Amerika-serie* and its demonstration of the development of capitalist countries and of the social contrasts and antagonisms (*Gegensätzen*) at work in North America.⁶⁴ These details might suggest that, by the late 1960s, the FDJ found *Mosaik* ideologically reliable enough to accurately

⁶¹ Alan McDougall, *Youth Politics in East Germany: The Free German Youth Movement 1946-1968* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 234-5.

⁶² Lettkemann, *Schuldig*, 49.

⁶³ BArch DC 9/1628, "Verlag Junge Welt Zeitungen und Zeitschriften, Presseamt beim Vorsitzenden des Ministerrates, Betr. Export, 8 Mai 1969."

⁶⁴ BArch DC 9/1628, "Verlag Junge Welt Zeitungen und Zeitschriften, Presseamt beim Vorsitzenden des Ministerrates, Betr. Export, 8 Mai 1969."

represent East German socialism through the characters of the *Digedags* and their interactions on the American frontier. And while this was arguably not the case, it is necessary to question why the least ideological comic was apparently ideal to provide “a positive, political balance to the flood of western comics,” unless it was precisely due to this limited ideological influence found in *Mosaik*.⁶⁵

Mosaik and Hegen were both previously attacked for their perceived western tendencies. Of all the comics available in the GDR, and admittedly the list is extremely short compared with those available in the western world during the postwar, *Mosaik* was the one most influenced by the West and the tropes apparent in western children’s publications. This was particularly the case given that Hegen drew inspiration from Disney and science fiction author Hans Dominik and also the FDJ’s own desire to create a comic that both emulated and fought western comics using their own methods, buttressing the East German socialist worldview among children.⁶⁶ Moreover, the *Amerika-serie*, beyond the scope of the publication’s ideological educational agenda, sought to address the Americanisms of the *Mosaik* comics through their interactions with the *Digedags* and thus with that socialist worldview.⁶⁷ While this aim meant that *Mosaik* addressed American racism, particularly through the nation’s history of slavery and exploitation, the writers did not look toward their own brand of racism made apparent through the cultural imperialism and perceived superiority of socialism evident in earlier issues and stories.⁶⁸ This suggests that the introduction of the *Amerika-serie* put *Mosaik* in a unique position when considering comics for export. The publication already closely resembled the funny animal

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Brad Pragar, “Micky, Marx und Manitu. Zeit- und Kulturgeschichte im Spiegel eines DDR-Comics 1955-1990. Mosaik als Fokus von Medienerlebnissen im NS und in der DDR by Thomas Kramer, Review,” *The German Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 364 and Fritzsche, 85.

⁶⁷ Catrin Gersdorf, “The Digedags Go West: Images of America in an East German Comic Strip,” *Journal of American Culture* 19, no. 2 (July 1996): 42.

⁶⁸ Augustine, 243.

comics popular with children in Western Europe having drawn its inspiration from those same books and as such had the best chance of penetrating that external market while serving the agenda of the FDJ, the SED, and German communism broadly.

However, the actions of the editorial regime and his own reduced influence proved to be sticking points with Hegen as the *Amerika-serie* and the FDJ's plans for *Mosaik*'s export moved forward. Since *Mosaik* moved to *Verlag Junge Welt* in January 1960, Hegen's contract remained relatively unchanged at the publisher despite the changes being affected around him and the changing tasks of socialist ideology and cultural policy mandated in *Mosaik* following its move. To this point, contracts between Hegen and the publisher were for fixed periods and renewed every few years. This allowed the publisher every opportunity to revise the terms and the fundamentals of the relationship as these contracts allowed the publisher licensed use of the *Digedags*, but guaranteed Hegen very little control after the creation of the *Chefredakteur* position and the reading-group.⁶⁹ Regardless, as the 1960s wore on, Hegen grew increasingly resistant to the demands made by the FDJ's editorial regime. By 1969, it was recommended to the publisher by Dr. Anselm Glücksmann, *Verlag Junge Welt*'s legal counsel since 1967, to negotiate a new contract with Hegen for an indeterminate amount of time. Although this move constructed the terms of their relationship for the foreseeable future, it was hoped that the supposed inability to revise the contract would force Hegen to settle his misgivings as the contract required a full year's notice prior to termination and revisions were incredibly difficult

⁶⁹ Throughout the 1960s, during which time Hannes Hegen was contracted by *Verlag Junge Welt*, those contracts were for limited periods though longer than at *Verlag Neues Leben*. As such, Hegen had opportunity to negotiate terms between these contracts until the final, unlimited contract of 1969. Why then his contract remained relatively unchanged despite his obvious unhappiness is unclear, unless those contract terms were imposed upon him by the FDJ and the publisher. Though, no evidence suggests this was the case. As suggested by Darnton and previously cited, the publication of *Mosaik* was indeed been subject to processes of resistance, compromise, and accommodation. See BArch DY 26/253.

to render. At the same time, it bound the regime to Hegen's ownership, insofar as the regime recognized intellectual property, of the *Digedags* and of the comics magazine itself.⁷⁰

As the FDJ understood Hegen to be a contracted employee of *Verlag Junge Welt*, rather than an autonomous artist as novelists were, Hegen's expressed problems with the publisher drew upon this relationship, not turning to the issue of his own control over the creative direction of the magazine, but the perceived deficiencies of the magazine's production. In other words, Hegen's complaints addressed the editorial regime, employing the language of the workers and of the regime that was supposed to represent them.⁷¹ In 1972, three years after the completion of the open-ended contract suggested by Glücksmann and the same amount of time into the publication of the *Amerika-serie*, Hegen informed Kurt Feitsch, then Publishing Director at *Verlag Junge Welt*, that the continued publication of twelve issues of *Mosaik* per year was impossible under the current working conditions. Since 1958, *Mosaik* published on a monthly schedule. In the autumn of 1972, however, Hegen argued that the monthly schedule demanded a physical and psychological overload that was compounded by understaffing, the insufficient qualifications of new employees, and the retiring of some of the older colleagues. By the end of the year, Lona Reitschel, a member of the *Mosaik-Kollektiv* since 1960, and Joachim Arfert,

⁷⁰ BArch DY 26/114, "Dokumentation zur Bilderzeitschrift 'Mosaik', Berlin, den 23.9.1976," 6-8. The FDJ conceded Hegen's ownership of the *Digedag* characters and of the title *Mosaik von Hannes Hegen*, though not of the title *Mosaik* more generally, and were admittedly unwilling to fight him on the matter. See also BArch DY 26/253.

⁷¹ Alf Lüdtke, "Sprache und Herrschaft in der DDR. Einleitende Überlegungen," in *Akten. Eingaben. Schaufenster. Die DDR und ihre Texte: Erkunden zu Herrschaft und Alltag*, ed. Alf Lüdtke and Peter Becker (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997), 11-26. See also, Esther von Richthofen, *Bringing Culture to the Masses: Control, Compromise and Participation in the GDR* (New York: Berghahn, 2009), 97 and Patrick Major, "Introduction," in *The Workers' and Peasants' State: Communism and Society in East Germany under Ulbricht 1945-71*, eds. Patrick Major and Jonathan Osmond (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 7. Both suggest that the author's of letters of complaint (Eingaben) in the GDR drew weight to their grievances through the appropriation of the language of socialism. That is, they used the Party's own rhetoric in framing their complaints and in the constructions of positive images of both themselves and the state. Richthofen suggests that while this was not reflective of reality or how the authors acted in society, it demonstrated a "willingness to adapt and submit to SED supremacy." This is exactly what Hegen did here in his complaints rendered to the publisher and the FDJ.

associated with the *Kollektiv* since the late 1950s, wrote to the publisher at Hegen's behest requesting increased wages for the *Kollektiv*. Regardless as to the truth to Hegen's reasoning, it was apparent he demanded a renegotiation of the *Kollektiv*'s contract as Altenburger reported to Feitsch in early 1973 following a conversation with Drägar. If a new contract could not be agreed upon, Hegen threatened to withdraw from the existing contract, taking the *Digedags* with him, at the end of June of 1974.⁷²

As far as *Mosaik*, Hegen, and the *Mosaik-Kollektiv* were concerned, the space of negotiation provided by West German Chancellor Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* (Eastern policy) and the ratification of the German-German Basic Treaty in late-1972 found form in the *Amerika-serie*.⁷³ Gersdorf suggests that the *Amerika-serie* represented the United States as a place of fun which served as a more appropriate setting for the *Digedags* story.⁷⁴ This portrayal deconstructed the rhetoric of the SED-state in terms of both the evils of capitalist society and the worker's role in it as the fault for class conflict in the United States was necessarily given a human face, as much as the face can be represented in comic form.⁷⁵ East German detective and

⁷² BArch DY 26/114, "Dokumentation zur Bilderzeitschrift 'Mosaik', Berlin, den 23.9.1976," 7-9 and "Entwicklung des neuen 'Mosaik,' Presserecht: Dr. Glücksmann über die Zeitschrift 'Mosaik' am 5.2.1974, Anlage 3."

⁷³ It is tempting to suggest that the export of *Mosaik* in 1969 was related to the introduction of *Ostpolitik* in the West as the two coincided, relatively speaking. But due to the nature of East German economic planning, the letter from *Verlag Junge Welt* of 8 May 1969 suggests a much longer process of preparations and approvals to develop a story to adequately represent the socialist worldview and the workers' and farmers' state that produced it. That said, *Ostpolitik* itself did not emerge from thin air in 1969 and existed in arguably similar forms during Willy Brandt's tenure as Mayor of Berlin and as West German Vice Chancellor and Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Grand Coalition of Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger. The initial relations addressed between the states were more concerned with mutual recognition and transit regulations than they were with the import and export of comic books. Nonetheless, the development of *Ostpolitik* over the course of the 1960s did have a certain effect on comic creators and the editorial regime's outlook on the United States and their ability to discuss and adequately represent America in *Mosaik* almost as a response to the construction of the Berlin Wall at the beginning of the decade. See BArch DC 9/1628, "Verlag Junge Welt Zeitungen und Zeitschriften, Presseamt beim Vorsitzenden des Ministerrates, Betr. Export, 8. Mai 1969."

⁷⁴ Gersdorf, 42.

⁷⁵ McCloud, 28-36. For more, see Scott McCloud's explanation as to how drawings become symbolic of human faces and features and how they are interpreted and understood by the reader.

crime novels were often set in the west as they provided the most fertile literary ground for societal criticisms, as far as the editorial regime and the Ministry for Culture were concerned. Setting *Mosaik* in the United States allowed the FDJ the opportunity to demonstrate the supposed failings of the western world and the constant class-based agitations that were part and parcel of the American *Unkultur* (lack of civilizing culture) that appeared to so completely influence East German youth culture during the 1960s.⁷⁶ As *Mosaik* was typically considered the least propagandistic of the *Kinderzeitschriften* by readers and possessed of western tropes from the relatively petite-bourgeois of the *Mosaik-Kollektiv* by the SED-regime, these aspects made the publication nearly ideal for the distribution of socialist ideology in the capitalist marketplace.⁷⁷ In addition, export provided the publisher and the state with much needed hard, western currency. And while *Ostpolitik* made for a nice backdrop against which this seemingly well-timed penetration of the western market occurred, it was the larger patterns of German-German relations and detente that made possible Hegen's criticisms of *Verlag Junge Welt's* practices in regard to his comics.

Despite initiatives such as the *Bitterfelder Weg* and the more direct assaults on comics published in the GDR, their adherence to socialist educational principles, and their abilities (or lack thereof) to properly develop the required socialist personalities among the child-readership, youth policy in the 1960s was relatively uneven. Moreover, the state's own desire for international recognition and the Federal Republic's advances toward detente made some degree of flexibility in that policy possible. As Darnton argues, the state had no clear policy to deal with

⁷⁶ By way of example, see attitudes surrounding *Deutschlandtreffen 1964* and the subsequent founding of East German rock radio station DT64 as a means of the regime demonstrating liberal attitudes when it came to issues of youth entertainment and consumer culture. McDougall, "Liberal Interlude," 131-9.

⁷⁷ Augustine, 230 and BStU Zentralarchiv MfS Zentralarchiv Allg. P Band 10321/64, "Hauptabteilung II—Abteilung 3—Bericht, Betr. Werksbungskandidaten Reitzl, Egon—österreichischer Staatsbürger, Berlin, den 17.1.1964," 1-2.

its authors and artists in terms of carrots and sticks, but chose to deal with each on a case-by-case-basis. At the same time, the West German media was well informed in matters of East German *Kultur* and were always peering over the Wall, as it were, searching for any instance of scandal by which to accuse the SED-state of repressive measures against its intelligentsia.⁷⁸ Although Darnton wrote more of the perceived relaxation of tensions toward the end of the Cold War following Gorbachev's calls for *glasnost* throughout the Soviet Bloc, much the same may be argued during the late-1960s and early 1970s with regard to German-German relations as a result of Brandt's *Ostpolitik* as the detente generated between East and West rendered the permeability of the Berlin Wall visible to the population.

These larger events in East German society at the start of the new decade relaxed the political atmosphere wherein Hegen felt himself able to criticize the publisher's practices and the inabilities of the *Mosaik-Kollektiv* to meet the publisher's Plan. Due to power struggles over youth policy between the SED and the FDJ, particularly in regard to the perceived westernization of that policy and its acceptability in the socialist state, *Verlag Junge Welt* was subjected to an uneven sense of direction and the necessities of their content that was not seemingly applied to all publications at the same time.⁷⁹ For example, *Mosaik* and Hegen came under attack in 1960 while nothing was done about the vastly inferior (in terms of both quality and sales) *Atze* until the middle of the decade despite residing at the same publisher. The inability for either the FDJ or the editorial regime to devise a consistent platform by which to deal with the *Mosaik-Kollektiv*

⁷⁸ Darnton, 171 and 181.

⁷⁹ Anglea Brock suggests that youth educational policy stabilized somewhat following the implementation of the Act on the Integrated Socialist Educational System in 1965, but as this was not meant to apply directly to publications for children and youth policy itself was generated by three different bodies, policy related to comics did not level off in the same way. Moreover, Fulbrook contends that youth policy was defined by tensions between attempts at state control and the recognition that relative freedom was the only correct way to foster the construction of the socialist personality in those youth. See Brock, 223; Fulbrook, *People's State*, 120; and Jeanette Z. Madarasz, *Conflict and Compromise in East Germany, 1971-1989: A Precarious Stability* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2003), 60.

and East German comics' producers more broadly allowed Altenburger, as *Chefredakteur*, to make some changes to the publication while still allowing the *Kollektiv* to continue producing *Mosaik* using the same tropes that previously defined the *Digedags* adventures. The oversight of Altenburger as editor, the implementation of a reader-group, and the overall reduction of Hegen's influence over *Mosaik* brought comics in the GDR more in line with other East German publications. That said, as the *Amerika-serie* and export to the West, coupled with SED Party Secretary Erich Honecker's general relaxation over the meaning of the socialist personality and subsequently the content of East German children's literature, made the appearance of western tropes reasonably acceptable in the pages of *Mosaik*, the mood regarding comics seemed agreeable toward Hegen's demands.

Channeling Popular Taste in *Mosaik* and the Need for Continuity after Hegen's Departure.

Despite the trappings of power and governance that arguably defined East German society and did so in some very real ways, in 1972 the FDJ was not in a position to either force Hegen to continue or to wrest control of the comics entirely from him. Locking Hegen into a contract without a date of renewal attempted to restrain Hegen's, and the *Mosaik-Kollektiv* as the group was largely considered to possess bourgeois tendencies if not identifications, western influences and have *Mosaik* address the concerns of the FDJ and Party educators that witnessed only marginal changes since these issues were first raised nearly a decade before. At the same time, the *Amerika-serie* contractually obligated the FDJ to maintain exports if they hoped to demonstrate *Mosaik*'s competitiveness in a global market and compared to the regime's other models of children's literature. Conversations with Hegen revealed that he was neither willing to budge from his insistence that the *Kollektiv* could not produce more than six issues per year, as

most artists involved were free-lance and worked only part-time, nor was he willing to transfer ownership of *Mosaik* and the *Digedags* to the publisher, *Verlag Junge Welt*. Given his position as *Chefredakteur* and perhaps as a result of his dealings with Hegen, as soon as Hegen's position was made clear in late 1973 and early 1974, Altenburger suggested the creation of a new monthly children's comic.⁸⁰ By June-July 1974, just as the *Amerika-serie* saw its final issue, Hegen delivered information regarding GDR copyright laws to Glücksmann, threatening to charge the publisher with plagiarism should it choose to continue *Mosaik* without his express permission. This ultimatum delivered by Hegen forced the FDJ to finally, though begrudgingly, accept the creator's resignation and resolve the matter of existing contracts with Edith Hegenbarth and Lothar Drägar, as co-copyright holder and scripter of *Mosaik* respectively. In August-September of the same year, the publisher's Central Party Leadership (*Zentrale Parteileitung* or ZPL) approved the termination of existing contracts with Hegen, his wife, and Drägar. In the same moment, however, the ZPL approved Altenburger's newly developed direction for the comic, renewing contract negotiations with Drägar.⁸¹

If this suggests a relatively measured reaction from the FDJ and the editorial regime, that is how it is intended. Although Honecker made claims toward the supposed lack of taboos within the arts, this is not to suggest that the censorship mechanisms ceased to function or exist.⁸²

⁸⁰ BArch DY 26/114, "Dokumentation zur Bilderzeitschrift 'Mosaik,' Berlin, den 23.9.1976," 7-10 and "Das MOSAIK," DDR-Comics.de, <http://ddr-comics.de/mosaik.htm> (accessed 6 May 2016). Following the completion of the *Amerika-serie* (issue 211), the series ran for another year (issue 223) to conclude the planned stories as well as Hegen's contract with the publisher. Six reprint issues were released between July and December 1974 and the *Abrafaxe* made their debut in *Mosaik*, no longer *Mosaik von Hannes Hegen*, in January 1976.

⁸¹ BArch DY 26/114, "Dokumentation zur Bilderzeitschrift 'Mosaik,' Berlin, den 23.9.1976," 14.

⁸² Shortly after coming to power in 1971, Honecker declared that there should be no taboos in the arts. Although this stood in stark contrast to statements made during his tenure as head of the FDJ, and he would renege on this statement in the 1980s, this represented the SED's attempt to come to terms with the prevailing westernized youth culture including jeans, long-hair, and beat music. Honecker wanted to present the GDR as youthful and dynamic, particularly in the run-up to the German-German Basic Treaty and the perceived normalization of relations between the two German states as a means of garnering international recognition from

But if censorship was at fault in the case of *Mosaik*, it was the result of censorship embedded in the foundations of the publishing system through the annual Plan.⁸³ And while arguments could be made that the situation did not warrant more repressive measures from the FDJ or that comics in the East German state did not “matter,” *Mosaik* was not only a financial pillar for the publisher, but was also a fundamental, though unofficial, platform for the regime’s educational agenda and the construction of the socialist personality among the child-readership. That said, releasing Hegen from his contract was the simplest and most beneficial solution for all parties involved. As discussed above, West German media sought any aberration in the arts to use as evidence of the SED-regime’s repressiveness and the general lack of freedom assumed to pervade the East German literary scene, including children’s literature, particularly after Honecker’s ascendancy. Releasing Hegen, but more importantly abiding by the terms of GDR copyright law and respect toward Hegen’s ownership of the *Digedags*, demonstrated to observers the perceived legality of the regime’s actions and provided evidence, no matter how small, of the GDR as a *Rechtsstaat* (state governed by the rule of law).⁸⁴ In this instance, however, the state, the FDJ, and the publisher all attempted to placate Hegen. When that apparently failed, given the societal concerns surrounding the Basic Treaty and the normalization of relations with the Federal Republic, not to mention the perceived normalization of life within the GDR itself, and as the publisher already had the mechanisms available to produce a successor to *Mosaik von*

the West. See Josie McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism: Intimacy and Sexuality in the GDR* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 28.

⁸³ Darnton, 149.

⁸⁴ Cooke, 29-30. The GDR was rife with western accusations, some well founded, of the state’s supposed status as an *Unrechtsstaat* (state without the rule of law) due to the SED-regime’s repressive hold on power and the Stasi’s coercive measures in maintaining order in the state. This point was problematic in terms of formal recognition of the GDR during negotiations of the Basic Treaty and reared again when questions of the normality of the East German everyday and memory were broached in the (re)unification era.

Hannes Hegen, the only viable recourse was a mutual and “amicable” dissolution of Hegen’s contract with *Verlag Junge Welt*.⁸⁵

In January 1976, *Verlag Junge Welt* launched the first issue of *Mosaik*’s new era, this time starring three characters known collectively as the *Abrafaxe*.⁸⁶ At the same time, the comics did away with the notion of series that saddled the publication with storylines that continued for years. The numbering scheme ended with the *Abrafaxe*’s introduction and after this, *Mosaik* issues were numbered by the year and month of publication similar to *Atze* following Altenburger’s rejuvenation of that series a decade before. Beyond these cosmetic changes, though, the comics appeared extremely familiar to its child-readership. Similarly referred to as “imps” or “leprechauns” (*Kobolde*) like their predecessors, the *Abrafaxe* was a trio of friends, arguably interchangeable with the *Digedags* based on their appearance. They continued to travel the world, sometimes visiting locales already explored by the *Digedags*, though the time-jumps that arguably defined the *Digedags*’ era were no longer as noticeable.

⁸⁵ 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), 1-30.

⁸⁶ An article published in *Der Tagesspiegel* on 24 April 2014 suggests that the sudden disappearance of the *Digedags* in *Mosaik* had not political basis or motivation (*Das plotzliche Verschwinden der Digedags...hatte keine politischen Gründe*). I would counter that this observation is motivated by the presumption that East German comics were spaces free from the state’s ideology, as cited elsewhere by Augustine. While this position argues in favour of the perceived normalcy associated with the *Alltag* in East Germany, thus making childhood an experience comparative across the Cold War division, it misrepresents the SED-regime and *durchherrschte Gesellschaft* conceptualized by Jürgen Kocka. It is not my purpose here to deconstruct the perception of normalcy in the East German *Alltag*. Indeed, the necessity of construction a common, or comparative, history is arguably necessary in overcoming the *Mauer im Kopf* (Wall in the Head) apparent in some Germans, both East and West, since (re)unification in 1990. Likewise, nostalgia for the former GDR (*Ostalgie*) is predicated upon the insistence that the private life, the domestic, the everyday, was an apolitical space free from the regime’s influence and conducive to practices of the *Eigen-Sinn* as discussed in earlier chapters. However, ignoring the SED’s power structures, malign or benign, and how they penetrated even the most routine practices does a disservice to those who lived under the communist regime. See Bodo Mrozek, “Ausstellung über DDR-Comichelden: Reisefreiheit für die Fantasie,” *Der Tagesspiegel*, <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/ausstellung-ueber-ddr-comichelden-greuliche-zeichnungen-in-rekordauflage/9755588-2.html> (accessed 21 June 2016). See also, Cooke, 7-8 and Jürgen Kocka, “Eine durchherrschte Gesellschaft,” in *Sozialgeschichte der DDR*, eds. Hartmut Kaelble, Jürgen Kocka, and Hartmut Zwar (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1994), 547-53.

The *Abrafaxe*, co-created by Drägar and Reitschel, represented continuity within the publication as much for the readers as it for the regime and was important to both. Drawing on the resources already available to it, *Verlag Junge Welt* ensured a relative consistency in the presentation of *Mosaik* as it transitioned from the *Digedags* to the *Abrafaxe*. This uniformity was apparent in terms of the stories, the art, the presentation, and the quality of all three, drawing obvious inspiration from what came before. Like the *Digedags*, the *Abrafaxe* featured a blonde, a brunette, and a red-haired imp with short, tall, and middling builds, who travelled across the landscape of the historical world.⁸⁷ As such and because the *Abrafaxe* were seemingly interchangeable with the *Digedags*, readers were welcomed into this new world of the *Abrafaxe* as though it was exactly the same as what came before (Fig. 15).⁸⁸ This continuity sought to ensure that the child-readership, both at home and abroad, was not alienated by a perceived change in the status quo of the publication. Indeed, following the introduction of the *Abrafaxe*, paper quotas for the exportation of the comic were increased yet again as the comics were translated into multiple foreign languages, perhaps most notably English and Dutch, for wider distribution throughout the Soviet Bloc and non-socialist world during the late-1970s and continuing well into the 1980s.⁸⁹ This attention doted upon the *Abrafaxe* suggested that, unlike *Mosaik von Hannes Hegen* that consistently generated complaints as to the suitability of the

⁸⁷ Additionally, the *Abrafaxe* had a naming convention similar to that of the *Digedags*. Just as the *Digedags* were named Dig, Dag, and Digedag, the *Abrafaxe* were Abrax, Babrax, and Califrax. While this was not entirely the same, it was yet another perceived similarity that Hegen would later consider in his accusations of plagiarism against *Verlag Junge Welt*.

⁸⁸ As discussed above, the *Digedags* were often criticized for their lack of individual personalities and, as a result, the supposed unnecessary continuation of the group as a trio. In 1958, following the addition of Drägar and the first artists hired to what became the *Mosaik-Kollektiv*, this resulted in the sudden transition from the *Römer-serie* to the *Weltraum-serie* in which the character Digedag was left behind as Dig and Dag were abducted to the planet *Neos* with apparently no ill effect on the publication suffered from the multi-year absence of the one character.

⁸⁹ BArch DC 9/1628, "Auflagenstatistik 1984 Januar-September, *Mosaik*;" "Presseamt beim Vorsitzenden des Ministerrates der DDR, Betrifft: Lizenzhöhung für die Zeitschrift *Mosaik* ab 1985;" "Antrag zur Lizenzhöhung für die Zeitschrift 'Mosaik' zur Gewährleistung der Export-Aufträge, Berlin 6. April 1979;" "VOB Zentrag Bereich Verlagsentwicklung, z.H. Gen. Jeschke, Betr. Lizenznachtrag 1979 für *Mosaik-Sammelbände*."

publication's ideological strengths, its educational value, and its apparent inability to adequately represent either historical accuracy or the socialist worldview, mandated by the FDJ for the construction of the socialist personality, *Mosaik* featuring the *Abrafaxe* faced few of these same criticisms as Hegen himself no longer proved a creative bulwark for the contents of the stories or of the publication generally. More importantly, perhaps, was the fact that *Verlag*

Figure 15. Two Generations of *Mosaik*. The *Digedags* (l) and the *Abrafaxe* (r) bore striking visual similarities that created the sense of continuity across the two eras.

Junge Welt was the sole copyright holder of the *Abrafaxe* characters and this latest iteration of the comic and, as a result, the characters were beholden to socialist values and representations of socialist history and the state in ways the *Digedags* never were.

Problematically, as the *Abrafaxe* were directly inspired and influenced by the *Digedags*, they were equally subject to the perceived American and western comic book tropes and traditions of its predecessor. As a result, the *Abrafaxe* were equally guilty of cultural

imperialism. The representation of populations in the Developing World fell into the same patterns of cultural racism that afflicted the *Digedags* under Hegen's guidance, as the *Abrafaxe* and European socialism were demonstrably the only forces strong enough to free those populations from the exploitation and enslavement of imperialism.⁹⁰ The need for continuity during this transition period in order to maintain the comic's child-readership thus shackled *Mosaik* to the same or similar conventions that hamstrung the *Digedags*. Moreover, the German-German Basic Treaty and the exportation of *Mosaik* to Western Europe placed the comics squarely in the battleground of the western capitalist marketplace where *Mosaik* had to compete with established and popular imperialist comics. The FDJ's imperative of proving the humanistic and moral strength of *Mosaik* against the capitalist comics caused the warranted socialist transformation of *Mosaik* to remain incomplete. This perpetuated the misconstrued notion of *Mosaik* as a space free of ideology compared to publications such as *Atze* or *Frösi* in the minds of the readership and arguably served the comic's transgression into the domestic and the private space.

Conclusion.

As with charges levelled against the American comic book industry in the 1940s and 1950s prior to the publication of Fredric Wertham's *Seduction of the Innocent* in 1954, *Mosaik* was long considered to misrepresent socialism, the socialist worldview, and the educational mandate of the FDJ. Socialists and Communists of the emerging postwar Soviet Bloc in Eastern Europe made claims toward the evils of comics and the capitalist influence they supposedly wielded over not only the children of North America and Western Europe, but also the children within the socialist states of Eastern Europe, for example citing the character Superman as an

⁹⁰ Augustine, 243 and McKinney, 4-5.

extension of the National Socialist conception of the superman.⁹¹ While comics in the GDR were created specifically to combat this perceived influence among children and youth, *Mosaik* was always understood as too closely resembling and reflecting the comics it was intended to confront. Throughout the 1960s and well past the point where it became arguably irrelevant within the publishing industry at large, decisions taken for the *Bitterfelder Weg* held sway over the representation of comics in the GDR throughout the decade. These outmoded directives attempted to steer *Mosaik*, Hannes Hegen, and the *Mosaik-Kollektiv* toward that which was acceptable to the regime as was mapped out by educators within the SED and by the FDJ itself as youth policy grew more conservative following the failure of Ulbricht's Youth Communiqué. But Hegen, influenced by Disney comics as he was, fought against the inclusion of ideology despite the very obvious forms of American morality encoded in those same Disney comics. As a result, the 1960s and the 1970s for *Mosaik* were marked by a push and pull of creative forces as the regime chipped away at Hegen's influence in order to recreate the comic along lines acceptable to the regime as, largely, endorsed by the *Bitterfelder Weg* at the end of the 1950s.

While books in the GDR were typically negotiated between the author and the editor in order to reach a consensus acceptable to the censors in the Ministry of Culture, Hegen largely lacked this oversight until Hans Erhardt was hired as *Chefredakteur*, followed by Wolfgang Altenburger. Without this perceived oversight committee to manage the content of *Mosaik* and effectively guide Hegen's hand, and given his contractual ownership of the characters and the perceived freedom such ownership entailed, Hegen was relatively free to continue the story of the *Digedags* in the manner he saw fit and as followed the western model that initially inspired their creation. As a result, the *Digedags* represented socialism and the interests of the GDR state in the education of *Mosaik*'s child-readership only insofar as their expressed morality and the

⁹¹ Wright, 101-2.

way in which they helped those around them ran counter to what the FDJ understood to be indicative of capital-imperialism. However, as demonstrated at length by Dorfman and Mattelart, the brand of socialism practiced by the *Digedags* mirrored the same capital-imperialism of Disney comics as socialist morality was demonstrated to be superior to that practiced by the developing cultures the *Digedags* were supposed to help. Problematically, this depiction contradicted fundamental precepts of the ideals of utopian socialism. As the *Digedags* demonstrated a form of cultural racism toward those in developing nations, they distorted the perceived idealism of the socialist worldview regardless of how near or far that representation was from the practices of “real existing socialism” in the GDR.

And yet, the East German regime never deployed the full weight of its power against Hegen to bring *Mosaik* in line with its other children’s publications through *Verlag Junge Welt* and the FDJ. Of course, this is not to draw attention from the Stasi’s observations of Hegen, his wife, and other members of the *Kollektiv*, but given their position and the presumed importance of the work done by the *Kollektiv* in the socialist education of East German youth, such actions taken by the regime are not only understandable, but expected. Rather, the publisher and the editorial regime pursued legal means to dilute Hegen’s influence and remake *Mosaik* as a publication acceptable in a medium typified by western *Schund- und Schmutzliteratur*.

Arguably, this course was pursued in order to maintain Hegen’s loyalty, or at least the outward demonstration of such, so as not to turn him to open dissent. Moreover, the regime attempted to find accommodations for Hegen and *Mosaik*, tolerating historical inaccuracies and the relatively absent, or at least invisible, sense of development of the socialist consciousness in order to

maintain the publication and its connections between the regime, the schools, and the East German home.⁹²

An arts scene devoid of taboos as articulated by Honecker upon his rise to power in 1971 obviously did not extend to comics as they were perceived part of the regime's youth education. As such, when Hegen complained of overwork and the *Kollektiv*'s inability to fulfill the FDJ's plan for the publication, threatening his departure if the regime did not agree to his requests, Altenburger, one of Hegen's defenders up to this point and perhaps the one who understood Hegen's relationship with the publication best, suggested a change. The *Abrafaxe* that emerged were intentionally similar to Hegen's *Digedags* for the sake of continuity within the publication and among the child-readership. This allowed the regime the illusion of control over the publication and the characters as it was no longer restricted by the original terms of Hegen's contract and his perceived ownership of the characters. However, as the publisher was involved with exporting the comic to the West and the expectation of a loyal domestic readership were imperatives for the FDJ's educational objectives, releasing Hegen did not have the desired effect and the *Abrafaxe* were seemingly as locked into those western tropes as were the *Digedags* before them. Although the publisher attempted to exert its own control over *Mosaik* while quelling Hegen's minor rebellions for the perceived benefit of the comics' educational content, Hegen's absence from the publication did nothing to prevent his continued problems with the regime, the publisher, and the *Abrafaxe* engaging the editorial regime in copyright disputes that extended beyond German (re)unification in 1990.⁹³

⁹² Darnton, 212-27.

⁹³ BArch DY 26/253.

Conclusion.

In the preceding chapters, this paper has sought to describe East German society and perceptions of childhood through the lens offered by the comic books and *Kinderzeitschriften* (magazines for children) published by the regime. This dissertation was never intended to provide a comprehensive history of comics. Instead, this paper characterized the comic books published by *Verlag Junge Welt* and the Free German Youth (FDJ) as an intersection between state power and the children that read their publications. Moreover, those comics, specifically *Mosaik von Hannes Hegen* and *Atze*, but also including those *Kinderzeitschriften* that contained comic strips such as *Frösi*, *Bummi*, *ABC-Zeitung*, or *Trommel*, are characterized as sites of negotiation between state and (child) citizens and their respective perceptions of childhood and the roles and responsibilities of the child in the socialist state.

For the Socialist Unity Party (SED) led state, then, comics were proxies for its own authority. Following Michel Foucault's governmentality thesis and his conceptualization of the panopticon as constructions of power used to control the population, the FDJ deployed comics as exemplary of the socialist personality and indicative of the state's educational and ideological agendas directed toward the child-readership. Moreover, the use of state power evident in these comics attempted to steer youth activity in ways largely invisible, and thus more pervasive, to the audience. As children and youth were increasingly viewed as potential threats to the stability of the state and juvenile delinquency was arguably on the rise in the early postwar years, it was the responsibility of the FDJ to organize the newly discovered leisure time of these youth in the GDR.¹ Of course, this supposed problem was not limited to the GDR, but throughout Western Europe and the United States that accompanied the generational shift that occurred in the wake

¹ Konrad H. Jarausch and Michael Geyer, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2003), 288-90.

of the Second World War. Whereas the United States blamed the content and popularity of comic books for this turn toward delinquency, European states including the GDR saw this as the fault of Americanization of which comic books were a small, but important part.² As a medium, though, comics had potential exactly due to the popularity that made them a threat to the FDJ and their goal of organizing and controlling the leisure time of youth. Corey Ross and Karl Christian Führer suggest that mass media is an integral component in an affluent society as well as contributing to the driving force of that society. In filling the ever-increasing leisure time of the postwar *Freizeitgesellschaft* (leisure society), although this concept applied less to the GDR than to the Federal Republic (West Germany), created “needs” for which it also offered ample solution.³ The concept of leisure time was thus important to the FDJ and the SED-regime, popping up in numerous official reports on comics, questioning the most effective uses of leisure and what individuals did during that time.⁴ That said, comics produced by *Verlag Junge Welt* for the FDJ sought to control children’s leisure time left unaccounted for by school and organized youth group, both FDJ and *Ernst Thälmann* Pioneers, activities. As Roger Sabin suggests in *Comics, Comix & Graphic Novels*, comics were consumed by children largely without the supervision of adults. While the absence of authority figures was largely empowering for the

² Richard Ivan Jobs, “Tarzan Under Attack: Youth, Comics, and Cultural Reconstruction in Postwar France,” *French Historical Studies* 26, no. 4 (Fall 2003): 687-725; Goran Jovanovic and Ulrich Koch, “The Comics Debate in Germany: Against Dirt and Rubbish, Pictorial Idiotism, and Cultural Analphabetism,” in *Pulp Demons: International Dimensions of the Postwar Anti-Comics Campaign*, ed. John A. Lent (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1999), 93-128; and Bradford W. Wright, *Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 91-6.

³ Karl Christian Führer and Corey Ross, “Mass Media, Culture, and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany: an Introduction,” in *Mass Media, Culture, and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany*, ed. Karl Christian Führer and Corey Ross (Houndsmills: Palgrave, 2006), 2.

⁴ BArch DY 26/118; BArch DY 26/173; and BStU MfS HA VIII Nr. 2608.

child-readers, it also provided the FDJ a space in which to control and subvert the private reading of children.⁵

Mary Fulbrook further teases apart this understanding of power, following Max Weber's notions and distinctions of power, distinguishing between the capacity to enforce one's will upon others and the likelihood that issued directives will be obeyed by a population, the difference between "power" and "authority."⁶ Comics in the German Democratic Republic tended to follow this latter as the comics themselves and their content demonstrated a mode of state power that typically went unnoticed by its readership and was thus easy to transgress the perceived boundaries between the public and the private, between the political and the apolitical. As such and in line with attestations of GDR comics after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of Soviet power in Eastern Europe, comics were perceived by readers as sites free from the ideology of the state despite the sometimes obvious inclusions of socialist educational stories and content. As comics and other reading material published for children was allowed by its own readership the ability to transgress perceived boundaries separating state power from the private, comics thus infiltrated and organized the leisure time of its readership in ways arguably beneficial to the state through the perceived development of the socialist personality through that ideological material. Comics represented, and this was indicated by the FDJ, a means of conveying the importance of a socialist education in a means both more effective and more permanent than was available through television due to the medium itself and the participation with the medium required of the reader. As Scott McCloud states, reading comics requires "closure" in order to create meaning of seemingly disparate images. This closure is also entirely

⁵ Roger Sabin, *Comics, Comix & Graphic Novels: A History of Comic Art* (New York: Phaidon Press, 1996), 28.

⁶ Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 236.

voluntary on the part of the reader and completely invisible as the act of reading and interpreting comics is one that does not overtly draw attention to itself.⁷ By comparison, television is a static and passive medium requiring nothing from its audience. Comics and the required participation from the readership is thus reflective of the required participation of youth and the citizenship by the FDJ and the SED-state itself. Through the internalization of the content of these comics, children, consciously or not, engaged with the imperatives of the state and their own collective role as citizens under socialism.

However, precisely because of comics' ability and, indeed, necessity to transgress the bounds of privacy and infiltrate everyday life (*Alltag*) in the East German state, these *Kinderzeitschriften* opened themselves to the ersatz public sphere as the meanings and constructions of state power included in their pages was accessed through the interpretive lens of the child-readers' *Eigen-Sinn*. Other historians including Paul Betts, Mary Fulbrook, Jan Palmowski, and Eli Rubin among others have argued the significance of the private sphere as a space in which citizens were able to express themselves, indeed able to exercise *Eigen-Sinn* that itself shaped the private sphere.⁸ And it is the result of the understanding and association of comics with the domestic that opens them to the interpretation of the reader. Although the regime included these publications with varying degrees of ideological influence, particularly after the turn of the 1960s and the calls for closely monitoring the educational imperatives of these publications following the construction of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent controls of western media in the East German market, the expectation that these comics would be consumed

⁷ Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: the Invisible Art* (New York: Harper, 1993), 63-9 and 91.

⁸ See Paul Betts, "Building Socialism at Home: the Case of East German Interiors," in *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics*, ed. Katherine Pence and Paul Betts (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 96-132; Paul Betts, *Within Walls: Private Life in the German Democratic Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Fulbrook, *People's State*; Jan Palmowski, "Between Conformity and Eigen-Sinn: New Approaches to GDR History," *German History* 20, no. 4 (2002): 494-502; and Eli Rubin, "The Trabant: Consumption, Eigen-Sinn, and Movement," *History Workshop Journal* issue 68 (2009): 27-44.

during the reader's leisure time in the home made them subject to the ersatz public sphere that arguably existed within the walls of the domestic space. As such, themes such as travel, education, race relations, and even the ideological divide between capitalism and state socialism took on new and different meanings for the children consuming these comics than their socialist educational intentions precisely because of the act of "closure" and the child-citizens interactions and interactivity with both the comics and the state.

The ways children interacted with these comics, emerging from the ersatz public sphere of the home, is thus comparable to the adult criticisms of state socialism and the production of *Eingaben* (citizen petitions). The FDJ and *Verlag Junge Welt's* editorial regime insisted on the linkage between these comics and *Kinderzeitschriften* and the broader educational regime of the SED-state. Part of this requirement was in response to criticisms leveled against the publications by the educators themselves and their demands on inclusion in the determination of these comics' content, but in equal portion this stemmed from the FDJ's need to control the leisure time of its readership as well as to organize the spaces arguably without the organizing influence of state power, in short, the home. East German comics were supposed to remake the child-reader's leisure time and space into one where the child would not avoid the state and consume mindless entertainment as was often perceived to be the case in the capitalist West, but entertainment was structured around the improvement of the individual and of the individual's private space for the benefit of socialist society as a whole. In other words, East German comics after the early 1960s were organized around the idea of developing the socialist personality among children and youth so that that generation could be successfully deployed in service of the state. That said, incorporation into aspects of the private space made them subject to the perceived rules of that space. While the private was by no means an apolitical space, indeed the

private was politicized through the act of consumption as suggested by Konrad Jarausch and Michael Geyer in *Shattered Past*, Uta Poiger in *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*, Paul Betts on East German interiors, and here in terms of comics and *Kinderzeitschriften*, *Eigen-Sinn* as a means of dealing with the larger nature of politicization in the GDR allowed for the perception, if not the reality, of an apolitical domestic space.⁹

And while the private operated as a site for the construction of state power as suggested by Foucault's notion of governmentality, precisely due to this consideration of the private as the ersatz public sphere as understood by Habermas, the distinction between public and private and the criticisms that were deemed permissible within the private were made possible by the individual's need to negotiate the perceived panopticon. Comics thus provided children sites with which to engage the regime directly. Through the consumption of comics and the interaction provided by editorials and the children's own letters to the publishing officials, children carved out their own understandings of the comics' contents, how they should respond to that, and developed their own criticisms of the comics and subsequently criticisms of the socialist imperatives behind those comics more broadly. At the same time, they both understood those ideological imperatives and subverted them in order to draw entertainment from the comics in a way that did not sever the state's educational objectives, but marginalized them. Though this was not always the case and children themselves just as often criticized their own inabilities to establish those linkages between the comics and the classroom due to the failings of the editorial regime and the production plan of their comics, if not overtly criticizing the regime itself. As such, *Eigen-Sinn* more than simply being a means of "doing things one's own way," as the term is often translated, took on the much deeper function of acting independent of the East

⁹ Jarausch and Geyer, 272-81; Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 218-24; and Betts, "East German Interiors."

German state in order to construct a “plethora of interpretations and patterns of behaviour by an individual confronted with the political, social, and cultural structures” of the SED-state and of the Free German Youth for the purposes of exploring the “space of citizens’ personal negotiations between public and private demands and opportunities.”¹⁰ As a result and as is argued here, East German comics provided a site common to both the child-citizen and the state. Independent of the other, each group could here delineate its own ideas of childhood and what that meant to citizenship and obligation in East German state-socialism. In the same moment, comics provided both actors space to subvert and redefine the meanings and understandings associated with the *Kinderzeitschriften* and its consumption within an ersatz public sphere.

¹⁰ Palmowski, 495.

Bibliography

Archives and Libraries:

Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde (BArch)

DC 9 Presseamts beim Ministerrat der DDR
9/1628

DC 207 Palast der Republik (Bestand)
207/686

DY 24 Zentralrat der FDJ
24/1581 1 von 2
24/1581 2 von 2
24/1585
24/2398
24/5790
24/8662
24/8674
24/8675
24/23769

DY 25 "Ernst Thälmann" Pionier Organisation
25/315

DY 26 Verlag "Junge Welt"
26/42
26/52
26/63
26/69
26/114
26/118
26/173
26/253

Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU)

MfS AIM 9409/69
MfS AP 803/70
MfS AP 10321/64
MfS HA VIII 1406/2
MfS HA VIII 2608
MfS HA XX 10915
MfS HA XX 11285

MfS HA XX 11510
 MfS HA XX 12353
 MfS HA XX 18546
 MfS HA XX/AKG 6680

Comic Bibliothek Renate, Berlin, DE

Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Leipzig, DE

Wende Museum, Culver City, CA, USA

Films and Television Programs:

Blaulicht. Berlin: DFF, 1959-68.

Becker, Wolfgang, dir. *Good Bye, Lenin!* DVD. Berlin: X-Filme Creative Pool, 2003.

Beyer, Frank, dir. *Spur der Steine*. DVD. Berlin: DEFA, 1966.

Haußmann, Leander, dir. *Sonnenallee*. DVD. Berlin: Delphi Filmverleih GmbH, 1999.

Mach, Josef, dir. *Die Söhne der großen Bärin*. DVD. Berlin: DEFA, 1966.

Prisma. Berlin: DFF, 1963-91.

Tele-BZ. Berlin: DFF, 1960-90.

Unserer Sandmännchen. Berlin: DFF, 1958-90.

Published Primary Sources:

ABC-Zeitung (Berlin, DE, 1946-96)

Atze (Berlin, DE, 1955-91)

Bummi (Berlin, DE, 1957-91)

Frösi (Berlin, DE, 1953-2005)

Junge Welt (Berlin, DE, 1947-present)

Mosaik von Hannes Hegen (Berlin, DE, 1955-75)

Mosaik (Berlin, DE, 1975-present)

Trommel (Berlin, DE, 1958-91)

Secondary and Online Sources:

Andrae, Thomas. *Carl Barks and the Disney Comic Book: Unmasking the Myth of Modernity*. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2006.

- Assouline, Pierre. *Hergé, the Man Who Created Tintin*, translated by Charles Ruas. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- “Atze.” DDR Comics. <http://www.ddr-comics.de/atze.htm> (accessed 27 August 2013).
- Augustine, Dolores L. *Red Prometheus: Engineering and Dictatorship in East Germany, 1945-1990*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007.
- Barker, Martin. *Comics: Ideology, Power and the Critics*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989.
- Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*, translated by Richard Howard and Annette Lavers. New York: Hill and Wang, 1957.
- Beatty, Bart. *Unpopular Culture: Transforming the European Comic Book in the 1990s*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007.
- Bensing, Manfred. “Thomas Müntzer.” Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Thomas-Muntzer> (accessed 9 February 2016).
- Berdahl, Daphne. “Good Bye Lenin! Aufwiedersehen GDR: On the Social Life of Socialism.” In *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, edited by Maria Todorova and Zsuzsa Gille, 177-89. New York: Berghahn, 2010.
- Bergfelder, Tim. *International Adventures: German Popular Cinema and European Co-Productions in the 1960s*. New York: Berghahn, 2005.
- Berghahn, Daniela. *Hollywood Behind the Wall: The Cinema of East Germany*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005.
- Bergmann, Werner. *Antisemitismus in öffentlichen Konflikten: Kollektives Lernen in der politischen Kultur der Bundesrepublik 1949-1989*. Frankfurt aM: Campus Verlag, 1997.
- Berninger, Mark, Jochen Ecke, and Gideon Haberkorn. “Introduction.” In *Comics as a Nexus of Cultures: Essays on the Interplay of Media, Disciplines, and International Perspectives*, edited by Mark Berninger, Jochen Ecke, and Gideon Haberkorn, 1-6. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2010.
- Betts, Paul. “Building Socialism at Home: The Case of East German Interiors.” In *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics*, edited by Katherine Pence and Paul Betts, 96-132. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008.
- . *Within Walls: Private Life in the German Democratic Republic*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

- Blessing, Benita. "DEFA Children's Films: Not Just for Children." In *DEFA at the Crossroads of East German and International Film Culture*, edited by Marc Silberman and Hennig Wrage, 243-62. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2014.
- Bongco, Mila. *Reading Comics: Language, Culture, and the Concept of the Superhero in Comic Books*. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Borneman, John. *After the Wall: East Meets West in the New Berlin*. New York: Basic Books, 1991.
- Boym, Svetlana. *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books, 2001.
- Brock, Angela. "Producing the 'Socialist Personality'? Socialisation, Education, and the Emergence of New Patterns of Behaviour." In *Power and Society in the GDR, 1961-1979: The 'Normalisation of Rule'?*, edited by Mary Fulbrook, 220-52. New York: Berghahn, 2009.
- Bruce, Gary. *The Firm: The Inside Story of the Stasi*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Bruner, Jerome S. *In Search of Pedagogy Volume I*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Burchell, Graham, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, eds. *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality with Two Lectures by and an Interview with Michel Foucault*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Calloway, Colin G., Gerd Gemunden, and Susanne Zantop, eds. *Germans and Indians: Fantasies, Encounters, Projections*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002.
- Carleton, Sean. "Drawn to Change: Comics and Critical Consciousness." *Labour/Le Travail*, no. 73 (Spring 2014): 151-77.
- Chapman, James. *British Comics: A Cultural History*. London: Reaktion Books, 2011.
- Childs, David. *The GDR: Moscow's German Ally*. New York: Routledge, 2015.
- Chute, Hilary L. *Graphic Women: Life Narrative & Contemporary Comics*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.
- "Circular 9—Works Made for Hire." United States Copyright Office—Library of Congress. <http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ09.pdf> (accessed 28 April 2016).
- "Complete Carl Barks Library #14. Walt Disney's Uncle Scrooge: The Seven Cities of Gold." Grand Comics Database. <http://www.comics.org/issue/1264699/> (accessed 29 December 2015).

- Connolly, Kate. "The Sandmannchen, Germany's cutest communist, turns 50." *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/nov/23/sandmannchen-germany-communist> (accessed 15 June 2016).
- Cooke, Paul. *Representing East Germany since Unification: From Colonization to Nostalgia*. Oxford: Berg, 2005.
- Cronin, Brian. *Was Superman a Spy?: And Other Comic Book Legends Revealed*. New York: Plume, 2009.
- Danziger-Russell, Jacqueline. *Girls and Their Comics: Finding a Female Voice in Comic Book Narrative*. Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2013.
- Darnton, Robert. *Censors at Work: How States Shaped Literature*. New York: Norton, 2014.
- Dennis, Mike and Jonathon Grix. *Sport under Communism: Behind the East German 'Miracle'*. Houndmills: Palgrave, 2010.
- "Die Digidags in Mosaik." DDR Comics. <http://www.ddr-comics.de/digidags.htm> (accessed 27 August 2013).
- "Die Digidags und Ritter Runkel." DDR Comics. <http://www.ddr-comics.de/digbuch4.htm> (accessed 16 June 2016).
- "Dig, Dag, Digidag. DDR-Comic Mosaik." Stiftung Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. <http://www.hdg.de/leipzig/ausstellungen/wechselausstellungen/ausstellungen/dig-dag-digidag-ddr-comic-mosaik/> (accessed 11 March 2016).
- Di Napoli, Thomas. "Thirty Years of Children's Literature in the German Democratic Republic." *German Studies Review* 7, no. 2 (May 1984): 281-300.
- Donovan, John. "Parody and Propaganda: Fighting American and the Battle Against Crime and Communism in the 1950s." In *Comic Books and American Cultural History*, edited by Matthew Pustz, 110-9. New York: Continuum, 2012.
- Dorfman, Ariel and Armand Mattelart. *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic*, translated by David Kunzle. New York: International General, 1975.
- Eedy, Sean. "Reimagining GDR Comics: Kultur, Children's Literature and the Socialist Personality." *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 5, no. 3 (September 2014): 245-56.
- Eghigian, Greg. "The Psychologization of the Socialist Self: East German Forensic Psychology and its Deviants, 1945-1975." *German History* 22, no. 2 (2004): 181-205.

- Eisman, April A. "East German Art and the Permeability of the Berlin Wall." *German Studies Review* 38, no. 3 (October 2015): 597-616.
- . "Painting the Berlin Wall in Leipzig: The Politics of Art in 1960s East Germany." In *Berlin: Divided City, 1945-1989*, edited by Philip Broadbent and Sabine Hake, 69-77. New York: Berghahn, 2010.
- Eisner, Will. *Comics and Sequential Art: Principles & Practice of the World's Most Popular Art Form*. Paramus: Poorhouse Press, 1985.
- Ewers, Hans-Heino. "Children's Literature Research in Germany." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 158-65.
- Feinstein, Joshua. *The Triumph of the Ordinary: Depictions of Daily Life in the East German Cinema 1949-1989*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.
- Fingeroth, Danny. *Superman on the Couch: What Superheroes Really Tell Us about Ourselves and Our Society*. New York: Continuum, 2005.
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila. *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Fleischhauer, Jan. "Germany's Best-Loved Cowboy: The Fantastical World of Cult Novelist Karl May." Spiegel Online International. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/marking-the-100th-anniversary-of-german-cult-author-karl-may-s-death-a-824566.html> (accessed 5 January 2016).
- Foucault, Michel. "Discipline and Punish, Panopticism." In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, edited by Alan Sheridan, 195-228. New York: Vintage, 1977.
- "Four Color #62." Grand Comics Database. <http://www.comics.org/issue/4095/> (accessed 29 December 2015).
- Fritzsche, Sonja. *Science Fiction Literature in East Germany*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2006.
- Führer, Karl Christian and Corey Ross. "Mass Media, Culture and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany: an Introduction." In *Mass Media, Culture and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany*, edited by Karl Christian Führer and Corey Ross, 1-22. Houndmills: Palgrave, 2006.
- Fulbrook, Mary. "The Concept of 'Normalisation' and the GDR in Comparative Perspective." In *Power and Society in the GDR 1961-1979: The 'Normalisation of Rule'?*, edited by Mary Fulbrook, 1-30. New York: Berghahn, 2009.
- . *Interpretations of the Two Germanies, 1945-1990*. Houndmills: Macmillan, 2000.

- . “‘Normalisation’ in the GDR in Retrospect: East German Perspectives of Their Own Lives.” In *In Power and Society in the GDR 1961-1979: The ‘Normalisation of Rule’?*, edited by Mary Fulbrook, 278-319. New York: Berghahn, 2009.
- . *The People’s State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.
- . “Structures and Subjectivities in GDR History.” In *Becoming East German: Socialist Structures and Sensibilities after Hitler*, edited by Mary Fulbrook and Andrew I. Port, 277-90. New York: Berghahn, 2013.
- Gaus, Günter. *Wo Deutschland liegt*. Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1986.
- Gersdorf, Catrin. “The Digidags Go West: Images of America in an East German Comic Strip.” *Journal of American Culture* 19, no. 2 (Summer 1996): 35-45.
- Grieder, Peter. *The German Democratic Republic*. Houndmills: Palgrave, 2012.
- Grix, Jonathon. “Non-Conformist Behaviour and the Collapse of the GDR.” In *East Germany: Continuity and Change*, edited by Paul Cooke and Jonathon Grix, 69-80. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000.
- Gumbert, Heather L. “East German Television and the Unmaking of the Socialist Project, 1952-1965.” PhD Diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2006.
- . *Envisioning Socialism: Television and the Cold War in the German Democratic Republic*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014.
- Habel, F.B. “Biografie—Gojka Mitić—Schauspieler, Autor, Regisseur.” Cinegraph-Lexikon zum deutschsprachigen Film.
http://www.cinegraph.de/lexikon/Mitic_Gojko/biografie.html (accessed 14 January 2016).
- Habermas, Jürgen. “The Public Sphere: an Encyclopedia Article (1964).” *New German Critique*, no. 3 (Autumn 1974): 49-55.
- . *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991.
- Harris, Cheryl. “Introduction Theorizing Fandom: Fans, Subculture and Identity.” In *Theorizing Fandom: Fans, Subculture and Identity*, edited by Cheryl Harris and Alison Alexander, 3-8. Cresskill: Hampton Press, Inc., 1998.
- Harrison, Hope M. *Driving the Soviets up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-1961*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.

- Harsch, Donna. *Revenge of the Domestic: Women, the Family, and Communism in the German Democratic Republic*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.
- Hatfield, Charles. "Comic Art, Children's Literature, and the New Comic Studies." *The Lion and the Unicorn* 30, no. 3 (September 2006): 360-82.
- , and Craig Svonkin. "Why Comics Are and Are Not Picture Books: Introduction." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (Winter 2012): 429-35.
- Heermann, Christian. *Old Shatterhand Ritt Nicht im Auftrag der Arbeiterklasse: Warum war Karl May in SBZ und DDR 'Verboten'?* Dessau: Anhaltische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1995.
- Heretz, Leonid. "Petitions from Peasants." In *From Supplication to Revolution: A Documentary History of Imperial Russia*, edited by Gregory Freeze, 170-9. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Ho'omanawanui, Ku'ualoha Meyer. "Hero or Outlaw? Two Views of Kaluaiko'olau." In *Navigating Islands and Continents: Conversations and Contestations in and around the Pacific*, edited by Cynthia Franklin, Ruth Hsu, and Suzanne Kosanke, 232-63. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 2000.
- Howard, Marc Morjé. *The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Jaraus, Konrad H. "Care and Coersion: The GDR as Welfare Dictatorship." In *Dictatorship as Experience: Toward a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, edited by Konrad H. Jaraus, translated by Eve Duffy, 47-69. New York: Berghahn, 1999.
- , and Michael Geyer. *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.
- Jehlen, Myra. "Banned in Concord: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and Classic American Literature." In *The Cambridge Companion to Mark Twain*, edited by Forrest G. Robinson, 93-115. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Jenkins, Henry. "Introduction: Should We Discipline the Reading of Comics?" In *Critical Approaches to Comics: Theories and Methods*, edited by Matthew J. Smith and Randy Duncan, 1-14. New York: Routledge, 2012.
- Jobs, Richard Ivan. "Tarzan under Attack: Youth, Comics, and Cultural Reconstruction in Postwar France." *French Historical Studies* 26, no. 4 (Fall 2003): 687-725.
- Jovanovich, Goran and Ulrich Koch. "The Comics Debate in Germany: Against Dirt and Rubbish, Pictorial Idiotism, and Cultural Analphabetism." In *Pulp Demons: International Dimensions of the Postwar Anti-Comics Campaign*, edited by John A. Lent, 93-128. Cranbury: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1999.

Jüngst, Heike Elisabeth. *Information Comics: Knowledge Transfer in a Popular Format*. Frankfurt aM: Peter Lang, 2010.

Kaschuba, Wolfgang. "Popular Culture and Workers' Culture as Symbolic Order: Comments on the Debate about the History of Culture and Everyday Life." In *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life*, edited by Alf Lüdtke, translated by William Templer, 169-97. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.

Kempe, Frederick. *Berlin 1961: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Most Dangerous Place on Earth*. New York: Berkley, 2011.

Kocka, Jürgen. "Eine durchherrschte Gesellschaft." In *Sozialgeschichte der DDR*, edited by Hartmut Kaelbe, Jürgen Kocka, and Hartmut Zwahr, 547-53. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1994.

Koenker, Diane P. "Men against Women on the Shop Floor in Early Soviet Russia: Gender and Class in the Socialist Workplace." *The American Historical Review* 100, no. 5 (December 1995): 1438-64.

Köhn, Lothar. "Von der Formalismus-Debatte zum <<Bitterfelder Weg>>." In *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart: Zweite, aktualisierte und erweiterte Auflage*, edited by Wilfried Barner, 287-306. Munich: Verlag CH Beck, 2006.

Kotkin, Stephen. *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Soviet Establishment*. New York: Modern Library, 2009.

Kramer, Thomas. "Die DDR der fünfziger Jahre im Comic Mosaik: Einschienenbahn, Agenten, Chemieprogramm." In *Akten, Eingaben, Schaufenster: Die DDR und ihre Texte. Erkundungen zu Herrschaft und Alltag*, edited by Alf Lüdtke, 167-88. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997.

—. *Micky, Marx und Manitu: Zeit- und Kulturgeschichte im Spiegel eines DDR-Comics 1955-1990—"Mosaik" als Fokus von Medienerlebnissen im NS und in der DDR*. Berlin: Weidler Buchverlag, 2002.

Leask, Phil. "Humiliation as a Weapon within the Party: Fictional and Personal Accounts." In *Becoming East German: Socialist Structures and Sensibilities after Hitler*, edited by Mary Fulbrook and Andrew I. Port, 237-56. New York: Berghahn, 2013.

Lee, Peter. "Decrypting Espionage Comic Books in 1950s America." In *Comic Books and the Cold War, 1946-1962: Essays on Graphic Treatment of Communism, the Code and Social Concerns*, edited by Chris York and Rafael York, 30-44. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2012.

- Lees, John. "On Comics Custodianism and the Illusion of Change." John Lees Comics. <https://johnleescomics.wordpress.com/2014/07/17/on-comics-custodianism-and-the-illusion-of-change/> (accessed 13 March 2016).
- Lefèvre, Pascal. "The Battle over the Balloon: The Conflictual Institutionalization of the Speech Bubble in Various European Countries." *Image & Narrative: Online Magazine of the Visual Narrative*, issue 14. http://www.imageandnarrative.be/inarchive/painting/pascal_levevre.htm (accessed 5 June, 2016).
- Lent, John A. "Introduction: The Comics Debate Internationally: Their Genesis, Issues, and Commonalities." In *Pulp Demons: International Dimensions of the Postwar Anti-Comics Campaign*, edited by John A. Lent, 9-41. Cranbury: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1999.
- Lettkemann, Gerd. "Comics in der DDR." In *Fortsetzung folgt: Comic Kultur in Deutschland*, edited by Andreas C. Knigge, 317-61. Frankfurt aM: Verlag Ullstein GmbH, 1985.
- , and Michael F. Scholz. "*Schuldig ist schließlich jeder...der Comics besitzt verbreitet oder nicht einziehen läßt*" *Comics in der DDR—Die Geschichte eines ungeliebten Mediums (1945/49-1990)*. Berlin: MOSAIK Steinchen für Steinchen Verlag GmbH, 1994.
- "Liberal Western Journalist Praises the Progress of the GDR (1986), a." German History in Documents and Images. http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=74 (accessed 1 February 2016).
- Lindenberger, Thomas. "'Asociality' and Modernity: The GDR as a Welfare Dictatorship." In *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics*, edited by Katherine Pence and Paul Betts, 211-33. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008.
- . "Alltagsgeschichte und ihr möglicher Beitrag zu einer Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR." In *Der Grenzen der Diktatur: Staat und Gesellschaft in der DDR*, edited by Richard Bessel and Ralph Jessen, 298-325. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996.
- . "SED-Herrschaft als soziale Praxis—Herrschaft und 'Eigen-Sinn': Problemstellung und Begriffe." In *Staatsicherheit und Gesellschaft. Studien zum Herrschaftsalltag in der DDR*, edited by Jens Gieseke, 23-47. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007.
- Lorenz, Christa. ">>Bummi<< und der Weg ins Leben: Erziehung zur Gesellschaft in einer Kinderzeitschrift." In *Fortschritt, Norm und Eigensinn: Erkundungen im Alltag der DDR*, edited by Andreas Ludwig, 211-32. Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag, 1999.
- Lüdtke, Alf. "Cash, Coffee-Breaks, Horseplay: Eigensinn and Politics among Factory Workers in Germany circa 1900." In *Confrontation, Class Consciousness and the Labor Process: Studies in Proletarian Class Formation*, edited by Michael Hanagan and Charles Stephenson, 65-96. New York: Greenwood Press, 1982.

- . “‘Helden der Arbeit’—Mühen beim Arbeiten. Zur mißmutigen Loyalität von Industriearbeitern in der DDR.” In *Sozialgeschichte der DDR*, edited by Jürgen Kocka and Hartmut Zwar, 188-213. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1994.
 - . “Practices of Survival—Ways of Appropriating ‘the Rules’: Reconsidering Approaches to the History of the GDR.” In *Power and Society in the GDR 1961-1979: The ‘Normalisation of Rule’?*, edited by Mary Fulbrook, 181-93. New York: Berghahn, 2009.
 - . “Sprache und Herrschaft in der DDR. Einleitende Überlegungen.” In *Akten, Eingaben, Schaufenster. Die DDR und ihre Texte: Erkunden zu Herrschaft und Alltag*, edited by Alf Lüdtke and Peter Becker, 11-26. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997.
 - . “Wo blieb die ‘rote Glut?’ Arbeitererfahrungen und deutscher Faschismus.” In *Alltagsgeschichte, Zur Rekonstruktion historischer Erfahrungen und Lebensweisen*, edited by Alf Lüdtke, 224-82. Frankfurt aM: Campus Verlag, 1989.
- Madarasz, Jeanette Z. *Conflict and Compromise in East Germany, 1971-1989: A Precarious Stability*. Houndmills: Palgrave, 2003.
- Mah, Harold. “Phantasies of the Public Sphere: Rethinking the Habermas of Historians.” *Journal of Modern History* 72, no. 1 (March 2000): 153-82.
- Maity, Nandini. “From Comic Culture to Cyber Culture: Cultural Imperialism and its Impact on Youth since 1960s.” *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 8, no. 4 (Mar.-April 2013): 10-4.
- Major, Patrick. *Behind the Berlin Wall: East Germany and the Frontiers of Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- . “Introduction.” In *The Workers’ and Peasants’ State: Communism and Society in East Germany under Ulbricht 1945-1971*, edited by Patrick Major and Jonathan Osmond, 1-20. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002.
 - . “‘Smut and Trash’: Germany’s Culture Wars against Pulp Fiction.” In *Mass Media, Culture and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany*, edited by Karl Christian Führer and Corey Ross, 234-50. Houndmills: Palgrave, 2006.
- Malone, Paul M. “Mangascape Germany: Comics as Intercultural Neutral Ground.” In *Comics as a Nexus of Cultures: Essays on the Interplay of Media, Disciplines and International Perspectives*, edited by Mark Berninger, Jochen Ecke, and Gideon Haberkorn, 223-34. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2010.

- Mathur, Suchitra. "From Capes to Snakes: The Indianization of the American Superhero." In *Comics as a Nexus of Cultures: Essays on the Interplay of Media, Disciplines and International Perspectives*, edited by Mark Berninger, Jochen Ecke, and Gideon Haberkorn, 175-86. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2010.
- Maxwell, Alexander. "East Europeans in the Cold War Comic *This Godless Communism*." In *Comic Books and the Cold War, 1946-1962: Essays on Graphic Treatment of Communism, the Code and Social Concerns*, edited by Chris York and Rafael York, 190-203. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2012.
- McAllister, Matthew P., Edward H. Sewell Jr., and Ian Gordon. "Introducing Comics and Ideology." In *Comics & Ideology*, edited by Matthew P. McAllister, Edward H. Sewell Jr., and Ian Gordon, 1-14. New York: Peter Land, 2001.
- McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York: Harper, 1993.
- . *Reinventing Comics: How Imagination and Technology are Revolutionizing an Art Form*. New York: Harper, 2000.
- McCulloch, Mark. "The Sword and Shield of Consumption: The Police-Society Relationship in the Former East Germany." *Past Tense: Graduate Review of History* 1 (2012): 67-83.
- McDougall, Alan. "The Liberal Interlude: SED Youth Policy and the Free German Youth (FDJ), 1963-65." *Debatte* 9, no. 2 (2001): 123-55.
- . *Youth Politics in East Germany: The Free German Youth Movement 1946-1968*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004.
- McGuire, Patrick L. *Red Stars: Political Aspects of Soviet Science Fiction*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1985.
- McKinney, Mark. *The Colonial Heritage of French Comics*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011.
- McLellan, Josie. *Love in the Time of Communism: Intimacy and Sexuality in the GDR*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Merkel, Ina. "'...in Hoyerswerda leben jedenfalls keine so kleinen viereckigen Menschen.' Briefe an das Fernsehen der DDR." In *Akten, Eingaben, Schaufenster: Die DDR und ihre Texte. Erkundungen zu Herrschaft und Alltag*, edited by Alf Lüdtke, 279-310. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997.
- , and Felix Mühlberger. "Eingaben und Öffentlichkeit." In *Wir sind doch nicht die Meckerecke der Nation!: Briefe an das Fernsehen der DDR*, 2nd edition, edited by Ina Merkel, 11-46. Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2000.

Meyer, Michael. *The Year That Changed the World: The Untold Story Behind the Fall of the Berlin Wall*. New York: Scribner, 2009.

“‘Micky Maus’ vs ‘Fix und Foxi’ Fürs Leben gezeichnet.” Spiegel Online. <http://www.spiegel.de/einestages/micky-maus-vs-fix-und-foxi-fuers-leben-gezeichnet-a-949644.html> (accessed 13 August 2013).

Mrozek, Bodo. “Ausstellung über DDR-Comichelden: Reisefreiheit für die Fantasie.” *Der Tagesspiegel*. <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/ausstellung-ueber-ddr-comichelden-greuliche-zeichnungen-in-rekordauflage/9755588-2.html> (accessed 21 June 2016).

Mühlberg, Felix. “Konformismus oder Eigensinn? Eingaben als Quelle zur Erforschung der Alltagsgeschichte der DDR.” In *Mitteilungen aus der kulturwissenschaftlichen Forschung*, 331-45. February 1996.

Naftzinger, Joseph. “Policy-Making in the German Democratic Republic: The Response to West German Trans-Border Broadcasting.” PhD Diss., University of Maryland at College Park, 1994.

Neuhaus, Jessamyn. “How Wonder Woman Helped My Students ‘Join the Conversation’: Comic Books as Teaching Tools in a History Methodology Course.” In *Comic Books and American Cultural History*, edited by Matthew Pustz, 11-25. New York: Continuum, 2012.

Nikolajeva, Maria. “Russian Children’s Literature Before and After Perestroika.” *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly* 20, no. 3 (Fall 1995): 105-11.

Nothnagle, Alan L. *Building the East German Myth: Historical Mythology and Youth Propaganda in the German Democratic Republic, 1945-1989*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999.

Palmowski, Jan. “Between Conformity and Eigen-Sinn: New Approaches to GDR History.” *German History* 20, no. 4 (2002): 494-502.

—. “Learning the Rules: Local Activists and the Heimat.” In *Power and Society in the GDR 1961-1979: The ‘Normalisation of Rule’?*, edited by Mary Fulbrook, 151-77. New York: Berghahn, 2009.

“Pats Reiseabenteuer.” DDR Comics. <http://www.ddr-comics.de/pat.htm> (accessed 16 March 2016).

Pence, Katherine. “Schaufenster der sozialistischen Konsums: Texte der ostdeutschen ‘Consumer Culture’.” In *Akten, Eingaben, Schaufenster: Die DDR und ihre Texte. Erkundungen zu Herrschaft und Alltag*, edited by Alf Lüdtke, 91-118. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997.

- . “Women on the Verge: Consumers between Private Desires and Public Crisis.” In *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics*, edited by Katherine Pence and Paul Betts, 287-322. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008.
- Penny, H. Glenn. *Kindred by Choice: Germans and American Indians since 1800*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013.
- . “Red Power: Liselotte Welskopf-Henrich and the Indian Activist Networks in East and West Germany.” *Central European History* 41, no. 3 (September 2008): 447-76.
- Pfeiffer, Reinhard. *Von Hannes Hegen bis Erich Schmitt: Lexikon der Karikaturisten, Presse- und Comic-Zeichner der DDR*. Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf Verlag, 1998.
- Pilz, Michael. “Der erste Superheld der DDR heißt Ronny Knäusel.” *Die Welt*. <http://www.welt.de/kultur/literarischewelt/article122884381/Der-erste-Superheld-der-DDR-heisst-Ronny-Knaeusel.html> (accessed 10 July 2016).
- Poiger, Uta G. “Amerikanischer Jazz und (ost)deutschen Respektabilität.” In *Akten, Eingaben, Schaufenster: Die DDR und ihre Texte. Erkundungen zu Herrschaft und Alltag*, edited by Alf Lüdtke, 119-36. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997.
- . *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- Port, Andrew I. *Conflict and Stability in the German Democratic Republic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Prager, Brad. “Micky, Marx und Manitu. Zeit- und Kulturgeschichte im Spiegel eines DDR-Comics 1955-1990. Mosaik als Fokus von Medienerlebnissen im NS und in der DDR by Thomas Kramer. Review.” *German Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 363-4.
- “Propaganda in ‘Atze’.” DDR Comics. <http://www.ddr-comics.de/atzepol.htm> (accessed 20 August 2013).
- Puaca, Brian M. *Learning Democracy: Education Reform in West Germany, 1945-1965*. New York: Berghahn, 2009.
- Pustz, Matthew J. *Comic Book Culture: Fanboys and True Believers*. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1999.
- . “Introduction: Comic Books as History Teachers.” In *Comic Books and American Cultural History*, edited by Matthew J. Pustz, 1-8. New York: Continuum, 2012.
- Reagin, Nancy. “Dances with Worlds: Karl May, ‘Indian’ Hobbyists, and German Fans of the American West since 1912.” *Participations* 13, no. 1 (May 2016): 553-83.

- Richter, Christoph and Kate Bowen. "East German Comic Celebrates 400 Editions of Slapstick Adventure." DW Deutsche Welle. <http://www.dw.com/en/east-german-comic-celebrates-400-editions-of-slapstick-adventure/a-4156898> (accessed 18 March 2016).
- Richthofen, Esther von. *Bringing Culture to the Masses: Control, Compromise and Participation in the GDR*. New York: Berghahn, 2009.
- . "Communication and Compromise: The Prerequisites for Cultural Participation." In *Power and Society in the GDR 1961-1979: The 'Normalisation of Rule'?*, edited by Mary Fulbrook, 130-50. New York: Berghahn, 2009.
- Robinson, Ronald E. "Introduction: Railway Imperialism." In *Railway Imperialism*, edited by Clarence B. Davis, Kenneth E. Wilburn, Jr., and Ronald E. Robinson, 1-6. Westport: Greenwood, 1991.
- Ross, Corey. *Constructing Socialism at the Grass-Roots: The Transformation of East Germany, 1945-65*. Houndmills: Macmillan, 2000.
- . *The East German Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of the GDR*. London: Arnold, 2002.
- Rubenstein, Anne. *Bad Language, Naked Ladies, & Other Threats to the Nation: A Political History of Comic Books in Mexico*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1998.
- Rubin, Eli. *Amnesiopolis: Modernity, Space, and Memory in East Germany*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- . *Synthetic Socialism: Plastics & Dictatorship in the German Democratic Republic*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008.
- . "The Trabant: Consumption, Eigen-Sinn, and Movement." *History Workshop Journal* 68, no. 1 (2009): 27-44.
- . "Understanding a Car in the Context of a System: Trabants, Marahn, and East German Socialism." In *The Socialist Car: Automobility in the Eastern Bloc*, edited by Lewis H. Siegelbaum. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011.
- Rueger, Fabian. "Kennedy, Adenauer and the Making of the Berlin Wall." PhD Diss., Stanford University, 2011.
- Sabeti, Shari. "The Irony of 'Cool Club': The Place of Comic Book Reading in Schools." *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 2, no. 2 (December 2011): 137-49.
- . "Reading Graphic Novels in School: Texts, Contexts and the Interpretive Work of Critical Reading." *Pedagogy, Culture & Society* 20, no. 2 (2012): 191-210.

- . “The ‘Strange Alteration’ of Hamlet: Comic Books, Adaptation and the Constructions of Adolescent Literacy.” *Changing English: Studies in Culture and Education* 21, no. 2 (2012): 182-97.
- Sabin, Roger. *Comics, Comix & Graphic Novels: A History of Comic Art*. New York: Phaidon Press, 1996.
- Sanders, Martin. “10th World Festival of Youth and Students, East Berlin, 1973.” University of Warwick Library, Media Resource Centre.
<https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/explore/further/filmvideo/worldfestival/> (accessed 10 February 2016).
- Sarotte, Mary Elise. *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.
- Saunders, Anna. *Honecker’s Children: Youth and Patriotism in East(ern) Germany, 1979-2002*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007.
- Schäder, Katharina. “Deutsche Dinge ‘Das Mosaik’. Ein West-Kind und sein Ost-Comic.” *Die Welt*. <http://www.welt.de/deutsche-dinge/article3071851/Ein-West-Kind-und-sein-Ost-Comic.html> (accessed 28 April 2016).
- Schneider, Matthias. “Creator of the Digidags—Hannes Hegen.” Goethe-Institut: Deutschsprachige Comics. <http://www.goethe.de/kue/lit/prj/com/pck/en363879.htm> (accessed 06 July 2016).
- Schweppe, Peter. “The Politics of Removal: Kursbuch and the West German Protest Movement.” *The Sixties* 7, no. 2 (2014): 138-54.
- Sheffer, Edith. *Burned Bridge: How East and West Germans Made the Iron Curtain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Stahl, J.D. “Children’s Literature and the Politics of the Nation State.” *Children’s Literature* 20 (1992): 193-203.
- Steinkamp, Maike. “The Propagandistic Role of Modern Art in Postwar Berlin.” In *Berlin: Divided City, 1945-1989*, edited by Philip Broadbent and Sabine Hake, 23-33. New York: Berghahn, 2010.
- “Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR in Bundesarchiv—Verlag Junge Welt, DY 26.” Jugendwerkhof-Treffen. http://www.jugendwerkhof-treffen.de/CMS_FILES_2.1/images/content/doku/organisation_ddr/junge_welt.pdf (accessed 28 April 2016).

- Stites, Richard. *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Stitzel, Judd. "Shopping, Sewing, Networking, Complaining: Consumer Culture and the Relationship between State and Society in the GDR." In *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics*, edited by Katherine Pence and Paul Betts, 253-86. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008.
- Stroemberg, Fredrik. *Comic Art Propaganda: A Graphic History*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2010.
- Suvin, Darko. *Russian Science Fiction 1956-1974: A Bibliography*. Elizabethtown, NY: Dragon Press, 1976.
- Tankel, Jonathan David, and Keith Murphy. "Collecting Comic Books: A Study of the Fan and Curatorial Consumption." In *Theorizing Fandom: Fans, Subculture and Identity*, edited by Cheryl Harris and Alison Alexander, 55-68. Cresskill: Hampton Press, Inc., 1998.
- Ten Dyke, Elizabeth A. "Memory and Existence: Implications of the Wende." In *The Work of Memory: New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture*, edited by Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche, 154-69. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002.
- Thomson-Wohlgemuth, Gaby. "About Official and Unofficial Addressing in East German Children's Literature." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 32-52.
- . *Translation under State Control: Books for Young People in the German Democratic Republic*. New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Timm, Annette F. *The Politics of Fertility in Twentieth-Century Berlin*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Tóth, András György. "Hungarian Avant-garde Comics in the 1990s." Stripburek. Comics from Behind the Rusty Iron Curtain. <http://www.ljudmila.org/stripcore/burek/hungary.htm> (accessed 28 June 2016).
- Unterrainer, Sebastian. "Comics in der DDR." In *Comic-Kunst vom Weberzuklus zum Bewegten Mann Deutschsprachige Bildeschichten des 20. Jahrhunderts*, edited by Dietrich Grünewald, 26-7. Koblenz: Görres, 2004.
- Wertham, Fredric. *Seduction of the Innocent*. New York: Rhinehart & Company, Inc., 1954.
- Wierling, Dorothee. "The Hitler Youth Generation in the GDR: Insecurities, Ambitions, and Dilemmas." In *Dictatorship as Experience: Toward a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, edited by Konrad H. Jarausch, translated by Eve Duffy, 307-24. New York: Berghahn, 1999.

- . “Der Staat , die Jugend und der Westen. Texte und Konflikten der 1960er Jahre.” In *Akten, Eingaben, Schaufenster: Die DDR und ihre Texte. Erkundungen zu Herrschaft und Alltag*, edited by Alf Lüdtke, 223-40. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997.
- . “Youth as Internal Enemy: Conflicts in the Education Dictatorship of the 1960s.” In *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics*, edited by Katherine Pence and Paul Betts, 157-182. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008.
- Willis, Jim. *Daily Life Behind the Iron Curtain*. Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2013.
- Witek, Joseph. *Comic Books as History: The Narrative Art of Jack Jackson, Art Spiegelman, and Harvey Pekar*. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1989.
- Woll, Allen L. “The Comic Book in a Socialist Society: Allende’s Chile, 1970-1973.” *Journal of Popular Culture* 9, no. 4 (Spring 1976): 1039-45.
- Wright, Bradford W. *Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001.
- York, Chris and Rafiel York. “Introduction: Fredric Wertham, Containment, and Comic Books.” In *Comic Books and the Cold War, 1946-1962: Essays on Graphic Treatment of Communism, the Code and Social Concerns*, edited by Chris York and Rafiel York, 5-15. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2012.
- Zander, Alex. “Die Digidags sind die Beatles aller deutschen Comics.” Freestland Vorpommern: Wo die Ostsee am süßsten ist.
<https://freestland.wordpress.com/2012/04/01/die-digedags-sind-die-beatles-des-deutschen-comics/> (accessed 8 June 2016).