

# Fighting against All Odds

## *GDR Popular Music and Youth Radio in an International Context*

Since they were integral parts of East Germany's media and culture, it is not surprising that popular music and radio broadcasting developed along similar lines as GDR cinema and television in the 1970s and 1980s. There are indeed numerous parallels between all of these media in the last two decades before the fall of the Berlin Wall. All of them struggled mightily with the continuous tension—and ultimately irreconcilable conflict—between their political mandate to educate a new socialist personality and the entertainment demands of the vast majority of the East German audiences. Likewise, the GDR media generally fought reactive battles against more fully resourced and rapidly multiplying channels and stations crossing the border, especially from West Germany, which kept up a relentless pace of cultural competition and technological innovation. Finally, cultural officials in East Germany were confronted with a population for whom cultural border crossings became ever more routine in the 1970s and 1980s—in a hybrid media milieu where Western capitalist culture and East German socialist expressions coexisted, competed, and clashed on a daily basis in an uneasy and unresolved tension. And it was a conflict in which the scale was tipping ever more decisively in favor of the Western opponents by the 1980s: it was indeed a fight against all odds.<sup>1</sup>

East German radio, along with its accompanying popular music, was particularly exposed to this continuous confrontation because of its technological effervescence and the quickly multiplying options that East Germans had at their fingertips. With a turn of the dial, they could tune in to Cold War broadcasting stations like Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, or the popular Berlin-based Radio in the American Sector (RIAS). More options were made available by proliferating West German

radio stations that were in close proximity to the border and that were a ubiquitous part of the daily East German media diet. By the late 1970s and especially by the mid-1980s, private, commercial Western radio stations added their channels to the already plentiful mix that penetrated deep into the GDR, making the task of East German radio officials trying to hold onto their audiences increasingly difficult.<sup>2</sup>

GDR youth radio, in particular, was integrally linked to international popular music and the related lifestyles of various subcultures that flourished in East Germany in the 1970s and 1980s as well. Rock and pop music, hippies, long hair, and provocative fashions as well as the succeeding waves of punk, new wave, and hip-hop left deep imprints on the GDR youth and transformed their cultural sensibilities and identity. GDR youth radio was the nexus to the officially approved culture, which ensured near-continuous conflicts between the SED policy makers, the professionals in charge of programming, and their audiences who demanded change at a faster pace. All of this ensured that youth radio broadcasting represented a particularly rife site for never-ending friction and cultural contests as well as an intriguing reflection of the changing nature of East German cultural transformations in the last two decades of its existence. And it is no coincidence that the headwinds for GDR cultural and media policies became especially strong in the 1980s, because this decade saw the rapid acceleration of technological changes in the international media landscape. As Stig Hjarvard has pointed out, the 1980s “witnessed the start of a series of structural changes in both the media sector and society in general” in large parts of Europe and the United States. Prominent among these were the end of the monopoly of “public service radio and television [in Europe] and the expansion of broadcasting services via satellite and cable, [which] created a more commercial and competitive climate in radio and television.”<sup>3</sup> For East Germany, these challenges proved especially vexing—and ultimately insurmountable.

In fact, the influence of Western popular music and the deep penetration of Western radio stations posed the most significant and difficult challenges to all Eastern Bloc countries as far as the dissemination of Western media and culture were concerned. Starting in the immediate postwar period, but especially accelerating in the late socialist phase of the late 1960s to the 1980s, Western rock, pop, and ultimately punk, hip-hop, and new wave became integral parts of the mainstream culture of every socialist country. It seeped in over international broadcasting channels like Radio Free Europe or Radio Luxembourg, was

increasingly sanctioned and included in official youth programming by communist governments, condoned through concert performances by Western bands in socialist countries, accessed in cross-border cultural transfers between socialist countries, or smuggled in, duplicated, and disseminated through underground exchanges. In addition, there was no uniform or coordinated Soviet or Eastern Bloc approach toward the ubiquitous influences of Western popular music. Individual communist governments in Eastern Europe pursued an inconsistent set of policies depending on the political crises and cultural mood they faced in their countries at different times. These approaches vacillated between periods of greater liberalization and tolerance followed by years of restrictive pushback, jamming, and increased censorship. And since none of these policy shifts were coordinated across the Eastern Bloc as a whole, young audiences always knew where to find the most promising access to their cherished bands and music, even if this meant cross-border poaching or traveling to more open socialist societies such as Hungary. This also highlights that youth cultures in each Eastern Bloc country developed differently and uniquely, just as was the case in other cultural arenas, weaving together homegrown bands and milieus with international influences into creative and nationally specific hybrid cultures.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter addresses the two most prominent strands of these rapidly unfolding transformations as they affected East Germany's radio broadcasting industry and popular music scene. The first focuses on the diverse impact of popular music and its related subcultures as well as lifestyle choices in the GDR. Rock, pop, and punk music forever altered the cultural life in the GDR and the identity formations of a large number of East German youth. It also created, for a short time at least, an authentic and robust GDR rock music scene with international reach and ambitions. Second, this analysis investigates the role and status of youth radio broadcasting within the GDR media environment. As the development of East German youth programming emphasizes, SED policy makers and radio officials made significant accommodations in order to stay at least somewhat relevant and competitive in light of the appeal of Western competition. But East German officials were facing a myriad of obstacles that went well beyond the challenges of Western radio broadcasting: GDR political and cultural leaders were battling relentless popular demand for more liberal cultural expressions, rapidly changing musical and broadcasting standards, as well as multiplying technological transformations in an international media environment, against which their initiatives and responses proved ineffective in the end.

## International Popular Music and East Germany's Alienated Youth

The overt political and ideological fight for the hearts and minds of the East German population, and particularly its youth, was a continuous feature of the cultural East-West confrontation and a central component of the larger Cold War. As insightful analysts at the Central Institute for Youth Research in Leipzig (Zentralinstitut für Jugendforschung Leipzig) as well as researchers within the Ministry of Culture argued by the mid-1980s, East German officials had to properly understand the challenges that the GDR faced if they wanted to have even a fighting chance of implementing part of their cultural socialist vision for radio broadcasting. As their 1984 report confirmed, radio remained the favored medium for young people in particular, even though it was often used as an accompanying medium rather than the sole focus of attention. When it came to relaxation, East German youth preferred radio over television by a wide margin, and almost all young people listened to the radio longer on a daily basis than they watched TV.<sup>5</sup>

The report also clearly diagnosed the multiplying obstacles for East German media in connection with the "internationalizing trends" of the media in general. It pointed out that the GDR was irrevocably and deeply enmeshed in an international exchange and that it had become "an import-dependent country" in this transnational cultural process. Several factors highlighted this trend particularly clearly. One was the ease and normality with which the East German population daily and even hourly chose from a broad range of international media selections by the 1980s and the high degree of competitive pressure that this put on East German cultural institutions. The other aspect that the researchers emphasized was less visible but equally powerful. As the authors pointed out, this international culture imposed certain styles and modes of expression on East German media because "the modification of standards, expectations, and experiences [of] international offerings" were hard to circumvent or escape.<sup>6</sup>

In a similarly revealing 1985 analysis, Peter Wicke, one of the foremost youth and popular music experts in the GDR, insightfully analyzed the growing deficits in terms of cultural infrastructure and creative energy in East Germany. He convincingly tied these to both subtle and overt cultural transformations of lifestyles, especially among young people. As Wicke argued, the new media environment of the 1980s was swiftly being transformed, which directly affected the sensibilities, lifestyle, and identity of East German youth. What all the novel popular music expressions had in common was that they were attractive,

emotionally appealing, and honest, as well as defined by expert craftsmanship and artful composition. In terms of the prospects for GDR-produced popular music, Wicke's outlook was not encouraging: "It is hard to ignore that in an international comparison the rock and pop music of the GDR does not meet world standards both in terms of its technological level as well as the originality and authenticity of its music."<sup>7</sup>

The bleak assessments from the mid-1980s almost make one forget that East Germany had had a rather successful and thriving rock scene, especially in the mid- to late 1970s. In fact, in terms of German-language rock music, East German bands were among the most successful in Europe for a short decade in the 1970s, when they performed abroad and sold tens of thousands of albums in a number of Western European countries. Prime examples of such success stories were bands like City, Karat, and Puhdys, all of which were popular among East German youth as well as internationally. These groups were part of the GDR traveling bands (Reisekader), which was a select group of carefully chosen bands that represented the GDR abroad and were provided with exclusive privileges. A good example of this was the folk-rock band City, which developed its international appeal with the 1978 hit "At the Window" ("Am Fenster"). The song was a rock ballad, based on a poem by a well-known East German poet, and performed with the accompaniment of a violin. This creative mix became one of the trademarks of the band's folk-rock sound in the late 1970s and early 1980s—in a vein reminiscent of the British rock band Jethro Tull. The song and album were released in 1978 and became an immediate hit in East Germany and beyond. The releases in West Germany and parts of southern Europe put City on the map as an internationally recognized rock band. As its lead singer Toni Krahl argued, using German-language lyrics was initially imposed by the SED cultural officials, but ultimately embraced by East German bands because it lent their songs more authenticity and a close-to-home feeling for audiences.<sup>8</sup>

Even earlier than City, the Puhdys had made a name for themselves in the German as well as international rock scene of the early 1970s. Their 1973 rock anthem "When a Man Lives for a Long Time" ("Wenn ein Mensch lange Zeit lebt"), with its equivocating and existentialist lyrics and easy-to-hum melody, uniquely captured the countercultural moment in East Germany as well as broader Europe during this time. The fact that it emerged as part of the soundtrack for the GDR cult film *The Legend of Paul and Paula* (*Die Legende von Paul und Paula*) only added to its cultural appeal and longevity, similar to the 1969 American movie *The Graduate*, which was accompanied by Simon and Garfunkel songs.



**Figure 4.1.** The Puhdys performing on GDR television on New Year's Eve in 1984. By the time this image was taken, the Puhdys were well past the high point of their popularity in East Germany. (Courtesy of ullstein bild / Granger, NYC—All Rights Reserved, New York; Image ID 0642800.)

The Puhdys followed this up with multiple hit songs, most significantly "Old as a Tree" ("Alt wie ein Baum") in 1976, which climbed the charts in both East and West Germany as well as in several other European countries. This success also led to the first extended tour of the band, which took the Puhdys through many Western European countries and as far as Cuba in the late 1970s.<sup>9</sup>

A group of similar caliber and success was Karat, which emerged simultaneously with City on the German rock scene in the mid- to late 1970s. One of its most successful songs, "You Must Cross Seven Bridges" ("Über sieben Brücken must du gehen"), was a soft-rock hit, which was released as part of an album in 1979 that became the best-selling LP in both East and West Germany that year. Similar to City's hit "At the Window," this song by Karat was based on a literary work that had been adapted as a TV play in East Germany in the mid-1970s. The lyrics told about lost love and the heartbreak of separation, but it also spoke of hope and the confidence that the relationship might find a happy ending. Groups like City and Karat were representative of the high point of GDR rock music in the mid- to late 1970s and were given significant license and freedom within the popular music scene of East Germany.

Following its early successes, Karat was allowed to release the 1979 song "Albatross," which described a sailor's envy of the bird's unfettered flight and freedom—a thinly veiled allusion to the widespread East German longing to cross the Berlin Wall and travel freely. Likewise, in the late 1980s, City released such controversial songs as "Half and Half" ("Halb und Halb"), which bemoaned the state of a country and city (Berlin) in which one could only ever be half-free and half-satisfied and dealt with the central East German themes of isolation, limitations, and the gnawing sense of feeling left behind.<sup>10</sup>

What these brief examples demonstrate is that East German rock music bands were successful and genuinely celebrated by their young East German audiences. As in other areas of GDR popular culture, the peak of artistic vitality and popular approval stretched from the early to late 1970s. Estimates are that there were several hundred rock 'n' roll, folk, and blues bands in the GDR during this decade. Few were as successful as City or Karat, and most of them never traveled outside their own borders or had at best regional appeal, but all of them had a loyal group of followers who in many cases traveled all over the country to attend every single one of their concerts. As Michael Rauhut and Thomas Kochan have pointed out, "The jeans-and-parka movement [of the 1970s] was the longest-lasting and most energetic youth movement that existed in East Germany." And it created lifestyles and subcultures that deeply unnerved officials in the SED and the Stasi alike.<sup>11</sup>

The first aspect that greatly disturbed GDR officials was that these subcultures, like the music genres its followers admired, were largely inspired by Western and often American cultural models. As Christoph Dieckmann, who was both a participant in and later cultural historian of the GDR youth movements, attests, many of its impulses were inspired by the "other America"—the 1960s protest movements in the United States: films of the New Hollywood genre, groups like Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, Woodstock and hippies, long hair and radical fashions. All of these were synonymous with freedom, rebellion, authenticity, and a "symbolic counter-reality," which could at least partly and temporarily remove one from the bleak and rather rigid East German society.<sup>12</sup>

Political battles, especially those between the political leadership and nonconformist youth, were often fought through symbols. Three of the most powerful rebellious symbols during the late 1960s and 1970s were long hair, jeans, and parkas, especially if the latter also included a US or Western emblem. The fights over their presence or absence from public life in East Germany created a relentless tug-of-war, one that the authorities usually lost. Jeans, for example, were officially prohibited in

the GDR until the late 1960s and early 1970s. For its users, they reflected an appealing sense of personal liberation and nonconformity as well as an embrace of a youthful and adventurous international culture. By the latter half of the 1970s, the majority of East German youth possessed some form of jeans clothing, but as surveys showed, there was still a vast pent-up demand for more. Likewise, a majority of young people in East Germany did not object to wearing US emblems on clothing; only a third found it objectionable. The vast number of those who actually wore these symbols said that they did so because it was fashionable and not for political reasons.<sup>13</sup>

More powerful and conflict-laden than the choice of clothing, however, was the length of hair. Here, too, cultural officials ultimately had to relent, but the battle lines were drawn more deeply and the confrontation was fought more acrimoniously than over most other oppositional symbol. Similar to other parts of Europe, long hair was part and parcel of the rock and blues music scene that enveloped the GDR during the 1970s, and SED political and cultural authorities forcefully opposed it. If they wanted to appear on East German youth television programs, for example, GDR rock musicians had to tie up their hair in hair nets in order to set foot on the stage. Long-haired males were widely decried as tramps, asocial loafers, and political troublemakers. In the mid- to late 1960s, forced haircuts were not an uncommon penalty for those accused of disorderly conduct. The primary legal tool for this cultural enforcement was the infamous Paragraph 249 of the GDR penal code, which was labeled "Endangering the Public Order through Asocial Behavior." While forced haircuts slowly disappeared, enforcement of Paragraph 249 did not. Estimates are that as many as 25 percent of all East German prisoners were behind bars based on this statute by the mid-1970s. The key accusations were often very similar: decadence, asocial behavior, and a deformed personal identity.<sup>14</sup>

This intense state pressure and scrutiny created one of the decisive differences between the youthful subcultures in East Germany and those in the West: it was the degree to which young nonconformists were prosecuted and ultimately criminalized in the GDR. Youthful gatherings as well as concerts were continuous targets of Stasi surveillance and infiltration. Internal reports routinely commented on the dirty and unkempt appearance of the audiences, their loud and disorderly conduct, and their overt admiration for Western role models and promiscuous trends. Not surprisingly, such official reports always arrived at the same conclusion, which was that these "hippies and tramps" reflected an overall negative attitude toward the socialist state. As one



author surmised rather broadly, "The 'commitment' to a specific beat-formation [rock music band] is an overt expression of a certain oppositional attitude as well as a symbol of a deformed relationship to the socialist society."<sup>15</sup>

As this Stasi report indicates, a nonconformist lifestyle and being identified as a member of a youth subculture had far more serious repercussions in East Germany than in the West. Being a rock musician or dedicated fan of the rock or punk bands marked someone not just as an outsider or marginal member of society. What was often and largely a commitment to cultural nonconformity and youthful rebellion in the West very quickly and routinely proved to be a decision with lifelong consequences in East Germany. Cultural nonconformity indeed was a life-altering commitment, which at a minimum cut one off from educational and professional opportunities. More consequentially, it often entrapped members of these subcultures in the vicious cycle of a denigrating criminal justice system, which ironically increased the chances of turning cultural rebellion into political opposition. As one member of the GDR hippie movement recalled with the advantage of hindsight, "Hippies in the East dreamt of a Woodstock experience that would be as carefree and without personal consequences as the one on the fields of White Lake."<sup>16</sup>

In order to avoid the watchful eyes of zealous Stasi and district officials, popular music subcultures in East Germany were often driven deep into the countryside, where surveillance was less complete and where friendly pub owners or wide-open meadows provided more welcoming venues for concerts and open-air festivals. This phenomenon regularly set off waves of hitchhiking or free-riding youth on weekends all across the GDR when dedicated fans embarked on yet another adventurous journey, eager to follow their favorite band to the latest musical hot spot. It was a continuous cat-and-mouse game of canceled venues and spontaneous gatherings, which kept the rock bands nimble and flexible and its fans more committed to them than ever before.<sup>17</sup>

Based on this analysis, several important similarities to music cultures in other Eastern Bloc countries become apparent. What stands out is how much the later 1960s and 1970s represented a long decade when Eastern European rock bands emerged as part and parcel of mainstream youth cultures in all socialist countries. In the Soviet Union as well as in Hungary and Poland, for example, it was during this time period when native-grown rock bands hit their stride and established their inimical and vastly popular musical styles. Just as in East Germany, it reflected the birth of internationally successful socialist rock bands in these coun-



**Figure 4.2.** Roving groups of rock fans were visible signs of the increasing willingness of many young people in East Germany to more openly challenge the SED political control as well as its cultural vision in the 1970s and 1980s. (Courtesy of BStU Archiv; MfS-BV-Bln-AKG-1045-Seite-0005-Bild-0003.)

tries, although their reach was largely limited to mainland Europe. Yet a few of them, like the Hungarian band Omega, achieved greater success than its GDR counterparts and even toured the United Kingdom during its heyday in the 1970s, which was indeed a rarity for any socialist music band. In one significant respect, however, the East German rock culture differed from those of its socialist neighbors: while the GDR rock bands declined in their overall significance and popularity in the 1980s, elsewhere in the Eastern Bloc native rock bands and musicians increased their stature and influence in many countries, especially Poland and the Soviet Union. These dynamics were in no small part driven by political transformations such as the rise of the Solidarity movement in Poland in the early 1980s and the cultural opening of the Soviet Union under Gorbachev by the mid-1980s. These developments provided both the impetus and cultural space for energized and relevant rock scenes in these countries.<sup>18</sup>

And while successful socialist rock bands and musicians were able to leverage their popularity and status vis-à-vis government authorities all across the Eastern Bloc, they still had to put up with patronizing

and meddling bureaucracies that could decisively impact their careers. Travel restrictions, prohibitions to perform, denial of opportunities to record songs, and tight control over public appearances were just some of the many limitations that bands had to navigate in order to pursue their musical careers. Most unsettling of all was that the restrictive censorship system was frequently unpredictable and operated according to rather arbitrary rules in the GDR and elsewhere. Of course, everyone knew that overtly oppositional lyrics could quickly end musical ambitions—let alone international success. Bands had to battle a thicket of bureaucratic layers, had to fight with incompetent administrators with little to no knowledge of the professional music scene, and often lived by the whims of small-minded local officials, who controlled which bands could legally perform within their jurisdictions. In East Germany, battles especially over lyrics were legion, and the use of the word “wall” could doom any otherwise acceptable song—or at least call for endless revisions. Moreover, most musicians depended on the studios of GDR radio, which were controlled by the only official GDR label, Amiga, and its production facilities. The central agency consisted of a group of music producers who listened to about two dozen songs every day and decided which ones deserved a release and which ones were to be revised or denied. Lyrics and talent, sound, fit for dancing, as well as political message and mass appeal all were key criteria in the decision-making process.<sup>19</sup>

Just as denigrating as the tiring battles over productions and lyrics was the clear realization that those in charge of musical production in the GDR prioritized classical orchestras and popular big bands over rock or blues. One important reason for this was that classical music made more money for the Ministry of Culture. Some of the renowned East German symphonic orchestras could compete with the best in the world and sold far more albums and recordings than did popular music, which brought in desperately needed and highly valued foreign currency. But this was also encouraged by a cultural bureaucracy dominated by older officials who maintained the traditional prioritization of what was referred to as serious music. This neglect and widespread ignorance about the popular music industry expressed itself in at times absurd proposals. When the popular GDR rock band Electra was preparing to tour West Germany in the late 1970s, for example, two of its members were banned from traveling by the local officials where they resided. In response, Ministry and Stasi officials advanced a plan that the group should just hire two other musicians who were cleared for travel in order to fill the open slots. In fact, officials in the Ministry of Culture

seriously debated a proposal by which all travel-eligible rock musicians should be pooled and deployed as groups for concerts abroad when needed. As an opponent of the proposal sarcastically observed, unfortunately this attitude was not atypical for those in charge of many cultural agencies: "Clearly only someone with absolutely no knowledge of cultural and musical production could recommend this. Well, if work needs to get done and a plumber gets sick, we replace the plumber; why shouldn't the same apply to [rock] musicians?"<sup>20</sup>

Even under the best circumstances and at the height of their popularity, as in the early to late 1970s, GDR popular music hits were still overshadowed by songs of Western bands. In a survey conducted in 1978, for example, City's hit "At the Window" emerged as an audience favorite, but it still ranked behind a song by the Western band Smokie. The only other GDR band that was even in the top-ten ranking of East German youth that year was Puhdys. When researchers conducted another such study in the mid-1980s, they noticed a dramatic shift. While some GDR rock bands were still well-liked by young people in the GDR, overall East German rock had suffered a precipitous decline. One factor was that the fresh and hard-hitting lyrics of the West German musical movement "New German Wave" had captured the hearts of East German youth and upstaged some of the GDR bands. The general preference for Western and English-language rock also increased during the same years. In 1979, 40 percent of surveyed young people in East Germany had still mentioned a GDR hit among their favorite songs; by 1984 that number had shrunk to 25 percent. Likewise, the percentage of favorite hits from Western countries increased from just over half in 1979 to well over 70 percent by 1985.<sup>21</sup> And the demise of East German rock got even more pronounced in the second half of the 1980s. By 1988, only around 15 percent of East German youth liked specific GDR groups and their hits, and half stated categorically that they did not even listen to their own rock musicians anymore.<sup>22</sup>

A 1984 assessment within the East German Ministry of Culture corroborates this radical shift in the early 1980s. The report argued that GDR rock music underwent a rapid expansion in the mid-1970s and emerged as the most significant German-language rock music in Europe. Citing several prominent East German bands, the authors argued that "the high poetic level of many songs" particularly distinguished their rock music—with lyrics that were close to reality, connected to GDR society, as well as highly expressive. By 1983, however, the authors argued that the East German rock scene had gone into a precipitous nosedive, which had both external and internal reasons. One of the most important external

ones was the rise of the “New German Wave” rock movement in West Germany, which represented the blossoming of German-language rock in the FRG in the latter years of the 1970s. Largely free from political restrictions and censorship, its music and lyrics expressed a critical edge and freedom that could not be matched by East German groups. Simultaneously, internally East Germany popular music suffered the long-term consequences of the patronizing and restrictive SED attitude toward its musicians and bands. In addition, several of the most popular bands had left the GDR in early 1980s, which signaled the beginning of a mass exodus of cultural talent during these years. Just as galling as the restrictions and censorship were the continuous and debilitating lack of adequate technical equipment and the increased courting of mediocre West German bands for GDR visits at the expense of showcasing established and homegrown talent.<sup>23</sup>

In fact, in a desperate attempt to appeal to its own youth, East German policy makers began staging large open-air rock concerts in the GDR by the mid-1980s that featured Western rock, pop, and blues bands. When West Berlin’s authorities launched a mammoth rock concert in June 1987 to celebrate the 750-year anniversary of the city, for example, East German officials countered it with an equally large three-day open-air festival in July of the same year. Over 100,000 GDR fans came together to hear folk and rock idols like Bob Dylan and Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers. In the following year, these concert series continued with even larger events. In June 1988, East German officials booked international stars like Pink Floyd and Michael Jackson as well as political renegades such as Udo Lindenberg and Nina Hagen for a multiday concert extravaganza. In July of the same year, 160,000 East German fans gathered for a Bruce Springsteen concert, which broke all previous records.<sup>24</sup>

## **Adding Fuel to the Fire: East German Punk**

As the East German rock and blues scenes declined during the 1980s, a new musical style and subculture emerged in this transition period in East Germany, just as it did in much of Western Europe: punk. Inspired by British youth who had created this new movement, it shared some characteristics with the still continuing rock and blues subcultures. But it simultaneously and quickly set itself apart from earlier popular music: it was edgier, more aggressive, and less willing to make compromises and concessions. Much of the music of the GDR punk scene spoke for

itself, like the 1983 song “The Nazis Are back in East Berlin” (“Nazis wieder in Ostberlin”) by the GDR group *Namenlos* (Without a Name). As the song made clear, for punks the East German regime had long lost its legitimacy, and they perceived few differences between the SED regime and the Nazis who ruled Berlin before them: “Nazis, Nazis, Nazis are back in Ostberlin / Nazi pigs, Nazi pigs, Nazi pigs in Ostberlin!”<sup>25</sup>

While the punk movement of the 1980s was smaller in size compared to the popular rock and blues subcultures, it accelerated and intensified many of the trends that had emerged in East Germany in the late 1970s. It purposefully embraced provocative and shocking fashion symbols such as studded leather jackets, piercings, and the iconic Mohawk hairstyles. Because punks were often attacked in public places and because many punks themselves embraced violent behavior, their appearance was perceived as even more threatening, disorderly, and disruptive than that of earlier subcultures. Most importantly, unlike their predecessors, punks were overtly hostile to the society and politics of the GDR and unwilling to make concessions. As the refrain of the 1987 song “Without Sense” (“Ohne Sinn”) by the group *L'attentat* made clear, in their minds the SED had robbed the East German youth of their future and were espousing a political system in which the politicians themselves no longer believed.<sup>26</sup>

As several studies have pointed out, while the slogan of British punks was “no future,” which criticized the lack of jobs and authentic choices in the Western capitalist system, East German punks railed against “too much future,” which implied that their lives in the GDR were planned out and prescribed, with little to no chance to create one’s own choices and lifestyles. Despite this difference, the two movements in East and West had more in common than divided them: “Rather dead than conformed”—another GDR punk slogan that captured a key sentiment of its members—emphasizes that the two movements drew from the same reservoir of nonconformism and radical call for alternative choices. To GDR punks, even rock ‘n’ roll and folk subcultures had been co-opted into the system. They likened successful bands like *Puhdys* and *Karat* to “state-rock” bands, whose vitality and authenticity had been sacrificed by their collaboration with and accommodation to government prerogatives and priorities. This is also the reason why many East German punk bands refused to cooperate with the SED government even when the latter finally condoned playing punk songs on national radio in the late 1980s.<sup>27</sup>

Historians of the punk movement in the GDR trace its slow rise to the late 1970s, but agree that it did not coalesce into a significant East

German subculture until the early 1980s. It was also rather short-lived, continuing in a more diffuse form into the late 1980s. Its edgier public face became especially visible around the early to mid-1980s when radical skinhead followers split from the punk movement, and when it competed with new forms of independent musical influences such as new wave and hip-hop. The punk movement was also targeted more swiftly and aggressively by the Stasi than previous youth subcultures. From its start in the early 1980s, the Stasi focused with laser-sharp precision on dismantling the punk scene, although its declaration of war did not come until 1983, when several prominent punk musicians were sent to jail. The systematic attack against the punk movement in fact intensified the criminalization of nonconformist youth culture in East Germany to levels not seen before. Even more than before, cultural and societal opposition by punks was swiftly turned into political opposition and commitment. As Katrin Wissentz states rather insightfully, many punks were politicized precisely because of the politicization forced on them by the Stasi and the SED policy makers: "It is fair to say that through the regime's actions it created its own political opponents."<sup>28</sup>



**Figure 4.3.** Graffiti on a GDR bus stop. The punk movement in East Germany mushroomed in the early 1980s and was far more antagonistic toward the SED government and its integrationist policies than earlier East German youth subcultures. (Courtesy of BStU Archiv; MfS-BV-Bln-XX-3022-Seite-0004-Bild-0007.)

This criminalization of the lifestyle and identity of punks and skinheads was indeed no isolated occurrence. While they found some limited protection in the popular "Blues Masses" organized by progressive Protestant churches in the first half of the 1980s, punks were for the most part shunned by the GDR mainstream. For their part, punks did not hide from the public spotlight and often reveled in their public rejection. Yet it took an early and heavy toll. By 1983, several of the leading bands had been dismantled by the Stasi, and members of the punk scene were even more completely cut off from future opportunities because of the severity with which these groups were infiltrated and prosecuted. As Klaus Michael put it, "Whether consciously or not, whoever committed themselves to the punk scene severed their ties with the GDR state. . . . What was largely ignored in other countries was reinterpreted as an attack on the very foundation of the country's ideology."<sup>29</sup>

As emphasized earlier, this repressive backlash against nonconformist cultures actually created one of the greatest differences between youth subcultures in East and West. Because of the often severe consequences, completely bucking social norms and especially dropping out of society occurred less frequently in Eastern Bloc countries, largely because the penalties and personal costs of belonging particularly to drop-out communities were so much higher than in the capitalist West. However, during the 1970s and 1980s greater segments of socialist youth cultures across Eastern Europe were evading or living outside the boundaries of the officially sanctioned norms, which created wider cultural free spaces. Because of their rarity and unique position in communist countries, then, socialist drop-out communities often had more impact. At the same time, their members also frequently faced threats of criminalization and repressive treatment, which in a number of instances turned even initially apolitical communes toward more political activism or even outright subversive activities.<sup>30</sup>

Like all outright oppositional movements, the punk scene in East Germany was thoroughly infiltrated by a network of Stasi observers and informants. Surprisingly, as the post-1989 revelations demonstrated, even hard-core members of the East German punk scene, including some of its well-known musicians, became entangled as Stasi informers. Enticed by promises of reduced sentences, access to musical equipment, or privileges, they served the powers they were decrying in their songs and lifestyles—a betrayal that cut even deeper in the punk scene than in any of the other GDR subcultures in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>31</sup>

The only youth subculture that achieved even more notoriety and risked a more abrupt break with the East German state were skinheads,



who emerged in the GDR by the mid-1980s both as a further provocation and partially as a response to the intensifying prosecution of the punk movement around 1983. Nothing could be more provocative in the GDR than to openly espouse neo-Nazi rhetoric and insignnia, because the whole existence of East Germany had been built on the premise that it represented the “other Germany”—the one not guilty for the Holocaust and World War II. Far less connected to music than the other independent movements of the time, the rise of the skinhead movement nevertheless further splintered the youth culture in the GDR in the 1980s, as did new and rapidly rising music trends such as new wave and hip-hop.<sup>32</sup>

One important aspect that all of these cultural movements had in common by the 1980s was that they were able to record and circulate their music independent of the official recording studios and systems. The reason for this was the cassette recorder, which proliferated rapidly in East Germany. With little chance of official recognition or dissemination, punk and other independent music bands started to record their own music and copied it through cassette tapes. In fact, some of them became so prolific that they created their own labels, even though the individual productions generally consisted of no more than one hundred copies at the most. These tapes were easy to produce and replicate while still ensuring reasonably good quality. Most important, they completely circumvented the established and tedious music production process in East Germany. Eventually, some of these recordings were used for music shows on GDR radio, but not until the last few years of the 1980s.<sup>33</sup>

In general, the previous two sections highlight three closely related trends of the popular youth culture in the GDR. The first noticeable trend emphasizes just how deeply and thoroughly East German youth were de-territorialized by the various musical and cultural influences of the 1970s and 1980s. To be sure, complex and contradictory affinities and cultural belongings remained until the late 1980s, but the degree of cultural displacement can hardly be overstated. As even the agency overseeing rock music in the Ministry of Culture had to admit, in the 1980s this created a completely unprecedented historical development: “We have to acknowledge that a large portion of our domestic audiences reject GDR rock music because of a lacking political commitment and identification with their country. This is almost unheard of in world history.”<sup>34</sup>

Second, and directly connected to this sense of a highly de-territorialized youth culture, was the degree to which cultural decisions

and commitments became political choices with lifelong repercussions in East Germany. Far more than in Western countries, lifestyle choices were politicized through frequent criminalization. Even for nonconformists who were never prosecuted, their identity formation was deeply and irrevocably imprinted by decisions over lifestyle and cultural preferences. Because of these unique historical and political circumstances, the cultural choices of nonconforming young people carried deeper and far more permanent significance in East Germany than in the West. The alienating effects of this process could still be countered in the 1970s when East German rock music provided identification with hybrid GDR bands and musicians. Once the last strands of such loyalties and affinities frayed in the 1980s, the impact of an international culture would be far stronger and more palpable than in most other countries.

The final thread was that most East German rock and pop bands lacked the technological equipment and artistic know-how to achieve the aesthetic and sound standards that defined international popular music by the early 1980s. As a 1979 report highlighted, the production technology and necessary equipment for popular music in the GDR reflected “an unacceptably high degree of backwardness.” Most of the equipment had been bought in the mid-1960s, a technology termed “second-generation music production equipment,” while the rest of international popular music had advanced to third-generation technology. Equally important, the training of “music production artists” had not kept pace with international standards. And the only place to purchase the necessary equipment was in the capitalist West, since East Germany had discontinued this electronic research and development years ago.<sup>35</sup> While some of this deficit could still be mitigated through the use of private music production studios of well-established GDR rock bands in the late 1970s, these technological limitations were a decisive factor for the demise of East Germany’s popular music scene in the 1980s.

## **The Last Stand: Preserving Youth Radio in East Germany**

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the challenge of how to respond to Western broadcasting and especially how to keep young listeners tuned in to socialist stations was a nagging challenge and uphill battle for all communist governments in Eastern Europe. Even in the Soviet Union, which was much further removed from Western European influences than the GDR, foreign radio stations as well as Western music and news were ever present, forcing the Soviet government into

concessions that were anathema to its socialist vision. In the mid-1960s, as part of the post-Stalinist Thaw, the Khrushchev government decided to respond to popular Western music with its own all-Union station, Maiak. The new station's programs heavily focused specifically on popular music and were able to win some Soviet audience groups back to domestic broadcasting channels. But the dominance of foreign stations persisted here as well during the late socialist era, especially as far as young Soviet listeners were concerned.<sup>36</sup>

The history of radio youth programming in East Germany goes back to the mid-1960s as well. In connection with a youth gathering organized by the feeder organization of the SED—the Free German Youth (Freie Deutsche Jugend [FDJ])—in May 1964, radio functionaries decided to develop a special youth-oriented program to accompany the weekend activities. This program was called *DT 64* (Deutschland-Treffen 1964). The broadcasts were received so positively—and fortunately fell into a short window of liberalized cultural policy—that it became a standard feature of the main East Berlin radio station starting in June 1964. It originally broadcast a two-hour program from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. five days a week (weekdays only). Officially, *DT 64* was tied to the same rules as other GDR programming; one of the most important and controversial early requirements was the 60:40 ratio of music on East German radio—60 percent GDR or socialist music and only 40 percent music from the capitalist West. But based on surveys from the 1960s, it seems clear that even in its early years, *DT 64* circumvented this rule whenever and wherever possible in order to satisfy young people's demand for popular Western hits. Its mere presence also sparked the greater need for East German popular music and thereby contributed to the increased recordings of homegrown popular musicians and the rise of East German rock bands in the late 1960s and the 1970s.<sup>37</sup>

By the 1970s, GDR radio added several other programs hoping to attract East German youth, which aired several times a week on Voice of the GDR (Stimme der DDR). In addition, specific programs focused on listener requests as well as broadcasts featuring international popular music hits and shows designed to showcase specific bands. The additions also highlighted that already in the 1970s East German radio broadcasters had significantly relented in their ideological opposition to Western popular music. As Edward Larkey has put it, this shift “guaranteed Western pop music unequivocally a solid and permanent place in GDR youth programs.”<sup>38</sup> Despite this expansion and the ensuing accommodations, by the late 1970s cultural officials in charge of radio programming were painfully aware that still more needed to be

done. Researchers were particularly aware that young people listened to Western radio stations in far greater numbers than other population groups in the GDR. The official estimates were that at least 35 to 40 percent of young people in East Germany regularly or frequently listened to Western radio stations in the second half of the 1970s. On weekday evenings or weekends, when GDR radio offered very little competitive youth programming, the percentages of those listening to Western broadcasts were significantly higher.<sup>39</sup>

The ability to hear the latest international hits and to record music on cassette tapes in high sound quality were indeed two of the key attractions of all youth radio stations. The broadcasting programs for young people in the GDR were no exception. A very good example of such a popular show on GDR radio was *Duet: Music for the Cassette Recorder* (*Duett: Musik für den Rekorder*). Programs like it were very popular with GDR youth both in the 1970s and 1980s because they allowed listeners to create recordings of international artists whose albums were impossible to purchase for the vast majority. Such recordings became prized possessions of most young people in East Germany. In addition, the taping often involved a combination of planning, luck, and the cooperation on the part of the DJ because the artists featured in each program were often poorly advertised. Likewise, DJs occasionally talked over the beginnings or endings of songs, which was a frequent cause for irate listener responses to GDR radio stations.<sup>40</sup>

Shows like *Duet* also had the advantage that they allowed GDR planners to shape the international popular music they deemed acceptable for East German culture, which showed an increasing tolerance of previously censored songs and albums from the capitalist West during the 1970s. By the late 1970s and early 1980s, the list of condoned Western artists included such British stars as Cat Stevens and Pink Floyd as well as American groups and singers like Chicago and Stevie Wonder. Guiding principles were popularity and lack of offensive lyrics or disorderly and rowdy image. Additional international performers welcomed on GDR radio by the late 1970s were bands and musicians like Aretha Franklin, Emmylou Harris, Neil Diamond, Queen, and Jethro Tull as well as other international groups, including some West German artists like Hannes Wader and Reinhard Mey. By contrast, musicians with explicitly critical lyrics like Udo Lindenberg or bands with a disreputable image like the Rolling Stones, punk groups like the Sex Pistols, or hard rock bands like Black Sabbath and AC/DC were frequently and for extended periods of time censored on GDR stations. But despite these exclusions, as the former music editor for *DT 64* Walter Bartel highlights, Anglo-American

popular music was used as the main attraction for East German radio music programs—interspersed with some mixture of GDR and other international selections. The 60:40 rule was not a realistic target at any time during youth radio in the GDR, as he pointed out, especially not in the 1980s, when GDR rock and pop bands were in decline and international radio competition increased exponentially.<sup>41</sup>

The other endearing quality of these GDR youth radio programs was the ability of listeners to talk back to those responsible for the content of these broadcasts. Listener responses and some of the ensuing correspondence reflect a great degree of honesty and authenticity as well as at times sharp exchanges. This correspondence makes clear that program editors attempted to keep an open line of communication with East Germany's young people. The question of censored bands was a particularly frequent flash point in these exchanges. Why were GDR bands like the Klaus-Renft-Combo or Nina Hagen, who had either been expelled or left for West Germany, no longer played on East German radio? one young listener wanted to know. "Should one really pretend that they had never existed?" he added pointedly. Another noticed that around 1980 East German youth programs increasingly played songs by previously prohibited groups like the Rolling Stones and AC/DC. Was this because radio officials could "no longer resist them because they were faced with waves of requests?" the listener asked bitinglly. In each case, one of the editors in charge of *DT 64* responded, generally in a conciliatory manner, often admitting the staff's mixed feelings on some of these matters. As an editor wrote in connection with ex-GDR bands, she too was a fan of some of these groups and still liked their lyrics. But she was simultaneously disappointed by what she deemed unacceptable and denigrating statements these artists had made about East Germany since their departure. Likewise, she defended her staff's decision to play previously censored Western music bands as a pragmatic and reasonable adjustment. As she put it, "I assume you would agree that we should not dogmatically insist on decisions from years past, but adjust according to changing times and circumstances." By contrast, when another letter writer complained about the censorship of songs by KISS a few years later, the response was far more clear-cut. The listener was informed that GDR broadcasting did not approve of a band that reveled in "horrifying symbolism" and in the eyes of the *DT 64* music editors flirted with "fascist tendencies."<sup>42</sup>

Questions about music genres and groups, which were temporarily or sporadically censored, occupied a significant bulk of the listener inquiries and responses. As in the case above, listeners were usually

informed that there were reasons beyond the music itself that excluded some artists from East German youth radio shows. But the music editors of *DT 64* at times also surprised audiences with their responses, as in the case of one letter writer in 1982 who complained about too much openness on the part of music editors, especially that the youth station had played punk songs as part of one show. To the listener, this was yet another example of Western influences being imported without proper discernment or political rationale. One of the editors in turn suggested that the writer take a broader, more tolerant perspective and reminded him that not too long ago “long hair, jeans, and rock music as well were viewed with suspicion and accused of running contrary to socialism and respectable culture.” She argued further that administrative restrictions were the least effective way to deal with such new musical genres and cultural influences.<sup>43</sup>

While there was often a search for reconciliation and common ground with listeners who questioned the music choices of program editors, the responses to criticisms of the political reporting on *DT 64* were frequently cause for harsher and less compromising editor responses. When a listener ridiculed what he perceived as a one-sided *DT 64* political report that painted the picture of a “happy and free GDR youth” in the face of travel restrictions and the absence of basic human rights, the editor did not mince words. The listener was encouraged to approach West German politics and lifestyle with the same critical attitude he applied to the GDR and was challenged to become active rather than to echo unfounded criticisms. The program editor closed on a rather exasperated note: “Thank you for your letter, but I have—quite frankly—heard enough from you.”<sup>44</sup>

Based on the discussions in this chapter thus far, it is apparent that 1986 was not an auspicious year in East Germany’s cultural history to launch a new youth radio station. The popularity of GDR rock and popular music was in decline, the technological broadcasting infrastructure was antiquated, and financial resources were dwindling. In light of these circumstances, it is probably not far-fetched to view the launch of a new youth radio station in 1986 as a last-ditch effort on the part of the political and cultural leadership to counter the increased competition from the West. It was an attempt to reconnect with its disenfranchised youth and maybe even to gain back some lost ground over time. In this spirit, East Germany’s radio officials mobilized their last reserves and resources to give this new station a fighting chance to compete. And in the final analysis, it proved to be more successful than seemed possible under the circumstances. Jugendradio DT 64, as it was called, actually

regained some trust, respect, and even loyalty among a portion of East German youth in the late 1980s.<sup>45</sup>

By the mid-1980s, all of West Germany's regional broadcasting stations had established additional channels focused exclusively on young listeners. By 1984, an internal GDR assessment highlighted that there were about twenty Western radio stations that could be received in some or most parts of East Germany. East German radio officials realized that their one-size-fits-all approach was not making any listeners happy and further encouraged the increasing habit to tune in to more appealing Western options. Around 1980, one report estimated that only as few as 20–25 percent of the GDR population was listening to morning programs on East German radio on many days of the week, for example. As the author of the report pointedly and facetiously asked, "We should therefore be interested in the question: where is the remaining 75–80 percent of the potential listeners?"<sup>46</sup>

The last push that finally convinced SED policy makers to embark on the establishment of their own youth radio station by the mid-1980s was that two of its fiercest Western competitors, first RIAS and then Station Free Berlin (Sender Freies Berlin [SFB]), decided to establish new youth channels in the mid-1980s in order to compete with new private stations unleashed by the introduction of the dual broadcasting system in West German in 1984. East Germany's response, Jugendradio DT 64, finally started to broadcast a daily eleven-hour program from 1:00 p.m. to midnight in March 1986—officially to celebrate the forty-year anniversary of the FDJ. The positive responses convinced the Central Committee of the SED to expand the programming even further. Starting in December 1987, the radio station added youth-oriented morning shows to its offerings and broadcast twenty hours daily (4:00 a.m.–midnight).<sup>47</sup>

None of this was accomplished easily, however. GDR radio technicians had to mobilize all remaining reserves in order to launch this new FM radio station in East Germany, and it further tightened the budgets for all other programs and stations. This was especially taxing because the station was directly competing with new Western channels, all of which sent their programs in stereo and with a high sound quality. The importance of sound reception was one of the important criteria for the listening choices of East German youth, and GDR cultural officials were well aware of this added competitive pressure: "The establishment of FM stations and quality stereo reception play a vital role [in the competition with the West]—a very good program has to be received in very good quality. Especially the excellent stereo sound on Western radio stations

is often mentioned as a reason why [East German] young people listen to them, especially when it comes to recording music on tapes."<sup>48</sup>

When broadcasting officials finally launched the independent Jugendradio DT 64, many young people in East Germany responded favorably. Popular programs like *Duet* were absorbed into the new schedule. Probably one of the most welcome changes was that young people finally had an acceptable option to listen to GDR radio in the morning with the introduction of *Morning Rock* (*Morgenrock*). Surveys conducted shortly after the introduction of this morning program confirmed that its addition was particularly welcome. According to the majority of surveyed listeners, *Morning Rock* finally offered a real alternative to Western radio stations. What young listeners particularly appreciated were the short discussions about issues relevant to their lives as well as brief sports updates and a "more honest reporting style." For GDR listeners, what they desired the most was popular international popular music and relevant, timely information, as a 1988 report emphasized: "Eighty percent of listener music requests indicate a close familiarity with international charts and music video productions. [Listeners] are searching for the newest and most up-to-date information. They want to be informed so they can participate in topical conversations, which explains why they listen both to GDR and West radio stations."<sup>49</sup>

Under pressure to appeal to more GDR youth and widen its appeal in East Germany, Jugendradio DT 64 was even given license to venture into completely novel territory by 1986, which included punk music and the independent scene. To be sure, there had been some very sporadic and isolated forays into these music genres in earlier years, but what was called "the other bands" in the GDR had overall been ignored and censored as far as official radio broadcasting was concerned. The program *Parocktikum*, moderated by Lutz Schramm, would change this. In March 1986, he was given permission to air a two-hour weekly program on late Saturday evenings specifically dedicated to these marginalized and elusive audiences. One of the biggest challenges of the initial programs was that there were no official recordings of GDR punk bands, and Schramm had to use some of his own taped recordings or unofficially circulating tapes to debut his program. In his own recollections, he likened his program and work to that of a minesweeper. He had to both feel his way through the thicket of censorship rules and likewise establish links to a subculture that was highly suspicious of official contacts and channels. While he was able to make some headway in both directions, he also quickly learned that there were at times insurmountable limits in both camps.<sup>50</sup>



Complications arose rather quickly because some of the bands that Schramm featured in his program had not been given permission to perform by their local authorities. This made for rather awkward bureaucratic turf wars, since local SED functionaries furiously inquired why the music of censored GDR groups was suddenly being played over an official East German radio station. Likewise, many punk and independent bands were often not interested in having their music played on state radio. One reason for this was that they feared it would ultimately carry with it concessions and limits on their artistic freedom. Second, they knew that their loyal fan base viewed anything with an official stamp of approval with deep suspicion and even derision. For these reasons, a number of bands declined Schramm's entreaties and offers. Under trying circumstances, Schramm did what he could and was eventually able to record an official album of GDR punk music by 1989. But the opening toward the independent scene always remained half-hearted on the part of the SED leadership. It was an accommodation driven by desperation and an attempt to hang on as best as possible. But like so many of these last-minute reforms and innovations, they came too late in order to have a lasting impact.<sup>51</sup>

Nevertheless, programs like *Parocktikum* as well as the more open exchanges discussed earlier highlight that Jugendradio DT 64 had a unique place in GDR radio history. It was in closer contact with its listeners and attempted to win their trust and respect, stubbornly exploring new avenues as well as risking occasional acts of nonconformity in its political reporting. To add to this, its staff was generally more committed to its work and was willing to work hard under difficult circumstances. They were giving greater license and took greater risks, reluctantly condoned by a cultural leadership that understood their special role and link to young audiences in the GDR. The ultimate testimony of this closer connection and loyalty between station and listeners became apparent in the transition period from 1989 to 1991, when thousands of young people of the former East Germany protested and demonstrated against the impending closure of the station, which was threatened by a takeover from its arch nemesis RIAS. At the same time, Jugendradio DT 64 should not be celebrated as a rebel broadcasting station, as several previous staff members have argued. Very few openly rebelled, and most displayed what one observer called "middling courage"—enough to demonstrate dissent but not enough to become a dissident. Or as Marion Brasch, one of the staff members of Jugendradio DT 64 put it, ultimately the limits of dissension were clearly apparent in the big picture: "Maybe like no other media in the GDR we were privileged and allowed

a longer leash. But rarely did we overcome the trained self-censorship. And if we did so occasionally, it largely created no more than tempests in a teacup.”<sup>52</sup>

It is also important to remember that despite all of the relative accomplishments and successes, the new youth radio station in East Germany never became the favorite broadcasting program of GDR youth even during the height of its popularity. Surveys of young people in East Germany in the late 1980s all point to a very similar trend: many of the programs on Jugendradio DT 64 were popular with their audiences, and overall the station slightly increased the percentage of young people listening to East German broadcasting. As one report bluntly put it, Jugendradio DT 64 was the only radio station most GDR youth would even tune into by the late 1980s. But this was still a long way from making it their favorite. In fact, the vast majority clearly indicated that they listened most frequently to Western radio stations, and the front-runners in the late 1980s were RIAS 2 and regionally available FRG channels. The overall ratio of listening ran 3:1 in favor of Western stations by this time. While Jugendradio DT 64 at least remained part of the listener mix, thus, it could not reverse what one report characterized as “the overall shift toward Western media and against use of our own stations in the 1980s.”<sup>53</sup>

A closer investigation revealed that it was not only popular music that attracted young people to GDR youth radio. In addition, what many listeners often appreciated most about their own station were short reports as well as discussions of problems that young people encountered in their everyday lives in East Germany—followed by other brief, topical reporting about their own country. When it came to the choice of music, the reporting on the international popular music scene, or the reporting style of the respective DJs, Western radio channels were favored by two out of three young people in the GDR.<sup>54</sup>

Clearly, East Germany continued to lose ground in its cultural competition with Western radio stations in the late 1980s—and the gap was widening even further. Despite numerous accommodations, radio broadcasting agencies ultimately jettisoned their vision of a socialist cultural alternative or identity by the mid-1980s, just as cultural officials in the movie and television industries did. In a desperate attempt to stay relevant to parts of their population and retain as many listeners as possible, they wholeheartedly embraced Western popular music by the 1980s—even if this meant throwing overboard the ideological policies and guidelines of the past. Peter Wicke has described the deep irony of these cultural reversals with pinpoint accuracy when he stated that



**Figure 4.4.** Springsteen concert in East Berlin, July 1988. Springsteen was one of many major Western rock stars allowed to perform in East Germany in the late 1980s. (Courtesy of Bundesarchiv Koblenz; Bild 1988-0719-4ON.)

toward the end of the GDR's existence this situation had all the elements of a grotesque farce: "Under the supervision of the Department for Propaganda of the Central Committee of the SED, the same Western music that it had previously wanted to erase from the hearts and minds of young people now advanced to become the central element and strategy of its ideological campaigns."<sup>55</sup>

In general, however, no accommodation could vault East German Jugendradio DT 64 toward the top spot of listener preferences by the late 1980s. Clearly, Western popular music and radio formats were the gold standard, and nothing short of matching it could change this. This included the specific style of DJ announcing unique to Western broadcasts (Moderation), which became yet another international standard that proved increasingly mandatory for East German broadcasters. Listener criticism of boring or rigid announcing styles on the part of GDR DJs was among the most common negative responses to Jugendradio DT 64. Working under political censorship and devoid of high-tech equipment made it indeed impossible to attain the same level of "confidence, relaxed attitude, and wit in relationship to the listeners," which analysts highlighted as the defining quality of youth-oriented Western radio.<sup>56</sup>

As Edward Larkey compellingly highlighted in his study on East German youth radio, the commercialization trends and the capitalist practices that defined West European media additionally impacted and forever transformed East German radio broadcasting by the 1980s as well. The ensuing reversal to a more Western-oriented broadcasting style and programming in the GDR was driven by a whole host of developments, which included the need for closer attention to the wishes and desires of audiences. The outcome was that radio on both sides of the Berlin Wall increasingly looked and sounded the same. This development and the expansion of Jugendradio DT 64 was yet another prime example of the increasing cultural convergence between Western and socialist media by the end of the 1980s.<sup>57</sup>

There were other similarly important dynamics at play that directly influenced East German culture and broadcasting. In the 1970s and 1980s, the GDR's inability to compete was directly tied to its failure to fund necessary infrastructure projects or keep pace with the technological structural media innovations. The newly developed East German foreign broadcasting channel, Voice of the GDR (*Stimme der DDR*), is a good case in point. Created in 1972 to represent East German perspectives abroad, GDR officials undertook a test in 1978 to find out how well this channel was operating. The rather disappointing outcome was that much of the programming could not even be received in satisfactory quality in large parts of the GDR, let alone outside its borders. The reception was poor in Warsaw, Budapest, and Rome. Even more disappointingly, the report emphasized that Voice of the GDR was almost impossible to receive in large parts of West Germany, especially in cities such as Munich or western and central parts of the FRG.<sup>58</sup>

Reading the internal Ministry of Culture reports from the late 1970s into the 1980s, it is very apparent how much GDR radio's infrastructure had begun to atrophy during these critical years. One aspect very reminiscent of the previous chapters was the increasing budget shortfalls and cuts that had to be implemented by the late 1970s in an effort to rein in ballooning deficits. In a report from 1977, for example, radio officials were informed that they would have to cut their budgets between 5 and 15 percent depending on the individual departments and that they should not expect additional personnel for the next few years. This situation deteriorated so dramatically over the next decade that by the late 1980s East German radio broadcasting had difficulty keeping their vans and trucks running in order to cover relevant news stories. As the head of GDR radio wrote in a pleading letter for more funds in 1987, the vehicle fleet was depleted, with more than 50 percent over the age limit

and barely functioning. As he pointed out, radio had only received 20 percent of the necessary replacement funds over the past several years, and he could no longer vouch for the mobility and adequate news coverage by his reporters.<sup>59</sup>

And while the resulting delay in technological development was nothing new by the 1970s, it became particularly pressing in the 1980s. By the late 1970s, the technology gap was widening at a rapid pace. Just as challenging and fundamental was the fact that East Germany radio still kept wrestling with producing shows in stereo sound. By the mid-1980s, only about two-thirds of GDR radio programming was available in stereo, while quality stereo sound and reception had long become common features for all Western radio stations.<sup>60</sup> As one GDR radio engineer reflected in disgust, "[We] often had to produce or back-engineer the necessary equipment, units, or electronic parts from scratch or with very inadequate tools."<sup>61</sup> The other reason the technological delay became so apparent and paralyzing for the GDR was that the 1980s was a decade of major technological innovations. Music recording equipment and radio infrastructure was slowly digitized, and novel technologies, such as cable and satellite broadcasting, were implemented. In West Germany, the dual media system, which allowed private TV and radio stations to compete with public broadcasting channels, got underway in 1984. In turn, this greatly increased the pressure on public FRG broadcasters to increase their offerings and accommodate listener demands and choices. East German officials discussed these media revolutions, but any practical counter-steps remained in the planning stages.<sup>62</sup>

The reason for this was quite simple: the GDR lacked both the technological infrastructure and financial resources to match this accelerating technological revolution. As in other media sectors, it actually increased the vicious cycle that only further added to East Germany's cultural atrophy. East German media officials desperately needed to modernize their infrastructure and equipment, yet they lacked the technology and know-how to do so. And the only place where they could purchase the needed high-tech equipment was from the capitalist West, which meant that cultural agencies would have to spend increasingly unavailable Western currencies. As reports from the early 1980s highlighted, the political and cultural leadership realized this deficit and increasingly desperate situation, but they could not overcome their continued dependence on Western equipment and advanced technology.<sup>63</sup>

As a consequence, East German radio broadcasting stagnated in the early 1980s, paralyzed by overpowering domestic deficits and by the inescapable effects of the newly emerging international innova-

tions based on revolutionary media technologies. For example, the introduction of the synthesizer and new electronic recording equipment established a base for international popular music by the 1980s; none of them were available in the GDR. While styles might differ, certain sound qualities and the ability to create specific sound effects were taken for granted and had become part of broadly shared musical standards by this time. By the end of the 1980s, East Germany did not have the talent, the technological infrastructure, or requisite spaces of political freedom and artistic autonomy to creatively respond to the manifold changes with which it was confronted.

## Conclusion

Cinema and television as well as popular music and radio broadcasting developed along a similar trajectory in East Germany in the 1970s and 1980s. All of them began in the early 1970s, still hopeful to establish an independent and culturally vibrant socialist alternative that would compare favorably with that projected by the capitalist West. Buoyed by the political tailwinds of the early to mid-1970s, which included America's loss in Vietnam as well as political and economic crises in both the United States and West Germany, SED officials envisioned a robust GDR society and culture that could hold its own in the ideological and cultural competition with the West. By the late 1980s, this vision was lying in shambles. Plagued by an aging and increasingly inefficient economic and technological infrastructure as well as popular opposition and youth subcultures, the East German policy makers had to make one painful accommodation after another. Each step of the way, they had to concede a bit more of their cultural home turf to the relentless drive of Western media and the reach of ever more powerful international influences. At the same time, its population—and especially its youth—severed its cultural and ideological ties with its home country. By 1989, fewer than 20 percent of the GDR youth believed that the basic tenets of a Marxist-Leninist societal system provided effective social or individual guidelines. By the same overwhelming numbers, young people had lost any confidence in the SED and lost faith that their contributions really mattered in the East German society at large.<sup>64</sup>

Another inescapable conclusion is that the high degree of criminalization of subcultures in the GDR and elsewhere in the Eastern Bloc created a political and cultural climate far different than that in the West. It emphasizes that cultural identity and lifestyle choices had far deeper

and more long-lasting repercussions for members of subcultures and frequently turned cultural rebellion into enduring political opposition. Closely related to this, the increasing lack of an appealing GDR popular music scene by the 1980s de-territorialized many young people in East Germany and permanently and significantly heightened their identification with transnational bands and cultural influences.

The inability to update and innovate its media infrastructure or to expand the technological equipment and know-how in East Germany ultimately robbed the GDR broadcasting industry as well as its musical artists of the opportunity to stay competitive or relevant on the international stage. A wide array of technologies and trends—cable and satellite broadcasting and the emerging digitalization of media as well as the increased commercialization and new cultural modes of expression—all combined to greatly transform the international media landscape. Coupled with the debilitating and often arbitrary meddling in music bands and their cultural creative process, GDR officials demoralized and ultimately suffocated potentially appealing cultural adaptations and expressions. The combined impact of these various developments highlights that East Germany was in the thralls of powerful challenges. It had to confront hostile and subversive Western radio stations as well as an alienated population, especially its own de-territorialized youth. In the 1980s in particular, it also came face-to-face with the accelerating impact of international media developments that ultimately forced it to abandon its socialist cultural vision, which significantly undermined the long-term political stability of the GDR.

## Notes

1. For insightful overviews of GDR radio broadcasting, see Klaus Arnold and Christoph Classen, eds., *Zwischen Pop und Propaganda: Radio in der DDR* (Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag, 2004); and Stefan Zahlmann, ed., *Wie im Westen, nur anders: Medien in der DDR* (Berlin: Panama Verlag, 2010). For an excellent analysis of East German youth radio, see Edward Larkey, *Rotes Rockradio: Populäre Musik und die Kommerzialisierung des DDR Rundfunks* (Berlin: LITVerlag, 2007).
2. On the emergence and development of RIAS, see Bernd Stöver, "Radio mit kalkulierte[m] Risiko: Der RIAS als US-Sender für die DDR, 1946–1961," in *Zwischen Pop und Propaganda*, ed. Arnold and Classen, 209–28. On the radio reforms of the GDR in connection with international broadcasting in the early 1970s, see Klaus Arnold, "Musikbox mit Volkserziehungsauftrag: Radio in der DDR I. Radio zwischen Partei und Publikum," in *Wie im Westen, nur anders*, ed. Zahlmann, 307–22.

3. Stig Hjarvard, *The Mediatization of Culture and Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 25.
4. Two more recent anthologies provide particularly intriguing and insightful case studies of these highly varied developments: William Jay Risch, ed., *Youth and Rock in the Soviet Bloc: Youth Cultures, Music, and the State in Russia and Eastern Europe* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015); and Ewa Mazierska, ed., *Popular Music in Eastern Europe: Breaking the Cold War Paradigm* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). These newer anthologies have significantly added to and complicated the assessments of earlier overviews, such as Timothy W. Ryback, *Rock around the Bloc: A History of Rock Music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); and Sabrina Petra Ramet, ed., *Rocking the State: Rock Music and Politics in Eastern Europe and Russia* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).
5. "Die Funktion der Massenmedien bei der kommunistischen Erziehung der Jugend," p. 82, June 1984, SAPMO-BArch, DC4 630.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
7. "Zu einigen Entwicklungsproblemen der populären Musik in der DDR," 30 September 1985, SAPMO-BArch, DR1 1983, pp. 1–10; the quote is on p. 9.
8. For the interview with Krahl, see Georg Maas and Hartmut Reszel, "Whatever Happened to . . . : The Decline and Renaissance of Rock in the Former GDR," *Popular Music* 17, no. 3 (October 1998): 267–77. For a discussion of GDR bands with international appeal that were allowed to travel abroad, including City, see Edward Larkey, "GDR Rock Goes West: Finding a Voice in the West German Market," *German Politics & Society* 23, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 45–68.
9. See Michael Rauhut, *Beat in der Grauzone: DDR-Rock 1964–1972: Politik und Alltag* (Berlin: BasisDruck, 1993), 253–56, 274–76; and Larkey, *Rotes Rockradio*, 138–40.
10. For a discussion of City's career in the late 1980s, see Michael Rauhut, *Schalmei und Lederjacke: Udo Lindenberg, BAP, Underground. Rock und Politik in den achziger Jahren* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 1996), chapter 5.
11. Michael Rauhut and Thomas Kochan, eds., *Bye Bye Lübben City: Blues-freaks, Tramps und Hippies in der DDR* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2013); the quote is on p. 8.
12. Christoph Dieckmann, "Küche, Kammer, Weite Welt: Mythen der Erinnerung," in *Bye Bye Lübben City*, ed. Rauhut and Kochan, 15.
13. On the symbolic meanings of jeans, see Rebecca Menzel, *Jeans in der DDR: Vom tieferen Sinn einer Freizeithose* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2004), especially chapter 3. The increasing acceptance of US emblems is discussed in the document "Jugend im FDJ-Aufgebot DDR 30," p. 41, April 1978, SAPMO-BArch, DC4 323.
14. Paul Kaiser, "Heckenscheren gegen Feindfrisuren: Das Vokabular der Macht. Asozialität, Dekadenz und Untergrund," in *Bye Bye Lübben City*, ed. Rauhut



- and Kochan, 328–48. As Detlef Siegfried points out in his article in the same volume, long hair was also an object of official condemnation in West Germany, but it did not possess even close to the same explosive symbolism as in the GDR: “White Negroes: Westdeutsche Faszination des Echten,” in *ibid.*, 408–19.
15. Bundesbeauftragter für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen DDR (hereafter BStU), BV Berlin 004070, July 1975; quote is on p. 6.
  16. Rebecca Wenzel, “Wittstock vs. Woodstock: Hippies Ost und Hippies West,” in *Bye Bye Lübben City*, ed. Rauhut and Kochan, 549. Very similar to this, Peter Wicke argues that it took far greater commitment and had far more severe and long-lasting consequences to become a musician in a GDR rock band: “Zwischen Förderung und Reglementierung: Rockmusik im System der DDR-Bürokratie,” in *Rockmusik und Politik: Analysen, Interviews und Dokumente*, ed. Peter Wicke and Lothar Müller (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 1996), 11–12.
  17. See, for example, Thomas Kochan, “Da hilft kein Jammern: Zwischen Resignation und Aufbegehren. Die Szene lebt den Blues,” in *Bye Bye Lübben City*, ed. Rauhut and Kochan, 84–102.
  18. Bence Csátori and Béla Szilárd Jávorszky discuss the success story of Omega in their essay “Omega: Red Star from Hungary,” in *Popular Music in Eastern Europe*, ed. Mazierska, 265–82. On the Polish rock music of the 1970s, see Ewa Mazierska, “Czeslaw Niemen: Between Enigma and Political Pragmatism,” in *ibid.*, 243–64; and Tom Junes, “Facing the Music: How the Foundations of Socialism Were Rocked in Communist Poland,” in *Youth and Rock in the Soviet Bloc*, ed. Risch, 229–54. The mid-1970s Soviet rock scene, including its “Estonian Invasion,” is discussed by Christopher J. Ward, “Rockin’ Down the Mainline: Rock Music during the Construction of the Baikal-Amur Mainline Railway (BAM), 1974,” in *Youth and Rock in the Soviet Bloc*, ed. Risch, 255–66; and Aimar Ventsel, “Estonian Invasion as Western Ersatz-Pop,” in *Popular Music in Eastern Europe*, ed. Mazierska, 69–88. For a discussion of the connections between the Solidarity movement and the Polish rock scene, see Junes in the same anthology, “Facing the Music,” 235–50. On the growth and influence of rock music in the Soviet Union, see Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), chapters 5–6.
  19. See the interviews with Luise Mirsch and Walter Chikan in *Rockmusik und Politik*, ed. Wicke and Müller, 73–85; and Larkey, *Rotes Rockradio*, chapter 2.
  20. Interview with Jürgen Hagen, p. 174. For the clear preference of classical music as well as other examples of petty censorship, also see the interviews with Hansjürgen Schaefer, Eike Sturmhöfeland, and Dieter Gluschke; all interviews are printed in *Rockmusik und Politik*, ed. Wicke and Müller, 111–33. For an overview of GDR rock music and cultural policies in the 1960s

- and early 1970s, see Rauhut, *Beat in der Grauzone*. For the early 1980s, see Rauhut, *Schalmei und Lederjacke*, chapter 1.
21. "Tendenzen der Beliebtheit von Formen der populären Musik aus dem Hitlistenvergleich 1979/1984/1985," November 1985, SAPMO-BArch, DC4 705, p. 5; and "Die Einwicklung musikkultureller Interessen und Verhaltensweisen Jugendlicher in der ersten Hälfte der 80er Jahre," p. 15, July 1985, SAPMO-BArch DC4 702.
  22. "DDR- Rockmusik und DDR-Jugend," p. 30, December 1988, SAPMO-BArch, DC4 728.
  23. "Standpunkt zur Entwicklung der Rockmusik in der DDR," pp. 2–4, 12 May 1984, SAPMO-BArch, DY30 27376. For an assessment on the rise and impact of the New German Wave, see Sabine von Dirke, "An Analysis of the Development of German Rock Music," *German Politics & Society* 18, no. 3 (Fall 1989): 64–81.
  24. Rauhut, *Schalmei und Lederjacke*, chapter 3.
  25. Gerhard Paleczny et al., eds., *Punk und Rock in der DDR: Musik als Rebellion einer überwachten Generation* (Norderstedt, Germany: Books on Demand GmbH, 2014), 50; German lyrics: "Nazis, Nazis, Nazis wieder in Ostberlin; Nazischweine, Nazischweine, Nazischweine in Ostberlin!"
  26. For very informative overviews of the punk movement in the GDR, see the last three sections in Paleczny et al., *Punk und Rock in der DDR*, written by Alexander Thrum, Maria Hess, and Sebastian Wagner. The song is quoted on p. 179.
  27. See Kate Gerrard, "Punk and the State of Youth in the GDR," in *Youth and Rock in the Soviet Bloc*, ed. Risch, 153–81; and Jeff Hayton, "Ignoring Dictatorship? Punk Rock, Subculture, and Entanglement in the GDR," in *Dropping Out of Socialism: The Creation of Alternative Spheres in the Soviet Bloc*, ed. Juliane Fürst and Josie McLellan (Lanham, MD, and London: Lexington Books, 2017), 207–32.
  28. Katrin Wissentz, "Unabhängige Kulturszene ab Ende der 1970er Jahre: Die Punkbewegung in der DDR," in *Dropping out of Socialism*, ed. Fürst and McLellan, 37–45; the quote is on p. 45. See also Michael Horschig, "In der DDR hat es nie Punks gegeben," and Torsten Preuss, "Stasi, Spass und E-Gitarren: Die Geschichte der Berliner Punkband *Namenlos*," both in *Wir wollen immer artig sein . . . : Punk, New Wave, Hiphop, und Independent-Szene in der DDR von 1980 bis 1990*, ed. Roland Galenza and Heinz Havemeister (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2013), 30–70, 71–89.
  29. Klaus Michael, "Macht aus dem Staat Gurkensalat: Punk und die Exerziten der Macht," in *Wir wollen immer artig sein . . .*, ed. Galenza and Havemeister, 136–37. For a discussion of the "Blues-Messen," see Friedrich Winter, "Die Ostberliner Bluesmessen: Ein Insider-Bericht über sieben Jahre Lernprozess," in *Bye Bye Lübben City*, ed. Rauhut and Kochan, 190–214.
  30. An intriguing analysis of this phenomenon is provided in several essays in Fürst and McLellan, *Dropping Out of Socialism*. See especially their introduction, chapter 8, and the conclusion of this anthology.

31. See Hayton, "Ignoring Dictatorship?," in *Dropping Out of Socialism*, ed. Fürst and McLellan, 214–20.
32. Ronald Galenza, "Glatzen & Bombenjacken: Skinheads in der DDR," in *Wir wollen immer artig sein . . .*, ed. Galenza and Havemeister, 178–93. On hip-hop, see Mike Wagner's article in the same collection: "Rap Is in the House: Hiphop in der DDR," 601–22.
33. Susanne Binas, "Kassetten als Kassiber," in *Wir wollen immer artig sein . . .*, ed. Galenza and Havemeister, 455–71; and Alexander Thrum, "DDR Punker. Gefahr für Bürger und Staat? Analyse einer Jugendkultur, ihres Selbstverständnisses und ihrer Musik," in *Punk und Rock in der DDR*, ed. Paleczny et al., 180–87.
34. Quoted in Rauhut, *Schalmei und Lederjacke*, 62. For the discussion of the notion of "de-territorialized culture," see Andreas Hepp, *Cultures of Mediatisation* (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2013), chapter 5.
35. "Stand und Perspektive der Musikproduktion im Rundfunk," pp. 1–7, December 1979, SAPMO-BArch, DR6 730b.
36. For a detailed and insightful analysis of Soviet radio broadcasting, see Kristin Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time: How the Soviet Union Built the Media Empire That Lost the Cultural Cold War* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2011), chapter 3.
37. Andreas Ulrich and Kalle Neumann, "Der Anfang: Andreas Ulrich im Gespräch mit Kalle Neumann, dem ersten Moderator von DT 64," in *DT64: Das Buch zum Jugendradio, 1964–1993*, ed. Andreas Ulrich and Jörg Wagner (Leipzig: Thom Verlag, 1993), 17–27; and Heiner Stahl, "Agit-Pop: Das Jugendstudio DT 64 in den swingenden 60er Jahren," in *Zwischen Pop und Propaganda*, ed. Arnold and Classen, 229–242.
38. Larkey, *Rotes Rockradio*; the quote is on p. 139. For a good overview of youth radio programming in the GDR, see chapter 4.
39. "Vorschläge zur Erweiterung des Programmangebotes für jugendliche Rezipienten," pp. 9–20, 15 March 1977, SAPMO-BArch, DR6 723a.
40. For an overview of "Duett," see Larkey, *Rotes Rockradio*, 150–65. In terms of its importance in the lives of East German youth, see Alexander Osang's reminiscences: "Keinen Sender Mehr," in *DT64*, ed. Ulrich and Wagner, 54–61.
41. Larkey, *Rotes Rockradio*, 160–65. For the comments by Walter Bartel, see *Rockmusik und Politik*, ed. Wicke and Müller, 89–101.
42. For the first two exchanges, see DRA Historical Archive, Berliner Rundfunk, Jugendstudio DT 64, Listener Mail 1980, H004-02-04/0127, pp. 91–192 and H004-02-04/0129, pp. 285–88. For the harsher response in connection with KISS, see DRA Historical Archive, Listener Mail 1983, H004-02-04/0205, pp. 468–69.
43. DRA, Historical Archive, Listener Mail 1982, H004-02-04/0156, pp. 415–22.
44. DRA, Historical Archive, Listener Mail 1983, H004-02-04/0211, pp. 248–60.
45. See the collection of essays published by Ulrich and Wagner, *DT64*. For additional useful surveys and analyses of East German youth programming,

- see Andreas Bauhaus, "Jugendpresse, -hörfunk und -fernsehen in der DDR. Ein Spagat zwischen FDJ-Interessen und Rezipientenbedürfnissen," dissertation, Universität Münster, 1994; and Aiva Yamac, "Jugendradio DT 64 zum Ende der DDR (1987–1991)," Diplomarbeit, Fachhochschule Mittweida, 2005.
46. The twenty competing radio stations are mentioned in "Die Funktion der Massenmedien bei der kommunistischen Erziehung der Jugend," p. 82, June 1984, SAPMO-BArch, DC4 630; for the quote, see "Tagesordnung für die Komiteesitzung vom 10.6.1980," p. 2, SAPMO-BArch, DR6 733b.
  47. Yamac, "Jugendradio DT 64," introduction; on the impact of the RIAS decision, see Larkey, *Rotes Rockradio*, chapter 6. See also Larkey's article "Radio Reform in the 1980s: RIAS and DT-64 Respond to Private Radio," in *Cold War Cultures: Perspectives on Eastern and Western European Societies*, ed. Annette Vowinckel, Marcus M. Payk, and Thomas Lindenberger (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2012), 76–93.
  48. For the quote, see "Jahresendstatistik der Hörerreaktionen für das Jahr 1987," 20 January 1988, SAPMO-BArch, DR6 967c; no page numbers provided. The financial and technical challenges are discussed in a letter to the head of the Staatliches Komitee für Rundfunk, 13 March 1987, DRA Historical Archive F000-03/0026, pp. 187–89.
  49. "Hörerreaktionen von Jugendradio DT 64 (ab Dezember 1987): Meinungen junger Hörer zum Jugendradio-Programmangebot und zur Medienkooperation," 22 April 1988, SAPMO-BArch, DR6 967b; quote is on p. 5.
  50. Lutz Schramm, "Sonderstufe mit Konzertberechtigung: Die DT64-Indienische," in *DT64*, ed. Ulrich and Wagner, 74–91.
  51. In addition to Schramm's recollection, see Thrum, "DDR Punker," on the attempted concession to the punk scene (pp. 184–86); Binas, "Kassetten als Kassiber" on the punk-LP (pp. 463–66); and Michael, "Macht aus dem Staat Gurkensalat" on the rather belated reforms (pp. 166–67); all in *Wir wollen immer artig sein. . .*, ed. Galenza and Havemeister. The same collection also includes an interview with Schramm, "Spule, Feedback und Zensur: Interview mit Lutz Schramm (DT 64)," 559–70.
  52. The greater commitment of *DT 64* staff is discussed in the interview with Walter Bartel, the chief editor for music of the station, in *Rockmusik und Politik*, ed. Wicke und Müller, 99. The reference of the "middling courage" comes from Thomas Braune's article, "Gegen allerschärfste Anweisungen: *DT 64* Journalismus zwischen 1985 und 1989," 65, and for the quote by Brasch, see her article, "Die kleine Renitenz," 108; both of the latter articles are in *DT64*, ed. Ulrich and Wagner. For its sometimes oppositional broadcasting and the resulting listener loyalty, see Jörg Wagner, "Das Ende: Der Rias-Coup," 8–17, and Harald Müller, "Zwischen Sputnik und Tiananmen: Der verordnete Sozialismus kippt," 98–105; both in *DT64*, ed. Ulrich and Wagner.
  53. "Forschungsbericht '20 Stunden Jugendradio': Hauptergebnisse einer operativen Studie," July 1988, pp. 4–9, SAPMO-BArch, DC4 641; the quote is on

- p. 28. On the overall lack of programming variety on GDR broadcasting, see for example "Weitere Profilierung der Rundfunksender der DDR," pp. 1–5, 9 September 1981, SAPMO-BArch, DR6 919. See also the introduction in *Zwischen Pop und Propaganda*, ed. Arnold and Classen; and Konrad Dussel, "Rundfunk in der Bundesrepublik und der DDR: Überlegungen zum systematischen Vergleich," in *ibid.*, 301–22.
54. "Ausgewählte Ergebnisse zum Hören des erweiterten Programms von 'Jugendradio DT 64' bei Leipziger Schülern," pp. 17–18, January 1988, SAPMO-BArch, DC4 640.
  55. Wicke, "Zwischen Förderung und Reglementierung," in *Rockmusik und Politik*, ed. Wicke and Müller, 27.
  56. On the relative lack of young people in GDR broadcasting, see "Auswertungen der politischen, Alters- und Qualifikationsstruktur der Mitarbeiter des Staatlichen Komitees für Rundfunk," pp. 6–7, 2 November 1981, SAPMO-BArch, DR6 914. The qualities and superiority of Western DJs is discussed in the report cited earlier entitled "Forschungsbericht '20 Stunden Jugendradio,'" p. 9.
  57. See Larkey, *Rotes Rockradio*, especially chapter 5.
  58. "Information über die Ergebnisse von Empfangsbeobachtungen auf Längswelle 185 kHz (Sender "Stimme der DDR") im Zeitraum 22.05–26.05.78," pp. 1–4, 30 May 1978, SAPMO-BArch, DR6 727a.
  59. See "Beschlüsse des Ministerrates vom 30. Juni 1977," 8 July 1977, SAPMO-BArch, DR6 724; letter to Staatliches Komitee für Rundfunk, 31 December 1987, DRA Historical Archive F000-03/0026.
  60. On the ownership of home electronics, see "Zusammenfassung wesentlicher Forschungsergebnisse als Zuarbeit für die Führungsvorgabe 1982," 12 May 1981, SAPMO-BArch, DR6 916; the deficits in stereo programming are discussed in "Bericht über die betriebswirtschaftliche Arbeit des Rundfunks, 1985," 24 March 1986, SAPMO-BArch, DR6 952a.
  61. Quoted in Dussel, "Rundfunk in der Bundesrepublik und der DDR," in *Zwischen Pop und Propaganda*, ed. Arnold and Classen, 306.
  62. "Einführung der Digitaltechnik im Rundfunk der DDR," 17 June 1986, SAPMO-BArch, DR 6 952c; and "Jahresplan 1987 für Staatliches Komitee für Rundfunk, HA Wissenschaft und Technik," 19 September 1986, DRA Historical Archive F000-03-00/0007, pp. 155–60.
  63. "Problemmaterial für die Beratung über den komplexen Planentwurf des Volkswirtschaftsplanes 1982 sowie des Fünfjahresplanes 81/85 des Rundfunks der DDR," especially pp. 2–6, 22 October 1981, SAPMO-BArch, DR6 916.
  64. For the survey of GDR youth, see "Zur Wirksamkeit des FDJ-Angebotes DDR 40," pp. 15–24, July 1989, SAPMO-BArch, DC4 346.