Thoughts on the Significance of Mass-media Communications in the Third Reich and the GDR

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ABSTRACT   *The article investigates the nature of propaganda on the basis of a comparison between propaganda in Nazi-Germany and under the GDR. The starting point for discussion is the definitional imprecision and overwhelmingly pejorative use of the term found within the classic totalitarianism theories of Arendt and Friedrich/Brzezinski. This leads to the proposal of a more historicised and culture-oriented concept of 'persuasive communication' as the premise for refining our understanding of how propaganda operates within the praxis of a regime. By stressing this concept of propaganda as an integrative component of political culture, our case studies highlight the presence of two styles of propagandistic communication, which could be characterised as 'mood-directed' in the case of National Socialism and 'didactic' in the case of GDR, a distinction that will hopefully prove its heuristic value in future propaganda studies.*

The Media Heritage of the Two Twentieth-century German Dictatorships

In the immediate aftermath of the conquest of the first territories of the German Reich in the autumn of 1944, the Commander in Chief of the Allied troops promulgated a law which not only forbade any kind of present activity in the press, broadcasting and film, but also banned the dissemination of already extant publications, films and sound recordings.[1] Shortly thereafter, the Potsdam Agreement stipulated the seizure of the assets of the Reich's film industry, and although censorship was handled very differently in the individual zones of occupation, each showing of a film required the military governments' permission. Permission was frequently withheld on political grounds.[2] Even once West Germany had gradually regained sovereignty after 1949, many products of the Nazi period stayed in the 'Banned Literature' cabinets. And there some of them remain to this day. Thus, unless accompanied by a critical commentary, Hitler's *Mein Kampf* may still not be distributed in Germany, while the question of the commercial exploitation of the propagandist feature-film output of the Third Reich continues to be a bone of contention.[3] A conclusion suggests itself: fear of the suggestive power of Nazi propaganda appears to be retaining its hold.

Yet no one at all hit on a remotely comparable idea when, less than half a century later, the Wall between the two German states fell, the Communist regime in the GDR was swept away by protesting citizens and then the moment of unification of

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the two German states arrived in autumn, 1990. The speeches and writings of the former Party leaders and heads of state Ulbricht and Honecker are freely accessible, and various institutions are striving to secure rights to the commercial exploitation of the cinematic estate of the DEFA.[4] In contrast to 1945, the case of the DEFA's corpus of films led neither to the banning of films nor to the distribution of edited versions. Those responsible for making the films were not pursued through the law courts. It is not just that the symbols of the GDR, its ruling Socialist Unity Party (Sozialistische Einheitspartei: SED) and of the mass organisations have escaped a ban. They have actually become objects of veneration within youth culture. Indeed, it seems that, against the background of economic stagnation and a widespread sense of crisis, numerous artefacts of the everyday culture of the GDR continue to enjoy increasing popularity.[5] If one confronts the younger generation – that is, those who were children while Germany was still divided – with the products of the 'hard' propaganda of the Stalinist and post-Stalinist periods between the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1960s, one provokes hilarity at best, but more usually incomprehension and above all boredom. The case of Karl-Eduard von Schnitzler, who had for many years been the GDR's chief radio and television commentator, is symptomatic. After the 'Wende', a West German satirical magazine hired him, precisely because of his universally known ideological pigheadedness, to write a regular column. Without von Schnitzler's meaning it to be so, it would prove to be inescapably funny. That the Nazi radio commentator Hans Fritzsche could have enjoyed a comparable second career after the collapse of the Nazi system is utterly unimaginable. He was, after all, among the accused at the Nuremberg Trials.

The objection that this is explicable with reference to the altogether different historical conditions of the two cases does have a measure of plausibility. We do need to bear in mind the circumstances of the occupation of Germany after the lost war, for instance, as well as the unparalleled nature of the crimes perpetrated in the Nazi period. The history of the GDR throws up no evidence of corresponding criminality, for all the injustice with which it was riddled. The numerous ironic 1990s reflections on the GDR, for which it is hard to find 1950s counterparts, also play an unmistakeable part. However, the question as to whether a decisive role attaches to a general difference between the propaganda of National Socialism and the 'actually existing socialism' of the Soviet Empire remains to be addressed. It is at any rate striking that the consensus carrying the Nazi regime right into the final weeks of the war is, at least in part, still explained in terms of the presumed successes and suggestive power of propaganda.[6] By contrast, in the case of the GDR, whose collapse was of course caused not from without, but from within, most researchers take precisely the opposite view. 'Nothing' had 'damaged [the GDR] as much as its own propaganda' is the judgment – surely delivered with some exaggeration – of one scholar in this field.[7] And even for those of us who would not wish to support so apodictic and sweeping a verdict, the impression of substantial failures and a general inability to contribute to the stability of the regime on the part of GDR communication policy still predominates – as it does not in the case of Nazism.[8]

Evaluations of the two systems have thus diverged greatly. But is it really possible to attribute diametrically opposite results to propaganda in two different political systems? Can it be that propaganda had a socially integrative and regime-stabilising effect in one case, but had an on the whole politically disintegrative impact in the other? And if this really was the case, then why did the

'heroisation' of leaders and the national community under Nazism work while the equivalent attempt to heroise the GDR's leadership and socialist community, both national and international, fail? These questions furnish the context within which I offer the reflections below. I intend them as preliminary suggestions, and they are not meant to be comprehensive.

Most approaches derived from totalitarianism theory see propaganda and the existence of propaganda apparatuses as a defining characteristic of totalitarian dictatorships. Firstly, therefore, I shall briefly consider the place accorded to propaganda in the classic totalitarianism theories propounded by Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski and by Hannah Arendt. Second, it strikes me as being necessary to interrogate the concept 'propaganda' itself rather more closely than do many even of the more recent works which employ it. It is true that the concept 'propaganda' has a meaning in everyday usage which appears immediately plausible to everyone. But if we are really to arrive at new understandings of the social dimension of dictatorships, we must examine the concept critically and, should it prove necessary, replace it with other concepts or models. Third, I will sketch similarities and differences between the propaganda of National Socialism and that of 'actually existing socialism' on a variety of levels, albeit without making any claim to satisfying the criteria of a thoroughgoing empirical analysis. Finally, I apply the results of my investigation to the question of propaganda's significance in relation to internal social consensus in both dictatorships.

Propaganda as a Constitutive Characteristic of Dictatorships in the Twentieth Century: Carl J. Friedrich/Zbigniew K. Brzezinski and Hannah Arendt

The classic totalitarianism theories declared the existence of a news-monopoly and the subordination of all politics of information to control by state or ideological authorities to be one of the hallmarks of totalitarian rule. The catalogue of characteristics compiled by Friedrich and Brzezinski provides a case in point. Alongside an official ideology, a single party and secret police and a centrally controlled economy, they declared 'a technologically conditioned near-complete monopoly of control, in the hands of the party and its subservient cadres, of all means of effective mass communication, such as the press, radio, motion pictures'[9] to be among the most important shared distinguishing features of totalitarian dictatorships, and clearly to distinguish these from earlier despotic regimes.[10]

For Friedrich and Brzezinski, the strict control of the media by state and by party, and the exclusive orientation of the former to the (power-)interests of the latter, stands to the fore in a way which corresponds to their generalising, structural approach. The two theorists are perfectly aware of the substantive difficulties confronting the actual praxis of mass-media propaganda under National Socialism and in the Soviet Union. Taking the example of the propaganda apparatus under Goebbels, they illustrate the problems of planning and coordination, for instance, and the demands of different addressees at home and abroad.[11]

Some scepticism is also evident in their views on the effectiveness of propaganda. They held that total control of the media created a general popular mistrust of official statements and news-reporting. This culminated in the transformation of the public sphere into a kind of 'vacuum' within which all relevant political questions were suspended. That, they suggested, might also explain the fact that many Gestapo reports cast considerable doubt on the obedience of the

population, so that one ought not to assume propaganda invariably to have been an effective instrument in the direction of public opinion.[12] On the other hand, they did not by any means deny the impact of propaganda. On the contrary, they held that its omnipresence led to the development of a particular cast of mind, from which even the regime's opponents were frequently incapable of escaping.[13] Here Friedrich and Brzezinski were alluding to the internalisation of certain stereotypes, images of the enemy and conceptions of value and order. These, they ascribed to permanent repetition on a number of levels and in various media including the press, radio and – in the Soviet case – political agitation on an individual level. When they therefore attached importance of the highest order to the role of propaganda in stabilising totalitarian regimes, they found themselves contradicting the very qualifications they had themselves proposed. Ultimately, images of a 'nationwide process of "brain washing"' and of a 'dehumanisation of the subject', for which they offer scarcely any empirical evidence, are taken to have achieved the prevention of independent thought and judgment.[14]

In these latter formulations, which to some extent reinforce the hypothesis of propaganda's towering significance, Friedrich and Brzezinski's reflections appear to converge with those of Hannah Arendt. For her, the transformation of the factual world into a fictional one all of its own represents a central characteristic of totalitarian movements. However, and in contrast to the other two authors' concept of propaganda, control of the public and monopolisation of the mass media did not play a determining or even a prominent part in Arendt's. On the contrary, in her work propaganda appears fundamentally to be a phenomenon peculiar to the so-called mobilisation phase. It was an instrument whose chief importance lay in the period in which total rule had not yet been fully achieved.[15] Propaganda was always directed at something 'external', that is, at groups within the population which were not yet convinced, at foreign countries, and under certain circumstances even at members of the extended leadership elite.[16]

After their conquests of power, however, the totalitarian movements were no longer materially dependent on propaganda. The form of rule really peculiar to them was terror. Wherever straightforward terror was not altogether dominant after the complete conquest of power, propaganda turned into indoctrination.[17] Nevertheless, Arendt too ascribes enormous significance to propaganda, especially in the creation and success of totalitarian movements. For the latter are, in her view, above all mass phenomena, and their leaders are thus genuinely dependent on the support of broad sections of the population.[18] It was precisely the 'unpolitical' masses which – unlike the proletariat and the elites – could not be won over without propaganda.[19]

According to Arendt, the definitive features of totalitarian propaganda are on the one hand its scientific trimmings, and on the other its orientation toward the future. Like Erich Voegelin, she sees the claim to 'scientificity' and the recourse to scientific explanatory patterns and models as being rooted in a widespread, naïve and quasi-magical belief in the healing and redemptive force of scientific cognition. She holds this to be characteristic both of National Socialism and of Communism. In her view, it is closely connected to an orientation toward the future. It followed that the combination of scientific authority and prognoses derived from a philosophy of history serves a fundamental need of mankind in the condition of modernity. What is offered is nothing less than the promise of

deliverance from the contingencies and risks of modern existence.[20] From this perspective, people voluntarily surrender the contingent and complex reality of modernity, adopting hermetically sealed, internally coherent ideologies instead. The stability of the modern dictatorships rests crucially on this internal subordination to the ruling ideology.

According to Arendt, what is so perfidious about all this is the fact that statements about the future are immune to concrete verification, and totalitarian regimes are in any case in a position to transform prophesies into realities. It is precisely here, in the transitional character of propaganda and power, that the specifics of totalitarianism are located. Where propaganda ends, power begins, creating a self-enclosed reality scarcely susceptible to analysis from within. In the end, this also 'proves' the assumed infallibility of the leader, on which belief in the legitimacy of totalitarian dictatorships is held largely to rest. According to Arendt, the concept 'propaganda' scarcely conveys the *process* inherent in the transition from persuasion to power and force. Indeed, to characterise it as 'propaganda' at all would virtually be to make it seem harmless.[21]

The two approaches unmistakeably derive from totally different traditions of thought. For Friedrich and Brzezinski, propaganda is initially no more than a particular mode of communication – one that is exemplified also by advertisements. It takes on a totalitarian quality through the monopolisation of access to the media and through rigid subordination to the ruling interests of the regimes. This is a 'supply-side' argument, positioned entirely on the level of the apparatus of domination. It is significant that the argument should become strikingly indecisive where it concerns the level of impact. Here, Friedrich's and Brzezinski's assumptions veer between the poles of wide-ranging scepticism about the official politics of information on the one hand, and on the other a firm belief in the development of a mindset particular to each regime, and from which nobody could really escape. Their conjectures about what happened at the level of reception, and their assumptions about effects, not only create a contradictory impression, but are in general speculative into the bargain.[22]

At its core, Hannah Arendt's approach is directed much more toward society. In the context of modernity, totalitarian movements and regimes are wholly unimaginable without the support of broad sections of the population. In order to secure it, she argues, propaganda is essential. However, she thus reduces propaganda to 'mere illusion', as does Peter Reichel when he discusses the 'beautiful appearance' of the Third Reich.[23] Substantive policy is sharply distinguished from it. Today, this approach appears just as unpersuasive as the epistemologically dubious distinction between factual reality and totalitarian fictions.[24] Here, propaganda is interpreted as a more or less consciously falsifying kind of advertisement. Its purpose is concealment of the real, material goals of policy, and it is only a surrogate for the power totalitarian movements strive to gain.[25] It is thus reduced to the status of a manipulative tactic. Although Arendt cites several instances of a corresponding self-understanding entertained by actors of the Nazi period,[26] the doubts linger on. Is this not far too narrow an understanding of the concept? And does it not postulate a distinction between real ideological persuasion and purely strategically determined propaganda which is often undetectable in the regime's practice? And interesting though her assumptions about the redemptive potential of ideologies certainly are, what she has to say about propaganda's impact on 'the mass' is unspecific and seems to be trapped within an older scheme of cultural pessimism.

What is Propaganda? Some Brief Reflections on the Heuristic Worth of a Problematic Category

These difficulties with the conceptual understanding informing the 'classics' provide a warrant for making yet another attempt at a rather more precise inter-rogation of the pitfalls and potentials of the concept 'propaganda'. For, on close inspection, it throws up considerable problems. In the first place, we need to consider the pejorative connotations clearly attached to it in Hannah Arendt's work. These connotations have accompanied the concept over long stretches of its history. They have done so ever since the Enlightenment, when they gelled in the theory of a papally-led Roman Catholic anti-Enlightenment conspiracy. Later, they congealed again in an equally exaggerated belief in the existence of a secret, opinion-shaping centre of adherents of the French Revolution.[27] 'Propaganda' was and is usually whatever one's opponent is up to, while one's own strategies for influencing opinion are euphemistically described as 'enlightenment' or 'publicity work'.[28] This has gone hand-in-hand with a 'strange overestimation, and even demonisation of propaganda', to which it was not least an array of 'propagandists' (Hitler and Goebbels among them) that succumbed.[29]

But it is the second aspect of the concept, namely its striking conceptual fuzzi-ness, that causes it to start to fragment. Where does propaganda begin, and where does it end? Anyone interested in making the concept analytically serviceable is therefore rapidly confronted with the problem of distinguishing propaganda from omnipresent persuasive forms of public relations, argument, advertisement and education.[30] That is certainly the case if one does not intend that the word 'propaganda' encompass all these other phenomena, and so turn into a catch-all category of expressions of life, bereft of any meaningful boundaries. For, as social psychologists and experts in conversational linguistics tell us, communication in and of itself possesses strategic components and is thus never disinterested.[31] The normative aspect of the concept, its 'one-sidedness' and 'illegitimacy', thus rapidly proves actually to be its defining feature.

Any effective delineation of the concept proves correspondingly difficult. Even the claim to limiting the use of the word propaganda to the context of state exer-tion of influence over the masses smacks of arbitrariness. Employing it in such a way would entail exclusion of the strategies of persuasion operated by non-state institutions (such as political parties), while even contact with state institutions would conversely suffice to have literary output, for instance, declared to be 'propaganda'. Furthermore, the similarity and intersections which clearly do exist between the advertisement of products and political advertisement will then threaten to disappear from view.[32]

A recent attempt to tie the concept of propaganda in closely to totalitarian systems builds on Arendt's work. It is equally problematic, taking propaganda to mean the dissemination (through the mass media) of an ideology fixated on abso-lute truth.[33] According to this view, whereas strategies of persuasion in pluralist systems are concerned merely with creating and disseminating positive images and particular truths, propaganda is about bringing 'into the public domain an exclusive world view which lays claim to the truth and embraces all reaches of society'.[34] Even if we ignore the fact that, strictly speaking, the problem is thus transposed to the concept of ideology, the distinction remains generally dubious in any case. The contention that the scope of the claims to validity which political statements make really is invariably contingent on the political system in which

they are made is certainly open to question. Here, a pejorative connotation catches up with propaganda again, this time by way of a detour into 'ideology'. Furthermore, because the liberal model of a pluralist public is pressed into service as a yardstick, the potential of the concept for historical analyses is surrendered.[35]

Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the concept does address one historical phenomenon which demands description, namely the conditioning and control of publics in the wake of the 'socialisation' of politics in modernity, in other words, the participation of ever larger numbers of people in political processes since the French Revolution.[36] At the same time, governance was subject to growing pressures of legitimation after the Enlightenment, because the 'unquestionable' legitimising framework of governance as a transcendent category resting ultimately on divine authority became fragile. The consequence of these developments was that rulers became increasingly dependent on the support of broad sections of the population, or were at least obliged to produce a dramatic impression of their involvement, and availed themselves of means of influencing opinion in order to secure the implementation of political goals. Thus, the defensive practise of censorship was rapidly supplemented by active strategies,[37] which were intensified in response to the increasing clamour for participation in the twentieth century, and above all as a result of the pervasive presence of the modern mass media.[38]

This process is fundamentally rooted in modern developments, and is not umbilically attached to all-embracing ideologies or to totalitarian systems. The concept 'propaganda' seems admirably suited to describing the process, above all from a diachronic perspective. But it does have the disadvantage of concentrating on institutions, while according a merely passive role both to the public as the campaigns' addressees, and even to the media themselves. Implicit in most relevant specialist studies' fixation on the producers' intentions and strategies is the temptation of recourse to the old cliché according to which such strategies really *could* comprehensively mould opinion and induce particular actions. But we can rule that possibility out almost entirely. In the aftermath of the establishment of 'cultural studies' in particular, research on the impact of the media has moved on to evaluate the appropriation process as a central component of mass-media communication. A key role is assigned to the recipient.[39] The assumption showing through more or less explicitly in the approaches to totalitarianism theory discussed above rested on a stimulus–response model borrowed from natural science theory. It held that effects were linear, a view now rendered largely obsolete. Current research on impact rests on recognition of a considerably more complex relationship involving mutual effects. It tends to ascribe only influences on a thematic agenda and certain catalytic effects to the media.[40]

It is still possible to go on using the concept to describe governmental practices of censorship and of the politics of information. In my view, however, at bottom this tells us nothing whatever about how much genuine success such propagandist endeavours enjoyed. I therefore suggest that we proceed from an extended understanding of political communication which distinguishes between four analytical levels. The first of these relates to the institutional structure of the media- and communications-apparatus. The 'classical' questions, addressing for instance the politics of personnel, control and censorship of content, the organisational and legal structure, belong within this domain. So also do management of access to the media and programmes for media policy. Concrete contents and stylistic characteristics stand to the fore on the second level: themes and patterns

of argument, their symbolic representations and their *mise-en-scène*, the influences exerted by the various media on content – and so on. On the third level, the issue of reception is identified. What does the population actually do with the mass media and their messages? This question in particular cannot be broached if we rely exclusively on the tool-kit of the classic concept of propaganda. Yet, if we are to address consensus-building in a society, this is at the very least just as important as the supply side. Finally, we should note the important part played by social contexts and social change. This is pertinent firstly to political determinants of the parameters within which propaganda operates. After all, these are by no means static in dictatorships, varying considerably in response to phases of peace and war for example. On the other hand, it also involves secular processes of change such as medialisation, the development of mass consumption and the expansion of leisure time. These are largely beyond the reach of political intervention, but nevertheless have considerable repercussions not only for the societies concerned but also for politics.

Red Equals Brown? Aspects of a Comparison Between Mass Media Communications in the GDR and the Third Reich

The sketch which follows does not seek to offer a thorough-going empirical comparison. Especially in relation to the four proposed levels of analysis, such an attempt would in any case be doomed to fail in consequence of a lack of relevant specialist studies. Rather, I hope to promote sensitivity to the similarities in and differences between the two German dictatorships' mass-media communication, in order to avoid premature judgments on the one hand,[41] and on the other hand to indicate the potential of the socially orientated concept of communications I have proposed.

If we begin with the institutional structure of the media system and of media politics narrowly defined, numerous commonalities are immediately striking. Each regime forged a vast bureaucratic apparatus for the directions and control of the media. This took the shape of the 'Reich Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda' (*Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*: RMVP) under National Socialism, and the agitational bureaucracy of the GDR.[42] There were further similarities in the shape of directions on the use of language, which made direct pre-censorship superfluous. Instead, regular meetings between the most important representatives of the media and of government were held under both regimes. Here, alongside broad thematic instructions on the regulation of language, specific formulations in respect of content were prescribed.[43] Moreover, both regimes sought to create a monopoly of information and opinion in the mass media, and kept correspondingly close checks on access to them. This went hand-in-hand with the attempted elimination of competing publics, as evinced for instance in attempts to prevent the reception of foreign radio stations, whether through relatively indirect repression and social stigmatisation as was the case in the GDR,[44] or by legislating to make it a punishable offence, and then pursuing the offenders, as happened in wartime Nazi Germany.[45] Finally, corresponding to these developments, obvious tendencies toward centralisation and concentration marked both media systems.[46] Thus far, it is clear that the attempt as far as possible to monopolise the public sphere constitutes a typical characteristic of dictatorships, and does so in ways which conform precisely to what Friedrich and Brzezinski had postulated.[47]

However, all this needs to be set against the substantial differences already visible at the institutional or political level. This is true for instance of the change in personnel, tangibly more radical in East Germany between 1945 and 1952 than it had been under Nazism where Goebbels was – with a grain of salt – more concerned that the Reich Chamber of Culture (*Reichskulturkammer*: RKK) control the personnel actually in place, and force them into a condition of dependency and loyalty.[48] Furthermore, significant segments of the media remained in private hands throughout the Third Reich, and the endeavours of the Party press to secure a monopoly were never realised. In the GDR by contrast, the nationalisation of the press and of publishing houses was already well under way at the beginning of the 1950s. Here, the dominance of the Party press was unmistakeable.[49] Perhaps even more importantly, the domain of media-direction and propaganda was not spared from the 'institutional anarchy' (Hans Mommsen) so characteristic of Nazism with its confused competences and its rivalries. The RMVP under Goebbels was never the sole actor within this sector. On the contrary, for the fields of artistic and cultural policy in particular, the ambitious minister had to contest responsibilities with such rivals as Rosenberg, Himmler and Ley, as well as with Max Amann, boss of the Nazis' own publishing house, the Eher-Verlag, and with Otto Dietrich, who was in charge of the Party and governmental press. Granted, that the corresponding bureaucracy of the GDR should have worked without wasteful internal frictions is far from being the case, while it had taken ten years to develop the durably stable institutional structures which finally cohered toward the end of the 1950s. Nevertheless, and at least if we take a longer view, we can detect in the GDR a significantly more bureaucratised and institutionalised system, with correspondingly tight constraints on room for manoeuvre.[50] These factors, taken together with the very informal, personalised leadership typical of Nazism, may explain why its propaganda apparatus was on the whole able to react with greater flexibility than was possible in the context of the GDR's 'actually existing socialism'. There, an all-embracing responsibility attached to the state. This combined with an expansionary planning system and strict centralisation to forge a system which exhibited a general lack of independence. Almost without exception, changes could be designed and executed only on the initiative of higher authorities: the Central Committee or Politburo.

On the second level, that of contents and subjects which were stage-managed and symbolically represented, similarities are much less evident. In this context, it seems appropriate to consider Walter Benjamin's famous dictum, that fascism aestheticises politics while 'Communism responds by politicising art' (or *must* do so).[51] But it is possible to establish at least one commonality even in this context. The two regimes shared a 'pathos of unity', manifested in the attempt to oppose the differentiating and dynamic process of modernity with an order that proclaimed its own unitary, homogeneous and absolute validity. The claim was constantly repeated through the media. Not infrequently demonstrated in stage-managed mass formations, such a 'pathos of unity' is a peculiar characteristic of Communism and Nazism. In Nazism, however, it appears to have been bound up chiefly with the representation of politics, whereas in Communism its focus was rather on content, and therefore has some bearing on the ideological core.

Leni Riefenstahl's films offer striking evidence of the aestheticisation of politics. They produced an aesthetic heightening of Nazism's canon of values, and simultaneously used modern elements in their composition and their dramatic repertoire, so that their experiential character – the sense they conveyed of 'being

there', and of a communal experience – can still make an impression today.[52] One would have to look long and hard to find anything comparable in the GDR. Rather, what one *does* find there is evidence of attempts to nail down authors, whether of film- and radio-scripts or of books, to the current political agenda. They were obliged to produce works on 'Socialist Construction', for example, in the expectation that these would have a mobilising and sometimes even an economically measurable effect. For the most part, such endeavours collapsed at the very point of their inception.[53]

A second example relates to the entertainment sector. In this field too, the Nazi regime proved to be a populist mass dictatorship which gave in on a broad front to the demand for easily consumable forms of what, at least at first sight, was more or less apolitical entertainment, whether in film[54] or in illustrated magazines.[55] Of course, this combined with the propagandist interest in imparting the 'right' politics and ideology to the *Volksgemeischaft* (racial-cum-popular community), whether in passing and subcutaneously,[56] or openly. Open attempts came in the shape of the many speeches, commentaries, weekly reviews and special announcements. The eventual diminution of their share of media space relative to that of entertainment corresponded to the increasing hopelessness of the Reich's military position.[57] A similar story unfolds in the case of radio.[58] Here, in the immediate aftermath of the Nazi takeover of power, Goebbels experimented with heavily ideologically and politically laden broadcasts. However, and to an unprecedented extent, he then quickly went over to satisfying the widespread demand for 'light' musical entertainment.[59]

The GDR on the other hand struggled to come to terms with this demand. There, entertainment was long held to be 'useless', 'bourgeois' and 'backward'. At Central Committee level, the media were conceived of as an 'organ of democratic mass-education'. Hermann Axen, the Central Committee member responsible for the media, insisted in May 1950 that 'Work and more work – education, self-education and the education of the people' be the journalists' motto.[60] Only very slowly, and then incompletely right up to the point of the GDR's collapse, did the authorities retreat from these educational pretensions, for instance by reducing the high proportion of radio-time dedicated to the spoken word. Massive reductions came only in the 1970s and 1980s, as the rulers gradually became careless as to means, so long as the end of keeping the population immobilised was served.[61]

Finally, the difference is also reflected in the value attached to the media themselves. Not only in the GDR but in the Communist system as a whole, the Party press remained the leading medium. Goebbels, by contrast, recognised at an early point that film and above all radio were much better suited to the emotional production of the '*Volksgemeinschaft*', inclusive of its promise transcendentally to transcend time and space.[62]

Constraints of space permit only brief discussion of the third and fourth levels, respectively, of the recipients and of historical contexts and social change.[63] We have already suggested that reception is not a passive event which might allow one to infer immediate consequences as to the media's real uses and impact from evidence of media supply. Yet this is what classical research on propaganda has too often done. Admittedly, this involves a process which is difficult to pin down through historical sources. Nevertheless, it has been firmly established that the entertaining, seemingly 'apolitical', aesthetically and emotionally appealing formats cultivated in the Third Reich gained a far better reception than the rational-cum-argumentative ones of the Socialist regime. It was especially at the peak

of Stalinism in the GDR, between 1948 and 1953, that the attempt was made comprehensively to obligate the media to toe the Party line and, altogether in keeping with the spirit of an 'educational dictatorship', to harness them to the creation of a 'Socialist consciousness'.

The consequence was that the population turned its back on the ideologically suffused media, partly because they were seen through and recognised as blatant propaganda, partly because they were simply unattractive. Instead, people tuned in to the rival offerings of the West.[64] Throughout this period, listeners repeatedly voiced their desire to have radio take a leaf out of the book of the successful entertainment programmes of the 1930s and 1940s.[65] Whereas these had mostly delivered no unambiguously ideological message, GDR propaganda sought – in this phase at least – to achieve a genuine social consensus. It was precisely this ideological clarity that made it difficult for the audience to connect what the GDR media had to offer with their own associations, interpretations and experiences. In the case of the Nazi period's generally less clear-cut offerings, which frequently took their bearings from already established general tastes, it was much easier to fill media output with group-specific or individual projections. Here, the continuing success of the UFA's entertainment films after the end of the Nazi regime speaks for itself.

Conclusions: Two Styles of Communication and their Significance for Loyalty and Consensus in Dictatorship

To sum up the preliminary findings of this investigation, we can indeed conclude that in the cases of Nazi Germany and the GDR we are confronted with two very different styles of communication. It is true that the two dictatorships evince no differences in respect of intent to control the mass media, and through them to control the public sphere as a whole. Simultaneously, however, I have sought to show that, the structural similarities described above notwithstanding, in the case of National Socialism we are dealing with a style of communication which can be called 'mood-directed', while we can attach the label 'didactic' to the Communist variant.

Of course, this typological distinction is not always as clear in practice. In fact, each form is to be found in each regime. But the anomalies do not put the fundamental difference into question. Under Nazism, classical propaganda, in which ideological content predominated, covered only a segment of the mass media. By comparison with the sector in which seemingly unpolitical entertainment predominated, it was not even the most important one. Instead, precisely in the war-time phase, it was entertainment geared to mass tastes that progressively gained the upper hand. In the shape, for example, of the 'up-beat hit' (*'optimistischer Schlager'*) encouraged by Goebbels, this was still capable of furthering the values and interests of the regime. Achieving ideological conformity was not its principal goal. Much more important was the creation of a positive climate: the encouragement of emotional identification with the Nazi movement, of a sense of community among the Germans, of their will to hold out during the war – and so on. Or, as Goebbels put it with the cynicism so characteristic of him: 'In order to wage war, we use a *Volk* that maintains its good mood'.[66]

In the GDR, by contrast, genuine and substantive persuasion was very much at issue. Here, social needs played next to no part at first. Instead, the population was supposed completely to internalise and act upon the ideological and political

premises of the political leadership, and to do so in the rational-cum-argumenta-tive spirit of the leadership (and of their wire-pullers in Moscow). Only gradually, for instance in the aftermath of the near-collapse of the 17 June 1953, was there a dawning recognition that people's interests could not be ignored altogether. Of course, this brought no change whatever to the fundamental didactic pretensions of the GDR's 'educational dictatorship'. Its work toward achieving ideological and political persuasion remained central, while everything else was a matter of concessions.

Several points may briefly be made in relation to the background and causes of the differences between the two styles of communication. What appears to me to be decisive is that Communism remained comprehensively in thrall to the moder-nising euphoria of the Enlightenment and especially of the nineteenth century. The belief that 'backward consciousness' could be overcome by persuasion, argu-ment, progress and so on was dominant. Thus, it would be possible to arrive at a consensus based on what was considered objectively to be correct. When this failed, public representations ossified in shallow rituals which sought to invoke that consensus.[67] This was already broadly suggested in Marx's postulates, but acquired practical definition only in 1917 when, in accordance with so-called 'vanguardism', Lenin decided to place the future in the hands of a group of professional revolutionaries.[68] Society thus became the *object* of an intent to gener-ate transformation, and communication purposefully was directed *against* the established society.

In the case of Nazism, the background was wholly different. Here, we find socially long-established and widespread discourses, such as nationalism, anti-Semitism, anti-modernism and so on, which were eclectically combined – and intensified with the aid of populism – by Hitler.[69] At no point in time was it underscored by a consistent theoretical and scientific model comparable to that of Marx and Engels. Its meaning was often vague, and so open to various interpreta-tions. The performance side of politics was always central, and frequently deter-mined content rather than the other way around. In social policy above all, Hitler functioned as a 'mood politician' influenced to a high degree by public opinion.[70] Nazism was thus in large measure populist, stood in a *parasitic* relation to society, and virtually lived off communication *with* it.

That Nazism was in some respects more successful in creating social consensus than was 'actually existing socialism' – at least in East Germany – has become historically manifest. Simultaneously, however, that is in itself indicative of the fact that there are far deeper questions involved than those which go to conscious propaganda strategies. It was not only their respective ideologies that were hidden co-determinants of the different styles of communication: so too was the respective historical genesis of the Nazi and Communist movements.

Let us finally pose the question addressed at the outset once more. Was the impact of propaganda integrative or disintegrative? It transpires that, as so often, the question has not been presented quite correctly, for the different styles of propaganda – or, to put it more precisely, of communication – are themselves expressions of very different political and cultural traditions. These latter were the principal determinants of the two regimes' respective capacities to manufac-ture internally cohesive forces. While intention, strategies and the structural aspects of control over the media are by no means unimportant, a broader view, informed by cultural history and focused on contexts, is required if we are to avoid the pitfalls of massively exaggerating propaganda's significance or, on the

grounds of their structural similarities, of treating its two forms as if they were identical. A concept of communication expanded and contextualised along these lines, then, appears to me to be a very promising analytical category through which to pursue the cohesive powers of dictatorships.

Translated by Peter Lambert

Notes

1. Order No. 191 of 24 November 1944.
2. Peter Gleber, "Zwischen Gestern und Morgen. Film und Kino der Nachkriegszeit in Rheinland-Pfalz 1945–1955", in Franz-Joseph Heyen and Anton Maria Keim (eds), *Auf der Suche nach neuer Identität. Kultur in Rheinland-Pfalz im Nachkriegsjahrzehnt* [Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für die Geschichte des Landes Rheinland-Pfalz, vol. 20] (Mainz: v. Hase & Koehler Verlag 1996), pp.451–520, here p.457.
3. Cf. Rolf Seubert: "'Freigegeben für Kinder ab 6 Jahren'. Wie das nationalsozialistische Filmerbe vermarktet wird", (1994), *medium* 3/94, pp.33–6.
4. The DEFA-Trust, the DEFA-Media Collection of Oldenburg University and the DEFA Film Library of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, are especially noteworthy in this context. The 'Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung', a Federal trust for the preservation (and control!) of the Nazi film heritage, was not founded until more than twenty years had elapsed since the end of the war.
5. Cf. Thomas Lindenberger, "Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn in der Diktatur. Das Alltagsleben der DDR und sein Platz in der Erinnerungskultur des vereinten Deutschlands", *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 40 (2000), pp.5–12; Thomas Beutelschmidt, "Out of fashion oder mega in? Die DDR im Spiegel ihrer Objekte, Bilder und Töne", *Rundfunk und Geschichte*, 23/4 (1997), pp.224–32.
6. See e.g. Peter Reichel, *Der schöne Schein des Dritten Reiches. Faszination und Gewalt des Faschismus* (Munich and Vienna: Carl Hanser, 1991); Ian Kershaw, The *'Hitler Myth': Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), Russell Lemmons, *Goebbels and 'Der Angriff'* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1994). In this context, it is worth noting that recent research has significantly relativised the importance of propaganda for Nazism. Cf. e.g. Gerhard Paul, *Aufstand der Bilder. Die NS-Propaganda vor 1933* (Bonn: J. H. W. Dietz, 1990); on the state of the research in general (and with further references), David Welch, "Nazi Propaganda and the Volksgemeinschaft: Constructing a People's Community", *Journal of Contemporary History* 39/2 (2004), pp.213–38.
7. Stefan Wolle, *Die heile Welt der Diktatur. Alltag und Herrschaft in der DDR 1971–1989* (Bonn: Links, 1998), p.70.
8. Cf. Klaus Arnold and Christoph Classen, "Radio in der DDR. Einleitung", in Klaus Arnold and Christoph Classen (eds), *Zwischen Pop und Propaganda. Radio in der DDR* (Berlin: Links, 2004), pp.13–26; here p.19.
9. Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (2nd edn, Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1965), p.10.
10. Ibid., p.107.
11. Ibid., p.110.
12. Ibid., p.112ff.
13. Ibid., p.115.
14. Ibid., p.117.
15. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (2nd edn, New York: Meridian Books, 1958), p.341ff.
16. As an example, Arendt offers Hitler's speeches during the war, in which he dished up 'monstrous lies' about the resettlement of the European Jews to his own public; cf. ibid., pp.344, 361.
17. 'Propaganda … is one, and possibly the most important, instrument of totalitarianism for dealing with the non-totalitarian world; terror, on the contrary, is the very essence of its form of government'; 'The true goal of totalitarian propaganda is not persuasion but organisation'; ibid., pp.344, 361.
18. Ibid., p.306ff.
19. Ibid., p.342.
20. Ibid., p.345ff.
21. Cf. ibid., p.348ff. Arendt therefore also explicitly distances herself from impressions, as conveyed by Friedrich and Brzezinski among others, of propaganda and terror as complementary, mutually determining and reinforcing political means. Cf. ibid., p.341.

22. The literature has often referred to the schematic nature of this model, its exclusive concentration on the apparatus of domination, and also to its static character. Cf. the synthesising and reflective discussion in Ralph Jessen, "DDR-Geschichte und Totalitarismustheorie", *Berliner Debatte INITIAL* 4/5 (1995), pp.17–24.

23. Peter Reichel, *Der schöne Schein des Dritten Reichs. Gewalt und Faszination des deutschen Faschismus* (2nd edn, Hamburg: Ellert & Richter, 2006).

24. Conversely, we may more readily take communication as the basis of politics in modernity as a point of departure. Cf. Thomas Mergel, "Überlegungen zu einer Kulturgeschichte der Politik", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 28 (2002), pp.574–606; here, p.587.

25. In this context, Hannah Arendt, too, refers to the relatedness of propaganda and advertisement, citing the Nazi radio boss Eugen Hadamovsky, according to whom propaganda was the 'accumulation of power without the possession of the means of violence'. Cf. Arendt (note 15), p.345 and quotation p.361.

26. Joseph Wulf, *Kultur im Dritten Reich* vol. 1: *Presse und Funk im Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt a. Main and Berlin: Ullstein, 1989), esp. p.130ff. furnishes a range of further exemplars; cf. also Goebbels's pronouncement to the effect that propaganda had nothing to do with the truth, cited David Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema 1933–45* (2nd. edn, London and New York: I. B. Tauris 2001), p.33.

27. Cf. Wolfgang Schieder and Christof Dipper, "Propaganda", in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. V, pp.69–112; here, p.71ff.

28. However, precisely National Socialism and the Communist systems are exceptions to this rule, since they attempted to imbue the concept with positive meanings. At least in the case of Nazism, the endeavour can safely be said to have failed. Cf. Schieder and Dipper (note 26), p.111.

29. Ute Daniel and Wolfram Siemann, "Historische Dimensionen der Propaganda", in: Ute Daniel and Wolfram Siemann (eds), *Propaganda. Meinungskampf. Verführung und politische Sinnstiftung 1789–1989* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 1994), pp.7–20, here, p.10; Bernd Sösemann, "Propaganda und Öffentlichkeit in der 'Volksgemeinschaft'", in Bernd Sösemann (ed.), *Der Nationalsozialismus und die deutsche Gesellschaft. Einführung und Überblick* (Munich: Dva, 2002), pp.114–54, here, pp.117 and 124ff.

30. See Michael Kunczik, "Public Relations: Angewandte Kommunikationswissenschaft oder Ideologie? Ein Beitrag zur Öffentlichkeitsarbeit", in Wolfgang Armbrecht and Ulf Zabel (eds), *Normative Aspekte der Public Relations. Grundlegende Fragen und Perspektiven. Eine Einführung* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), pp.225–64.

31. See John R. Searle, *Speech Acts. An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969); Friedemann Schulz von Thun, *Miteinander reden 1* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1981), esp. p.29ff.

32. Jeffrey Verhey, "Neuere Arbeiten zur Propagandageschichte", *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 40 (2001), pp.624–32, here, p.627.

33. Klaus Arnold, "Propaganda als ideologische Kommunikation", *Publizistik* 48/1 (2003), pp.63–82, here esp. p.73ff.

34. Ibid., p.76.

35. Were one to adopt this definition, the German Federal Government's massive campaign to popularise rearmament in the early 1950s would not constitute propaganda at all, while it is at least unclear whether the collective contents of the East German media would then amount to propaganda.

36. See Georg Simmel, "Das Problem der Soziologie", in Georg Simmel, *Soziologie. Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung* (Frankfurt a. Main: Suhrkamp, 1992), pp.13–62.

37. See Wolfgang Piereth, "Propaganda im 19. Jahrhundert. Die Anfänge aktiver staatlicher Pressepolitik in Deutschland (1800–1871)", in Daniel and Siemann (note 28), pp.21–43.

38. Ute Daniel and Wolfram Siemann (note 28), p.13.

39. Cf. e.g. the contributions to Andreas Hepp and Rainer Winter (eds), *Kultur-Medien-Macht. Cultural Studies und Medienanalyse* (Opladen: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1997).

40. On this, see Klaus Merten, Siegfried J. Schmidt and Siegfried Weischenberg (eds), *Die Wirklichkeit der Medien. Eine Einführung in die Kommunikationswissenschaft* (Opladen: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1994), pp.291–328. The persistence of the older topoi might rather be traceable back to the elitist, culturally pessimistic perceptions of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and particularly to those standing within the tradition of Gustave Le Bon. According to them, the 'mass' is easily seduced, and a great danger to the state (and not least to their own social stratum) emanates from the press, which conforms increasingly to liberal principles and is therefore difficult to control. Cf. Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd. A Study of the Popular Mind* (London: Transaction, 1995; first published in French, 1895) and Andreas Schulz, "Der Aufstieg der 'vierten Gewalt'.

Medien, Politik und Öffentlichkeit im Zeitalter der Massenkommunikation", *Historische Zeitschrift* 270 (2000), pp.65–97, esp. p.81f. and 85ff.

41. Cf. the way the two cases are equated with one another in Gunter Holzweißig, "Totalitarismusforschung passé? Rückfragen an Verena Blaum", (1992), *medium* 1/92, p.76f.

42. For National Socialism, see Bernd Sösemann, "Propaganda und Öffentlichkeit in der 'Volksgemeinschaft'", in Bernd Sösemann (ed.), *Der Nationalsozialismus und die deutsche Gesellschaft. Einführung und Überblick*. Munich: DVA 2002, p.114–54, esp. p.123ff. and, for the GDR, Gunter Holzweißig, *Zensur ohne Zensor. Die SED-Informationsdiktatur* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1997), esp. p.17ff.

43. For the example of Nazism, see Jürgen Hagemann, *Die Presselenkung im Dritten Reich* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1970); Kurt Koszyk, *Deutsche Presse, 1914–1945* (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1972), p.363ff.; Joseph Wulf, *Presse und Funk*, p.81ff. and, for the GDR, Ulrich Bürger (Pseudonym for Ulrich Ginolas), *Das sagen wir natürlich so nicht! Donnerstags-Argus bei Herrn Geggel* (Berlin: Dietz, 1990); Holzweißig, *Zensur ohne Zensor*, p.36ff.; specifically on radio: Daniela Münkel, "Produktionssphäre", in Adelheid v. Saldern and Inge Marßolek (eds), *Zuhören und Gehörtwerden* vol. II, *Radio in der DDR der fünfziger Jahre* (Tübingen: Edition Diskord, 2001), pp.45–170.

44. See Joseph E. Naftzinger, "Policy-Making in the German Democratic Republic: The Response to West German Trans-Border Television Brodcasting", Ph.D. Thesis, Maryland, 1994.

45. See Michael P. Hensle, *Rundfunkverbrechen. Das Hören von "Feindsendern" im Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: Metropol, 2003).

46. For the press and radio in the Third Reich, see Norbert Frei, *Nationalsozialistische Eroberung der Provinzpresse. Gleichschaltung, Selbstanpassung und Resistenz in Bayern* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1980); Ansgar Diller, *Rundfunkpolitik im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1980), p.76ff.; for the Soviet Zone of Occupation (SBZ) and the GDR, see Elisabeth M. Herrmann, *Zur Theorie und Praxis der Presse in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands* (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1963); Wolfgang Mühl-Benninghaus, "Rundfunkgeschichte. Sowjetische Besatzungszone – DDR – Die Wende", in ARD/ZDF (ed.), *Was Sie über Rundfunk wissen sollte. Materialien zum Verständnis eines Mediums* (Berlin: VISTAS, 1997), pp.369–94, here p.372f.; Konrad Dussel, "Die Sowjetisierung des DDR-Rundfunks in den fünfziger Jahren. Die Organisation des Staatlichen Rundfunkkomitees und seine Leitungstätigkeit", *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 45/11 (1997), pp.992–1016.

47. See Adelheid v. Saldern, "Rundfunk im Nationalsozialismus und in der DDR der 50er Jahre. Diachrone Relationsanalysen und offene Vergleiche", in Christoph Classen and Klaus Arnold (eds), *Zwischen Pop und Propaganda*, pp.281–300, here esp. pp.288–90, 294; for descriptions of publics in dictatorships in general, see also Adelheid von Saldern, "Öffentlichkeiten in Diktaturen. Zu den Herrschaftspraktiken im Deutschland des 20. Jahrhunderts", in Günter Heydemann and Heinrich Oberreuter (eds), *Diktaturen in Deutschland – Vergleichsaspekte. Strukturen, Institutionen und Verhaltensweisen* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2003), pp.442–75; Gábor T. Rittersporn, Malte Rolf and Jan C. Behrends (eds), *Sphären von Öffentlichkeit in Gesellschaften sowjetischen Typs. Zwischen partei-staatlicher Selbstinszenierung und kirchlichen Gegenwelten* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2003).

48. For more on what were in any event harsh purges of the radio, for Nazism see Ansgar Diller, *Rundfunkpolitik*, pp.108–33; for the SBZ/GDR, where the repression of the 1950s followed the peculiar dynamics of the general Party-purges and were therefore directed especially against 'one's own' people at this point in time, see Petra Galle, *RIAS Berlin und Berliner Rundfunk 1945–1949. Die Entwicklung ihrer Profile in Programm, Personal und Organisation vor dem Hintergrund des beginnenden Kalten Krieges* (Münster, Hamburg and London: LIT, 2003), esp. pp.132, 403; Klaus Arnold, *Kalter Krieg im Äther. Der Deutschlandsender und die Westpropaganda der SED* (Münster, Hamburg and London: LIT, 2002), pp.246–66; Daniela Münkel, "Produktionssphäre", pp.123–26.

49. See Siegfried Lokatis, "Das Verlagswesen der Sowjetisch Besetzten Zone", in Monika Estermann and Edgar Lersch (eds), *Buch, Buchhandel und Rundfunk 1945–1949* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1997), pp.112–24, here p.123.

50. See Simone Barck, Martina Langermann and Siegfried Lokatis, *'Jedes Buch ein Abenteuer'. Zensur-System und literarische Öffentlichkeiten in der DDR bis Ende der sechziger Jahre* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1997).

51. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", in Hannah Arendt (ed.), *Walter Benjamin. Illuminations* (London: Pimlico 1999), pp.211–44; p.238.

52. From a rich literature on this, see e.g. Martin Loiperdinger and David Culbert, "Leni Riefenstahl, the SA, and the Nazi Party Rally Films, Nuremberg 1933–1934: 'Sieg des Glaubens' and 'Triumph des Willens'", *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 8/1 (1988), pp.3–38; on the issues in general, Peter Reichel, "Aspekte ästhetischer Politik im NS-Staat", in Ulrich Herrmann and Ulrich

Nassen (eds), *Formative Ästhetik im Nationalsozialismus. Intentionen, Medien und Praxisformen totalitärer ästhetischer Herrschaft und Beherrschung. Zeitschrift für Pädagogik*, Beiheft 31 (Weinheim and Basel:Beltz, 1994), pp.13–31.

53. The unsuccessful attempt to concentrate the entire content of radio broadcasting in the SBZ to rally support for the so-called 'Two-Year Plan' of 1948 (the East German answer to the USA's Marshall Plan) furnishes one example. See Hans-Ulrich Wagner, *'Der gute Wille, etwas Neues zu schaffen'. Das Hörspielprogramm in Deutschland 1945 bis 1949* (Potsdam: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 1997), p.61ff.

54. The long-running and virulent debate about the ideological character of the Nazi entertainment film cannot be comprehensively rehearsed here, but see Gerd Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1969); Stephen Lowry, *Pathos und Politik: Ideologie in Spielfilmen des Nationalsozialismus* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1991); Andrea Winkler-Mayerhöfer, *Starkult als Propagandamittel. Studien zum Unterhaltungsfilm im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Ölschläger, 1992); "Capriolen und Vexierbilder. Neue Studien zum NS-Unterhaltungsfilm", *Augen-Blick* 15; Jürgen Felix et al. (eds), *Marburger Hefte zur Medienwissenschaft* (Marburg: Schüren, 1993); Karsten Witte, *Lachende Erben – Toller Tag. Filmkomödie im Dritten Reich* (Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 1995).

55. See Thomas Bauer, *Deutsche Programmpresse 1923 bis 1941. Entstehung, Entwicklung und Kontinuität der Rundfunkzeitschriften* (Munich: Saur, 1993).

56. See Stephen Lowry, "Politik und Unterhaltung – Zum Beispiel 'Die Feuerzangenbowle'", in Louis Bosshart and Wolfgang Hoffmann-Riem (eds), *Medienlust und Mediennutz. Unterhaltung als öffentliche Kommunikation* (Munich: Ölschläger, 1994), pp.447–57.

57. Konrad Dussel, *Hörfunk in Deutschland. Politik, Programm, Publikum (1923–1960)* (Potsdam: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 2002), p.239.

58. See ibid., pp.176–243; Monika Pater, "Rundfunkangebote", in Inge Marßolek and Adelheid von Saldern (eds), *Zuhören und Gehörtwerden* I: *Radio im Nationalsozialismus. Zwischen Lenkung und Ablenkung* (Tübingen: Edition Diskord, 1998), pp.129–241.

59. Marßolek, "Radio in Deutschland 1923–1960. Zur Sozialgeschichte eines Mediums", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 27/2 (2001), pp.207–39, here p.217.

60. Minutes of the Radio Conference of May 1950, Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv Potsdam (DRA), Historisches Archiv, Bestand Schriftgut Hörfunk 1945–1952, F 201–00–00/0001, p.440.

61. See Christoph Classen, "Ungeliebte Unterhaltung. Zum Unterhaltungs-Diskurs im geteilten Deutschland 1945–1970", in Jens Ruchatz (ed.), *Mediendiskurse deutsch/deutsch* (Weimar: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 2005), pp.209–33.

62. See Marßolek (note 58), p.218ff.

63. On the historical contexts, see the cursory remarks below.

64. For the case of radio, see Galle, *RIAS Berlin*, p.240ff.; Michael Meyen, "'Geistige Grenzgänger'. Medien und die deutsche Teilung", *Jahrbuch für Kommunikationsgeschichte* 1 (1999), pp.192–231.

65. Classen, *Faschismus und Antifaschismus, Die nationalsozialistische Vergangenheit im ostdeutschen Hörfunk (1945–1953)* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2004), p.274ff., esp. p.288.

66. Cited after Konrad Dussel (note 56), p.223

67. On this, see also Martin Sabrow, *Das Diktat des Konsenses. Geschichtswissenschaft in der DDR 1949–1969* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2001).

68. See Gerd Koenen, "Bolschewismus und Nationalsozialismus. Geschichtsbild und Gesellschafts entwurf", in Matthias Vetter (ed.), *Terroristische Diktaturen im 20. Jahrhundert. Strukturelemente der nationalsozialistischen und der stalinistischen Herrschaft* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1996), pp.172–207, here pp.181ff.

69. Cf. Sabrow, *Das Diktat des Konsenses.*

70. Cf. Götz Aly, "Ich bin das Volk. Alle reden von Hitler, wir reden von Deutschland", *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 202, 1/9 (2004), p.11.

Thoughts on the Significance of Mass-media Communications in the Third Reich and the GDR

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ABSTRACT   *The article investigates the nature of propaganda on the basis of a compari-son between propaganda in Nazi-Germany and under the GDR. The starting point for discussion is the definitional imprecision and overwhelmingly pejorative use of the term found within the classic totalitarianism theories of Arendt and Friedrich/Brzezinski. This leads to the proposal of a more historicised and culture-oriented concept of 'persuasive communication' as the premise for refining our understanding of how propaganda oper-ates within the praxis of a regime. By stressing this concept of propaganda as an integra-tive component of political culture, our case studies highlight the presence of two styles of propagandistic communication, which could be characterised as 'mood-directed' in the case of National Socialism and 'didactic' in the case of GDR, a distinction that will hope-fully prove its heuristic value in future propaganda studies.*

The Media Heritage of the Two Twentieth-century German Dictatorships

In the immediate aftermath of the conquest of the first territories of the German Reich in the autumn of 1944, the Commander in Chief of the Allied troops promul-gated a law which not only forbade any kind of present activity in the press, broadcasting and film, but also banned the dissemination of already extant publi-cations, films and sound recordings.[1] Shortly thereafter, the Potsdam Agreement stipulated the seizure of the assets of the Reich's film industry, and although censorship was handled very differently in the individual zones of occupation, each showing of a film required the military governments' permission. Permission was frequently withheld on political grounds.[2] Even once West Germany had gradually regained sovereignty after 1949, many products of the Nazi period stayed in the 'Banned Literature' cabinets. And there some of them remain to this day. Thus, unless accompanied by a critical commentary, Hitler's *Mein Kampf* may still not be distributed in Germany, while the question of the commercial exploita-tion of the propagandist feature-film output of the Third Reich continues to be a bone of contention.[3] A conclusion suggests itself: fear of the suggestive power of Nazi propaganda appears to be retaining its hold.

Yet no one at all hit on a remotely comparable idea when, less than half a century later, the Wall between the two German states fell, the Communist regime in the GDR was swept away by protesting citizens and then the moment of unification of