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DEFA and East European Cinemas: Co-Productions, Transnational Exchange and Artistic Collaborations

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DEFA and East European Cinemas: Co-Productions, Transnational Exchange and Artistic Collaborations

by

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Dedication

For Stanislav and all who spurred my interest in cinema

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Like composing a film script, writing a dissertation is a solitary project that involves much patience in researching, structuring and editing each and every paragraph, while harnessing diverse ideas for the creation of "the big picture." At the same time, this process resembles the realization of a film as a collaborative project: it opens up space for discussion and negotiation, for the consolidation of ideas in formal and informal settings, for advising and agreement on various details that come together to make up this "big picture." Similarly, the conceptualization of my project spans over several years of graduate work and research and would be unthinkable without the fruitful discussions with fellow students and mentors, and, above all, with my advisor, Dr. Sabine Hake.

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DEFA and East European Cinemas: Co-Productions, Transnational Exchange and Artistic Collaborations

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This dissertation focuses on film co-productions of the East German film studio DEFA (*Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft*) with East and West European partners. It revisits patterns of institutional and transnational collaboration during the Cold War in order to challenge the predominant cliché of the isolation of East European film industries. The project seeks to reposition East German cinema within evolving debates on European film, deriving its argument from archival research on production histories and contemporaneous press releases, as well as from correspondence and personal testimonials such as interviews with former East German and East European filmmakers.

The discussion is structured around three categories that focus attention on the interplay between the East German studio's co-production agenda and state-imposed film policy: cultural prestige, popular entertainment, and international solidarity. I devote a chapter to each category in my study, and show how co-productions, as collective enterprises at the intersection of national cinemas, allowed DEFA to compete for internationally renowned film stars and to re-appropriate Hollywood genres by forming

multinational film collectives and sharing sets, talent, and production costs, while simultaneously negotiating complex economic, political, and market conditions in each host country.

This project moves beyond previous approaches to East German film as European cinema's 'other.' DEFA co-productions provide a privileged route into the examination of socialist film production as a state-controlled and ideologically compliant cultural domain, and, at the same time, as a venue for artistic collaborations that challenged the limitations of state censorship and sponsorship. Undoubtedly, East German and East European films were influenced by international developments and responded to them. Focusing on DEFA as a case study, I shed light on the negotiation of cultural policies not only within a discrete film studio, but also among the various institutions involved in filmmaking in Eastern Europe.

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Introduction

After 1989, the social and political changes in Central and Eastern Europe lead film and cultural historians to make several geopolitically motivated choices and to engage in a remapping of European cinema. Censored pictures premiered at film festivals, directors spoke up about filmmaking in the past and stirred new debates on the entanglement of artists with the socialist state. The redrawn European borders invited revisions of notions such as East and West, socialist and democratic, compliant and subversive. In retrospect, scholars attempted to regroup European films according to their belonging to national and regional cinemas, and to move away from the notion of East European Cinema, which emerged in the heyday of the Cold War. This way, the history of numerous film productions and marketing strategies from the postwar period became detached from film collaborations after 1989, and the legacy of vibrant institutional and interpersonal collaborations among East German and West or East European filmmakers fell into oblivion.

The case of the East German state-owned film studio DEFA (*Deutsche Film Aktiengesellschaft*) provides one of the best examples for the uneasy project of post-1989 repositioning of film industries within Europe, as well as for the relevance of the legacy of former collaborations. In 1946, DEFA inherited the film studios and facilities of UFA (*Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft*), a filmmaking company that had developed a wide network in Europe, signing co-production and co-distribution agreements with most Central and West European as well as with Scandinavian countries. UFA was founded in 1917 and prior to the Second World War significantly shaped European filmmaking by attracting internationally renowned filmmakers and actors, by introducing innovative film aesthetics and by developing its own genres. During the Third Reich, the studio fell into

the hands of Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, yet it continued to maintain its successful international connections and to strive for its films' distribution abroad. As UFA's successor, DEFA initially utilized the existing contacts and sought to sustain a reputation as the largest and most prolific European studio. However, DEFA's status as a state-owned socialist film company quickly altered perception of it among politicians and film scholars.

North American scholarship has viewed DEFA primarily as a national cinema that was once isolated from West Germany and Western Europe. The political isolation of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) produced among film scholars and historians a sense of stagnation and arrested development, reflected in research from the mid-1950s on. Even though this view contributed to DEFA's critical assessment as a state-owned studio operating with different models of national film production and distribution, it also promoted an image of its films as propaganda products for the domestic market. Due to this emphasis on the ideological function of film within socialist states, therefore, scholarship of the 1960s and the 1970s subsumed East German films under the category of East European cinema according to Europe's division between Eastern and Western.[1]

[1] Starting with *Eastern Europe: An Illustrated Guide* by Nina Hibbin, published in 1969 for the SCREEN series in London and New York, East European cinema includes the films of East Germany, Poland, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania. *New Cinema in Eastern Europe* by Alistair Whyte published in London in 1971 addresses the cinemas of the same countries, grouping Albania, Romania, the GDR and Bulgaria in the last chapter. In 1977, Polish émigrés Mira and Antonin Liehm publish in Berkley *The Most Important Art: Soviet and East European Film after 1945,* where they devote one chapter to the cinema of the GDR. In 1989, Daniel Goulding edits a volume *Post New Wave Cinema in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe,* published by Indiana University Press. The second chapter, following the one on Soviet cinema discusses East German film on fifty-one pages.

After the German reunification of 1990 and DEFA's dissolution in 1991, East German films were quickly reintegrated into the cultural heritage of a new Germany.[2] The studio's ties to other countries from Eastern Europe have ever since been marginalized, and the once politically motivated notion of East European cinema became a fossil. However, both political discourse and film history after reunification shifted towards equally vague geopolitical categories such as Central Europe, Central Eastern Europe or East Central Europe vs. South-East Europe or the Balkans. This diffusion of former Eastern Europe into hazily defined regions resulted not only in the reaffirmation of boundaries within Europe itself, but also in the obliteration of former international and transnational contacts, collaborations, and exchanges.

THE PROJECT OF REPOSITIONING DEFA WITHIN EUROPEAN CINEMA

In my dissertation, I argue for a new perspective on DEFA and engage East German co-productions with various European film studios in order to position them in the larger developments of postwar European cinema. By looking at both film production histories and film narratives, I attempt to move beyond already explored approaches to East German cinema as the 'other' with its ideologically tainted genres, propaganda and socialist realist sensibilities. My study of DEFA co-productions, in contrast, provides a

[2] After 1989, East German cinema vanishes completely from accounts on East European cinema. For instance, *The BFI Companion to Eastern European and Russian Cinema* from 1999 does not include a single entry on East German cinema or filmmakers. Similarly, in all introductions to European cinema, East German film is not discussed in any respect to films from the former Eastern Europe. Both Ginette Vincendeau's *Encyclopedia of European Cinema* (published in London in 1995) and Jill Forbes's and Sarah Street's *European Cinema: An Introduction* (published in New York in 2000) do not include discussions on East German film at all. Moreover, respectable accounts on world cinema have also quickly altered their categorization. For instance, Paul Rotha's *The Film Till Now: A Survey of World Cinema* (published in London in 1967) still includes East Germany in the subdivision "Eastern Europe." This term is obliterated in most recent film histories. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith's *The Oxford History of World Cinema* (published in Oxford in 1997), John Hill's and Pamela Gibson's *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies* (published in Oxford in 1998) and Robert Sklar's *A World History of Film* (published in New York in 1999) all consider Central European and most recent Balkan films, but discuss no GDR films.

privileged way to examine socialist film production in its ambiguity and in its right to participate in European cinema: I discuss specific film production strategies, interpersonal and institutional collaborations, and the histories of films that illuminate how East German and East European cinemas responded to and shaped international political and artistic developments. Focusing on DEFA as my case study, I hope to provide insights into the negotiations of cultural policies, not only within a discrete film studio, but also among the various institutions involved in filmmaking in Eastern Europe during the Cold War.

My objective, therefore, is to scrutinize the role that co-productions played in the DEFA project, especially in regard to cultivating its image abroad, marketing its artistic products in East and West and attracting foreign audiences. The main emphasis of my analysis and core case studies lies in the personal and industrial connections between the East German and other film industries in the process of planning, negotiating, censoring, or distributing of film co-productions. My focus on the institutional history of these films challenges existing text-based modes of critical analysis, which tend to privilege binary oppositions such as compliance and dissent, artistic creativity and state control, socialist realist and experimental filmmaking. While theme-, genre- or narrative-based approaches to DEFA films have contributed to our understanding of generic patterns and fundamental differences in the way films were made and received in divided Europe, they have also promoted the compartmentalizing of DEFA's project and have marginalized the importance of international cooperation for the studio. Moving beyond binary oppositions, my approach allows us to acknowledge complex political and practical as well as economic and artistic concerns in their intertwinement; and, ultimately, to uncover the significance of international collaboration and transnational exchange in European cinema after 1945.

In my analysis, I define as international the project of collaboration among artists from different nations, which was based on the utopian notion of socialist solidarity. International friendship, unity and cooperation comprised one central aspect of socialist political discourse and found their expression in exchanges of materials and services, as well as in visits among artists collectives. The concept of the international thus refers to an artistic endeavor that complied with the political project of promoting solidarity among socialist nations. In this sense, East German and East European filmmakers conceived themselves as internationalists, i.e. they advanced the cooperation among nations as institutions as well as among people within these nations.

I conceive the transnational in terms of the interpersonal exchange among DEFA employees, producers and filmmakers, as well as the strategies for negotiating the right of co-producing, for instance through the creation of dummy film companies or the employment of foreign actors by a national film studio. The category of the transnational thus refers to patterns of personal collaborations, which resulted in DEFA co-productions. In my discussion of socialist cinemas, I describe phenomena in film production that remain marginalized by the conceptualization of East German cinema as a national cinema or a cinema with an international agenda. Such phenomena are, for instance, the mobility of film professionals, such as screenwriters, technicians, directors and actors, within film industries and studios; the permeability of national borders for the purposes of filmmaking and film distribution; and the new strategies for marketing and distribution of films.

While there are a number of different approaches through which the interaction between national, international and transnational aspects of filmmaking might be studied, I have chosen to focus specifically on and to write a history of currently under-researched production practices, industrial mechanisms for decision-making, public and personal

controversies. The main advantage of this approach is that it avoids the traditional chronology that aligns the histories of East German literature, cinema and art solely with the history of the German socialist state. My approach, in contrast, emphasizes the agency of individuals and institutions in film history and questions the national tenets of the project of filmmaking. Therefore, this approach may also be applied to the study of literary and art production under socialism in order to reconsider issues such as artistic freedom, compliance with the power or the subjugation of private interests to public ones. Without making any overriding claims, I hope that the proposed methodological frameworks, which revisit both national specificities and transnational exchange, will contribute to the larger reevaluation of the mechanisms of cultural production in postwar Europe.

DEFA CO-PRODUCTIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN CINEMA

The fifty-three existing DEFA co-productions make a valuable contribution to the broader palette of exchanges and collaborations within postwar European cinema. During the 1950s and the 1960s, hundreds of film co-productions emerged in Western Europe, mostly in response to Hollywood's invasion of movie screens. As film historian Anne Jäckel shows in the case of French and Italian filmmaking, bilateral cinema agreements were often negotiated in the immediate postwar years in order to offset the influx of American imports. Co-productions used as star vehicles, boosted the market share of domestic films, and engendered hopes for the creation of a European Cinematographic Union in the West (Jäckel 2003:239). By 1957, as another British film scholar, Tim Bergfelder, points out, with the European Economic Commission directive of abandoning trade barriers among West European states, most of the film industries in these countries signed co-production agreements and profited from cinematic exchange (2005: 55).

These exchanges were supervised and coordinated by newly created industry umbrella organizations such as Export-Union in West Germany, or Unifrance and Unitalia in France and Italy. The contracts received their final approval in the respective ministries of trade or culture.

Similar trends informed cultural and film policies in Eastern Europe,[3] where the first co-production contracts were signed by the mid-1950s and the first East German-Czech feature film, *Jahrgang 21* (*Generation of 1921*, Václav Gajer), was released in 1958. Divergent economic interests and the reaction to Hollywood intervention in West European industries, as well as the political agenda of solidarity and internationalism in Eastern Europe at the time, conditioned a positive attitude towards cooperation in filmmaking, which coexisted with and complemented national cinemas in East and West. European co-productions, which started proliferating in the 1950s, allowed for the emergence of ideas of cinema beyond national borders in the West (driven by free market demands and the desire to reach more viewers to secure economic support for European film productions), or for the conception of internationalist cinema (based on solidarity in the exchange of services and films, where the political agenda dominated economic considerations) in the East.

During the Cold War, filmmakers in both democratic and socialist societies, however, never explicitly disputed the political status quo. There was a great mobility of film professionals until 1961 when the Berlin wall was constructed. Yet directors and producers in both ideological camps were well aware of the demands posed and the limits drawn by the cultural ministries, film approval committees and censorship commissions, even though the latter differed in terms of the means they used and the pressure they

[3] For a detailed discussion of these film trends, see Iordanova 2003: 20-46.

exercised. Despite the limited options for collaborations with Western partners, in the 1950s DEFA initiated several co-production projects with French and West German producers. When this became impossible, the studio moved on to co-producing with East European partners. DEFA's repeated initiatives for joint filmmaking, as well as one decade of successful cooperation with West European partners suggest that the East German filmmakers participated in their own right in the internationalization of postwar cinema in Europe.

The changing definitions of DEFA's film production since 1990 inspired insightful discussions of existing differences in filmmaking and film reception in both German states. These debates have generated important research on topics ranging from the entanglement of filmmakers with the state and the reality of censorship and suppression of artistic potential,[4] to the exploration of socialist realism and the aesthetics of everyday culture,[5] memory and anti-fascism in DEFA films.[6] At the same time, German film scholars such as Thomas Elsaesser, Sean Allan and Ralf Schenk in Europe, as well as Sabine Hake, Barton Byg and Marc Silberman in the North American context, have emphasized the necessity to continuously re-evaluate East German cinema from a contemporaneous perspective. Focusing on particular films, themes, genres or film directors, these scholars have challenged in their work an isolationist approach to DEFA with its reduction to a propaganda vehicle for the education of domestic audiences, and have thus called for a reconsideration of East German films and filmmakers within the larger discursive frameworks of European cinema. Other film scholars such as Daniela

[4] For instance, in Schittly 2002 and in Agde 2002.

[5] See Feinstein 2002 and Berghahn 2005.

[6] For instance, in Kannapin 1997, Coulson 1999, Silberman 2000 and Barnert 2008.

Berghahn, Dina Iordanova and Katie Trumpener have contributed to the discussion by drawing attention to the institutional history of filmmaking in the East. They have embarked, for instance, on exploring festival networks and on comparing traditions in filmmaking. Thus, they have stressed the importance of enduring institutional relations among East German and East European cinemas in the context of remapping European film history since 1989.[7] Paradoxically, the history of DEFA co-productions remains largely under-researched, with the exception of two contributions by Ralf Schenk in 2004 and by Marc Silberman in 2006.[8] Schenk and Silberman have focused on particular bilateral collaborations such as the East German/Soviet and the East German/French, but there is no comprehensive account on DEFA co-productions to date. The purpose of this study, therefore, will be to show how film co-productions as well as collaborations in the form of exchange of services (such as editing, circulation of costumes and set designs, developing or copying institutional networks) form an important part of DEFA's history and significantly shaped its artistic project.

Co-productions were potentially lucrative, economically advantageous and politically desirable, yet they often involved tedious bureaucratic procedures for the film directors and the studios. For instance, they required a number of initial meetings among dramaturges or production managers from the respective studios and a proposal in the form of a script outline, as well as political justification for the project that had to appeal equally to both sides in the process. In addition, both parties would agree to sign mutual agreement on the objectives of the film, economic participation in the project and

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[7] Trumpener 2001, Trumpener 2002, Iordanova 2003, and Berghahn 2006.

[8] Compare to Ralf Schenk, "Splitter eines grossen Themas: Filmbeziehungen zwischen der UdSSR und der DDR," *Film Dienst* 57.1 (2004): 22-24 and Marc Silberman's discussion of East German/French co-productions in "Learning From the Enemy: DEFA-French Co-Productions of the 1950s," *Film History* 18 (2006): 21-45.

distribution rights in Europe (Wolf 2000: 5-14). There were frequent instances of disagreement among the co-producing studios, production managers and filmmakers, or the respective film commissions within the culture ministries, sometimes at the earlier stages of scriptwriting or casting, but often even after the films were already advertised in the press and their premieres in the respective countries scheduled. These discrepancies undermine the common belief that film releases in socialist countries depended only on the respective censorship organs. In order to unravel the complex process of film realization, approval and release, especially in the case of co-productions between two or more countries, we need to understand the interplay of the institutions that participated in the decision-making.

INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN DEFA CO-PRODUCTIONS

There were several institutions involved in a co-production's approval and release on the screens. In the GDR, these included *Dramaturgen*, dramaturges or script editors, who had a role as crucial as that of directors. The dramaturges had to select film projects from among two hundred proposals each year, supervise the development and revision of scripts and ensure the successful completion of a project through all stages from the institutional acceptance to the plan for distribution of a film project. The dramaturges negotiated with the studio head and the head of dramaturgy,[9] DEFA's *Künstlerischer Rat,* an internal Artistic Council consisting of filmmakers rating each other's work, *Hauptverwaltung Film* (Central Film Administration), a state-appointed film office at the Ministry of Culture, and, finally, the state-run distribution companies that actively

[9] Dieter Wolf elaborates on the DEFA dramaturge's complex tasks and critiques "die eingefangene Praxis einer vielstufigen Beratungs-, und Entscheidungspyramide für alle Buchphasen vom Dramaturgen zu seinem Chef, von ihm in die Szenarienkommission, von dort zum Studiendirektor und in die Hauptverwaltung, deren Leiter sich inzwischen ihre eigene "dramaturgische" Abteilung zugelegt hatten" (1992: 265).

advertised upcoming films with flyers and events for domestic and foreign audiences. The dramaturges gained importance in the decision-making process especially between 1960 and 1967, when the so-called *Künstlerische Arbeitsgruppen* or KAGs were formed.[10] These were artistic collectives organized around a film director or a dramaturge that received a relative independence both in aesthetic and political terms. After 1965, these collectives specialized in co-productions or genre cinema. The role of the dramaturges in a co-production project was complemented by the advice of DEFA's studio board and internal Artistic Council. These identified and solved potential problems with the script or the mechanics of co-producing at the pre-production stage. The Central Film Administration, which in 1954 had replaced the earlier state-run *DEFA Filmkommission* (DEFA Film Commission, 1946-1954), was a division of the GDR Ministry of Culture. This agency had the responsibility of supervising all stages of film production and would, if needed, intervene in a timely fashion and prevent the film from release.[11] Usually, DEFA submitted a co-production plan and revised film script to the Central Film Administration, which gave its consent to or vetoed co-productions. In rare cases, contested projects were reported to the *Kulturabteilung der Zentralkomitee der SED* (SED Central Committee's Cultural Office). The latter was the ultimate authority in the decision-making process and operated under the SED's (Socialist Unity Party) auspices.[12]

With so many different interests at play in at least two countries where a co-production was to be released, conflicts were inevitable. Admittedly, the most vociferous

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[10] The emergence and organization of these artistic collectives will be discussed in more detail in the second chapter of this study.

[11] See Wolf 1992: 255-257, Feinstein 2002: 40 and Mückenberger 1994: 25.

[12] See Wolf 1992: 256-260.

criticism originated at meetings of the appointed state film commissions within the respective ministries (in the case of the GDR, the Central Film Administration). Voiced usually during the approval stage, the critique of party functionaries and bureaucrats within the ministries comprised the last impediment before the film's release. The heated debates in these film commissions occasionally even resulted in one country's policies overriding the other's, which was unique to co-production projects and provides us with interesting case studies of the possible negotiation of film policy making.[13] Moreover, the precedents ranged from film directors' negotiation with East German cultural ministers or even the head of the GDR state, Walter Ulbricht or Erich Honecker, to Soviet authorities and cultural ministers.[14] Occasionally, the DEFA studio head or the respective dramaturge responsible for the project also asked for correspondence among cultural ministers and governments, which addressed film production issues or financial questions on the governmental level.

Another source of predicaments for co-production projects were the differences among film studios and film collectives in terms of working morale, as well as the involvement of a multinational crew with various training, languages, background and expectations.[15] A co-production project started and ended at the table for political

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[13] Such was the case, for example, with *Sterne* (*Stars,* 1959, Korad Wolf, GDR/Bulgaria), the first East German/Bulgarian co-production. On January 5, 1959, at a meeting with filmmakers and DEFA representatives, the Bulgarian film commission did not approve *Stars* for release in Bulgaria (BArch DR 117 BA (I) 0877b). After the film received acclaim at the Cannes festival in 1960, the Bulgarian political authorities finally allowed its release in Bulgaria.

[14] A good example in this respect provide the efforts of two DEFA directors, Konrad Wolf and Frank Beyer, in negotiating their respective film co-productions projects *Sonnensucher* (*Sunseekers,* 1957) and *Jakob der Lügner* (*Jakob The Liar*, 1975). Both directors negotiated their films with the support of the DEFA studio heads and the East German cultural ministers of the time, however, in both cases co-productions were rejected.

[15] Discontent with the working morale and actors' and staff's training was expressed in several of the final reports of *Indianderfilme,* such as *Apachen* (*Apaches,* 1973, Gottfried Kolditz, GDR/USSR/Romania;

negotiations, yet similarly contested issues defined the actual process of filmmaking, which involved discussions about the distribution of jobs on the set, the supply of materials and equipment, various acting styles, and, in the post-production stage, correspondence about film negatives and copies as well as distribution practices in East European countries. These debates brought about the need to acknowledge differences in the way film as art was approached in different state-run studios, but also suggested varying degrees to which the film industries depended on political prerogatives.

Throughout the four decades of socialist government, the agendas for co-productions in East European film studios changed. For instance, while Poland was eager to co-produce entertainment films with East Germany and to profit from DEFA's collaborations with French filmmakers in the late 1950s,[16] by the late 1960s, the Polish studio in Lodz rejected several offers for DEFA co-productions, with the motivation that they did not share the Polish aesthetic agenda and audience tastes.[17] DEFA dramaturges and production managers thus had to negotiate across cultural differences and perceptions, changing film studio agendas and expectations, competing financial motivations and aesthetic sensibilities. In sum, practical and organizational problems during the casting and the shooting phase, as well as prolonged debates during the approval phase often created internal tensions among filmmaking collectives, dramaturges and political functionaries, and, in some cases, even discontent between the

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Barch DR 117/ 23415) and the sequel to that film, *Ulzana* (*Ulzana,* 1974, Gottfried Kolditz, GDR/USSR/Romania; BArch DR 117/ 23433).

[16] Refer to the second chapter of this study for a discussion of the prolonged production history of *Der schweigende Stern* (*The Silent Star*, Kurt Maetzig, 1961).

[17] Prime example in this respect are the debates around Frank Beyer's project *Jacob the Liar,* originally conceived as East German/Polish co-production and after the rejection of the project by Polish filmmakers, Beyer co-produced with the East German television.

studios or abandonment of the co-production project, as meticulously described in DEFA's final acceptance reports.

ARTISTIC AND POLITICAL CONTEXTS

Why then did DEFA continue to seek and engage in co-productions, given the laborious nature of the process, the frequent instances of disagreement and the outcomes that were rarely satisfactory to all who were involved? In order to engage this question, we need to look at the specific artistic and political conditions in which the co-productions emerged but also to examine the different objectives that the DEFA studio assigned to various film projects. We first have to account for the vagaries of the political discourse and the changing expectations toward filmmaking in the GDR. This involves tracing the changes made in the DEFA management and in the film policies in East Germany, as well as their motivation, for instance, in the immediate postwar years, when continuations with UFA styles and strategies were still vibrantly discussed. Similarly, at the 11th Plenary of the SED in December 1965, party leaders decided to ban the film production from an entire year from East German screens, which for the five co-productions of various genres made in that year meant longer showing times and increased audience access.

Second, we need to map out and scrutinize the ongoing discussions since 1947 among DEFA filmmakers about the function of their films (and co-productions, in particular) in socialist society and about the audiences' reception of the pictures. These discussions comprised the dominant model of decision-making within the studio and reveal its conflicting attitudes toward schooling the viewers in the project of socialism, and, simultaneously, of attending to audiences' expectations for light entertainment.

Third, we need to consider developments within European cinema, which triggered DEFA's desire to co-produce their own genre films as a way of competing with other large film companies and to develop their international reputation. Examples for DEFA's response to such West European developments might be found in DEFA's initiative to co-produce *utopische Filme* (utopian films, a genre competing with Western science-fiction films) in the 1960s, or *Indianerfilme* (films about Native Americans, a genre competing with Westerns) in the 1970s.

Finally, in order to understand and define the importance of co-productions, we need to scrutinize DEFA's utilization of the "film city" Babelsberg, which pre-dated and outlasted the socialist state. The structure, the image and the function of DEFA as a studio in Europe profited greatly from the experience of previous generations of UFA filmmakers, as well as from already existing connections and patterns of collaboration among European filmmakers. These transnational practices of collaboration, moreover, continued to inform filmmaking at Babelsberg even after DEFA's dissolution in 1991.[18] Along these lines, we need to look at the contribution that DEFA co-productions made to the overall project of GDR cinema as well as to European cinema with their models and film genres that were developed together with other studios on the continent.

FUNCTION OF THE CO-PRODUCTIONS WITHIN DEFA

The function of co-productions in DEFA was redefined several times throughout the film studio's existence, in particular after the shelving of almost the entire annual production of 1965.[19] With declining numbers of moviegoers in the GDR in the mid-

[18] For a detailed discussion on DEFA's dissolution and the fate of studio Babelsberg, see Berghahn 2005: 214-224.

[19] Katie Trumpener mentions the importance of three DEFA co-productions with East European countries as replacement for the unreleased films of 1965 (2002: 96).

1960s, and the import of entertainment cinema from Hollywood, France or Britain in the late 1970s, co-productions after 1965 appeared to be a good strategy to boost productivity, share production costs, and use joint talent to create a homegrown version of middlebrow entertainment films. Ultimately, these films served to increase the interest in DEFA films at home and abroad, to improve export figures and the studio's image among state policy makers, and to take advantage of the pre-established exchange of cultural assets among the socialist states more effectively. Accordingly, the number of DEFA co-productions with East European studios, which in the 1950s totaled only three compared to eight joint projects with France and West Germany, increased to eleven in the 1960s and even to eighteen in the 1970s, though in the 1980s, it went back to seven. In addition, DEFA co-produced six other films with Latin American and Asian countries. Compared to a total of seven hundred East German-only feature films, these co-productions hardly appear significant in their number. However, their role in popularizing GDR film was indispensable.

The relevance of co-productions results primarily from the fact that they overcame strictly national concerns such as the ones thematized by the films about GDR contemporary life, yet at the same time, they projected a new image of East Germans in terms of their ability to cooperate with other nations. This agenda seems different from the West European studios' conception of the role of co-productions, as developed under the conditions of a free market and based on prefabricated Hollywood models. In the West European context, as demonstrated in Bergfelder's research, the issue of co-productions demanded "the acknowledgement that economic considerations interact with specifically national developments, but they are equally informed by the dynamics of an international media market" (2005: 11). In the East European context, as I will show in my discussion, due to the lack of product competition, economic and marketing concerns

were superseded by the necessity of a consensus on the film's political agenda, by the profits from exchange of services, facilities and labor (actors and technicians), and, finally, by the hopes of attracting audiences to East European films. Consequently, according to their proclivity toward these different projects, co-productions are divided into three categories.

CATEGORIES OF DEFA CO-PRODUCTIONS

These categories correspond to my concern with institutional history, the material conditions of film production and the circulation of actors, staff and services within Eastern Europe, while each of them also provides an interesting case study for intense collaboration within and internationalization of European cinema. Furthermore, the three categories illustrate the different strategies that DEFA developed in the effort to preserve the image of an internationally acclaimed studio. Especially after the West German Hallstein doctrine of 1955[20] and until the GDR was recognized as a state in 1973, DEFA relied largely on co-productions with other European countries, in order for their films to enter competitions at international film festivals located in Western Europe, such as those in Venice and Cannes. During the 1970s, the established relations to East European studios were fully developed, primarily in terms of their potential for genre cinema made attractive to younger audiences across borders, and by the 1980s, co-productions with the Soviet Union and Bulgaria predominated.

Joint projects initially represented an attempt to continue UFA's traditions of collaboration with other studios (later on continued with French and Italian film companies), to profit from the exchange of artistic and technical competence and to gain

[20] This key doctrine of 1955 in West Germany's foreign policy received its name from Walter Hallstein, a state secretary since 1951. The Hallstein doctrine announced that the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) would not maintain diplomatic relations with any state that recognizes the GDR as an independent state.

prestige for both the studio and the GDR state. These films comprise the first category to be examined in this study. In terms of genre, they were predominately costume dramas and literary adaptations from the 1950s, made with France, Italy or West German producer Erich Mehl in Sweden, as well as historical epics co-produced with the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia in the later 1970s. These cooperative projects shared the involvement of international stars and well-known directors, the demonstration of DEFA's high production values and less politicized subject matter.

The second category of co-productions refers to genre films made for international markets and audiences. Prime examples for this category are *utopische Filme* or utopian films made since the 1960s and films about Native Americans, the *Indianerfilme* of the 1970s. The co-producers of these films ranged from various countries in Eastern Europe to socialist countries in Asia and Latin America, such as Vietnam, Mongolia and Cuba. What motivated these projects was usually the exchange of professional services (with the other countries providing actors with particular physiognomies or landscapes that were not found in the GDR in exchange for financing of joint film projects), camouflaged by the idea of international collaboration for peace and freedom.

The last category of co-productions carried various political functions: to address the atrocities of the fascist regime, to promote the GDR's diplomatic recognition abroad, to advance the idea of international solidarity within the Socialist Bloc, and even to retrospectively emphasize ideas of internationalism and communist cooperation during the Spanish Civil War. Such ideologically charged co-productions emerged in the late 1950s in collaboration with Poland and Bulgaria and reached their peak in the late 1970s and the 1980s in collaboration with the Soviet Union.

In order to define these three projects of DEFA co-productions within European cinema of the period, we need to situate them in respect to tendencies in the West, such as the experimental New Waves or popular genre cinema from the 1960s to the 1980s. In this respect, there are a number of concerns that run through my study. First, instead of viewing developments and changes in the East German film industry as solely national or state-controlled, my discussion attempts to place them within wider parameters of cinematic continuities and collaborations across borders. This perspective derives from the realization that both chronological and geo-political approaches to the history of DEFA co-productions, i.e. the attempts to compartmentalize that history into decades or to reduce it to political thaws and freezes during the Cold War, leave out important inter-textual references, returning patterns of studio collaborations that predate DEFA and the evolution of certain genre conventions throughout its existence. Second, if East European models for co-producing participate in overarching tendencies of European filmmaking, we have to identify and examine underlying differences in comparison to West European models, i.e. in terms of production and distribution practices or financing strategies. Third, my discussion of DEFA co-productions will be informed by what I see as shared thematic and genre conventions (especially in the case of literary adaptations and grand historical epics), and what sometimes (as in the case of the utopian films or the *Indianerfilme*) appears to be an alternative to or subversion of conventions developed in Hollywood and Western Europe.

All categories of DEFA film co-productions relate in one or another way to ideas that challenge national constraints and advocate international cooperation. For instance, the costume dramas and historical epics refer to various literary traditions, well-known artists and scholars, or relevant past events that have shaped European thought and cultures. In the utopian films or the films about Native Americans, the narratives are

deliberately relocated in terms of space and time outside national borders. Even politically charged films, such as *Sterne* (S*tars*, Konrad Wolf, 1959) and *KLK an PTX: Die rote Kapelle* (*KLK Calling PTZ: The Red Orchestra*, 1971, Horst Brandt, GDR/USSR), thematize border-crossing, cultural exchange or solidarity in a way that exceeds the national space.

Another aspect that all DEFA co-productions share with other European films is the ambiguous interplay of ideological mandates and institutional practices within the system of film production and cultural policy in the GDR. I propose to trace and compare censorship and reception histories of the DEFA co-productions within Eastern and Western Europe. In this respect, films like *Die Hexen von Salem* (*The Witches of Salem*, 1957, Raymond Rouleau, GDR/France)*, Sterne* (*Stars*, 1959, Konrad Wolf, GDR/ Bulgaria)*, Der schweigende Stern* (*The Silent Star*, 1961, Kurt Maetzig, GDR/Poland), or *Goya* (1972, Konrad Wolf, GDR/USSR), stand out. These film projects emerged in different time periods and contexts, involving various co-producing film studios. Even though they follow different genre conventions, they all encountered difficulties with their approval and release, and their production histories display various strategies for negotiation and success. Some of these films were repeatedly re-edited for international (Western) audiences, as in the case of *The Silent Star,* which was released in divergent versions and under different titles for East and West German or North American audiences. Other co-production projects were purged of "overtly bourgeois" or "overly liberal" scenes for East German audiences (*The Witches of Salem*) or were saved from the censor's scissors by their ideologically compliant and influential directors (Konrad Wolf's *Goya* being the best example here). There were co-productions first celebrated in the West and afterwards released in their respective countries, even though they had been banned before (*Stars*), while the scripts for others had to be changed several times (*The*

Silent Star), and sometimes projects had to be shelved for over eight years (in the case of *Goya*).

CHAPTER OUTLINE

According to my goal to discuss the three categories of DEFA co-productions, the chapters of this study will be thematically divided and each will be organized around one of three categories: cultural prestige, international solidarity, and popular entertainment. As my approach to DEFA co-productions focuses particularly on their production histories, the studio's institutional development and place in an international socialist community, and, ultimately, on the collaborative patterns that call for DEFA's repositioning within European cinema, I am less concerned with the audience or media reception of these films. Each of the chapters, therefore, introduces two or more film co-productions from different decades with their production history in comparison and will situate them within their contemporaneous political, cultural, and social context in order to use them as examples in support of my argument. The goal of this comparison is to trace how DEFA's co-production agenda has evolved over the time period from the mid-1950s until the 1980s. I also consider DEFA's development as an institution, the impact of cultural policies on internal filmmaking practices, as well as changing strategies for accommodation of artistic potential and improvement of the creative process. Finally, each chapter engages with unrealized co-productions to develop and support my argument, and to explore how different reasons for abandoning a co-production project might complement or challenge my discussion of DEFA co-productions.

My first chapter is entitled "Co-productions for Cultural Prestige: DEFA's Strategies for Achieving International Recognition." I argue that the initial motivation for the East German studio to co-produce was to increase its prestige and to retain UFA's

image of an internationally acclaimed film company, primarily in Western Europe. To support this claim, I engage with one of the main tasks for all DEFA film co-productions: to lobby for the GDR's recognition in the West. Several material and pragmatic aspects comprised this task: the development of business relations to other film studios including the attraction of foreign directors and stars, economic sponsorship and negotiation of distribution abroad; the demonstration of their cinematographic achievements in terms of production facilities and the development of 70-mm cameras comparable to Western devices; and, finally, the employment of traditionally successful genres of the past such as historical epics, costume dramas, period films, and literary adaptations in the UFA tradition. In contrast to the co-productions for entertainment of the late 1960s and the 1970s, the prestige productions did not challenge or compete with West European or American popular genres; they were conceived as manifestations of German and European cultural heritage and relied on already tested formulas and conventions in order to achieve international acclaim. Similarly, even though the prestige agenda responded to the state's political demands for recognition abroad, it did not overlap completely with the project of solidarity, which saw co-productions as a means to demonstrate socialist ideals put into practice both on the set and in the film narrative.

In this first chapter, I set up my discussion by elaborating on the significance of West German filmmakers, returnees, and former UFA employees who DEFA contracted in the 1950s and the 1960s for the development of the prestige agenda. I then engage with the influence of Cold War politics on early DEFA co-productions, arguing for differences in the regulation and negotiation of projects with West German producer Erich Mehl or French partners, as well as Soviet, Czech and Polish partners. To illustrate my argument, I look closely at the film co-production *Fräulein von Scudéri* (*Mademoiselle de Scudéri*, 1955, Eugen York) and the short-lived collaboration of DEFA with Erich Mehl's West

German company undercover, Pandora, in Stockholm. In my discussion, I show how both the film's representation and DEFA's negotiation with its star, Henny Porten, can be read as allegories for the artist's entanglement with the state. While elaborating on the gradual politicization of the agenda for cultural prestige during the 1950s, I move on to the case of East German/French co-productions, which illustrates the initial enthusiasm by GDR functionaries for working with Western partners and then the growing difficulties encountered by DEFA due to the French studios' unwillingness to compromise their aesthetic principles. East German artists and politicians turned to work with socialist colleagues, and the case study of Konrad Wolf's film *Goya* (1972, GDR/USSR) shows with its prolonged production history that, yet again, the project of co-productions for prestige remained a contested one.

The entertainment agenda is the focus of my second chapter entitled "Competing with the West: Co-Productions for Popular Entertainment." This chapter explores DEFA's agenda to produce entertainment films in order to compete with West European and North American cinemas, which by the 1970s had established themselves on the market with genre films such as Westerns, comedies, science fiction and action films. I open the chapter with an elaboration on the project of entertaining GDR and socialist audiences, which was accompanied by awareness of the failure of politically motivated co-productions to appeal to audiences: "In order to widen its field of topics and better comply with the need for entertainment," former DEFA studio head Albert Wilkening announces in 1976, "great attention is paid to co-production and co-operation, in particular with regard to the film production of other socialist countries" (Wilkening 1976, original translation). Tracing the studio's contested agenda to entertain its audiences back to its roots in early Leninist postulates, I elaborate on DEFA's investment in developing the genres of *Indianerfilme*, or films about Native Americans, which

responded to Hollywood's Westerns, and of *utopische Filme,* or utopian films, which replaced on the socialist screens West European and North American science fiction films.

The *Indianerfilme* share with the utopian films the representation of a community unified by notions of brotherhood and solidarity with the oppressed, and therefore, both artists and cultural officials viewed these genres as particularly apt to demonstrate the project of DEFA co-productions. My discussion in this chapter illuminates the ways in which these genres visually create the fantasy of an international community whose values would successfully oppose US-American Imperialism. Developing further this argument, I explore DEFA's adaptation of common science fiction film conventions in order to attend to the audience's need for entertainment and the studio's search for a larger market for GDR films, and to promote the preservation of international peace. I illuminate DEFA's endeavor to reconnect to other state-owned film studios in the Eastern Bloc by comparing two utopian films made in co-production with Polish filmmakers, *The Silent Star* from 1960 and *Signale – Ein Weltraumabenteuer* (*Signals: A Space Adventure,* 1970, Gottfried Kolditz, GDR/Poland), as well as the *Indianerfilme Apachen* (*Apaches*, 1973, Gottfried Kolditz, GDR/USSR/Romania) and its sequel *Ulzana* (1974, Gottfried Kolditz, GDR/USSR/Romania). My discussion of specific genre conventions cultivated in socialist cinema in response to Western filmmaking focuses on the story's displacement in terms of time and space and on the disappearance of national borders. I also explore economic and material aspects of these co-productions, as they were motivated by the exchange of professional services, such as providing actors with particular physiognomies or landscapes that were not found in the GDR in exchange for financing of joint film projects.

Entertainment co-productions, finally, appear of significant value to the entire project of DEFA during the mid-1960s, not only due to their ability to reach out to younger East European audiences, but also because they provide a kind of the compensation for the earlier loss of Central European (Polish and Czech) film studios' interest in co-producing with DEFA. The compensatory function of DEFA co-productions becomes even more prominent after December 1965 with the encouragement of the production of entertainment genres as substitution for the censored films. Towards the end of the chapter, I engage with the identification of East German and East European hobbyist with the idealized Indian heroes on the silver screen; I also discuss the emerging utopian communities who lived in solidarity with the oppressed and attempted to practice the ideals propagated in the film co-productions.

My last chapter entitled "*Gemeinschaftsproduktionen*: International Solidarity and Antifascism in DEFA Co-Productions" discusses the agenda for co-producing in the context of the East European film industries' search for new modes of filmmaking. Overall, this chapter explores how DEFA employed co-productions from the late 1950s onward to promote the political ideal of solidarity and to school audiences into the project of building a new socialist society. Here the interplay between the project of co-producing and the fulfillment of state expectations and demands emerges more prominently than in the chapters before.

In the beginning of the third chapter, I discuss the political and institutional significance of the new notion of *Gemeinschaftsproduktion* (collective film production or equal partners co-production), which differs from the co-productions with Western partners. I view the introduction of this new term as a bridge from the already discussed prestige agenda to the redefined project of co-producing within the parameters of socialist cinema. Furthermore, I dwell on the origin of solidarity as a notion in the discourse

surrounding the memory of the Spanish Civil War in East Germany of the early 1950s. I thematize the involvement of veterans of this war, resistance fighters and Jewish returnees who were often convicted communists in the politics of the newly found German socialist state and draw implications for the changing representations of the Holocaust and the atrocities during WWII in co-productions.

Based on the case study of the first East German/Bulgarian co-production, *Stars*, I discuss the initial understanding of the solidarity concept as solidarity with Jewish suffering. Most importantly, I look at new strategies for negotiation of co-production projects within Eastern Europe. The lack of potential for further narrative or aesthetic development in solidarity co-productions of the late 1970s, however, and the marginal interest with which they were received among socialist audiences, resulted in the decline of these co-productions in the 1980s. Moreover, I identify a turn in the definition of the concept of solidarity to the exclusion of Jewish suffering and the preferred representation of positive socialist heroes, communist leaders and resistance groups. I therefore analyze *KLK Calling PTZ: The Red Orchestra*, in order to illustrate the involvement of the East German Ministry for State Security in the project of co-productions for solidarity as well as the manipulation of the memory of the victims of antifascism. After a brief discussion of further co-production projects initiated by Soviet film studios, I mention several examples of rejected, postponed, or never realized co-productions in order to elaborate on their relevance for our understanding of the limitations and the alternatives to the project of co-producing.

In my conclusion, I restate the importance of DEFA co-productions and the agendas of prestige, solidarity and entertainment to our understanding of the project of the East German studio. I summarize the ways in which the projects of sustaining international acclaim or of developing new genre conventions for a socialist

entertainment cinema complied with the interests of the GDR state, although they also occasionally clashed with political prerogatives. The final question that I address in the conclusion is: How does the discussion of co-productions change our perspective on DEFA and its place within European cinema before and after 1990? I point to still unexplored questions and fields for further research in regard to DEFA co-productions and thematize the continuation of the project of European co-productions after DEFA's dissolution in 1991.

Chapter 1: Co-Productions for Cultural Prestige: DEFA's Strategies for Achieving International Recognition

Two young boys, the son of a well-known West Berlin wholesaler and his friend, the family driver's son, start a fight while flipping through a glossy women's magazine. "My mom is the most beautiful woman!" exclaims the first one and points at an image of a blond made-up woman with a brilliant necklace sparkling around her neck. To the driver's son, however, only the expensive adornment makes this rich woman more appealing than his own mom. The boys dare each other to steal the most valuable jewelry of their mothers so they can compare their genuine beauty. This story of the comparison of the rich and the poor mothers mirrors the anxieties and the accelerating competition of the 1950s in divided Germany. Made between 1955 and 1957, this cinematic parable and co-production of East and West German filmmakers became trapped in a time of raging animosity between both ideological camps.

Te film presents the glamour of upper class societies defined by a lustrous party life, fashionable costumes and good-looking women reminiscent of UFA's successful genre film productions. East German cultural functionaries viewed these visual references to formerly acclaimed aesthetics as subversive to the ideals of the socialist-realist artwork, such as positive heroes and work in the name of the collective wellbeing. Three months after the completion of the co-production, therefore, the West German author Arthur Kuhnert saw himself forced to withdraw his name from the production credits. DEFA took over the film project and, following the demands of East German political officials, director Ernesto Remani shot several new scenes focusing on the life of workers in Berlin. From January 1958 to March 1959, internal negotiations at the East German film studio produced nothing but the repeated rejection of *The Beauty*'s release.

DEFA had appointed a new director in the fall of 1958, politically innocuous East German Walter Beck, yet even his edits did not satisfy the cultural functionaries. They announced the film's representation of the Western economic miracle (*Wirtschaftswunder*) as "political inaccuracy," which together with the problematic border-crossing act of two children who outsmart East and West German police sufficed for the film's ban. On 24 August 1961, eleven days after the beginning of the Berlin Wall's construction, *The Beauty* was sent to the shelves of the archives.

In 1999, thirty-eight years after the film was banned and ten years after Germany's reunification, German film scholar Ralf Schenk discovered 319 film reels from this last East/West German co-production, including various scenes, edits, screen tests, and film music. The preservation of this project in its astonishing entirety points not only to the fact that East German filmmakers could not easily let go of their project, but also to the strong agenda within the DEFA studio to revive the international acclaim of German cinema in the 1920s.

DEFA'S AGENDA FOR CULTURAL PRESTIGE

The Beauty is one of the many film co-productions for cultural prestige with West and East European partners that DEFA initiated over several decades. This chapter examines three aspects of the film studio's agenda for these films: first, attraction of West German and other internationally renowned film directors, actors, or scriptwriters in order to produce quality films and improve DEFA's image abroad; second, re-appropriation of formerly successful and politically innocuous genres such as literary adaptations of classical works, or costume dramas in the tradition of Weimar cinema; and third, development and maintenance of contacts to other film producers and studios in order to share sets, talent, and production costs, or to secure the release of DEFA films

abroad. Cultural prestige as a concept thus refers to DEFA's struggle to sustain the image of an internationally recognized studio, viewed as an equal partner in the circulation of films, cinematic talent, and services, while relying on transnational contacts among filmmakers and producers.

Most of the co-productions for cultural prestige were conceived as manifestations of German and European cultural heritage and were used to legitimize the East German state abroad or to explore contemporary artistic questions by reconnecting to the classical literary canon. There were two consecutive waves of DEFA films appropriating European cultural heritage: thirteen in the 1950s and eleven in the 1970s. The necessity for cultural and historical self-definition, to which these films attended, first emerged after the founding of the two German states in 1949 in the context of East German efforts to receive cultural and political legitimization, and returned in the 1970s, when the GDR in fact gained international recognition as a sovereign state. In my discussion, I will show how film co-productions responded to contemporaneous debates in the GDR public sphere, for instance on the role of artists in a socialist society, the employment of art as means of education, or the appropriation of the classical literary canon by way of asserting the GDR as the legitimate successor of the German cultural legacy. DEFA's agenda for achieving cultural prestige with international film co-productions was thus inextricably bound to the political prerogatives and expectations of the East German state.

In order to trace the alteration of DEFA's concept of cultural prestige, we need to resituate the co-productions in the historical conditions in which they emerged. In the early 1950s, while artists and political authorities were still discussing and consolidating the role of film in the newly founded socialist state, contracting well-known Western directors and actors appeared a logical strategy for combating DEFA's shortage of

experienced filmmakers and for maintaining the annual production.[21] Moreover, by attracting producers and artists from the Federal Republic, the East German studio hoped for easier access to Western screens, especially after 1951, when the official film exchange among the four German zones (*interzonaler Filmaustausch*) was suspended and DEFA's film production was systematically rebuffed (Schenk 1994: 86-104). By the mid-1950s, however, most West German filmmakers, screenwriters, and stars started rejecting projects and job offers in East Berlin out of fear that they might lose their positions or funding in the West. At the same time, pressed by demands by the GDR Ministry of Culture, DEFA required artists based in West Berlin to relocate to the eastern part or their contracts would be discontinued. In this precarious context, co-producing with West German and French partners appeared to be the only strategy to replace the practice of contracting individuals, and to guarantee DEFA's already existing collaborations with Western filmmakers.

Co-productions for cultural prestige with West European partners gained not only artistic but also political dimensions. Most of these films were adaptations of classical literary works made as a response to the cultural policy in the mid-1950s that endorsed the GDR's relationship to German cultural heritage. The coining of this policy pointed to the necessity of using past traditions in order to achieve present legitimacy for the East German state. GDR leaders, such as Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl, Education Minister Paul Wendel, as well as Minister of Culture, Johannes Becher, ardently propagated their view of the "harmonious pan-German communion of art and people, to be developed on

[21] Compare to Thomas Heimann's discussion of the DEFA crisis of 1952/1953 in terms of lack of experienced authors and well-developed scripts that resulted in a rapid decrease of domestic and international audiences' interest. According to Heimann, the East German studio shared this crisis with the cinemas of the Soviet Union and other East European countries (1994: 130-134).

new social foundation and based on the German classics" (Barck et al. 2001: 89-90).[22] This agenda was not foreign to other East European countries, which in the 1960s and 1970s endorsed the production of artistic biopics, literary adaptations and heritage epics in order to also claim national sovereignty.[23] In contrast to these socialist countries, however, East German cinema reclaimed classical literature by adaptations in the legacy of UFA, whereas the collaboration with West German filmmakers served as a legitimization strategy.

Consequently, party functionaries regarded co-productions with French partners between 1956 and 1960 "as part of the larger strategy in the GDR's efforts to gain international recognition and legitimacy" (Silberman 2006: 23-24). Drawing on the works of European Classicism, these films complied with the founding myth of the GDR as the successor of German enlightened thought and with the need for education of the audience in the ideals of socialism (Byg 1999: 27, Berghahn 1999: 222). The joint character of these films facilitated the exploitation of German and French classical works from a socially critical perspective that, in some cases, allowed the artists to voice their concerns about the uneasy relationship among culture, art, and politics in a divided Germany.

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[22] In 1950, Grottewohl declared that German culture should not be divided and critiqued the West German *Kulturverrat* or betrayal of German indigenous coulture (Judt 1998: 334). Similarly, Wendel appealed for the preservation of of what he called "cultural heritage of our Nation" (*Kulturerbe der Nation*) and stressed its importance in the processes of the negotiations for German unification (Schlenker 1977: 84). In 1956, Becher, presented at the Fourth German Writer's Congress his contribution to the discussions on the question of German cultural heritage. On the one hand, he emphasized the consolidating character of literature and all arts in providing opportunities for expression to various social groups. On the other hand, his speech clearly identified East Germany as the sole custodian of the German classical legacy (Barck et al. 2001: 89).

[23] Film historian Dina Iordanova argues that "Poland has pursued a systematic programme of adaptations of literary classics as a part of a concerted management effort. (…) Some memorable films have come out of the government-sponsored efforts to film officially endorsed epics focusing on important episodes of the nation's formation (and particularly those showing resistance to a variety of invading powers), thus fostering an articulate consolidation of sovereign Polish national identity" (2003: 49).

UFA'S LEGACY: UTILIZING TRANSNATIONAL CONTACTS

The transnational contacts that existed among filmmakers in Europe during the 1950s, as well as the continuity between DEFA and UFA in terms of artistic talent, development of particular genres, and technical equipment, proved crucial for both the initiation and the realization of co-productions for cultural prestige. When in 1946 DEFA moved to the film city Babelsberg – where some of the most innovative pictures of German and European cinema of the 1920s were made – the studio inherited not only facilities, costumes, film stock and sets, but also highly trained film personnel (cinematographers, film editors, designers, technicians, sound specialists) and directors who had worked with French, Italian, and British colleagues and were experienced mainly in making genre films, such as melodramas, musicals, revue films, and costume dramas (Kreimeier 1992: 434, Wilkening 1981:1-68). Several of these filmmakers who later became involved in East/West German co-productions lived in West Berlin or West Germany and worked for film companies, such as Artur Brauner's Central Cinema Companie (CCC)[24] and Erich Mehl, a Munich-based tradesman and film producer.[25] At the time, Soviet cultural officers who were familiar with the international successes of Weimar cinema, encouraged DEFA to entice German intellectuals, returnees, and filmmakers to the newly founded studio in Babelsberg (Jäger 1982: 9, Mückenberger 1994: 9-32). In response, DEFA offered contracts to more than ten former UFA directors,

[24] Artur Brauner returned from the Soviet Union in 1946, where he escaped during the Second World War. He was involved with DEFA on several film projects, including two with former UFA directors employed by DEFA: *Morituri* from 1948, directed by Eugen York, and *Man spielt nicht mit der Liebe* (*One Should not Play with Love,* 1949) directed by Hans Deppe (Bergfelder 2006: 105-135, Schenk 1994: 87).

[25] Erich Mehl, who had rescued a Jewish friend during the Third Reich, had strongly antifascist and socially critical views (Schenk 1994:86). In an article about his film project *Großstadtgeheimnis* (*Big City Secret,* 1952, Leo de Laforgue, West Germany), West German magazine *Der Spiegel* describes him as very active, well-connected and resourceful producer who traveled across the border in Berlin and worked equally well with East and West German film companies. (*Der Spiegel* 52 (1951): 28-29).

such as Arthur Pohl, Erich Engel, Paul Verhoeven, Hans Deppe, Georg Wildhagen, Arthur Maria Rabenalt, Wolfgang Schleif, Hans Müller, Gerhard Lamprecht and Wolfgang Staudte (Kersten 1963: 21, Wilkening 1981: 79). In the late 1940s and the early 1950s, they produced at Babelsberg a remarkable number of popular and critically successful films, released in the East and the West. However, as the division of both German states intensified, most of these directors ended up with short-lived appointments with DEFA, and very few managed to keep their contracts through the 1950s. Wolfgang Staudte, for instance, who is considered the most prolific director among the former UFA employees made seven films for DEFA between 1946 and 1955 compared to four for independent producers in the Federal Republic, as well as the first co-production by East and West German filmmakers, *Leuchtfeuer* (*Navigating Light,* 1950). Similarly, other UFA directors, such as Arthur Pohl, Hans Müller, and Gerhard Lamprecht, maintained work contracts with DEFA and parallel to that with the above-mentioned West German producers Artur Brauner and Erich Mehl, which also explains their subsequent involvement in DEFA film co-productions. In addition, one third of the scriptwriters at DEFA during the later 1940s and the early 1950s came from West Germany, and were able to work simultaneously for the East German film studio and Western film companies until the late 1950s when their contracts with DEFA were suspended.[26] Finally, in order to attract Western distributors and audiences to their films, DEFA competed for internationally acclaimed UFA stars, such as Henny Porten, Leny Marenbach, and Zara Leander, as well as the actors Theo Lingen and Hans Klering (Schenk 1994:86-87). The studio profited from a lasting and fruitful collaboration with Henny Porten, for instance, whose return to Babelsberg was widely publicized in the East German press.

[26] Such examples include R. A. Stammle, Georg C. Klaren, Gerhard Menzel, Gerhard Grindel, Bobby Lüthge, Arthur Maria Rabenabelt, Alf Teichs, Erich Ebermayer, Arthur A. Kuhnert, Joachim Barckhausen and Frank Clifford (Kersten 1963: 22, Wilkening, 1981: 109-110).

The initial endeavors to contract or present former UFA employees on screen reflect a desire within the East German studio during this transitional phase (1947-1955) to reconnect to former successes in order to achieve present goals. The existing production capacity of the largest studios in Europe, the mandate to educate and entertain German audiences, as well as the competition with genre cinema in the West, comprised essential conditions for the collaboration with Western directors and actors. More importantly, DEFA's ambition to achieve cultural prestige by employing West German filmmakers resonated with the prerogatives of the GDR government at the time, i.e. its attempts to reeducate the Germans and justify the East German state, as suggested by one of DEFA's founders, Alfred Lindemann, in 1947:

> We welcome everyone who wants to help the new and true democracy with creativity, directing, and acting, no matter in which zone one lives. [It is] of great importance to produce as many German films as possible. Our priority lies not in economic concerns but in the great relevance of film as means for the democratic reeducation of the German people. For this reason, we feel obliged to help in a comradely manner every German producer who needs our help for his project, under the condition that his film is artistically sound and serves the great goal of democratization.[27]

Until the mid-1950s, East German politicians valued and sponsored collaborations with Western authors and film directors particularly on genres that would allow DEFA to export a positive image of the GDR and its film industry. Such films were predominantly adaptations of world literature and costume dramas that recycled cinematic successes before WWII. By appropriating pre-socialist traditions, the cultural functionaries sought

[27] My translation of: „Wir begrüßen jeden Einzelnen, der mit seiner Idee, mit seiner Regie und mit seiner Schauspielkunst, ganz gleich in welcher Zone, der neuen wirklichen Demokratie helfen will. [...] [Es ist] von großer Wichtigkeit, dass soviel deutsche Filme wie nur möglich produziert werden. Wirtschaftliche Erwägungen sind hier nicht einmal in erster Linie entscheidend, maßgeblich ist die große Bedeutung des Films für die demokratische Erneuerung des deutschen Volkes. […] Aus diesem Grunde fühlen wir uns verpflichtet, jedem deutschen Produzenten die kameradschaftliche Hilfe zu geben, die er für seinen Film braucht, vorausgesetzt, dass sein Film künstlerisch fundiert ist und diesem großen Zwecke der Demokratisierung dient" (cited in Wilkening, 1981: 76-78).

to achieve cultural legitimization for the antifascist ideas promoted in East Germany and to demonstrate that even West German intellectuals supported these ideas. This became evident, for instance, in the discussion of a potential joint project with former UFA director Erich von Stroheim, whose reputation as a successful Hollywood filmmaker, GDR officials hoped, would bring a worldwide success for East German cinema.[28] For similar reasons, in 1954 DEFA and the GDR Ministry of Culture engaged in five-year long negotiations over a film adaptation of Thomas Mann's novel *The Buddenbrooks*.[29] As West German film critic Manfred Jäger points out, for East German political functionaries the re-appropriation of humanistic traditions ("die Wiedergewinnung humanistischer Traditionen") went hand in hand with the luring of intellectuals and returnees who settled in the West after the end of WWII and whose relocation to the East would have served as propaganda for the victory of socialist ideals (1982: 8-10).

DEFA's strategy of hiring West German directors and actors for the production of cultural prestige films was also a remedial practice for internal crises. This strategy gained importance especially in 1953, when DEFA acknowledged a decrease in audience numbers and failure of strictly political films to engage East German viewers.[30] Following this crisis, in October 1954, East German casting agent Erwin Reiche justified

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[28] In February 1950, Stefan Heyman from the Office for Culture and Education at the Central Committee wrote to Sepp Schwab, the head of DEFA: "There is no doubt that from an artistic standpoint, a film under Erich von Stroheim's direction would bring a world sensation for Defa and, therefore, you need to make it possible" ("Vom künstlerischen Standpunkt aus gesehen wäre ein Film unter der Regie von Erich von Stroheim zweifellos eine Weltsensation für die Defa und muß dementsprechend auch von euch vewertet werden," BArch SAPMO IV 2/906/203).

[29] See Ralf Schenk's discussion of DEFA's and GDR cultural attaches' negotiations (1953-1958) with Thomas and Erika Mann about the adaptation of *Die Buddenbrooks* as the first East/West German film co-production (Schenk 2003).

[30] For a detailed discussion, see Heimann 1994, "5.2. Deutsch-deutsche Filmarbeit oder Imagepflege? Die DEFA und die Öffnung nach Westen," 189-193. On the crisis in East German filmmaking and the search for solutions in entertainment films, see also Heimann 1994, 130-137.

his desire to continue employing filmmakers based in West Germany, saying that "DEFA and its casting manager have loyally and steadfastly followed the idea that there are no West or East German actors but only German ones."[31] Reiche's statement suggests that DEFA was conscious of the need for entertainment and popular actors that would bring the audience back to the movie theaters, yet at the same time, developments that same year refuted his words and demonstrated the dependence of the studio's policies on political prerogatives.

The year 1954 saw the establishment of a new Ministry of Culture in the GDR that supported DEFA's project to continue attracting Western directors and film personnel, yet with a new motivation behind this agenda. First, the Ministry urged DEFA's management to require that those filmmakers work exclusively for DEFA and relocate to East Berlin. Second, a new model of co-producing films was introduced so that DEFA would not have to necessarily employ those artists:

> The Ministry of Culture in the German Democratic Republic proposes the following measures that serve the struggle for an integral humanistic German culture in the realm of film and could encourage the dialog between both parts of Germany: […] joint East/West German film production; beginning of open negotiations among film producers in East and West about the cooperative production of *Heimat* and cultural films, as well as humanistic films.[32]

Behind the promise of mutual dialog, this statement suggests a stronger bond between cultural prestige and the agenda for political legitimization of the GDR state. The increasing politization of DEFA's hiring policies made both East and West German

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[31] "Die DEFA und ihr Besetzungschef haben ständig und unbeirrbar die Linie verfolgt, auf der es keine West- und Ostschauspieler, sondern lediglich deutsche Schauspieler gibt" (Cited in Schenk 1994: 87).

[32] My translation of: "Als Maßnahmen, die dem Kampf um eine einheitliche humanistische deutsche Kultur auf dem Gebiete des Films dienen und die Annäherung der beiden Teile Deutschlands fördern können, schlägt das Ministerium für Kultur der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik vor: (...) Gemeinsame ost-westdeutsche Filmproduktion; Aufnahme direkter Verhandlungen zwischen den Filmproduzenten in Ost und West über die gemeinsame Herstellung deutscher Heimat- und Kulturfilme sowie humanistischer Filme," *Sinn und Form* 2 (1954): 303.

artists cautious about their involvement with joint film projects. Cultural policies in the GDR solidified around demands for ideological education and rejection of artistic experimentation in favor of the creation of "humanistic films." This led to continuous negotiations of film projects, whereas the studio's desire to meet the audiences' expectations for entertainment after the 1953 crisis conflicted with the GDR officials' fear of the political emancipation of art production.

The West German government also took measures against collaborations on cultural grounds for fear of indoctrination and the importation of propaganda films. In 1953, an Interministerial Commission for East/West Questions was formed in the Federal Republic.[33] This commission met in 1954 to explicitly discuss the question of co-productions with DEFA, and rejected such projects in the future (Schenk 2003: 29). Film critic and historian Heinz Kersten reports on a follow-up meeting of East and West German filmmakers who discussed new opportunities for co-producing, such as the omission of DEFA in the film credits, or management of distribution rights solely by a West German company (1963: 136). These conditions, however, as we will see later in the case of the East German/French co-productions, were inacceptable to GDR film officials who insisted on the visibility of DEFA in every co-produced film that would bring support for the East Germany's political cause.

TRANSNATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR CO-PRODUCTIONS

In this precarious context, West German producer Erich Mehl proposed a new transnational strategy for combating the problem of banning co-productions across the borders of both German states. Mehl created the West German film company Pandora

[33] For an elaborate discussion of the role of this commission, as well as on censorship of DEFA films and the restriction of East/West film collaborations, see Andreas Kötzing's discussion "Zensur von DEFA-Filmen in der Bundesrepublik" (Kötzing 2009: 33-39).

undercover in Stockholm, and collaborated with DEFA on four films labeled as East German/Swedish co-productions: *Leuchtfeuer* (*Navigating Light,* 1954, Wolfgang Staudte), *Das Fräulein von Scudéri* (*Mademoiselle de Scudéri,* 1955, Eugen York) *Spielbank-Affäre* (*Casino Affair*, 1957*,* Arthur Pohl) and *Die Schönste* (*The Beauty,* 1957, Ernesto Remani).

Several factors point to Pandora's history as a private company founded abroad in order to circumvent legal restrictions on film co-production in West Germany. First, the company was established with the help by Henny Porten's and Hans Nielsen's connections to Swedish colleagues and fans, which dated back to the 1920s and the 1930s. Second, according to film historian Ralf Schenk, founding Pandora in the Swedish capital brought some financial advantages, as the company had to pay lower taxes than in West Germany. Shot in Babelsberg and only occasionally in Sweden with German actors, these films were, nevertheless, released solely in the GDR and the Federal Republic (sometimes under different titles) but never in Sweden (Schenk 2003: 28). There are several reasons that explain this fact, perhaps, the most important of which would be the lack of finances to dub or subtitle the films, as well as the supposedly marginal interest among Scandinavian audiences to stories attending to German issues. In fact, all four films co-produced with Pandora raised questions about current social or artistic problems and afforded East and West German filmmakers the opportunity to critically comment on their respective societies.

Mehl's company worked, furthermore, with an Austrian distributor, Austria Filmverleih, but there is no record of cooperation or exchange of services and actors with the domestic Swedish film industry. This fact yet again points to the lack of Erich Mehl's aspirations to reach to Scandinavian audiences, and, at the same time, the desire to sustain an East/West German collaboration through what he saw at the time a transitional

phase in the hope that German reunification will alter the rigid political circumstances. Pandora's practice, therefore, was to use already existing contacts and acquaintances, primarily among former UFA employees or German émigrés. The studio typically hired directors and scriptwriters who lived in West Berlin, were previously involved in DEFA productions, and had the approval of the studio and East German officials. The directors Wolfgang Staudte, Hans Müller, and Arthur Pohl were involved in such projects, as were; the writers Joachim Barckhausen and Alexander Graf Stenbock-Fermor.

In order to understand the relevance of these transnational collaborations to the co-productions for cultural prestige, we can explore how and why filmmakers and actors became involved in one of DEFA co-productions with Pandora, *Das Fräulein von Scudéri* (*Mademoiselle de Scudéri,* 1955, Eugen York). Most artists who participated in this film project came from West Germany, yet they were linked either through a common past at UFA, or by their progressive political convictions. For example, former UFA director Eugen York who agreed to direct the co-production had already shot his major feature film *Morituri* (1948, Germany) in Babelsberg, a project sponsored by West Berlin producer and Jewish émigré from Poland, Artur Brauner. *Morituri* was politically significant as the first film to openly address the Holocaust in a story, which focused on an attempt to escape from a concentration camp.[34] Born in Moscow, Eugen York moved to Berlin as a teenager, and worked at UFA as a cutter and assistant director. Under the guidance of UFA's prolific documentary filmmaker Walter Ruttmann, York received acclaim for his short and documentary films. What made the former UFA director attractive for the *Mademoiselle de Scudéri* project was his previous work on two West German film adaptations released in 1950, *Lockende Gefahr* (*The Allure of Danger*) and

[34] For a detailed discussion on *Morituri*'s production history, as well as on Brauner's international network of émigrés, see Bergfelder's chapter "Artur Brauner's CCC: Remigration, Popular Genres, and International Aspirations" in Bergfelder 2006: 105-137.

Export in Blond. During these projects, York had collaborated with some of Germany's best-qualified authors, such as DEFA screenwriter Artur Kuhnert, as well as the West German author of the popular Mabuse-films, Norbert Jacques. Moreover, York's positive experience at DEFA encouraged him to engage further with literary adaptations for West German television, several of which appeared in the late 1960s and the 1970s. Similarly, Joachim Barckhausen and Alexander Stenbock-Fermor, the successful DEFA screenwriting team,[35] lived in West Berlin and specialized in film adaptations of literary works.[36] From the inception of the East German studio, they had written eight scripts for DEFA, including several antifascist films.[37] Stenbock-Fermor, who like York immigrated from tsarist Russia to Germany, met Barckhausen as a young communist in the early 1930s, and both became close friends and collaborators (Mückenberger 1994: 20). Their relationship to communist circles during the Weimar Republic made them attractive to DEFA, and the studio employed the screenwriting team until the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 when both authors insisted on making West Berlin their home (Richter 1994: 181-182).

Given the fact that DEFA co-productions with Pandora were released only in both German states, we can conclude that the East German artists sought recognition from their West German colleagues and the preservation of existing contacts in a suffocating political climate. Moreover, the transnational efforts to co-produce as outlined above suggest that artists from East and West Germany shared comparable concerns about their

[35] For more information on the team, see Mückenberger 1994: 20-22, and Stenbock-Fermor's autobiography from 1973, *Der rote Graf*.

[36] Such films were their adaptations of Honoré de Balzac, *Karriere in Paris* (*Career in Paris*, 1952, Georg C. Klaren, GDR) and of Hans Christan Andersen's fairy tale *Das Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern* (*The Little Match Girl*, 1953, Fritz Genschow, West Germany).

[37] Examples include *Grube Morgenrot* (*Coal Mine Red Sky,* 1948, Erich Freund, Wolfgang Schleif, Germany) and *Familie Behntin* (*The Behntin Family,* 1950, Slatan Dudow, GDR).

role as mentors, critics or educators in the divided country. All four films co-produced with Pandora raised questions about current social or artistic problems and afforded East and West German filmmakers the opportunity to critically comment on their respective societies. Most importantly, the format of co-productions allowed them to also address their own questions about the relationships of artists to political power, to audiences, or to their artwork, about the role of art in their respective societies, and about their power or the limitations they experienced.

CASE STUDY: MADEMOISELLE DE SCUDÉRI

Similar questions informed E.T.A. Hoffmann's novella *Das Fräulein von Scudéri* (*Mademoiselle de Scudéri*), published between 1819 and 1821, and made it appealing to Erich Mehl, Eugen York, and DEFA dramaturge Marieluise Steinhauer.[38] Hoffmann's text focuses on the social role of an artist, Mademoiselle de Scudéri, who had two tasks as a public intellectual: to disclose the truth about a prominent public figure committing crimes (represented by René Cardillac), and to assert the victory of virtue over false accusations (by rehabilitating a young man's innocence). York's film, in comparison, defined by some scholars as a *Massenkostümfilm,* or costume drama for the masses,[39] differs from previous adaptations in its concentration on social conflicts and injustice, and in the blending of genres such as musical, costume drama, and period film.[40] More to

[38] Marieluise Steinhauer lived in West Berlin and worked on all four DEFA co-productions with Pandora and on several successful East German film adaptations such as the adaptation of Theodor Fontane's novel *Corinna Schmidt* (1951, Arthur Pohl, GDR), Wilhelm Hauff's fairytale *Das kalte Herz* (*Heart of Stone,* 1950, Paul Verhoeven, GDR), and Friedrich Wolf's play *Bürgermeister Anna* (*Anna the Mayor*, 1950, Hans Müller, GDR). In 1962, after the building of the Berlin Wall and the release of her last DEFA film, *Auf der Sonneneite* (*On the Sun Side,* 1962, Ralf Kirsten, GDR), she decided to live in the West.

[39] See Gorski's discussion of the film and her comparison to earlier adaptations (1980: 83).

[40] By the mid-1950s, Hoffmann's novella has been adapted several times for German and European audiences: by the prolific Mario Caserini in the Italian production *Mademoisielle de Scudéri* (1911, Italy), by Karl Frey in his silent film *Der Besessene* (*The Obsessed,* 1919, Germany), by Hans Brückner in a 1930

the point, DEFA's and Pandora's treatment of the novella focuses on questions such as: What is the relationship between art and the artist? Can art be made for art's or the artist's sake and if so, what are the implications for society?[41] What value do we assign to artifacts that serve to please those in power? The co-production addresses these complex questions through the juxtaposition of two types of artists: the jeweler René Cardillac who is consumed with his art and struggles to separate himself from it; and the elderly poetess Scudéri who in her efforts to please the French King Louis XIV represents an artist compliant with power. At the same time, the socio-political dimensions of the film resonated with debates over the autonomy of art, art as a means of education, and state-sponsored art production, which informed the GDR public sphere in the 1950s.

The plot of the film loosely follows Hoffmann's novella: The story evolves in Paris during the reign of Louis XIV. Presumably, an organized band of thieves and murderers terrorizes the citizens by attacking them on the street at night. Most of the victims are wealthy lovers who bring their mistresses expensive jewelry made by one of Paris's best goldsmiths, René Cardillac. In order to prevent further murders among the aristocracy and to restore peace to the city, the King establishes a special tribunal, the *Chambre ardente*, whose purpose is to investigate the crimes, capture the criminals, and restore social stability. Instead, the tribunal's president, La Régnié, and the Minister of War, Marquis de Louvois, fill the prisons with homeless people and prostitutes, and conspire to control the nobility by means of terror and cruelty. To this end, they send a

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film *Juwelen* (*Jewels*, 1930, Germany), and by Austrian-born director Paul Martin in his West German picture *Die tödlichen Träume* (*Fatal Dreams,* 1951, FRG), a fantastic drama, which was loosely based on motifs from several works by E.T.A. Hoffmann (Gorski 1980: 82, Ringel 1995: 87, Kremer 2009: 587).

[41] The early 19th century concept of *l'art pour l'art* (art for art's sake) proposed an intrinsic and genuine value of art as divorced from any propagandistic, didactic, moral, or utilitarian functions. This view was denounced in the young GDR state as bourgeois and ideologically problematic. Film historian Barton Byg provides an excellent discussion on the aversion to Expressionist film in official GDR policy and the debates on stylized filmmaking (1999: 26-29).

poem to the King in the name of the lovers of Paris whose nightly trysts are endangered by the murders, while in fact asking for greater control over the streets of Paris. It is no accident that the two officials cast their request in verse form, as their poem is designed not only to flatter the king, but also to appeal to his appreciation of the arts. Louis XIV asks advice of Mademoiselle de Scudéri who at the time is directing an opera glorifying the Sun King. She elegantly counters La Régnié's and Louvois' proposal with a jocular verse: *Un amant, qui craint les voleurs, N'est point digne d'amour* (A lover who is afraid of thieves is not worthy of love). Soon after that, Scudéri receives a thank-you note and a fine necklace from the alleged thieves, yet the gift makes her fear for her life. At this point, the film narrative draws our attention to Scudéri's admirer and counterpart, René Cardillac, who is the actual murderer. His assistant, Olivier Brusson, accidentally discovers Cardillac's secret: the artist kills his customers because he is unable to part with his art, even when others commissioned and paid for it. The jeweler shows Brusson where he hoards the stolen artifacts: in a museum-like chamber under his house, on display only to the artist himself. Due to his love for Cardillac's daughter Madelon, Brusson is willing to remain silent about this secret, even when one commissioner kills Cardillac and when the police officer captures the young assistant and convicts him of being the jeweler's murder. In the end, Scudéri learns the truth from Brusson, and uses her art and the king's affection to restore the balance and rescue the innocent.

Instead of focusing on elements from German Romanticism or engaging with the struggles of the individual subject, York's film introduces several thematic and structural alterations that underscore its agenda to address the contemporaneous question of the artist's entanglement with the state.[42] First, Mademoiselle de Scudéri's relationship to the

[42] The exclusion of romantic elements from York's film might be seen as a strategy to accommodate the predominant negative attitude to German Romanticism in the GDR cultural policy. According to film historian Barton Byg, "Romanticism's implication in the irrational seductiveness of Nazi imagery

king is reinforced by her position as a theater director staging opera and ballet performances (whereas in the novella she is only a writer), and thus her public appearance and authority invite a comparison to the role of a film director in a socialist society. Second, the exclusion of the daemonic aspects from Cardillac's character, the restraint from moral judgment exhibited by his criminal acts, and the deliberate focus on his artistic talent and the struggle to salvage his art from becoming a commodity, raise questions about art production and reception, and the material versus aesthetic value of artifacts. Third, the power relationships within the narrative are redefined, in order to accommodate the critique of an empowered elite. For instance, the omission of the personal narrator who recounts his story in flashbacks and is integral to Hoffmann's narrative structure invites a more universal reading of the text. This reading points the audience to the political conflicts that informed French society at the time, which were employed by the filmmakers as an allegory for the GDR in 1955. In addition, while in the novel the poetess functions as a detective who compensates for the shortcomings of the police, the film emphasizes the antagonism between Scudéri and the recently established tribunal empowered through the king's signature.

The question of power first emerges in the film when the president of the *Chambre ardente*, La Régnié, and Minister of War Louvois plot to gain control over the city of Paris: "My dear Régnié, you are making a mistake by thinking too much of prestige. Don't we both want something else, i.e. power; the power in this state. To your health! Now imagine that we were able to implement everything proposed by good old Degrais." La Régnié responds in the following manner: "Then, yes, then we will finally

(indirectly by way of Expressionist film) has made many film people averse to this German tradition of meretricious spectacle…" (Byg 1999: 27). For further comments on the film policy in East Germany and the preferred realist style in film adaptations and DEFA/French film co-productions of the 1950s, see Silberman 2006.

have the nobility under control. There would be no secrets anymore. Our eyes, our ears would be everywhere. We know everything, we steer everything, we command everything."[43]

This dialog, which is not found in Hoffmann's novella, captures the anxieties of artists working under conditions of increased state control over art production and distribution. On the one hand, the image of both politicians threatening to submit daily life to their power reveals a critique of the limitations placed upon artistic representation of reality. Louvois' initial comment about prestige, furthermore, points to internal political debates over the GDR's image abroad that became relevant especially in the mid-1950s, and for which cinema, as shown above, appeared a crucial medium. On the other, we can read the metaphor of an omnipresent police force in the streets of Paris as an allusion to the East German Ministry for State Security (Stasi), which was formed in February 1950. Both readings address the complex issue of the entanglement of artists with power, which has been under the scrutiny of German historians especially since 1989.[44]

As in the case of Mademoiselle de Scudéri in York's film, the socialist state privileged writers, filmmakers and intellectuals to create a discourse on the inner life of society by analyzing problems and reaffirming values. Yet at the same time, the artists' work and private lives were overseen by various state-sponsored commissions and the

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[43] My translation of: Luvois: "Mein Lieber la Regnie, Sie machen einen Fehler, Sie denken zu viel an die Prestige. Was wir beide wollen ist doch was anderes: die Macht, die Macht im Staate. Auf Ihre Gesundheit! Stellen Sie sich einmal vor, wir könnten alles ausführen, was der gute Degrais vorgeschlagen hat." La Regnie: "Dann, ja, dann hätten wir endlich auch den Adel unter Kontrolle. Dann gibt es kein Geheimnis mehr. Unsere Augen, unsere Ohren sind überall dabei. Wir wissen alles, wir lenken alles, wir beherrschen alles. "

[44] Refer to Michael Geyer's introduction to an edited volume on the power of intellectuals in Germany, where he states that "the intertwinement of intellectuals and the repressive regime is of signal importance in the ongoing debates on German culture" (2001: 1).

East German secret police. The institutional infrastructure of the GDR, in the words of historian Frank Trommler, made artists into "beneficiaries of this peculiar system of welfare and surveillance" (2001: 55). The interdependence of the state and the artists thus needs to be reconsidered in light of their role to reeducate and transform the citizen's consciousness in the process of building the socialist state. In the context of the 1950s, completing this task implied returning to past German literary traditions and appropriating them for the legitimization of both, the socialist state and its intellectuals as "tutors of the nation" (Geyer 2001: 2).

Another German historian, Konrad Jarausch, has traced the emergence of critical East German intellectuals as rooted in a German literary and philosophical tradition, from the notion of the *Gelehrter* (scholar) in the eighteenth century to the concept of *Geistesarbeiter* (workers of the mind) during the Weimar Republic (2001: 277). Jarausch points out that in the socialist context, the concept of writers and intellectuals "tends to conflate engagement with structure by focusing on the producers of ideology" (2001: 278). Due to the fact that most of these artists belonged to Weimar communist circles, had emigrated to the Soviet Union during the Third Reich or participated in the resistance inside Nazi Germany, they conceived of antifascism as a notion that participated in the concept of an intellectual and of reeducation as their primary task. This is important for our understanding of the unique self-definition of GDR artists – in particular of the 1950s – as they embraced the role of mediators between the antifascist ideology of the state and the larger masses as the recipients of both art and new values.[45]

In this sense, we can reconsider Mademoiselle de Scudéri, an artist compliant with political power who restores the social status quo, and Cardillac, a proponent of art

[45] For a detailed discussion on the conflation of antifascist ideas and the image of the emerging East German intellectual, refer to the last chapter of this study.

for art's sake, as two models that do not necessarily contradict but complement each other. While Cardillac's figure stands for the artist as a solitary creator of ideas, Scudéri may be viewed as "fulfilling the old Romantic *Wunschtraum* of the artist emerging from isolation and social alienation and exerting a humanizing influence on the exercise of political power at the highest level." (Holbeche 1980: 10). Indeed, in York's film the poetess always negotiates with the King in public, which reinforces her status of a visibly recognized and respected adviser. Thus, she represents the kind of public figure that GDR politicians envisioned for cultivating the prestige of their state.

In 1955, the *Westdeutsche Allgemeine* commented on Porten's appearance as Mademoiselle de Scudéri in York's film after a long break from her career as an UFA star. The parallel between Scudéri's and Porten's artistic personas is indicative of the important role that internationally renowned actors as public figures played in the 1950s East/West German co-productions:

> This scene is almost creepy. It clearly shows Henny Porten 'in her element'; she appears in a world of illusions and glow, where neither problems in the East or the West, nor political facts exist. The scene shows that this lady needs the dream factory, the light of the projectors and the magic of opulent film premieres. She is neither a martyr nor émigré, I think. She is and will remain a film star as long as she has this opportunity.[46]

For Porten, as West German journalist Michael Lentz asserts, appearing in a DEFA production was first and foremost an opportunity to reconnect to her own former successes as one of the most celebrated silent film stars of the dream factory UFA. At the same time, despite Lentz's critique of Porten's ignorance of Cold War rivalries, her

[46] My translation of: "Diese Szene ist fast gespenstisch. Sie zeigt ganz deutlich, dass Henny Porten 'in ihrem Element' ist, in jener Welt der Illusionen und des schönen Scheins, in der es weder Ost- noch West-Probleme und keine tagespolitischen Fakten gibt. Sie zeigt, daß diese Frau die Traumfabrik braucht, das Rampenlicht und den Zauber der großen Premieren. Sie ist weder eine Märtyrerin noch eine Überläuferin, denke ich, sie ist ein Filmstar, und sie wird es bleiben, solange man ihr die Gelegenheit dazu gibt" (Lentz 1955).

agreement to film with the East German studio had much larger political implications than he anticipated.

The story of Porten's interest in the co-production illuminates the symbiotic relationship between DEFA and West European film stars who shared international prestige as a goal. Porten first appeared in *Carola Lamberti – eine vom Zirkus* (*Carola Lamberti from the Circus,* 1954, Hans Müller, GDR), a project that she herself suggested to DEFA studio managing director Sepp Schwab. He saw in Porten's proposal the potential for "the most spectacular guest performance of a West German star at DEFA," and agreed to produce a story that, similarly to *Mademoiselle de Scudéri*, commented on the role of an aging female artist in emphasizing the political and social importance of arts (Schenk 1994: 98).[47]

DEFA's enthusiasm to work with Porten is evident from Schwab's letter dated July 27th 1951. In this document, he offered the former UFA actress a work contract, which included coverage of all relocation costs, exchange from West to East German marks at a special rate, travel visa, villa, documents for the intelligence services, and work for her husband, Dr. von Kaufmann, in a leading position in the administration or in East German health care institutions.[48] By promising Porten privileges shared by few East German artists at the time, DEFA reveals its intention to use her case as an example for a star neglected in the West and rediscovered in the East. As Porten's biographer Helga Belach and film historian Schenk suggest, by 1954 the actress had been long unemployed in the West and faced financial difficulties (Belach 1986: 146, Schenk 1994:

[47] In *Carola Lamberti from the Circus,* an elderly lady who manages a circus is pressed by her three sons to give up the business and retire. After their initial success, the young men eventually encounter great financial difficulties and at the end, only their mother is able to secure the circus's reputation and future.

[48] Sepp Schwab's Correspondence (BArch DR 117 S 69).

98). In other words, by contracting Porten and bringing her back on stage, the studio management sought to draw attention to its own potential as one of the largest European studios and employers of filmmakers. Ironically, Porten's decision to allow her prestige to enhance the studio's reputation recalls Scudéri's relationship to the French king. By coming to Babelsberg, then, she not only sought to reconnect to her previous successes, but also found her own professional and emotional satisfaction. This is evident from the actress's account upon her arrival at DEFA in 1953:

> In Babelsberg, I encountered old acquaintances: stage workers, lighting technicians, location managers. It was a very cordial reunion, and I am very happy to be able to work again. Every day in the studio is like a holiday for me.[49]

This statement, as well as the entire story of DEFA's and Pandora's collaboration, attests to the ability of co-productions for cultural prestige to mobilize not only artistic talent but also the existing contacts among former UFA employees for the improvement of the East German studio's image abroad. In addition, the trajectory of these co-productions demonstrates that transnational contacts and personal agendas were always intertwined with political projects and with the mandate that the socialist state assigned to artists.

DEFA CO-PRODUCTIONS WITH FRENCH PARTNERS

By 1955, the year when *Mademoiselle de Scudéri* was released and when the Federal Republic officially refused to recognize the East German socialist state, high-ranking GDR officials began to reevaluate the political potential of existing transnational contacts to the West. At this point, the collaboration with Pandora had run into serious difficulties, which ultimately resulted in the censoring of DEFA's and Mehl's last co-production, *The Beauty,* just before its premiere in 1957 (Hallensleben 2002). Even

[49] My translation of: "Ich habe in Babelsberg alte Bekannte wieder getroffen, Bühnenarbeiter, Beleuchter, Aufnahmeleiter. Es war ein herzliches Wiedersehe, und ich bin sehr froh, wieder arbeiten zu können. Jeder Tag, an dem ich im Atelier stehe, ist für mich immer noch ein Feiertag" (cited in Belach 1986: 146).

though East German co-productions with Pandora initially succeeded in bridging the political divide, governmental decisions of the late 1950s rendered the feasibility of such collaborations obsolete. As already discussed above, by 1957, both German governments had established film controlling commissions and declared film imports across the German border and East/West German co-productions undesirable. Therefore, DEFA embarked on expanding its existing contacts to French film companies, and signed co-production contracts with two smaller ones, Films Ariane and Films Borderie, as well as with the largest French studio, Pathé Consortium Cinéma (Pathé), all based in Paris. Once again, these projects were of interest to DEFA primarily for their appropriation of the European classical heritage and for their use of transnational ties: Pathé had collaborated with UFA since the 1920s, and many of the French directors involved in the co-productions had previously worked at UFA. For instance, Louis Daquin was among the few young French filmmakers whose career started as an assistant director at Babelsberg in the 1930s and participated in early French/German co-productions. He was one of many directors, writers and actors brought to Babelsberg by the French/German bilateral agreement signed in 1929. Last but not least, as film historian Marc Silberman points out, the contacts between French and East German artists were reinforced by the active participation of most French directors in left-wing organizations, such as the Labor Union or the French Communist Party (2006: 22).

DEFA co-productions with French partners gained political importance in order to buttress the reputation of the GDR as independent from the restrictive policies of the Federal Republic introduced with the Hallstein doctrine from September 1955. This doctrine limited trade, cultural exchange, as well as diplomatic relations with countries in and outside Europe that would recognize East Germany's sovereignty. In response, the cooperation with French filmmakers provided an opportunity to East German artists' and

state functionaries to voice their opposition to the exclusion of DEFA films from European venues of cultural exchange.

Already in March 1955, DEFA sent a delegation to Paris to negotiate its participation in the Cannes Film Festival. Three months later, the East German studio's representative Rudolf Böhm reported his success: unofficial screenings of two DEFA films at the festival. He concluded that under these circumstances, the film relations with France were of primary importance for GDR's efforts to gain political and cultural prestige:

> The struggle for Germany's democratic unification is to be undertaken more forcefully in the film sector so that relations to West Germany's movie industry are secured and expanded, while at the same time securing relations to France and England and establishing new relations to Italy will have an impact on our West German film strategy.[50]

DEFA's delegation to Cannes, therefore, was a serious step to confirming the support of French filmmakers of East German cinema, and suggests that, at least for DEFA's part, political priorities defined the initiatives for co-producing. French producers and filmmakers, in comparison, saw an economic opportunity in their collaboration with DEFA, but they also profited from the exchange of technical know-how and the increased audience appeal of co-productions. "Drawing on DEFA's production capacity (the largest studios in Europe, virtually limitless extras, highly trained technicians)," film historian Silberman argues, "allowed these companies to produce movies with a big-budget look 'on the cheap,' features that could compete with the blockbusters coming from Hollywood" (2006: 22).

There were several venues where the interests of French and East German filmmakers intersected. In postwar Europe, torn by ideological rivalries, East

[50] Report from June 6, 1955 (BArch DR1/4644), cited in Silberman 2006: 40-41.

German/French co-productions revisited a past that, on the one hand, should appeal to European audiences as such, and on the other, similarly to the DEFA co-productions with Pandora, invited critique of contemporary social and political relations. Three of the adaptations of European classical works of literature, therefore, represented struggles for justice, class equality, or for liberation from occupiers and adopted the genre conventions of costume dramas and period films. The fourth one was based on a more recent theater play, which critically engaged with the Salem witch hunts in colonial Massachusetts, and translated them into the 1950s context of anti-communist hearings under Senator Joseph McCarthy in the United States Congress.

All narratives revolved around stories from the sixteenth, seventeenth, or the nineteenth century, which gave the filmmakers the opportunity to create visually opulent pictures, and at the same time, to eventually relocate contemporary problems in terms of space and time. The first co-production, *Die Abenteuer des Till Ulenspiegel* (*The Bold Adventure*, 1956, Gérard Philipe), was a film adaptation of Belgian author Charles de Coster's novel from 1867, *The Legend of Thyl Ulenspiegel and Lamme Goedzak*. Borrowing the fourteenth-century Low German character, Till Eulenspiegel, Coster's text revamps him as a popular Flemish hero whose adventures become an allegory for the struggle for national independence in the Netherlands during the Wars of Reformation. The second co-production, *Die Hexen von Salem* (*The Crucible,* 1957, Raymond Rouleau), was based on the seventeenth-century trials prosecuting people accused of witchcraft in Massachusetts. Jean-Paul Sartre adapted Arthur Miller's 1953 play, *The Crucible*, as an allegory of McCarthyism. Similarly, the adaptation of Victor Hugo's 1862 classic historical epic *Les Misérables* addressed the struggle for class equality and better life of oppressed citizens of the beginning of the nineteenth century. The fourth film adaptation, *Trübe Wasser* (*Muddy Waters,* 1960, Louis Daquin) focused on Honoré

de Balzac's historical 1842 novel *La Raboilleuse* from the series *La Comédie humaine,* which ridiculed bourgeois pettiness and fraudulence during the restauration in France of the early nineteenth century.

These co-productions proved advantageous for both sides in the partnership. For the French side, the access to DEFA's film studios, facilities, technicians and artistic talent meant lowering of their production costs, exchange of technical competence and expanding of their European audiences. East German film officials, as already mentioned, viewed the co-productions primarily in terms of their agenda for the appropriation of the European classical heritage for GDR's recognition in Western Europe. According to GDR politicians, and parallel to the case of Thomas Mann, the involvement of celebrated European writers in these projects, such as Sartre, for instance, as well as of renowned directors, such as Jean-Paul Le Chanois or Louis Daquin, or of film stars, such as Simone Signoret, Yves Montand, Jean Gabin, and Gérard Philipe, served as an evidence of left oriented European intellectuals' support for the socialist project. Moreover, the publicity and press attention that the presence of internationally acclaimed artists in Babelsberg received boosted DEFA's reputation at home and in Europe. The widespread reception that the co-productions enjoyed in more than ten countries, including Finland, Sweden, Hungary, West Germany, Poland, Spain, Italy, USA, and Greece suggests that these films were actually conceived as contributions to European cinema.

The first problems with the East German/French co-productions emerged in the late 1950s from the French partners' hesitancy to include DEFA in the credits of their film versions. Already with the *Les Misérables* project in 1957, Pathé's representatives began negotiating DEFA's role in the co-production. In May of the same year, they announced that the film credits for their version would define the double-feature as

French/Italian co-production "with the cooperation of DEFA (Brandt Production)."[51] In 1958, Pathé did not mention East Germany and DEFA in its promotional leaflet for the Cannes film festival, which included several pages on the completed film. In this context, the GDR officials' hopes of using film co-productions to establish the de facto recognition of the GDR's sovereignty came to a dead end. As a response, at the DEFA film conference in July 1958, the GDR Minister of Culture, Alexander Abusch, announced that only partners from socialist countries should be considered for future DEFA co-productions: "The consequences must be drawn from the studio's previous co-productions that work will be oriented primarily toward co-productions with the Soviet Union and other countries in the socialist camp."[52]

DEFA's disappointment with its French partners escalated with the last joint film project, which was released only in two other countries besides East Germany and France. Even though previously East German party officials tolerated the privileging of genre aesthetics over the political message in the literary adaptations, in the case of *Muddy Waters,* the Film Office required a complete revision of the film in terms of narrative and editing. The two versions and premieres, as well as the controversial reception of the last East German/French co-production show the growing discrepancies between the partners' conception of the collaborative project that could not be overcome anymore. As a consequence, two further projects, Louis Daquin's film adaptation of Émile Zola's naturalist novel from 1892, *La Débâcle*, as well as an Arthur Miller adaptation 1945 novel thematizing antisemitism, *Focus*, failed (Schenk 1994: 97).

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[51] Quoted in BArch DR1/4433. See also Silberman's discussion of the production history of the film *Le Miserables* (2006: 35-37).

[52] The Federal Archive in Berlin holds various documents from preparatory meetings for this conference. This documents strongly critique the issue of co-productions with Western partners. See BArch DR1/7904.

Finally, with the construction of the Berlin Wall and the consolidation of the border between the two German states in 1961, DEFA's joint projects with Western partners were suspended.

DEFA CO-PRODUCTIONS WITH EAST EUROPEAN PARTNERS

Starting from the early 1960s and throughout the 1970s, DEFA co-production partners came exclusively from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.[53] What characterizes these collaborations is a redefined and much more complex agenda for cultural prestige, related, according to managing director Albert Wilkening, to DEFA's ambition of strengthening its contacts to other film studios to compete on an entertainment-oriented film market.[54] In addition, the DEFA annual report from 1970 announces that "co-productions serve not only the increase of our films' potential to attract audiences, but they are first and foremost a significant tool for the stabilization and consolidation of socialist collaboration with our comrades from socialist film studios."[55] With the encouragement of artistic exchanges within Eastern Europe, the task of film co-productions was primarily to showcase East German production facilities and artistic talent at international film festivals in Moscow, Karlovy Vary or Leipzig. At the same time, by co-producing with other socialist cinemas and by sharing the cost of

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[53] Such studios included the Czech Barrandov in Prague and Koliba in Bratislava, the Polish Zespół Filmowy in Warsaw, Hungarofilm in Budapest, the Yugoslavian Bosna Film base din Sarajevo, the Romanian Studio Bukarest, the Bulgarian Boyana Film in Sofia, as well as the Soviet Mosfilm and Lenfilm based in Moscow and Leningrad respectively.

[54] Refer to: "In order to widen [DEFA's] field of topics and better comply with the need for entertainment, great attention is paid to co-production and co-operation, in particular with regard to the film production of other socialist countries" (Wilkening 1976: 10).

[55] My translation from: "Die Ko-Produktionen dienen nicht nur der Erhöhung der Attraktivität unserer Filme, sondern sind vor allem ein bedeutsames Instrument zur Festigung und Vertiefung der sozialistischen Gemeinschaftsarbeit mit den Genossen der sozialistischen Filmstudios" (DEFA annual report from 1970, DR 117/ 19120, 23).

considerable film projects, DEFA was able to continue the production of period films, historical epics and costume dramas, which had previously been successful. Indeed, in 1971 alone, DEFA collaborated with six East European and Soviet studios on fifteen films, including six co-productions, and provided technical services for nine foreign film projects.[56] Compared to DEFA's annual production of fifteen films in 1971, eighteen films in 1972, and sixteen films in 1973, the active involvement in collaborative film projects and co-productions in the 1970s suggests that co-productions were as important as domestic feature films.[57]

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw the revival of debates on the appropriation of classical European heritage in the GDR, as well as the question of the relationship of artists to political power. Classical works were once again translated into genres of prestige, such as literary adaptations, period films, and especially biopics. Indeed, the perspective on cultural heritage from the 1950s was revised in order to emphasize a "discontinuity between the classical bourgeois tradition and the new, different ideas of socialist culture" (Berghahn 1999: 224). Together with this altered view on the European classical literary tradition went a critical reappraisal of previously marginalized artistic movements, such as Romanticism and Naturalism, which focused in particular on the controversy between individual desires and public demands. At the same time, a more general thematic shift took place in DEFA filmmaking of the 1970s, where the conflict between the individual and the collective became most apparent in the reevaluation of the artist's role in post-1968 socialist society. The engagement with the relationship between

[56] See the 1971 DEFA annual report, BArch DR 117/ 19120, p. 6.

[57] See the 1973 DEFA annual report, BArch DR 117/19125, p. 27.

artists and power from a new perspective thus gave rise to a genre that DEFA filmmakers named *Künstlerfilme* or artist films.

DEFA artist films served as venues to address artistic and aesthetic questions and to reflect on the changing role of artists in socialism after the short-lived liberalization of the early 1960s. Artist films, as Dina Iordanova, Larson Powell, and Séan Allan suggest, were made in the 1970s throughout Eastern Europe, which points to a renewed interest in exploring and problematizing the status of intellectuals on an international scale (Allan 2009: 343, Iordanova 2003: 49, Powell 2008: 131). These films often addressed the increasing silencing or even exclusion of artists from political life. It comes as no surprise then that in the DEFA studio the biopics comprised a contested genre. On the one hand, they appeared important to filmmakers who sought to express their view of what art should be and by relocating the story in terms of time and space, to scrutinize the status quo of artistic production within East Germany and Eastern Europe. On the other hand, artist films allowed the filmmakers to situate themselves within the pre-socialist literary, artistic, and intellectual traditions of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. This way, they were able to voice a subtle criticism of existing relations between the artists and the state, without being able to openly challenge the regime, yet still looked for practical ways to reform the system from within.

DEFA artist biopics, which for the most part were co-productions, combined pre-socialist traditions with post-1968 solidarity among artists and sought to gain cultural prestige for their films by reclaiming famous European intellectuals and artists. Between 1970 and 1980, DEFA released a number of biopics, which pay tribute to classical icons of culture, art and science. Most of these films were conceived as co-productions with multinational film crews. For instance, *Goya oder der arge Weg zur Erkenntnis* (*Goya,* 1971, Konrad Wolf, GDR/USSR) focused on the life of a famous Spanish painter and

brought actors and technicians from seven East European countries. *Copernicus* (1973, Ewa and Czeslaw Petelski, Poland/GDR) and *Johannes Kepler* (1974, Frank Vogel, GDR) both engaged with the biographies of European scientists and critics of social injustice and began as co-productions with Poland except that the latter was realized as an East German production.

Besides biopics of artists and intellectuals, DEFA adapted and co-produced several texts by Romantic authors with Czechoslovakia. *Die gestohlene Schlacht* (*The Stolen Battle,* 1972, Erwin Stranka, GDR/ CSSR) was released as an adaptation of an eighteenth century legend about the thief Andreas Käsebier who fought for the liberation of Prague in 1757. After *Mademoiselle de Scudéri* in 1973, another E.T.A. Hoffman adaptation followed: *Die Elixiere des Teufels* (*The Devil's Elixirs,* 1973, Ralf Kirsten, GDR/CSSR), a story about the monk Franziskus, who in the search for his own happiness challenges the dogma of the Catholic Church. Most of these film projects were contested because of economic impediments, prolonged negotiations surrounding their production, which resulted in numerous revisions, or because of DEFA directors' and dramaturges' significant difficulties in finding partners for the co-productions. Nevertheless, the realized projects provided a venue for the collective expression of the views and ideas of East European filmmakers from various socialist societies. In order to explore their function as a place for voicing criticism and for addressing the artists' endeavors, we will turn to Konrad Wolf's 1971 film *Goya*.

CASE STUDY: *GOYA*

Goya oder der arge Weg zur Erkenntnis (*Goya or the Hard Way to Enlightenment,* 1971, Konrad Wolf, GDR/USSR) is a historical biopic and an artist film with a long and complex production history. East German director Konrad Wolf who

preferred making *Gegenwartsfilme,* or films about contemporary socialist society, identified the goals of the international group of filmmakers involved in *Goya* as follows: "We hope to have direct impact on our present reality with this film, especially because the role of art was never before as significant as in our age of great social changes."[58] In this co-production, Wolf and his Bulgarian scriptwriter Angel Wagenstein sought to link the personal story of the Spanish painter Francisco de Goya to the life of artists in Eastern Europe. Their film adaptation of Lion Feuchtwanger's eponymous novel is set in the Spanish monarchy of the late eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century as seen through Goya's art. His paintings and *Caprichos* assume a central role in the narrative through their depiction of oppression, war, and injustice, as well as through their criticism of the Inquisition's encroaching power over everyday life. Moreover, *Goya* challenges the temporal, spatial and national constraints imposed by the historical period as it poses the universal question of the artist's responsibility in an oppressive regime and problematizes his relationship to power and to art. In contrast to Wolf's later film, *Der nackte Mann auf dem Sportplatz* (*The Naked Man in the Stadium,* 1974, GDR) *Goya* embodies the belief in art's function to enlighten and represents an artist who identifies with the masses and portrays their struggles in his work. However, compared to York's depiction of Scudéri's respected status at the royal court, Wolf introduces an artist who is progressively isolated from public life both through his physical deafness and his ostracization by the king and the religious leaders.

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[58] My translation of: "Als Gewinn erhoffen wir uns direkte Wirkungen in unsere Gegenwart hinein, zumal die Rolle der Kunst noch nie so groß und so anspruchsvoll war, wie heute in unserem Zeitaltergroßer gesellschaftlicher Umwandlungen" (BArch DR1 45/719). See also Wolf's interview with Heinz Hofmann from 1971, where the director states: "Unsere kollektiven Überlegungen werden durch Goya und Feuchtwanger immer stärker zu der Fragestellung geführt: Wie kann Kunst intensiver in den Kampf unserer Epoche, in die Auseinandersetzungen unserer Zeit einwirken? Wir wurden uns klar darüber, daß wir die Widersprüche in jener Zeit und in den einzelnen Personen deutlich herausarbeiten mussten, um zur Gegenwart sprechen zu können" (Wolf 1983: 19).

Initially, Goya is an artist trying to disengage from conventional artistic practices prescribed by the power institutions of the Spanish Court and the Inquisition. On the one hand, he opposes the expectations of King Charles IV and his wife for a decorative embellished art, as well as the Inquisition's demands that his art comply with religious dogma. As a court painter, Goya depicts the royal family realistically with their deficiencies and yet, this move is interpreted as loyalty to the crown. Similarly, the Inquisition acquires his paintings and invites him to a tribunal instead of punishing him for his critical art. In this sense, Wolf's film represents Goya as struggling for a change from within the established mechanisms of power without challenging the status quo entirely, as David Bathrick had described East German intellectuals.[59] On the other hand, Goya disagrees with the Spanish poet Gaspar de Jovellanos who is a proponent of a rather one-dimensional politicized art, associated with the policies of East German cultural functionaries. When they first meet, Jovellanos passionately advocates the idea that "no artist can abstain from politics" and reproaches Goya for his "experiment[s] with the great overwhelming truths."[60]

Goya's and Jovellanos's argument recalls the formalism debates in the GDR of the early 1950s and challenges the idea that the ideological message of an artwork created in a socialist society has prerogative over its aesthetic function. Instead, Wolf offers an alternative to the formalistic view through Esteve's intervention in the conversation. The painter's enlightened friend and alter ego ("zweites Ich"), as Wolf often described Esteve,

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[59] Compare to Bathrick's argument for a legitimate approach to East German intellectuals: "The ultimate goals, political views, and behaviors of individual writers, while important for understanding their relationship to the power elite at any given time, must also be evaluated in light of what they were or were not actually accomplishing as advocates for change within the broader framework of post-war Eastern European politics" (1995: 2-3).

[60] My translation of two quotes from the film: "Kein Künstler kann der Politik fern bleiben" and "Nach meiner Meinung, experimentieren Sie zu viel mit den großen überkommenden Wahrheiten."

opens Goya's eyes for an aesthetic that serves not self-imposed ideals but the needs of the simple people, i.e. art should be made for the people's sake (Herlinghaus 1971: 127). In this sense, Esteve argues that art has to be socially engaged, which has to be equally reflected in its form and its content: "Clear things can be depicted only by clear lines. Yet people are not clear. The wicked, the dangerous, the seductive cannot be represented by the old means of expression."[61] This statement proposes a new relationship of art to reality, which breaks with the mimetic function of artistic expression and legitimizes subjective means for the depiction of the existing sociopolitical reality. At the end of the film, when persecuted by the Inquisition and rejected by the King, Goya implements this concept in his *Caprichos*. Combining a unique critical style of subjective authenticity with a collective mode of art production, both Esteve and Goya work together to create and distribute the prints to the people of Spain.

Like 1950s DEFA filmmakers who adapted literary works or made historical films in order to indirectly comment on the limitations imposed by the contemporary repressive situation, dramaturge Walter Janka and film director Konrad Wolf sought to create, in the words of Wagenstein, "a suitcase with a double bottom."[62] Set against the backdrop of the conflict between the Spanish Inquisition and Goya, Feuchtwanger's novel from 1951 critiqued the politics of McCarthyism in the US, yet this criticism also attended to the endeavors of GDR artists and filmmakers ten years later. According to interviews with Wagenstein and Janka, the growing political crisis in the GDR and the Eastern Bloc throughout the 1960s added new critical points of reference to the film

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[61] My translation of a quote from the film: "Klare Dinge lassen sich mit klaren Linien wiedergeben. Aber die Menschen sind nicht klar. Das Bösartige, das Gefährliche, das Hexenhafte lässt sich nicht mit den alten Mitteln machen."

[62] Statement taken from an interview of the author of this study with Angel Wagenstein, Sofia, December 2007.

narrative, including the ban of twelve DEFA films at the 11th Plenary of the SED in December 1965 and the Prague Spring of 1968 (Poss and Warnecke 2006: 275). Most importantly, the critique, which *Goya*'s makers encoded in their international co-production resonated with the struggles shared by all East European artists.

For DEFA director Konrad Wolf, *Goya* had enormous significance in terms of his development as an artist and his experiment with aesthetics. According to German film historian Rolf Richter, Wolf saw great potential in such a project as an international production, but he also had his own artistic agenda with the film. He was not interested in making an ostentatious historical film, but rather in experimenting with a so-called optical script in order to achieve *Massenwirkung* (impact on the large audience, Wolf 1983: 19). The optical script, similarly to Goya's *Caprichos,* provided the film director with the opportunity to express his own artistic idea in each frame of his film. To this end, Wolf worked closely with one of DEFA's best set designers, Alfred Hirschmeier, with whom he developed a visual draft of each scene and a film iconography that would maximize the audience's identification with the painter (Krautz 1990: 147). Moreover, Wolf was fascinated by "the enormous historical tension defining Goya's time, and the contested amalgamation of artistic and political dimensions in Goya's art" (Richter 1983: 269).[63]

Undoubtedly, as a former VGIK student who regularly traveled to the Soviet Union and maintained his contacts to former colleagues, Wolf was influenced by classical and contemporaneous Soviet cinema, and especially by directors such as Sergei Eisenstein and Andrei Tarkovsky. For instance, the cinematic use of the masses at the beginning of *Goya* or in the tribunal scenes, Wolf's meticulous reconstruction of each

[63] My translation of: "die enorme geschichtliche Spannung der Zeit Goyas, die widersprüchliche Einheit von künstlerischem und politischem Niveau in der Kunst Goyas."

scene in the optical script, as well as his attention to extreme close-ups and the facial representation of affect are reminiscent of Eisenstein's cinematic theory and techniques. In addition, as film historian Larson Powell suggests, Wolf's *Goya* and Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev* (1966, USSR) shared an agenda to create a film for larger international audiences and, at the same time, to thematize an artist's development from political disengagement to commitment (Powell 2008: 133). Although *Andrei Rublev* was never officially released in the GDR, it was screened internally for DEFA filmmakers, and other East German directors, such as Günter Reisch and Helmut Baierl, draw parallels to Tarkovsky's work in 1971 discussions of *Goya* (Herlinghaus 1971: 154-155). Powell comments on numerous affinities between both films' use of montage sequences, "directed explicitly against the static, authoritarian sublime of heroic Stalinist father figures," although he is also aware of the otherwise mostly divergent cinematic styles of both works (2008: 139). Finally, it is not a coincidence that Wolf, who was familiar with Tarkovsky's work, adopted as a model this internationally celebrated biopic, *Andrei Rublev,* and sought to win the studio that produced it, Mosfilm, as a partner in his project.

Wolf and the East German studio officials conceived *Goya* as a co-production that would bring them international acclaim because of the multinational character of the project (Jacobsen and Aurich 2005: 341). Indeed, the film had no precedent in East European cinema with its monumental production and actors from seven Eastern European countries, who all acted in their native language. Moreover, after multiple revisions, *Goya* was released at the international film festival in Moscow in 1971, where it was largely celebrated and received a special jury prize. Wolf comments on the international significance of the project in a 1971 interview with Heinz Hofmann, as follows:

> The international significance of *Goya* was pivotal for our endeavor to create a film that would have an impact on the masses. […] Therefore, our film became possible as a co-production with the USSR, and in particular under the contract with Lenfilm. […] We are connected by a mutual agreement on our shared responsibility for a great international theme, to which we are equally committed in our friendship.[64]

Despite Wolf's assertion of a harmonious collaboration, *Goya* had a convoluted production history that provides a remarkable model of collective filmmaking combined with strategies of negotiation that, due to their transnational aspects, proved successful within state-controlled film industries.

DEFA had made efforts to acquire the rights for the film adaptation of Feuchtwanger's novel *Goya or The Hard Way to Enlightenment* as early as 1963. At the first meeting to discuss the project, which took place on February 21, 1963, director Konrad Wolf, screenwriter Angel Wagenstein, dramaturge Walter Janka and the studio's managing director Hans Rodenberg, conceived *Goya* as a co-production among East Germany, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria.[65] The East European partners had to provide locations similar to the original ones in Spain and actors with darker hair and eyes. However, already in February 1964 DEFA dramaturges grappled with financial problems and repeatedly tried to attract partners from Munich, Paris and Madrid. At the same time, the studio management presented the financial difficulties and asked for governmental support, as evident in the draft of a letter from April 13, 1965, addressed to GDR Minister of Culture, Kurt Hager:

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[64] My translation of: "Entscheidend für unser Bemühen um eine massenwirksame Gestaltung wurde die Überlegung, daß *Goya* internationale Bedeutung hat. […] Deshalb ist unser Film in einer Koproduktion mit der UdSSR und in direkten vertraglichen Abmachungen mit dem Lenfilmstudio entstanden. […] Uns verbindet die tiefe Harmonie in der gemeinsamen Verantwortung für einen großen internationalen Stoff, dem wir uns gleichermaßen freundschaftlich verpflichtet fühlen" (Wolf 1983: 20).

[65] The complete protocol from this meeting can be found in BArch DR 117 BA I/3358.

> The film *Goya* may become a great and effective testimony of our socialist and humanistic mission. In spite of some reservations commonly expressed by Western producers, such as "the genre is inappropriate," "too serious," "the American biopic of Goya seven years ago was a flop," it has the potential to achieve international acclaim. The *Goya*-project is significant for the future development of director Konrad Wolf and his image abroad. This film also has great potential to open up countries and markets for our cinema, which we have been unable to access with our film production so far. Furthermore, the film could aid us in acquiring the rights for other important works from our literary heritage that are now sold for West Marks to incompetent West German directors [Thomas Mann!]. Instead, these projects can be given to us in the future so we can adapt them according to our national concept and duty.[66]

According to this letter, for reasons similar to DEFA's earlier co-productions with France, the realization of *Goya* faced difficulties because of discontinued or non-existing cultural agreements with Western countries, lack of interest from Western producers, or unavailable Western currency in the GDR. Consequently, the letter points to three crucial reasons for DEFA's need of a Western partner, who first, would guarantee the distribution of the film in the West; second, would finance the involvement of West European actors and make the picture attractive to those markets; third, would sponsor outdoor shooting, as the filmmakers needed landscapes found in Spain, Italy, or Southern France.

For these reasons, on February 16, 1965, DEFA started negotiations with Artur Brauner, the managing director of CCC. On April 10, 1965, Konrad Wolf met with him

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[66] My translation of: "Dieser „Goya"-Film kann ein großes wirksames Zeugnis unserer sozialistischen und unserer humanistischen Mission sein; er hat trotz der routinebegründeten Reserven westlicher Produzenten – „das Genre geht nicht", „zu seriös", „amerikanischer Film um Goya war vor sieben Jahren Misserfolg" – internationale Wirkungschancen. Der „Goya"-Film hat eine große Bedeutung für die weitere Entwicklung des Regisseurs Konrad Wolf und für seinen internationalen Ruf. Dieser Film hat in sich alle Möglichkeiten, unserer Filmkunst auch solche Länder und Märkte zu erschließen, die wir mit unserer bisherigen Produktion nicht erreichen konnten. Er könnte dazu führen, dass wichtige Werke unseres literarischen Erbes, die zur Zeit für Westmark an schlechte westdeutsche Regisseure vergeben werden [Thomas Mann!], in Zukunft an uns gegeben und von uns im Sinne unserer nationalen Konzeption und Aufgabe verfilmt werden können" (letter by Kurt Hager about the *Goya*-project and the services for CCC-Film from 13 April, 1965, Konrad-Wolf- Archive, file 597, BArch DR 117 BA I/3358).

in West Berlin to sign a preliminary contract for *Goya*. Brauner was not chosen by accident; he had already expressed his interest in working with Wolf in 1963 when he had invited the East German filmmaker to direct the antifascist film *Korczak und seine Kinder* (*Korczak and His Children*). Moreover, already in the 1950s, Brauner was interested in reaching out to East European markets through collaboration with DEFA. He continued to engage in co-productions with partners from socialist countries, such as Poland and especially Yugoslavia, where he made several adaptations of Karl May's novels. Initially, he offered one million DM for the *Goya* project and required special effects and editing services from DEFA. DEFA agreed, as it was particularly interested in the production of *Goya* as a large-scale, wide-screen film project in 70mm, a format that would make it attractive to audiences both in Europe and the US.[67] However, when the actual agreement was signed on May 17, 1965, Brauner demanded that the film be released in the West solely as a CCC-production. Moreover, he withdrew his proposal of one million DM and reduced his financial commitment to 465,000 DM. In addition, he acquired the distribution rights for all German-speaking countries in the West, while DEFA received the rights for the markets in Eastern Europe. All those requirements posed by Brauner reminded the East German studio of its previous compromises and disappointments with French partners and led to DEFA's and Wolf's gradual withdrawal from the negotiations with CCC.

As in the case of the East German/French co-productions, the fatal combination of financial difficulties and political complications resulted in the withdrawal of the Western partners from the project. Unable to sponsor the outdoor scenes, Brauner promised to

[67] For a detailed discussion on the relevance of the new 70mm format for DEFA's aspirations, see BArch DR 117 BA I/3358.

bring the Yugoslavian film studio Avala into the negotiations.[68] After Avala rejected the co-production due to their disagreement about the proposed film financing, Brauner took one last step to save the joint project, which this time failed for political reasons. On October 16, 1965, the CCC-studio head attracted the French actor Robert Hossein for the role of Goya who promised to serve as a mediator in a DEFA/French co-production with Sinfonia Films based in Paris. For this gesture, Brauner required "commercial-industrial services" (*kommerziell-industrielle Dienstleistungen*) from DEFA for one of his films. This meant that Brauner would provide the script, as well as a British director and West European actors. DEFA was supposed to provide the cameraman, ateliers, lighting, costumes and props, sets and special effects. The project that Brauner had in mind was his infamous *Das Kabinett des Dr. Mabuse*, a film of which DEFA disapproved. Nevertheless, the studio considered the financial profit from such a deal, which stirred an internal debate on future services for Western partners:

> The material is not anti-socialist in the political sense, it is 'apolitical' in the commercial sense and it does not comply with our aesthetic views or with our principles in terms of style. Here, therefore, we pose for the first time the specific question about providing industrial services in terms of our studio capacity in exchange for hard currency. This way, we would be able to acquire in the future currency that might be used for technical equipment and important innovations. The film topics would never attend to our expectations. The only condition for such services could be the elimination of anti-state, anti-socialist, counterrevolutionary topics or details.[69]

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[68] Brauner had good working relationship to the studio, and had used his rich transnational connections to make with Avala such successful films as *Old Shatterhand* (1964, Hugo Fregonese, FRG/ Italy/France) and *Dschingis Khan* (1965, Henry Levin, FRG/ UK/ Yugoslavia) and others.

[69] My translation of: "Der Stoff ist nicht antisozialistisch im politischen Sinn, er ist 'unpolitisch' im kommerziellen Sinn. Er entspricht nicht unseren ästhetischen Ansichten, unseren geschmacklichen Prinzipien. Hier wird also zum ersten Mal die Frage nach einer speziell industriellen Dienstleistung mit unserer Atelierkapazität gegen Valuta gestellt. Auf einem solchen Wege können in der Perspektive Valuta eingenommen werden, die unserer Filmtechnik zugutekommen könnten und wichtige Erneuerungen ermöglichen würden. Die Filmstoffe werden dabei nie unseren Vorstellungen entsprechen. Einzige

This strategy, if it were further pursued and implemented, may not only have compensated for DEFA's discontinued 1950s co-production projects with Western partners, but, more importantly, it would open the studio for larger transnational collaborations. However, in the wake of the 11th Plenary in 1965, when the entire annual film production of DEFA was censored, the studio rejected all types of collaboration with Westerners. In this destabilized political context and because of the existing financial difficulties, on January 1966, the head of HV Film withdrew his approval of the *Goya* project and all further negotiations with Brauner were discontinued.[70]

Nevertheless, the question of co-production was not solved yet. According to dramaturge Walter Janka, co-production was Wolf's and Wagenstein's only strategy to get the film approved and made, both because of its cost and its message (Poss and Warnecke 2006: 275). In a letter from 16 May 1966, therefore, the team of East European filmmakers involved in the project wrote to the DEFA studio director:

> It is time to pose the question again and to decide: Do we want to make *such* films and in particular this film? […] What ways for the realization of this co-production or for film services do we want to choose, not only in regard to the project of *Goya* but also *in general*.[71]

In the same letter, the filmmakers proposed two possible solutions to financial problems: First, further persuasion of Western partners at the risk of a financial loss and to the

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Bedingung solcher Dienstleistungen könnte sein, daß es sich nicht um staatsfeindliche, antisozialistische, konterrevolutionäre Stoffe, bzw. Details handelt" (BArch DR 117 BA I/3358).

[70] At this stage, Dr. Hermann Schauer, head of HV Film at the Ministry of Culture from 1962 to 1969, shared in a letter to Joachim Müchenberger that he sees as an alternative to Brauner's involvement in the project only a co-production with Soviet partners and other socialist studios (14 January 1966, BArch DR 117 BA I/3358).

[71] My translation of: "Es ist jetzt höchste Zeit, die Frage neu zu stellen und zu entscheiden: wollen wir *solche* Filmprojekte und diesen Film speziell? […] Welche Wege zur Co-Produktion bzw. Dienstleistungen wollen wir und können wir für den „Goya" und darüber hinaus *prinzipiell* beschreiten" (BArch DR 117 BA I/3358).

advantage of distributing the film on a larger market and of gaining foreign currency. The second proposal was more viable: to start negotiations with socialist countries to produce a film together that addressed East European audiences, even though this would mean a less ambitious picture and limited distribution and economic return.[72] The dilemma that the East German studio faced with this monumental production, however, was related not only to its financial but also political predicaments in the aftermath of the 11th Plenary, compared by Günther Witt to the Inquisition.[73] Moreover, the message of the film itself had become politically precarious as it resonated indirectly with the socio-political context not only in the GDR, but also in the entire Socialist Bloc, where artists started publicly addressing their struggles for freedom of expression and their isolation from politics.[74]

Therefore, it was difficult for DEFA to win Soviet partners for their *Goya* project, even though the idea for the Soviet co-production first came from Feuchtwanger's widow, Marta Feuchtwanger, who in 1962 gave DEFA the rights for the film

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[72] I refer here to the following discussion: „Der Film wird auf möglichst breite Wirkungs- und Verkaufschance auf dem Weltmarkt konzipiert. Er soll dazu dienen, die Position der DEFA mit dem Genre des "großen historischen Spielfilms" mit eigener, inhaltlich bestimmter Note in von ihr erschlossenen Ländern zu festigen und in neue Verleihungsgebiete hineinzukommen. Effekt: Stärkung des kultur-politischen Einflusses der DDR und Deviseneinnahmen sowohl mit diesem Film als auch mit anderen, denen dieser den Boden bereiten müsste […] Die [zweite] Lösung bedeutet: Der Schauwert wird spürbar vermindert, es müssen dramaturgische Kompromisse eingegangen werden, die inhaltliche Bedeutung haben. [Spanische Landschaft, Landschaft und Architektur, Stierkampf u.ä.]. Die Besetzung wird aus der DDR und den sozialistischen Ländern engagiert, was keine künstlerische Einbusse bedeuten muss, aber die Verkaufschancen im westlichen Verleihgebiet einschränken wird. Zu dem *Vorteil,* dass keine Valuta notwendig sind und keine Mitsprache westlicher Partner bei Buch, Rollenanlage und Produktion erfolgt, tritt der *Nachteil,* dass die Gesamtkosten verteilt werden" (BArch DR 117 BA I/3358).

[73] See Witt's discussion entitled "Wie eine Inquisition" in Agde 1991: 339-344.

[74] In an interview of the author with Angel Wagenstein, he describes the political climate of the early 1970s in socialist countries as defined by scandals with Solzhenitsyn in the USSR and Rudolf Slánský in Poland. See also the reference in Walter Janka's interview (Poss and Warnecke 2006: 275).

adaptation.[75] Five years later, Wolf and Wagenstein sought a contract with the Moscow film studio with the support of Mikhail Romm, one of Wolf's mentors and collaborators in the Soviet Union. The contract with Mosfilm failed on recommendation of Soviet Vice Minister of Culture Vladimir Baskakov according to whom the script apparently lacked resonance with contemporary socialist reality. Later on, as Wagenstein reports, Baskakov would discover parallels between Goya's and Solzhenitsyn's stories and would ask the filmmakers to change the ending of the film right before its premiere in Moscow.[76]

After the rejection of the co-production by Mosfilm, East German filmmakers had to come up with a new rationale for making *Goya*. Ironically, their strategy recalls the situation of the Spanish painter defending his art before the Great Inquisitor. To justify his project, Wolf drew parallels between Goya's story and the stories of contemporary intellectuals oppressed in the West, such as Angela Davis and the persecuted during the McCarthy trials in the 1950s. As a result, he received the support of his studio and continued to negotiate an international co-production with Soviet cultural policy makers.

In a letter to Wilfried Maass, the director of HV Film at the Ministry of Culture, Wolf reports that he had discussed the future co-production with the head of the Soviet Committee for Film Questions, Alexei Romanov, in July 1966 during a visit to the Soviet Union. Wolf promised seven million East German marks from DEFA's budget, and required one and a half million Rubel from the Soviets. In a letter from 10 October 1967, DEFA dramaturge Dieter Wolf [no relation to Konrad Wolf] foregrounded the necessity

[75] In a letter to Walter Janka from May 1962, Martha Feuchtwanger wrote: "Mich interessiert zunächst die künstlerische Seite. Haben Sie die Absicht, den Film in Gemeinschaft mit einem anderen Lande herzustellen, wie das häufig der Fall ist? Ich habe herrliche russische Filme hier gesehen, und ich würde es sehr begrüßen, wenn sich da die Möglichkeit einer Zusammenarbeit böte" (Poss and Warnecke 2006: 275).

[76] The film attracted the criticism also of the subsequent Soviet partners. For instance, the managing director of Lenfilm, Ilya Nikolaevitch Kisselev, saw the Inquisitor's address of the audience at the end of the film as very problematic and demanded the shortening of the film by twenty minutes (BArch DR 117 BA/ I3358).

of the Soviet partners' participation in the co-production and begged Erich Honecker's, as well as GDR Minister of Culture Klaus Gisy's and deputy minister of culture Alexander Abusch's, to support the international project. Finally, in 1971, with Honecker's letter to the Soviet Minister of Culture, Wolf and Wagenstein succeeded in signing the contract for a co-production with Lenfilm.[77]

The Lenfilm officials initially endorsed the project both financially and by providing numerous actors for supporting roles, yet upon completion of the co-production, they drew on Baskakov's criticism and demanded editing of the final scene before the premiere of the film. Alexander Dymschitz, one of DEFA's early supporters of and a Soviet cultural attaché in East Berlin until the 1950s, now functioned as Lenfilm's consultant for the *Goya* production. In a letter from February 1971 to Lenfilm's chief dramaturge, Irina Pavlovna, Dymschitz demanded the reediting of the abstract scene where Goya is plagued by his ghosts and the complete reshooting of the final scene. He opposed the ending with the monologue by the Great Inquisitor whom Dymschitz saw as a "symbolic figure" loaded with negative connotations and creating a contrast to the Goya's figure of an artist whose art is concerned with the masses' wellbeing.[78]

During the discussion preceding the film's acceptance at DEFA, Lenfilm's managing director, Ilya Nikolaevitch Kisselev, cited Dymschitz' criticism and demanded substantial revisions of the tribunal scene and the film's ending. In Maria Rosario's

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[77] Copy of the contract is found in BArch DR 117/ BA (III) 1873A.

[78] Quote from: "Ich empfehle, die Bilder zu kürzen, wo die Gestalt des Großinquisitors aufdringlich oft in Goyas Bewißtsein aufblitzt. Ich empfehle auch, die Bildfolge im Finale selbst zu ändern. Dieser Film - ein Film, der die Gestalt eines volksverbundenen Künstlers zu seinen hohen Thema macht, sollte nicht mit den Worten des Großinquisitors enden. […] Wenn das Ende so belssen wird, wie es jetzt ist, dann gewinnt die Gestalt des Großinquisitors eine symbolische Bedeutung, was im Prinzip der konkreten Geschichtsauffassung des gesamten Filmes, seiner ganzen Stilistik entgegensteht" (BArch DR 117 BA/ I3358).

revolutionary song before the Inquisition, Kisselev saw an overdone solo performance that focused on the individual as opposed to the group. Moreover, the studio manager read Goya's predicaments with the Great Inquisitor at the end of Wolf's film as a subversive statement along the lines of "I am an anti-communist. Even though all of you think I am a communist. The *Caprichos* reveal his [Goya's, MI] inner artistic attitude."[79] Finally, Irina Kokoreva, a dramaturge at the Lenfilm studio, insisted that an introduction should be added for a younger audience that had not read Feuchtwanger's book and might not recognize the historical context situated in the conflicts between Spain and France. At the same time, she opposed the language of the dialogues, which to her appeared "too modernized" and advised that the word choice should help the audience to situate the story in the nineteenth century. Wagenstein and Wolf responded to this criticism by pointing to the central characteristics of their project as an artist biopic. Moreover, Wolf emphasized that his main objective had never been to address political realities from the nineteenth century, but rather to emphasize Goya's and his art's relevance to the contemporaneous audience and socialist society.[80]

The reception of the belated project, which in 1969 would have resonated with the Soviet political intervention in Prague and would have provided a critical comment on the ongoing silencing of intellectuals, did not fulfill Wolf's expectations. While the film

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[79] My translation of: "Eine halbprinzipielle Frage meiner Meinung nach ist das Finale. Jetst kommt ein Antikommunist. Alle wissen von mir, daß ich Kommunist bin. Caprichos, die seine Geisteshaltung bezeugen. Überhaupt, zu viele Caprichos zum Schluß, sie werden zum Selbstzweck" (BArch DR 117 BA/ I3358).

[80] Quote from Wolf's response: "Das Finale des Films, da haben wir uns zur strikten Aufgabe gestellt, im Schlussteil des Films, der j eigentlich als Epilog gedacht ist, ohne daß er als Epilog gekennzeichnet ist oder sich strukturell absetzt, daß hier eine Ballade gegen dem Krieg dem Zuschauer sehr nahe und geistig gezeigt wird. Nach meiner Meinung kann es in diesem Schlussteil nicht vorwiegend darum gehen, daß dem Zuschauer die komplizierten historischen Zusammenhänge jetzt erklärt werden, sondern es muss in ihm das geweckt werden, was also Goya heute für uns ist und was er gemeint hat" (BArch DR 117 BA/ I3358).

was received enthusiastically among the critics, Jacobsen and Aurich point to the failure of the co-production to bring across a "revolutionary message" in both the GDR and Western Europe (2005: 353). Nevertheless, over one million viewers in the GDR saw the film in its first year, which compares favorably to other successful DEFA productions such as popular genre films.[81]

CONCLUSION

Goya's convoluted production history attests to the fact that by the 1970s, it had become increasingly difficult for DEFA to find co-production partners for both financial and political reasons, as suggested by the failure of the last co-production project for cultural prestige, *Johannes Kepler,* rejected in 1974 by the Polish film studio. At the same time, the ultimate success of Wolf's and Wagenstein's negotiations shows that such co-productions had gained a new status for individual filmmakers who had found an outlet to express their ideas in the format of joint projects. As film historian Harry Blunk has suggested, at times when East European artists were silenced or experienced particularly restrictive cultural policies, cinematic adaptations of the literary canon prevailed, as the appropriation of the European cultural legacy became a calculated strategy in the survival of artistic ideas and modes of expression (Blunk 1987: 160).

In this sense, the critical appropriation of European cultural and literary traditions from the 1950s onward was a very dynamic process. As evident from our discussion at the beginning of this chapter, DEFA co-productions for cultural prestige in the 1950s enabled the preservation of certain genres such as the costume drama and the period film, as well as existing transnational contacts across the borders of divided Germany. While they complied with East Germany's agenda to present itself as the legitimate heir to

[81] See BArch DR 117/ 23359.

Germany's culture and history, 1950s DEFA co-productions with West German filmmakers also cast internationally acclaimed UFA stars and profited from the expertise of Western directors and personnel in order to improve DEFA's reputation at home and abroad. East German/French co-productions in their own right strengthened personal contacts and exchange of creative and technical competence among East and West European artists, yet they also marked the shift from the conceptualization of co-productions not only as cultural products but also as political tools in East Germany's struggle for international recognition after 1955.

Therefore, what unifies the projects of DEFA co-productions in the 1950s and the 1970s with both East and West European partners were the enduring intertwinement of ideological and artistic agendas as well as the continuous endeavors of filmmakers to address contemporary problems by locating them in the past. In contrast to the East German/French co-productions, where the film narratives revolved around legendary heroes or national themes serving the political interests of the GDR state, DEFA co-productions with socialist partners resembled the project of *Mademoiselle de Scudéri*: while focusing on the artists and their questions about the past, these films engaged with current manifestations of the conflict between private and political lives, individual and collective interests. Finally, DEFA 1970s co-productions, as shown in the discussion of *Goya*, brought into question the loss of the privileged status of the artists in socialist societies and offered as a solution the escape into collective art production and the search for new cinematic genres.

Chapter 2: Competing with the West: Co-productions for Popular Entertainment

APPEAL FOR NEW CINEMATIC GENRES

In October 1960, DEFA director Kurt Maetzig delivered a speech inaugurating the new academic year at the East German film academy in Potsdam.[82] In his address, "Future Developments in Film and Television," Maetzig tackled the two most pertinent questions for future DEFA filmmakers: East German cinema's competition with Hollywood and West European genre films and with the fast spreading phenomenon of television (Agde 1987: 280-289). In order for DEFA to face these opponents, Maetzig suggested that "[t]he duty of the filmmakers is to offer high quality artistic entertainment and to develop further the specific nature of the film art" (285). He then elaborated on the new tasks of East German cinema:

> This does not mean that filmmaking has to concentrate on mass scenes and superficial formality, or will require great production expenses. On the contrary, all genres, from the chamber play to the revue film, from films dealing with current social issues to comedies, in short: a large variety of films, should be represented on screen.[83]

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[82] The East German Film Academy (*Deutsche Hochschule für Filmkunst*), was initiated by GDR prime minister, Otto Grotewohl, and minister of culture, Johannes R. Becher, in October 1954. The Film Academy was modeled on the Soviet and the Czech film schools and initially offered degrees in directing, cinematography, dramaturgy, film studies and film production. From 1967, the academy began enrolling also students in the fields of media and television, which resulted in the change of its name to: Academy for Film and Television of the GDR (*Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*). Today, the academy is one of the most prestigious German film and media studies centers and still functions under the honorary name "Konrad Wolf," received in 1985 (http://www.hff-potsdam.de/de/hochschule/geschichte.html, September 2010).

[83] My translation of: "Die Verpflichtung für die Filmkünstler besteht darin, die höchstentwickelte künstlerische und Unterhaltungsleistung zu bieten und die Spezifik der Filmkunst zu entwickeln. […] Man erkennt bereits, worin ein Teil der Spezifik des Films liegt. Das beideutet nicht, sich etwa auf Massenszenen und Äußerlichkeiten, auf großen Aufwand konzentrieren soll. Im Gegenteil, vom Kammerspiel bis zum Revue-Film, vom zeitgenössischen Thema bis zur Komödie, müssen alle Genres, eine möglichst breite große Palette, im Spielfilm gepflegt werden" (Agde 1987: 285).

Maetzig, who in 1954 vehemently critiqued the project of *Mademoiselle de Scudéri* as "empty of content and relying solely on visual pleasure," now advocated a new attitude toward genre cinema and set an example for other filmmakers by volunteering to direct the first DEFA science fiction film, *Der schweigende Stern* (*The Silent Star,* 1961, GDR/Poland).[84] What made him change his perspective?

One of the motivations for Maetzig and other DEFA filmmakers' new perspective on genre and entertainment cinema was the acknowledgement of a new "socialist film viewer" (*sozalistischer Filmzuschauer*), referring to the younger generation of moviegoers who in 1960 and 1961 became the focus of DEFA's concern after an increase in audience numbers. Maetzig defined these viewers as "demanding enthralling human fates" and "hoping for immanent optimism" on the silver screen, as found in adventure films and comedies coming from the West (Agde 1987: 286). Indirectly, this was an acknowledgement of the growing pressure on the domestic film industry particularly from Western television programs that could be received in the GDR via West German stations. These media- and audience-related factors raised DEFA filmmakers and GDR cultural administrators' awareness of what Maetzig referred to as "film mass production" (*Massenkonfektion*). With this term, he designated the production of numerous films with simple narratives, characters, and portrayals of life, which in the late 1950s gained increasingly popularity among audiences, yet they were not representative for the socially committed art that attended to the people's needs as later invisioned by Wolf in *Goya*. Ten years before *Goya* was realized, Maetzig proposed that DEFA filmmakers should

[84] For Maetzig's extensive discussion of *Mademoidelle de Scudéri,* refer to his statement from 20 November 1954, "Für bessere Unterhaltungsfilme," in Agde 1987: 259-261.

strive in the future "to overcome mediocrity, schematism, and film mass production" (286).[85]

SOCIALIST FILM CO-PRODUCTIONS IN RESPONSE TO WESTERN CINEMA

Understanding Maetzig's speech as symptomatic for East German cinema's new agenda in the 1960s, this chapter explores DEFA's endeavor to co-produce entertainment films in order to compete with West European and Hollywood cinemas. Since the 1950s, genre pictures of Western provenance such as comedies, science fiction, Westerns, and musicals enjoyed increasing popularity among East European audiences. In response to West European genre cinema's acclaim, and in an attempt to attract a younger generation, DEFA created its own genre types: utopian films (*utopische Filme*) and films about the struggle of Native Americans against American imperialism (*Indianerfilme*).[86] Moreover, the 1960s boom of East European popular literature, i.e. science fiction novels and stories about Native Americans, stirred the interest of East European audiences in these topics and prepared the way for the success of both film genres among socialist audiences. Realized as co-productions or in exchange for services and talent with other studios, these films were endowed with a complex agenda: to entertain, to educate, to claim scientific or historical accuracy, and to promote the fantasy of identifying with a socialist community that transcends the limits of time and space.

The *Indianerfilme* share with the utopian films the representation of a community unified by notions of brotherhood and solidarity with the oppressed, and therefore, both

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[85] My translation from: "Vor unseren Filmschaffenden steht die große Aufgabe der Überwindung der Mittelmäßigkeit, des Schematismus, der Konfektion" (Agde 1987: 286).

[86] These genres were created as a response to the classical Hollywood genres of the Western and the science fiction film. While I refer to the *utopische Filme* as "utopian films" throughout this chapter, there is no apt and short translation of the German term *Indianerfilme*. Film scholars such as Gerd Gemünden, Susanne Zantop, and Vera Dika typically use this term without translating it. Therefore, in order to avoid confusion of terminology, I will also refer to the *Indianerfilme* as such in my discussion.

artists and cultural officials viewed these genres as particularly apt to demonstrate the project of DEFA co-productions. Our discussion in this chapter will illuminate the ways in which these genres visually create the fantasy of an international community whose values would successfully oppose US-American imperialism. The second goal here is to emphasize the relevance of structural changes within DEFA, which made the realization of such co-productions possible. Examples for these changes are the introduction of relatively independent artistic work units, as well as of transnational collaboration on the project of entertainment co-productions. The third goal in this chapter is to expand on existing research in order to show how co-productions of genre films were different from national productions.

In order to analyze DEFA's efforts to reconnect to other state-owned film studios in the Eastern Bloc, we will focus on two utopian films made in co-production with Polish filmmakers, *The Silent Star* from 1960 and *Signale – Ein Weltraumabenteuer* (*Signals: A Space Adventure,* 1970, Gottfried Kolditz, GDR/Poland), as well as the *Indianerfilme, Apachen* (*Apaches*, 1973, Gottfried Kolditz, GDR/USSR/Romania) and its sequel *Ulzana* (1974, Gottfried Kolditz, GDR/USSR/Romania). We will also explore economic and material aspects of these co-productions, as they were motivated by the exchange of professional services (providing actors with particular physiognomies or landscapes that were not found in the GDR in exchange for financing of joint film projects). Towards the end of the chapter, we will engage with the decline of entertainment co-productions because of the general decrease of East European studios' interest in DEFA films, the lack of financial resources, as well as the increased import of Hollywood productions in the early 1980s.

ENTERTAINMENT AND EDUCATION

Entertainment was a contested category in the context of GDR film policy in the 1960s and the 1970s. To begin with, the purpose of feature film in socialism differed from its function under capitalism where pictures were assumed to operate as popular entertainment made predominantly for profit and for the cultivation of a taste for spectacle and voyeurism (Naughton 2002: 24). In contrast to Western cinemas, DEFA created a "cinema of responsibility and entertainment" (*Kino der Pflicht und der Kür*), as the last East German Deputy Minister of Culture and head of HV Film, Horst Pehnert, recapitulated in 1989.[87] This concept recalls the discussion developed among East German filmmakers in 1960 and 1961, to which Maetzig's address cited above responded. At the time, DEFA's newly founded production and artistic units called *Künstlerische Arbeitsgruppen* (KAGs) had to report to a commission in the Central Committee of the SED on the reasons for the "backwardness" of the East German national production.[88] Resonant of Maetzig's critique of the DEFA films' mediocrity, the KAGs' reports focused on the obsolete schematism in cinematic representation and the lack of new topics, and fostered the idea of creating a "new genre cinema," which would attend to the audiences' needs and expectations. Along these lines, DEFA studio head Jochen Mückenberger published a statement in the SED main newspaper, *Neues*

[87]This is an interpretation of the German expression "Erst die Pflicht, dann die Kür" meaning that one should first deal with duties and responsibilities and then act upon personal wishes and preferences. For a summary of Pehnert's speech at the last East German filmmakers' conference, see Helmut Lange's article "Soll und Haben des DDR-Kinos" in *Filmspiegel*, September 1989.

[88] The report was entitled "Ursachen des Zurücklbleibens unserer nationalen Filmproduktion" (BArch SAPMO IV 2/906/211, ZK Kutlur). DEFA director's Slatan Dudow's contribution to this discussion was even published in *Neues Deutschland* on 30 March 1961: "Nachdem wir mit knapper Not an der Klippe des Revisionismus vorbeigesegelt sind, suchten wir Schutz in der windstillen Bucht des Schematimsus […] Aus der windstillen Bucht des Schematimsus verscheucht, sind wir jetzt im Hafen der Mittelmäßigkeit gelandet. Wir werfen schon Anker in der Hoffnung, hier lange bleiben zu können" (cited in Schittly 2002: 111).

Deutschland, and called for the production of "interesting and enthralling films," which should focus not on modern aesthetics but on the education of East German citizens and society as a whole.[89] East German "entertainment films" (*Unterhaltungsfilme*) of the 1960s and the 1970s thus oscillated between the obligation to educate and the aspiration to entertain.

The link between education and entertainment in East Germany, and– by extension– in socialist film, was rooted in Lenin's vision of popular genre films as expressed in his 1922 *Directive of Cinema Affairs* and in his interview, from the same year, with Anatoly Lunacharsky, Soviet Commissar of Enlightenment in the 1920s and supporter of the entertainment film (Taylor and Christie 1988: 56-58, Youngblood 1992: 41-43). According to these documents, entertainment cinema could exist in socialism only if maintained in a certain proportion to "scientific" and "propagandistic films," and it had to carry an educational message. Similarly, during the period of Stalinism (1924-1953), which significantly impacted the consolidation of GDR's cultural policy of the 1950s, Soviet as well as East European cinema was rigidly conceptualized as "an instrument of Communist education and agitation and a weapon of the Party in the education and organization of the masses" (Kenez 2001: 93). It became the priority of socialist filmmakers to turn moviegoing from entertainment into an everyday routine for all. However, as film historian Denise Youngblood has shown in her study of 1920s Soviet popular cinema, what film administrators and cultural policy makers initially viewed as "cinema for the millions" often failed to meet audience tastes and expectations. In fact, the task of cinema to entertain and simultaneously enlighten the masses remained

[89] Quoted from: "Doch alles Mühe ist vergeben, wenn wir am Publikum vorbei gehen. Deshalb müssen unsere Filme interessant und packend sein. Sie sollen nicht durch ausgeklügelte Formensprache den Anschein besonderer Modernität erwecken, sondern sie müssen zielklar sein und mit der Absicht entstehen, einen wirklichen Beitrag für unsere Entwicklung zu leisten" (statement published in the East German Party newspaper, *Neues Deutschland,* 4 February 1962, cited in Schittly 2002: 117).

a controversial subject among political authorities and experimental artists for several decades (Youngblood 1992: 35-49).[90]

Striking a balance between socialist cinema's two objectives (to entertain and to educate) similarly became a challenge in East German cinema of the 1960s and 1970s. While the "new" genre films promised to offer quality entertainment, they were afflicted by an internal contradiction. On the one hand, these films appealed to the fantasy of the audiences and compensated for the dull reality of everyday life. On the other hand, the cinematic representation of the story and the characters had to be "historically accurate" in the case of the *Indianerfilme,* or, in that of the utopian films, to comply with the SED's official doctrine of a future world governed by socialist ideals. These limitations of the genre film's potential for the representation of conflicts and social criticism posed problems in terms of script writing and editing that haunted most of DEFA's entertainment films. DEFA's search for the successful formula of a "million-viewers-film" (*Millionenfilm*) thus reached its pinnacle in the 1970s only to decline in the mid-1980s, in the context of increased imports of Western adventure and science fiction films. In addition, the GDR cultural functionaries' concept of entertainment remained intricately bound to Lenin's agenda for the education of the masses. In 1982, for instance, the last GDR Film Minister, Horst Pehnert, did little more than reiterate the early Soviet cinema's dilemma. For him, the mix of "enlightenment potential and entertainment qualities" still went hand in hand with a "qualitative viewing experience" in order to achieve the impact desired by the political authorities (Pehnert 2009: 180).[91]

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[90] For a detailed discussion, see Youngblood's second chapter, "The Entertainment or Enlightenement Debate" in Youngblood 1992: 35-49.

[91] In an interview from 1982 for *Berliner Zeitung,* Pehnert identified two problems in East German cinema of the 1980s that paralleled Maetzig's concern from 1960: audience's boredom with DEFA productions and competition from television productions. Pehnert thus proposed that genre cinema's enlightenment potential and entertainment qualities should be a solution to the acute decrease of audience interest: "Zu

The idea of entertainment for the masses fit neatly into GDR official policy during the period of de-Stalinization, which called for a new type of art production under the conditions of the 1963 New Economic System.[92] Under this system, designed after Khrushchev's denunciation of the Stalinist cult of personality at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU in 1956, individual enterprises in the GDR received greater autonomy in making decisions. The state set basic goals for the economy, while lower-level factories and companies determined the achievement of these goals. These developments led to a reform in the DEFA studio as well, where the seven existing artistic units, the KAGs, gained greater responsibility over script development. Moreover, for the first time artists inside the KAGs could participate in the studio's management, which increased their insight and agency in the industrial aspects of filmmaking such as the distribution of material resources, project approval, and budget development. HV Film even made plans to expand the functions of the KAGs and to increase their freedom to invest in prestigious entertainment productions and support promising young directors (Feinstein 2002: 156).

These aspirations mirrored larger developments in the GDR cultural sphere, defined broadly by the impetus of a 1960s experiment with artistic production, known as the Bitterfeld Path (*Bitterfelder Weg*). The experiment came out of the inauguration of an East German nation-wide cultural program at the First Writers' and Workers' Conference

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allen Zeiten gab es bessere und schlechtere Filme, aber heutzutage wird mehr Qualität verlangt, weil der schwächere Film angesichts des Bildschirmangebots, das im Einzelfall gar nicht besser sein muss, leichter durch Nichtanwesenheit im Kino bestrafbar ist. […] Erkenntniswert und Unterhaltungswert zum künstlerischen Erlebnis vereint bedingen die Wirkung" (Pehnert 2009: 180).

[92] The term "New Economic System" (*Neues Ökonomisches System*) refers to an economic policy implemented by the East German Socialist Party, SED, in 1963. Its purpose was to rejuvenate the East German economic after ca. three million Germans left the GDR from 1945 to 1961. The new system had to replace the existing Five Year Plan used in the GDR's economy since 1951. The main goal of this system was the centralization of labor regulation, combined with more independence at the lower level in factories and enterprises, which should result in more efficient production methods, and would foster quality rather than quantity (Fulbrook 2009: 171-175).

in Bitterfeld on 24 April 1959. Under the slogan "Comrades, take the pen, the socialist national culture needs you,"[93] this conference directed writers and workers onto a path of switching roles and openly expressing themselves in both literary and industrial production. Conceived as an implementation of the doctrine of socialist realism, the idealistic objectives of the Bitterfeld movement included the formation of circles by prospective writer-workers. The program was reviewed and reinforced in principle at the Second Bitterfeld conference in 1964.

The Bitterfeld Path demanded that art come closer to the audiences by blurring the border between author and audience. In other words, this program aimed at the creation of an imagined community of artists whose production would reinforce socialist values in art and facilitate their reenactment in everyday life: a fantasy that parallels the subsequent release and reception of DEFA's *Indianerfilme*. These co-produced films provided East European audiences with narratives of oppression and resistance, recreated in various communities such as Indian clubs and pen-pal hobby groups. The utopian films also shared the impetus of the Bitterfeld Path campaign: like the *Indianerfilme,* they promoted the unifying power of a shared mission, and fostered the recognition of equality in terms of class, race and education status.

POLITICAL POTENTIAL OF ENTERTAINMENT CINEMA

The potential of entertainment cinema to exploit audience interest in popular topics and actors for the successful dissemination of political ideals is key to our understanding of DEFA's motivation to embark on creating their own genres in co-production with other East European film studios. Even though the discourse on entertainment was heterogeneous and shaped mostly by anti-Western diatribes, as film

[93] My translation of: "Kumpel, greif zur Feder, die sozialistische Nationalkultur braucht dich" (cited in Schittly 2002: 77).

historian Stefan Soldovieri has shown, phenomena such as stardom and advertisement were not foreign to the GDR context.[94] Focusing on the image of DEFA actor, singer, and public persona, Manfred Krug, Soldoveri furthermore argues for the discursive complexity of stardom, fandom, and film distribution strategies, which in Eastern Europe produced meanings in addition to those common in Hollywood or West European cinemas. On the one hand, film stars such as Krug or Gojko Mitić were not merely apealing to naïve spectators, but facilitated the projection of sexual, political, and social fantasies (Soldovieri 2003: 223). On the other hand, these actors often started their careers by playing antifascist heroes. Thus by promoting such popular faces on the silver screen, GDR cultural policy makers recognized the socialist audience's need for star appeal, and, at the same time, hoped to couch the discourse on stardom and entertainment within their own ideological agenda. In the 1960s, therefore, film stars could pass as "positive heroes" in the context of propagated Socialist Realism in art, and yet, they remained present in the imagination of GDR spectators as "larger than any one role, charging films with latent ironies and double meaning" (Soldovieri 2003: 223).

This coexistence of different star images in the official and individual spectator's imagination could become problematic if limited to the strictly national context. Co-productions, in contrast, opened up a space that was safe for addressing the discrepancy between public and private interests because this tension appeared unspecified in terms of time and geographical location. The film that best illustrates this contrast is Frank Beyer's bold adaptation of the Western genre to DEFA's genuine genre of *Gegenwartsfilm*, in which Manfred Krug had the lead role. Film historian Joshua Feinstein compares Beyer's *Spur der Steine* (*Trace of Stones,* 1965/1966, GDR) to the

[94] For a detailed discussion on the phenomenon of stardom in DEFA, refer to Soldovieri's study, "The Politics of the Popular. *Trace of the Stones* (1966/89) and the Discourse on Stardom in the GDR Cinema" in Soldovieri 2003.

classic American movie genre not only in terms of its traditional use of costumes and music to reinforce the narrative, but also in terms of casting star Manfred Krug and other actors as "typical heroes from a Western, […] presented against the land that they shape and that shapes them in turn, the construction site" (2002: 185). Understandably, this representation in a purely national context failed to fulfill the expectations of East German cultural administration and SED party functionaries. Instead of educating audiences, Beyer's film shifted the perspective to contemporary problems within the GDR and invited young people's identification with the rebellious figure of Hannes Balla (Manfred Krug) who openly opposes the decisions of Werner Horrath (Eberhard Esche), a cowardly party secretary. While the film's production history and wide promotion exemplified DEFA's attempts to capitalize on the drawing power of star actors, according to Soldovieri, it also highlighted "the challenge that the star phenomenon posed to the system of film regulation and the contradictions inherent in DEFA's popular and genre-film production" (2003: 221).

The 11th Plenary, an "ideological house-cleaning" of the annual production, which we mentioned earlier in regard to DEFA's reorientation to East European partners, marked a shift also in the East German studio's agenda for entertainment. After 1965, DEFA had to balance out the use of entertainment aspects and film stars by relocating stories dealing with negotiation within the collective in different places and times. This was best done in film co-productions with politically innocuous partners, such as the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Romania, and Bulgaria. In other words, the narratives thematizing the struggle of individuals within the collective, or vice versa, the collective's response to individual needs, had to either be historicized in *Indianerfilme*, or transformed into abstract parables about humanity's search for a common future in the utopian films.

As DEFA dramaturge, Klaus Wischnewski, explains, the DEFA film studio responded to the 11th Plenary by changing their programming policy (1994: 213). Most banned films had scrutinized problems of contemporary life in socialism or socialist societies. "Pragmatic functionaries," Wischnewski maintains, encouraged the young generation of film directors to use cinematic conventions in their films "more effectively," i.e. according to existing political prerogatives. Wischnewski calls this initiative "courage to use convention" (*Mut zur Konvention*), referring to a qualitatively new DEFA project of entrusting not individual film directors, but the KAG collectives with the creation of "sequels to successful genre films" (*Erfolgsserien,* 213). The serial production of successful *Indianerfilme* and utopian films, which reached its peak in the 1970s, offered an appealing experience of participation in the adventures of positive heroes to a younger generation. In addition, released mostly as co-productions during a time of social and political upheaval in the West (due to events such as the student revolts of the late 1960s and the terrorist activity of the Red Army Fraction), these films promoted international solidarity with the oppressed, encouraged anti-imperialist sentiments, and even provided escapist fantasies.

There were several motivations behind DEFA's successive development of genres, which made them popular among East and West European audiences in the 1960s and the 1970s. First, DEFA combined narrative, visual and ideologically acceptable ingredients that appealed both to party functionaries and to larger audiences. Although Wischnewski bemoans the inability of DEFA to achieve "genre professionality" (*Genre-Professionalität*) in creating unique genres as Hollywood did, the entertainment films produced in collaboration with socialist partners were not mere imitations of Western genre cinema (1994: 213). In contrast, as DEFA dramaturge and scriptwriter Günter Karl stated in 1971, the international artistic collectives who worked on the *Indianerfilme* used

elements from genre cinema that guaranteed appeal, but also assumed a historic-materialist perspective (Habel 1997: 12). Similarly, the utopian films had to demonstrate the technical superiority of unified socialist nations, although they could not digress into depictions of fantastic worlds, space wars, or parallel realities, and had to limit their visual representation to the contemporaneous stage of scientific research. By effectively employing genre conventions and by claiming historical accuracy, DEFA filmmakers infused these escapist genres with an enlightening message and thus created politically correct entertainment.

Second, as film historians Rosemary Stott (2002) and Gerd Gemünden (1998) argue, both the utopian films and the *Indianerfilme* came in response to the success of Western film imports. In other words, DEFA co-productions cashed in on the popularity of these genres, while at the same time promising East European audiences better entertainment by offering them a home-grown version of capitalist genre cinema, which in the 1960s and the 1970s became increasingly subject to strict control and rarely reached beyond the Iron Curtain. At the same time, East European filmmakers were well aware of the boom of science fiction literature and novels about Native Americans, which guaranteed widespread interest in their pictures.

Finally, even though DEFA co-productions for entertainment adopted many of the conventions already established by Westerns or science fiction films, they received a very important function in socialist society. In scrutinizing the *Indianerfilme* potential to imitate Hollywood Westerns, film historian Vera Dika claims their impact was "closer to a 're-mythification,' that is, a reformulation of established genre conventions for the purpose of telling a new myth, now to a specific people at a particular time in history, and accomplished by the nearly blank re-presentation of generic form and variation" (2008). Since migration of East Germans became impossible after 1961, DEFA co-productions

for entertainment, which were shot on location in Eastern Europe, not only familiarized GDR audiences with their neighbors in other socialist countries, but also encouraged a sort of "cinematic tourism" and the participation in utopian communities of people with similar interests (hobbyists, science-fiction fans, etc) across borders.[95]

UTOPIAN FILMS

DEFA's socialist-made utopian films represent a genre that in the 1960s was relatively new to the German and European context, or rather, revived after a long period of neglect.[96] Indeed, leftwing or communist intellectuals in Eastern Europe of the 1920s and 1930s had already made valuable contributions to the science fiction genre. Such examples include Soviet Alexander Belyayev who described interplanetary platforms and remote-guided weapon systems, or Czech Karel Čapek who derived the term "robot" from the Slavic root *rabota* (work). In the 1950s, with the resurgence of public interest in space travel and technologies, literature about the future of the planet also regained its popularity in East and West. This resulted in several film adaptations of best-selling novels in the US, but the Hollywood genre of science fiction became clearly defined only in 1968 with the release of Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* and Franklin J. Schaffner's *Planet of the Apes*.

DEFA's utopian films, in comparison, used the popularity of East European science fiction literature to become mediators between popular taste and the state's

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[95] East European landscapes were common not only in the *Indianerfilme,* but also in some utopian films, such as *Eolomea* (1972, Herrmann Zschoche, GDR/USSR/Bulgaria) shot largely on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, one of the most popular tourist destinations in Eastern Europe.

[96] Literary and cinematic forerunners of the DEFA utopian films had already blossomed during the Weimar Republic among left-wing authors such as Werner Illing and Arthur Zapp, or Fritz Lang's films *Metropolis* (1927, Germany) and *Die Frau im Mond* (*The Woman in the Moon,* 1929, Germany). For a detailed discussion of the socialist science fiction tradition in Germany, see Peter Fischer's chapter "Hope and Dispair: Socialist and Pacifist Visions" (1991).

attempt to appropriate young people's fantasies and aspirations for their own political discourse. This became possible in the context of de-Stalinization, initiated at the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956, and especially after the Sputnik launch in 1957, when a generation of science fiction "thaw writers" and readers emerged in the Socialist Bloc.[97] While in the early 1950s, GDR cultural policy makers saw science fiction and fantasy literature as being at odds with the officially propagated style of socialist realism, by the end of the decade, the development of alternatives to Western genres received priority. As literary scholar Sonja Fritzsche points out, both the growing interest in Western popular literature and the success of East European science fiction novels among East German readers resulted in the state's endorsement of literature with "attentiveness to future themes" in order to cultivate a discourse on utopia (2006: 80). Moreover, Fritzsche suggests that "[s]cience fiction's place within the GDR discourse on utopia received further support with the popular success of Stanislaw Lem's first book *The Astronauts* released in German translation in 1954 (83).

Lem's novel belonged to a myriad of texts demonstrating the capability of science fiction to appeal to diverse audiences and to serve as a prognostic form of literature, complying with the doctrine of socialist progress and victory over capitalism. Most of the science fiction films made in Eastern Europe between 1960 and 1980, therefore, adapted best-selling novels by authors such as Soviets Ivan Efremov, Sever Gansovsky, Arkady and Boris Strugatsky, Serbian Vladimir Voinovich or East German Carlos Rasch. The novels conveyed enthusiasm for a reformed society especially to a younger generation, praised the materialist-scientific achievements of socialism, and promised the emancipation of science in the name of humanity. Adopting the approach of Lem and

[97] For an extensive commentary on the impact of the "thaw writers" on East European readers' perceptions of the science fiction genre, see Istvan Csicsery-Ronay's essay "Science Fiction and the Thaw," *Science Fiction Studies,* 31.3 (2004): 337-344.

other East European science fiction authors, filmmakers studied contemporary scientific research in order to be able to present on screen the future possibilities of socialist technology and to create compelling forms of film entertainment. East European science fiction as a genre, therefore, became most prominent on the international market via Andrey Tarkovsky's film adaptations of novels by the Strugatsky brothers (*Stalker,* 1979, USSR) and by Lem (*Solaris,* 1972).

Between 1960 and 1976, DEFA co-produced four feature films with East European partners associated with the science fiction genre, referred to as *technisch-realistische Utopie* or utopian films, which aimed at representing the technological progress in realistic terms and thus placed high economic demands on the state-owned studio.[98] DEFA's first utopian film, *Der schweigende Stern* (*The Silent Star*, 1960, Kurt Maetzig, GDR/Poland) was conceptualized between 1956 and 1959, and released in 1960. The picture had a strong anti-nuclear message and portrayed an international space-crew from eight different countries including the first black astronaut shown on film. As the most expensive and perhaps the most ambitious DEFA film to date, the project attracted West European partners and much media attention in the late 1950s. Although the French filmmakers later withdrew from the co-production out of political considerations, the international flair of *The Silent Star* nevertheless was rewarded with its successful release in West Germany, Great Britain, Japan, and even the USA. This lavish co-production, that cost triple of what DEFA would usually invest in a project, was followed by one other popular science film, *Die Reise nach Kosmatom* (*Journey to*

[98] In addition, Detlef Kannapin and Sonja Frietzsche identify several other films that might squarely fit into the genre, including some popular scientific or documentary features, as well as children films with a story that begins or ends in the future. Some examples include the popular science film *Die Reise nach Kosmatom* (*Journey to Kosmatom,* 1961, Manfred Gussmann, GDR/Poland) and the children films *Abenteuer mit Blasius* (*Adventure with Roboter Blasius,* 1975, Egon Schlegel, GDR/CSSR) and *Blumen für den Mann im Mond* (*Flowers fort he Moon Man*, 1975, Rolf Losansky, GDR).

Cosmatom, 1961, Manfred Gussmann and Janusz Star), also co-produced with Poland in 1961. There was a gap of ten years before DEFA renewed its collaborations with a Polish film collective on their next utopian feature film, *Signale – Ein Weltraumabenteuer* (*Signals: A Space Adventure,* 1970, Gottfried Kolditz, GDR/Poland), a response to Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. The reasons for the decade-long abandonment of the genre lie in the questions that had remained unanswered during Maetzig's film co-production: justification of the prohibitively high budget, of dealings with Western partners, debates on the limitations of artistic experimentation and license within the SED's vision of socialist art.

Nevertheless, in the 1970s, DEFA conceived two further co-productions as sequels to *Signals* in a trilogy called *Adventure Galaxy*: *Eolomea* (1972, Herrmann Zschoche, GDR/USSR/Bulgaria) and *Im Staub der Sterne* (*In the Dust of Stars,* 1976, Gottfried Kolditz, GDR/Romania). The last utopian film was *Besuch bei Van Gogh* (*Visiting Van Gogh,* 1985, Horst Seemann, GDR/FRG), made nine years later as an East/West German co-production. It was an adaptation of a Soviet novel by Sever Gansovsky and borrowed West German and French set designs and props, which points to DEFA's renewed aspirations for collaboration with Western partners. These films share the concrete and optimistic representation of a future society, based on the socialist concept of peaceful human coexistence. In contrast to the often critical and pessimistic tone of Western science-fiction films, DEFA utopian films provide an ideal image of society ruled by the promise that class and social conflicts will be solved by international solidarity. Therefore, DEFA's utopian genre dispenses with the action elements of the

classical science-fiction film and offers instead what director Kurt Maetzig described as an "approach of cooperation instead of confrontation." [99]

"COOPERATION INSTEAD OF CONFRONTATION"

Referring originally to the pacifist message of *The Silent Star*, the "approach of cooperation" translates into a strategy defining the entire genre. DEFA utopian films – all of which were co-productions – developed as a result of several artistic collectives' transnational teamwork as they sought consensus at every production stage, from the script to the special effects and editing of the films. At the same time, screenwriters and directors showed cooperation with the ideological discourse of the time as they endorsed radical script changes or used existing competition with West European genres to legitimize their projects. In the late 1950s, the East German studio contemplated *The Silent Star* as an entertainment picture in collaboration with Polish and French partners, which had to achieve acclaim in East and West. Comparatively, by the 1970s, the co-production of *Signals* became the mandate of a KAG called *Red Circle* (*Roter Kreis*) and was made primarily for East European audiences. Moreover, the collaboration of DEFA director Gottfried Kolditz with Serbian film star Gojko Mitić on the film script complemented the KAG's work and suggested that *Signals* was geared towards East European audiences familiar with Mitić' star persona in the *Indianerfilme*.

In terms of production strategies, these two film projects greatly differed from each other. The production of the first utopian film in the context of the accelerating space race between 1957 and 1961 would be unthinkable without the support of DEFA's

[99] In an interview referring to his film *The Silent Star,* Kurt Maetzig contrasts its message from the agenda of Hollywood science-fiction films in the following way: "Dieser Film wurde noch mitten in der Periode des kalten Krieges gedreht. Damals zu sagen, in diesem Raumschiff müssen Forscher aus aller Welt zusammen wirken, erforderte schon etwas. Wir steuerten also nicht die Konfrontation, sondern die Kooperation an" (cited in Agde 1987:121).

management and high-ranking politicians from the GDR and Poland. The contacts to Western partners, as far as they became essential for the financial realization of the project, were initiated and managed by the studio head himself, Dr. Albert Wilkening. In contrast, the second East German/Polish co-production was mainly a project of two artistic collectives with their respective production managers. The making of *Signals: A Space Adventure*, as a result, was downscaled and much less problematic compared to that of *The Silent Star,* which set a precedent with its fourteen script revisions and three years of negotiations before shooting.[100] In addition, recorded internal discussion among DEFA officials and the KAG's representatives prior to *Signals'* release attest to the filmmakers' awareness of the predicaments during the making of *The Silent Star,* which resulted in the justification of this co-production with the genre's political potential.[101]

The KAGs have always played a crucial role in the development of DEFA genre films and, by extension, in the development of co-productions for entertainment. There is a direct link between the making of *The Silent Star* and the formation of the KAGs after 1959, which resulted from Maetzig's suggestion after his collaboration with the Polish group *Iluzjon* (Schenk 1994: 153). The East German KAGs adopted the model of *zespol filmovy,* artistic collectives already introduced in Film Polski in the mid-1950s by dramaturge Ludwik Starski who in 1955 founded the group *Iluzjon* in Warsaw. According to film historians Dina Iordanova and Ralf Schenk, the filmmaking collectives within East European studios proliferated in the early 1960s and functioned as basic film production entities with some degree of creative autonomy (Iordanova 2003: 23, Schenk

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[100] Stefan Soldovieri has traced the negotiations among various political players and the East German, French, and Polish studios chronologically (1998).

[101] "Protokoll der Rohschnittabnahme von "Signale" from April 8 1970, BArch DR 117/Vorl. BA (II), 1782.

1994: 153). The KAGs were organized around one well-established director and a dramaturge, and were usually comprised of several other directors sharing artistic personell and generic preferences. In DEFA's case, for instance, most *Indianerfilme* and utopian films were made by the first KAG, *Red Circle*, found in 1959 by Maetzig and later managed by dramaturges Günter Karl and Thea Richter. After 1971, as Sonja Fritzsche has argued, the KAGs concentrated on a certain genre or aesthetic agenda, such as *defa-futurum,* which specialized in the production of utopian films, as well as popular science and feature films (Fritzsche 2006).

Initially, the introduction of the KAGs prefigured the significant decentralization in the process of film production and regulation mentioned earlier in the context of the New Economic System. In the aftermath of the 11th Plenary, however, the KAGs' growing artistic autonomy was curtailed and, by way of centralizing them, the groups were reorganized and renamed into "dramaturge groups" (*Dramaturgengruppen*), i.e. units managed by one dramaturge who reported regularly to the chief dramaturge and the studio's management. Thus, from 1966 on, the dramaturges had multiple functions in the hierarchy of the studio, which involved authorizing film scripts, sustaining contact among all participants in the film production, and bringing the project successfully through all stages of censorship and approval. "A good dramaturge," Daniela Berghahn summarizes, "was above all a good negotiator, someone who was capable of defending a potentially controversial film against any objections from above" (2005: 28). In other words, together with the project managers (*Produktionsleiter*) assigned to each individual film project, after 1965, the dramaturges had the responsibility to negotiate with international partners, film authors and actors, studio managers and ministers of film or cultural affairs. The KAGs thus created room for transnational collaboration, as well as for more successful negotiation of the film projects, which can be illustrated by a comparison of

the production histories of *The Silent Star* from 1960 and *Signals: A Space Adventure* from 1970. In this comparison, special attention is given to the political and historical context in which these films were made.

CASE STUDY: THE SILENT STAR

The story of *The Silent Star* reveals the complexities of the transition from working with Western partners to a multinational co-production with East European filmmakers and actors, from consolidation of the political agenda behind the utopian films to the development of a genre that ideally would compete with capitalist-made films and equally satisfy the expectations of cultural officials, artists and audiences. When in late 1956 the Polish film group *Iluzjon* proposed the cinematic adaptation of Lem's novel, *The Astronauts*, the project resonated with DEFA's existing practice of involvement in co-productions for cultural prestige with French and West German partners. The East German studio enjoyed the international acclaim of their just-released co-production with Ariane Films, *The Bold Adventure,* and was in the process of negotiating their next big-budget literary adaptations with Pathé Consortium Cinéma in Paris, *The Crucible* and *Les Misérables*. Moreover, in light of their recent positive experience with the adaptation of *Mademoiselle de Scudéri*, DEFA commissioned the script for Lem's novel to the West German writing duo Alexander Stenbock-Fermor and Joachim Barckhausen. However, this move coincided with the directives to abandon the employment of West German partners, as discussed in the first chapter of my study, and the subsequent twelve revisions of the script by several different scriptwriting teams show that adapting Lem's story to political expectations was a greater challenge than its screen adaptation.

At the height of the euphoria surrounding the space race and in the conditions of post-1956 liberalization throughout the Socialist bloc, Lem's novel offered a best-selling, yet politically not quite innocuous plot: It opens in the year 2003, when scientists discover a spool-like object in the Siberian taiga, a remnant of the meteor crash known as the Tunguska explosion from 1908. Using a real event as a departure point, Lem develops his fictional story from the perspective of the narrator Robert Smith, a North American pilot who participates in a subsequent expedition to Venus. In addition, the context of the spool's discovery is provided by the construction of a large Soviet nuclear power plant for the purpose of melting the ice of the North Pole and creating energy. Once the scientists decode the ominous message of the spool, they send out an international crew, composed predominantly of members from the USSR, USA, China, India, France, as well as Nigeria, Poland and Germany.[102] The expedition becomes a secondary plot line to the evolving friendship between the Soviet captain Arsenyev and Smith and ends with an optimistic message about future peace on Earth brought by international solidarity and collaboration.

Although *The Silent Star*'s final ending from 1960 remained true to Lem's message in *The Astronauts,* there were so many changes made to the script after 1956 that "by the time the final version of the screenplay had been completed," Soldovieri suggests, "the story shared only the most general plot features with its nominal literary source" (1998: 383). Some of the changes included the substitution of the film's working title *Planet of Death* (the original title under which Lem's novel appeared in the GDR) with the ideologically acceptable *The Silent Star*, the relocation of the story from 2003

[102] When Lem composed his novel in 1950, only the USA and the USSR had tested and declared their nuclear weapons. The inclusion of members of most other states that later developed their own nuclear missiles must have been speculative for both Lem and Maetzig. To strengthen the anti-nuclear message, the initial film script, and its later revisions introduced a female character, a Japanese doctor, whose parents fell victim to the Hiroshima bombings.

into 1970, the addition of a Japanese character whose parents died in the bombing of Hiroshima, and the justification of a North American scholar's inclusion in the Venus expedition.

Provoked by *The Silent Star*'s intricate production history, Soldovieri engages with a rigorous analysis of the fourteen film script revisions dictated by the vagaries of political discourse between 1956 and 1960. What remains outside of the scope of his discussion, however, is the significance of the already existing transnational collaborations with French filmmakers and German émigrés for the co-production's prolonged negotiations, as well as the competition represented by a West German science fiction production planned in 1957. Therefore, three further factors need to be considered: first, the collaboration and the competition with Western filmmakers during both the initial opposition to and subsequent support of this film, second, the role of the studio manager and cultural functionaries' endorsement of the project, and, third, DEFA's determination to develop an innovative genre, with the hope of launching itself ahead of European studios and earning prestige among wide audiences.

Already the initial stages of the script revision suggest multiple complications proceeding from the intertwinement of the politically sensitive subject of Lem's novel with reservations about former UFA employees, as well as with DEFA's changed course of collaborating only with East European partners. When the Polish film studio contacted the DEFA studio manager in 1956 with the proposal for a co-production, Wilkening commissioned his screenwriting team most experienced in adaptations. The first draft by West Germans Stenbock-Fermor and Barckhausen from February 1957, however, met with growing disapproval by DEFA dramaturge Hans-Joachim Wallstein, director Maetzig. Furthermore, the head of HV Film at the time, Anton Ackermann, rejected in July 1957 the official inclusion of the film in DEFA's thematic plan. At the same time,

Wilkening and the production manager, Hans Mahlich, who later would initiate and produce DEFA's most successful series of *Indianerfilme,* agreed that genre film development was essential for the studio's development. In search of new ways to rescue the project, Mahlich was sent as an intermediary to Warsaw. A month later, the *Iluzjon* group's production manager, Ludwik Starski, wrote to Wilkening to express his disappointment with the slow progress of the project and insisted that author Jan Fethke, a former UFA filmmaker who then worked for the Polish film industry, re-write the script.[103] Since Fethke's former career appeared controversial to Ackermann and others at HV Film, Wilkening had to curb the Polish partners' demands by suggesting Günter Reisch, Maetzig's assistant director in the *Ernst Thälmann* films, as Fethke's co-author in developing a new version of the script.

The second stage of the project negotiations was marked by Wilkeining's strategy of contacting Western partners once he realized that Reisch and Fethke lacked expertise in film adaptations, and because of the Polish partners' demands for DEFA's financial share of 70% in the co-production expenses. Wilkening, therefore, invited French filmmakers to co-finance the project and to contribute towards this new genre with their know-how and famous stars. On 18 September 1957, six days after the DEFA studio head confirmed the new screenwriters Reisch and Fethke, he composed four letters.[104] First, he asked Ruth Fischer, a Jewish émigré in Paris who was already involved in East

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[103] Jan Fethke, a German author and director who at the time worked for the Polish film industry, appeared an inappropriate choice due to his existing experience as former UFA employee. In the 1930s, he started as a screenwriter for Phil Jutzi, for whom he worked on the script for *Mutter Krausens Fahrt ins Glück* (*Mother Krause's Journwy to Happiness,* 1929), but he also worked as assitant director for Fritz Lang and other. What Ludwik Starski saw as an advantage, namely, Fethke's former career at Ufa, was hardly welcomed by East German political authorities and film policy makers in the 1950s. Nevertheless, later on DEFA would accept him back in *The Silent Star* project, due to demands by the Polish filmmakers.

[104] Found in Albert Wilkening's correspondence on the production of *The Silent Star* (1957-1962), BArch, DR 117/ Vorl. BA (I) 1927.

German/French co-productions, to lobby for the East European utopian film project.[105] The timing was perfect: in the fall of 1957, DEFA's co-production with Pathé, *The Crucible,* had just premiered in France and the GDR. The participation of French stars Simone Signoret and Yves Montand had brought acclaim to the film in the East and West. Moreover, DEFA was already in the process of negotiating their next big-budget project with Pathé, *Les Misérables* (Silberman 2006: 35). With this successful collaboration in mind, Wilkening sent his inquiry to three potential partners in France: Pathé, Procinex and Franco-London Film Paris. In these letters, he emphasized already existing collaborations with Pathé, a meeting between Maetzig and the Franco-London representative at the Berlin Film Festival, as well as the commercial potential of Lem's science fiction novel on wider European markets.

Indeed, following the Sputnik's successful launch into space on 4 October 1957, Pathé conveyed their willingness to participate in the project. Ruth Fischer responded to Wilkening's inquiry at the end of October 1957, announcing not only Pathé's agreement, but also their conditions: distribution rights for Western Europe and a new version of the script composed by their director and writer, Louis-Émile Galey. On 6 November 1957, the French author arrived in Babelsberg to meet with Maetzig and Wilkening, followed shortly by the Pathé representative, René Bezard. On 20 November 1957, Bezard and Wilkening signed a contract on the French participation in the East German/Polish co-production *The Silent Star*. Pathé added a new condition: DEFA's participation in yet

[105] Ruth Fischer was the sister of well-known composer Hanns Eisler who worked closely with Bertolt Brecht on one of the first proletarian films *Kuhle Wampe* (1932), and who composed the music for many DEFA films and two of the East German/French co-productions, *The Crucible* (1957) and *The Opportunists* (1960). Fischer was active in communist circles of the Weimar Republic, where she became the leader of the Communist Party from 1924 to 1926. During the Third Reich and the Second World War, Fischer emigrated to France and the USA, and upon her return to Paris in 1955, she published several critical works *on Stalinism and called for reforms of communism and Soviet society after Stalin's death.*

another co-production, the film adaptation of Jacques Perret's *Le Caporal Épinglé* by Guy Lefranc and directed by Jean Renoir.[106]

At the third stage of the negotiations, following the new film policy that required DEFA to discontinue any future collaborations with Western partners, the GDR Deputy Minister of Culture, Erich Wendt, and the head of HV Film, Schauer, demanded from Wilkening the withdrawal of the Pathé author and film actors from the co-production. On 11 January 1958, despite Maetzig's serious objections and attempts to bring Politburo members to his side of the debates surrounding his project, Wendt declared a halt on the project (Soldovieri 1989: 392). Wendt's main critique concentrated on the involvement of Western filmmakers in the project and rejected both Fethke and Galey as screenwriters. In order to save the project, Wilkening and Maetzig had to relinquish the initial plans for a spectacular production with French monies and stars and instead employed two of DEFA's most experienced authors, Günter Rücker and Wolfgang Kohlhaase. Having made these concessions, the DEFA filmmakers had yet another card to play.

On 8 January 1958, West German magazine, *Der Spiegel,* published a report about the endeavors of Hamburg-based producer Friedrich A. Mainz and his company Fama Film to adapt to the screen the story of German rocket scientist Wernher von Braun. A typewritten copy of this article dated 1958 features in the Kurt Maetzig archive at the German Arts Academy (file 275), which suggests that the competition with the West German production was used as an argument in negotiations over *The Silent Star* production. Moreover, in an interview with film historian Günter Agde, Maetzig cites the relevance of Wernher von Braun's research next to Soviet scientific reports as sources for

[106] After DEFA terminated the collaborations with French partners and withdrew from the co-production, this film was made with Omnia-Film Munich, and released in 1962 as the French/West German co-production, Le Caporal Épinglé (The Vanishing Corporal, Jean Renoir).

the conceptualization of his utopian film.[107] Maetzig, who sought to develop a new genre, engaged audience interest by claiming use of extensive research on future technological developments and by using the popularity of Lem's novel. According to a follow-up article in *Spiegel* from 14 June 1959, Maetzig's West German competitor, Mainz, gave up his project for two reasons: the advancing production of *The Silent Star* and the sudden withdrawal of West German producers from his project due to the disadvantageous course (i.e. for the West) of the space race at this point.[108] Mainz intended to create a semi-fictional biography of Wernher von Braun, which he envisioned as "the best film of 1958" and as "the first feature film in the Western world that will focus on rocket and space travel in the Sputnik era."[109]

This ambitious project, initially involving negotiations with UFA's producer Dr. Laurence and the glamorous film star Hildegard Knef, was disrupted by the successful lauch of the first Soviet Sputnik in October 1957. In resonance with the political discourse of the time, the author of the article ironically comments on the rivalry between Maetzig and Mainz: "The outcome of this competitive race, in which the East Germans seem to have assumed a leading position, could very well affect negatively the

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[107] Compare to: "Was Wernher von Braun damals in Amerika von sich gab, habe ich ebenso gelesen wie alle sowjetischen Quellen, die mir zugänglich waren. Auf diese Weise ist dann beim Entwickeln des Stoffes auch eine technische Utopie zustande gekommen, die ziemlich genau da getroffen hat, was erst später vor sich ging (...) Der erste Sputnik wurde erst gestartet, während wir noch in den Dreharbeiten des Filmes *Der schweigende Stern* waren!" (Agde 1987: 121).

[108] In 1960s, Hollywood made the von Braun biopic *I Am at the Stars,* which, reportedly, was not very successful among audiences, yet it was shown also in West Germany.

[109] Quote from: "Der Hamburger Filmproduzent Friedrich A. Mainz, Inhaber der "Fama Film GmbH." ("Der Cornet", "Alibi", "Canaris"), bemüht sich seit Wochen, mittels Ferngesprächs und persönlicher Vorsprache finanzstarke deutsche Filmhersteller für ein Projekt zu gewinnen, das nach seiner Auffassung alle Chancen hat, "der Film des Jahres 1958" zu werden. Er möchte nämlich die Biographie des deutschen V-2 -Konstrukteurs und Weltraumpioniers Dr. Wernher von Braun sowie die Geschichte der Raketentechnik verfilmen und damit der westlichen Welt den ersten Raketen - und Raumfahrtspielfilm der Sputnik-Ära bieten" (*Der Spiegel* 2 (1958): 37).

performance of the cinematic tribute to Wernher von Braun on the Western film market."[110] Although Mainz had already secured the rights for the film in a meeting with von Braun, both UFA and its successor in the negotiations with Mainz, Artur Brauner, withdrew from the project. "We can't show how the Americans potter about their satellite program, while the Sputnik circles the Earth," was the cynical comment delivered by Dr. Laurence.[111]

Curiously, the fears of Western producers resurface in a scene of *The Silent Star* where North American scientist Hawling negotiates with US politicians his decision to join the Venus expedition. "They are more interested in our rocket than in you," suggests one US politician to Hawling. "At this pace, we will have our rocket in no time at all," adds another one. "But in no time at all, I won't be able to fly anymore," responds Hawling sarcastically, "George, you know, we are just getting older and older!"[112] Upon the arrival of his mentor, a German engineer modeled on Wernher von Braun, Hawling bemoans the waste of twenty years of dreams about space exploration, and his involvement in (bombing) experiments in the Pacific. His mentor supports him and announces his regret over having worked for the Americans after the Nazis drove him out of Germany, and that his only achievement was the atomic bomb. This scene reflects anxieties in the West during the space race, and, in particular, the reluctance of Western

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[110] My translation of: "Der Ausgang des Rennens, in dem die Ostdeutschen zur Zeit weit in Führung liegen, könnte sehr wohl das Geschäft der Wernher-von-Braun-Ballade auf dem westlichen Kinomarkt beeinträchtigen" (*Der Spiegel* 2 (1958): 37).

[111] My translation of: "Man kann doch jetzt nicht mehr zeigen", lamentierte Ufa-Dramaturg Dr. Laurence, "wie die Amerikaner an ihrem Satelliten-Programm arbeiten, während Sputnik um die Erde kreist" (*Der Spiegel* 2 (1958): 37).

[112] My translation of: "Sie wissen so gut wie wir, dass es denen weniger um Sie geht, als um unsere Rakette!" – "Bei dem Tempo, das wir jetzt entwickeln, haben wir unsere Rakette in ganz kurzer Zeit!" – Hawling: "Aber, in ganz kurzer Zeit kann ich nicht mehr mitfliegen! George, das wiessen Sie so gut wie ich, wir werden eben alt!"

filmmakers to produce a film about von Braun who had worked for the Nazis and developed missiles for them. At the same time, the dialog reveals the strongly politicized agenda of this first utopian film. The ideologically loaded revision of the script, however, as well as the potential competition by a West German science fiction film, explain the GDR cultural functionaries' renewed support of the project.

Deputy Minister Wendt's view of the co-production project changed dramatically after the release of this article and his return to the negotiations proved vital. By the spring of 1958, the disagreement between DEFA and *Iluzjon* deepened and without Wendt's intervention, the co-production would have failed. In a letter to Wilkening on 27 June 1958, Ludwik Starski conveyed ultimate disapproval of the new script by authors Stanislaw Lem and Jan Fethke, as well as by the Polish film commission. They complained about the changes made previously by Western authors and strongly insisted on Fethke's re-acceptance as an author, or that DEFA should return the rights for Lem's novel and *Iluzjon* could produce the film alone. Wendt, for whom the film had gained new importance, called the Polish Minister of Culture and National Heritage, Tadeusz Galiński, on 22 August 1958 and requested his support for the project's continuation. By September 1958, Fethke was restored in his function as author and, in February 1959, shooting began. The international team worked on location at the small airfield Berlin Johannisthal, in the Polish part of the Carpathians, as well as in the studios of Babelsberg and Wroczslaw. Only a few days after the start of shooting, Maetzig proudly reported back to DEFA studio head Wilkening that he directed in four different languages and tried to accommodate various demands by actors and film personnel from eight different countries.[113]

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[113] Compare to director Joachim Hasler's statement about Maetzig's directorial style while working on the co-production: "Und dann interessierte ihn […] aus seiner Eitelkeit heraus, dass er mit der Darstellerin am liebsten den ganzen Tag Französisch gesprochen hätte. Oder mit dem Neger Englisch, der aber schön

If the negotiations led by Wilkening with French and Polish partners attest to the shifting success of using transnational ties to various intellectuals, artists or film producers, the shooting of *The Silent Star* delivers an example of lived international solidarity. The cast of actors from various socialist countries and African states that sympathized with socialism, the collection of equipment, airplane parts, radars and other props from electronics supplier Funkwerk Erfurt, the optics company Carl Zeiss Jena, the tractor manufacturer VEB Traktorenwerke Brandenburg, and many other factories in the GDR and Poland, and the use of expert knowledge from nuclear research institutes in Germany and the USSR point to the enormous efforts by the filmmakers to create a truly international film with the participation of people with various national, social and professional backgrounds.[114]

The strategies of production manager Mahlich to achieve this variety of international contacts and to draw in specialists can be illustrated by his recruitment of Soviet *Tricktechniker* or technicians who used animation to create special effects. Upon seeing the Soviet documentary *Doroga k Zvezdam* (*Der Weg zu den Sternen/ Road to the Stars,* 1958, Pavel Klushantsev) at a DEFA-internal screening in August 1958, Mahlich wrote to the GDR embassy in Moscow inquiring about assistance contacting the animation experts and the architects of this film. He emphasized the international agenda of the project and the lack of East German expertise in the field. It was not uncommon for embassies to mediate between film studios in light of their responsibility to enhance cultural exchange. Usually, such inquiries resulted in an exchange of staff or services between the studios. Indeed, a few months later, in October 1958, the Lenfilm studio

Sächsisch sprach, weil er aus Leipzig kam. Und mit dem Russen, der gut Deutsch konnte, natürlich nur Russisch. Er hatte das Gefühl, daß er eben die Welt zusammenbringt, er, Kurt Maetzig" (Poss and Warnecke 2006: 152-153).

[114] BArch DR 117/ BA (I) 1048, Produktion Mahlich, Schriftwechsel.

contacted Wilkening. They offered to send a team of animation experts and a cameraman to Berlin for three months in exchange for DEFA's acceptance of their actor for the lead role of Arsenyev.[115] This strategy demonstrates the fact that transnational collaboration often went hand in hand with various practices of governmental support of cultural production in the socialist economies. Both artists and politicians shared the conviction that international collaboration would facilitate their creative or political projects respectively.

THE FANTASY OF UTOPIAN COMMUNITY

The agenda of international solidarity propagated on screen, furthermore, responded to some cultural functionaries' fantasy of a utopian community of viewers. On 29 June 1959, one of the representatives of HV Film, Ernst Hoffmann, wrote to Heinz Willmann, the general secretary of GDR's Peace Council (*Friedensrat*) and member of the World Peace Council (WPC). Hoffmann envisioned the simultaneous premiere of the East German/Polish co-production in Berlin, Warsaw, Moscow, Prague, as well as in Peking and Tokyo and, possibly other capitals in capitalist countries. He saw WCP's help as a prerequisite for the realization of his idea, and hoped that the event would boost the GDR's image abroad.[116] Even though this idea eventually faded, the endeavor to include the co-production in the larger spectrum of utopian and popular science films circulating in the socialist bloc remained. On 23 December 1959, an internal memo announced that

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115 BArch DR 117/ BA (I) 1927 1957-1962, Prof. Wilkening Schriftwechsel zu Film 238 *Planet des Todes*.

116 My translation of: "Wir denken dabei an die gleichzeitige Aufführung des Films sowohl in Berlin als auch in Warschau, Moskau, Prag, Peking und nach Möglichkeiten in Hauptstädten kapitalistischer Länder, zB Tokio. Wenn es gelingen würde mit Hilfe des Weltfriendenrates diesen Film zu einem noch festzulegenden Zeitpunkt – etwa im vierten Quartal dieses Jahres – am gleichen Tag, zur gleichen Studen in allen genannten und vielleicht noch einigen Städten mehr zur Aufführung zu bringen, so wird neben der Verbreitung der internationalen Autorität der DDR erzielt" (BArch, DR 117/ BA (I) 1927 1957-1962, Prof. Wilkening, Schriftwechsel zu Film 238 *Planet des Todes*).

the East German premiere of DEFA's first utopian film should follow two and a half months after the release of Viktor Morgenstern's Soviet-made film *Ya byl sputnikom solntsa* (*I was the Sun's Sputnik,* USSR, 1959). At the same time, five months after *The Silent Star*, the premiere of a second Soviet film was scheduled, *Nebo zovyot* (*Battle Beyond the Sun,* Mikhail Karzhukov, Aleksandr Kozyr, USSR, 1960). One of the greatest successes of Soviet science fiction cinema, this film was later re-edited by Francis Ford Coppola for US audiences (Ciesla 2002).

As expected, *The Silent Star* achieved international acclaim: at the 12th International Film Festival at Karlovy Vary in July 1960, the organizers presented the film – which ran as the first one in the competition – to more than six thousand viewers from all over the world after a panel discussion with the filmmakers. According to reviews in *Neues Deutschland* from 13 July 1960 and in *Der Morgen* from 16 July 1960, Maetzig's film was celebrated as innovative and sensational at the festival. In the issue of *Neues Deutschland* from 28 February 1960, the date the film premiered in the GDR, Horst Knietzsch praised it for its ability to compete with Hollywood films of the same genre and for its use of visual effects. *The Silent Star* premiered on 7 March 1960 in Warsaw and was, nonetheless, received with mixed feelings: the dialogues were perceived as "declamatory" and "artificial," while the technical effects were critiqued as not innovative enough, and too realistic for a representation of the year 1970 (*Glos Pracy,* 8 March 1960).[117] In *Sovietskii Ekran* from November 1961, the film is described as a good attempt at the genre of "realistic utopian film." However, the reviewer also

[117] Kurt Maetzig's Archive at the Art Academy in Berlin, file 1897.

criticizes the script as unable to portray the people of the future, because it is too bound to the problems of the present.[118]

Drawing on the success of *The Silent Star,* the DEFA studio for popular science films initiated another co-production with Poland, the 57 minutes long popular science film, *Die Reise nach Kosmatom* (*Journey to Cosmatom,* 1961, Manfred Gussmann and Janusz Star, GDR/Poland). Gussmann, an experienced filmmaker of shorts and popular films, had started a series of films produced following the 1957 launching of the Soviet satellite Sputnik. They included *Es ist kein Geheimnnis!* (*It's Not a Secret,* 1958), *Signale aus dem All* (*Signals from the Universe,* 1960), and *Schneller als der Schall* (*Faster than the Sound,* 1958, Jürgen Thierlein), and dealt with astronomical and scientific discovery. *Journey to Cosmatom* employed some of the innovative gaffer effects from *The Silent Star* and music by its composer, Andrzej Markowski.

CASE STUDY: SIGNALS: A SPACE ADVENTURE

A decade passed between the release of these films and the production of the next East German/Polish project, *Signals: A Space Adventure* (1970, Gottfried Kolditz). The seeming abandonment of the utopian genre is due partially to the conflict-ridden production of Maetzig's film, complicated by budget issues and especially by Albert Wilkening's initiative to collaborate with French partners. In addition, Wilkening's role as production director in supporting many of the critical projects of the year 1965 was reconsidered at the 11th Plenary. Similarly, the KAG Red Circle received much criticism for "exceeding its authority" in producing the infamous *Das Kaninchen bin ich* (*The Rabbit am I,* 1965, Kurt Maetzig, GDR), which together with Beyer's film *Trace of Stones* became the censors' primary target (Feinstein 2002: 167). After the Plenary, major

[118] Kurt Maetzig's Archive at the Art Academy in Berlin, file 1897.

structural changes took place within the KAGs. As described earlier, decision-making within the artistic units was redistributed, i.e. the production managers shared responsibility with the KAG's dramaturge while the film directors had much less say than before. For KAG Red Circle, this meant that the power in decision-making went from Maetzig's hands to former production manager Günter Karl who now became the dramaturge, and to Dorothea Richter who remained the KAG's production manager between 1966 and 1990. In this way, HV Film at the Ministry of Culture hoped for multi-level control over the artistic production: first, under the dramaturge's supervision, the KAG had the task of debating and preparing the submission of any film project; second, the individual KAG's dramaturges reported to the chief dramaturge and recommended the acceptance of scripts; and, finally, the chief dramaturge conveyed the project to the studio head who, upon completion of shooting and editing, assembled the artistic commission and HV Film representatives for final approval.

It was essential, therefore, for dramaturge Günter Karl to emphasize the KAG Red Circle's new utopian film project as a cooperative endeavor with a Polish artistic collective.[119] In his report on the *Signals'* script (*Stellungnahme zum Drehbuch*), he also underscored the cameo appearance of "the extremely popular Yugoslavian actor Gojko Mitić" whose international acclaim promised to increase the film's appeal among younger moviegoers. By the 1970s, Mitić enjoyed the GDR authorities' approval since he had performed in several partisan films and abandoned his career in Western film productions to work for DEFA. In addition, Karl argued that this new project was conceived with socialist humanist ideals in mind and by mutual agreement between German and Polish artistic collectives and would therefore achieve two equally important

[119] In his report, Karl maintains: "Das Drehbuch wird als "Bemühen der KAG auf dem Gebiete des Films lang vernachlässigte Genre ("Der schweigende Stern", 1961) wieder aufzunehmen gesehen"" (BArch DR 117/ BA (II), 1782).

goals: first, it would avoid the allegorical interpretations of present conflicts (as critiqued in *The Silent Star*); and, second, the film would successfully compete against more abstract science fiction productions (an allusion to *2001: A Space Odyssey*):

> In conclusion, we would like to point out that our script draws neither on a parable of the present, nor on some utopia of a *Neverland*, but that it represents a "realistic-fantastic" adventure and a humane, moving story, which we hope has every chance to become a success among the audiences.[120]

Celebrating *Signals: A Space Adventure* as a successful socialist response to *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Hans-Dieter Tok reiterated Karl's agenda in the *Wochenpost* of 15 January 1971 saying that the picture was dominated "not by terror, panic, and apocalyptic prognoses, to which one should helplessly surrender (as aspects of numerous science-fiction productions in the West), but by the triumph of reason and the cooperation of the Earth's populace."[121] Along these lines, the production of *Signals* became not only the official answer to Kubrick's film, but also a definitive break between the past project of *The Silent Star* and future DEFA utopian films.

Unlike Maetzig's grandiose co-production, where the struggle for funding and the pursuit of international prestige had overshadowed the main goal of creating a new genre, Gottfried Kolditz' enthralling film followed the post-1965 prescription to "use conventions effectively." An experienced screenwriter and director who by 1970 had worked on several DEFA fairy tales and musicals, Kolditz seemed well suited to satisfy

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[120] My translation of: "Abschließend möchten wir noch einmal darauf hinweisen, daß es sich bei unserer Filmvorlage nicht um eine Parabel auf Gegenwärtiges handelt, und nicht um eine Utopie, ein "Nirgendland", sondern um eine "real-phanstastische" abenteuerliche und menschlich bewegende Geschichte, die unseres Erachtens alle Chancen hat, ein Publikumserfolg zu werden" (BArch DR 117/ BA (II), 1782).

[121] My translation of: "Nicht Schrecken, Panik und Weltuntergangsstimmung dominieren, denen der Mensch hilflos ausgeliefert ist, Attribute der unzähligen Science-fiction-Produktionen westlicher Provence, sondern Vernunft und Miteinander der Erdenbewohner haben gesiegt" (*Wochenpost*, 15 January 1971).

the demand for socialist-style entertainment. In addition, he had recruited Mitić and cast him as a preternaturally strong Indian chief in *Spur des Falken* (*Trace of the Falcon,* 1968, GDR). Kolditz' first DEFA *Indianerfilm* had received positive media reviews at home and abroad and filled movie theaters with young moviegoers. In addition to Mitić's cameo appearance in *Signals,* Karl and Kolditz (credited as director and writer) carefully budgeted the second East German/Polish co-production and imbued it with "impressive visual effects" (Grisko 2002: 114).

The story of *Signals: A Space Adventure* still shared a couple of similarities with *The Silent Star* and revolved around the rescue of a spacecraft named Ikaros presumably destroyed in a meteor storm. Based on a 1968 German science fiction novel, *Asteroid Hunter*, by Carlos Reisch, Kolditz' narrative focuses once again on a strong commander figure, Veikko, who embarks on a mission to save Ikaros' crew and assembles an international team to man the space ship Laika.[122] Also reminiscent of *The Silent Star* is the robot in the film, which decodes the message from the planet that the crew is supposed to contact, Jupiter. When Captain Veikko and his team discover Ikaros, he becomes good friends with the only survivor, Terry (Mitić). Towards the end of the film, visually defined by space shots imitating the abstract compositions of Kubrick's *2001,* Veikko reveals his vulnerable side to Samira, Laika's psychologist. Their dialog summarizes the *Signals'* core message in somewhat didactic tone: individual sacrifice is necessary to rescue human life and to preserve peace on Earth. Yet in spite of its treatment of existential questions, *Signals* ends on an optimistic note. The film narrative

[122] The production manager Dorothea Hildebrandt's final report on the film underscores Kolditz' goal to compose an international film crew from six different countries, which was similar to Maetzig's endeavor: "Bei der Besetzung des Films ging der Regisseur von der Annahme aus, daß in hundert Jahren die Menschen aller Nationalitäten bei der Erschließung des Kosmos zusammen arbeiten werden und besetzte die Hauptrollen mit Darstellern der DDR, der UdSSR, der VR Polen, der SR Rumänien, SFR Jugoslavien und VAR" (DR 117/ BA (III) 3443 Schlussberichte 1966-1984).

is interspersed with flashbacks of life on earth, and the story ends at the beach where the crew of the Laika and Terry enjoy their vacation.

Film reviewers in the GDR and elsewhere, as film scholar Michael Grisko points out, disapproved of the arbitrarily happy ending of *Signals*, asserting that the dialog suffered from the same expository quality as that of *The Silent Star* (2002: 113). Renowned East German critics such as Horst Knietzsch and Hans-Dieter Tok praised the individualized depiction of characters, as well as the use of genre convention, while West German Gerd Focke's review entitled "A Space Adventure without Excitement" addressed the special effects as mere mimicry of spectacular Western productions and "not opportune for filmmakers in socialist societies" (cited in Grisko 2002: 113-115). Granted, *Signals* fell short of the technical standard set by Kubrick's worldwide success, yet some of these reviews seem to overlook the ambition of Kolditz, Karl, and the other members of the KAG *Red Circle* simply to create a popular film. The positive reception of the film among East German audiences (577.832 visitors in the first three months) proved these ambitions right.[123]

The makers of *Signals* clearly differed from both Kubrick and Maetzig in their conception of a utopian film as a collective project to equally benefit both sides involved in the co-production. Learning from the history of prolonged negotiations with cultural administrators, ministers and Ludwik Starski's artistic collective *Iljuzjon* during the production of *The Silent Star,* the KAG *Red Circle* now reviewed the requirements of their Polish partners at each stage. Instead of dividing the tasks "mechanically," DEFA filmmakers sought to use the strengths of their Warsaw colleagues (animation, set design, acting) and agreed to take over two thirds of the financial responsibilities for the

[123] BArch DR117/ 23355.

project.[124] Furthermore, unlike Maetzig who derived his inspiration from Soviet aerospace research reports and Wernher von Braun's memoirs, the Polish KAGs agreed on a more "realistic" and ideologically less troublesome representation (Ciesla 2002: 122). In March 1971, while finishing the final approval report, Dorothea Hildebrandt pointed to the crucial assistance of East German and Polish scientists who had adapted "the authors' fantasies" to a "credible cinematic representation" reflecting contemporary tendencies in scientific and technological progress.[125] In addition, Hildebrandt's report summarized the KAG's ambition for a pioneer endeavor as follows:

> The production of the utopian film *Signals: A Space Adventure* is to be considered a new beginning in this genre. Within two years, the film collective completed a pioneering accomplishment, as all colleagues contributed with exceptional commitment and perseverance. This applies to the German as well as Polish filmmakers. Above all, we need to acknowledge the artistic-technical management of the material, which accounts for the film's extraordinary appeal. We gained experiences and insights, which should necessarily benefit future utopian films made by our studio.[126]

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[124] Reference to: "Mit dem Abschluß eines Co-Produktionsvertrages zw. DEFA und PRF Warszawa am 24. April 1969 über die gemeinsame Herstellung des Spielfilms "Signale- ein Weltraumabenteuer" begann eine schöpferiche Zusammenarbeit der Kinematographien unserer beiden Länder. Es wurde eine neue Form der Zusammenarbeit gewählt, nicht eine mechanische Aufteilung der Aufgaben und Pflichten, "halb und halb", sondern die allerbeste Ausnutzung aller Kräfte und Mittel beider Partner angestrebt. Die künstlerische Leitung des Filmvorhabens oblag der deutschen Seite. Eine Leistungsaufteilung erfolgte 70:30" (BArch DR 117/ BA (II) 1782).

[125] My comment refers to the following statement by Hildebrandt: "Das Abenteuer, was erzählt wird, sollte die Faszination des Möglichen im Technischen und des Wahrscheinlichen im Gesellschaftlichen haben. Gemeinsam mit den wissensch. Beratern des Films [H.Mielke- DDR, Dr. Wolzek- Polen] wurde eine künstlerische Konzeption für die glaubwürdige Gestaltung des utopischen Genres entwickelt. Die Autorenphantasie wurde filmische Realität mit heute ablesbaren Tendenzen in Wissenschaft und Technik" (DR 117/ BA (III) 3443, Schlussberichte 1966-1984).

[126] My translation of: "Die Produktion des utopischen Films *Signale, ein Weltraumabenteuer* ist als Neuanfang innerhalb dieses Genres zu werten. Das Filmkollektiv hat in zweijähriger Arbeit eine Pionierleistung vollbracht, von allen Mitarbeitern wurde mit außerordentlicher Einsatzbereitschaft und Beharrlichkeit gearbeitet. Das trifft sowohl für die deutschen als auch für die polnischen Mitarbeiter zu. Vor allem sollte die künstlerisch-technische Bewältigung des Stoffes Erwähnung finden, die den Film seine besondere Attraktivität gibt. Es sind Erfahrungen gemacht worden und Einsichten gewonnen worden, die sich in einem weiteren utopischen Film unseres Studios unbedingt niederschlagen müssen" (Schlussbericht, BArch DR 117/ BA (III) 3443, Schlussberichte 1966-1984).

Indeed, one of these insights was the careful examination of script and production plans within the KAG, followed by the dramaturge's approval. In a letter from 29 February 1968, Günter Karl reports to Günter Schröder, DEFA chief dramaturge from 1966 to 1977, the process of internal negotiation of the script and the development of ideas about the genre. He refers to several discussions, the first one being on 25 January 1968 (the day of the KAG's approval of the script) on the use of robots and special effects. A subsequent meeting on changes in the character representation took place on 6 February 1968 involving the dramaturge, the authors, and director Kolditz. After this meeting, the dramaturge and the production manager Hildebrandt met several times with the chief dramaturge and discussed changes mainly with reference to the overuse of technical jargon in the script and the profusion of special effects.[127] At the end, the main characteristics of the film, such as the variety of special effects and shots imitating Kubrick's film, remained. This fact points to improved negotiations between the dramaturges, even though the post-1965 restructuring of the KAGs, as Feinstein had suggested, tightened administrative control over film production (2002: 177). While it is true that *Signals* did not raise any troubling questions as *The Silent Star* did, we need to be reminded of Daniela Berghahn's definition of a good KAG's dramaturge as a good negotiator. Günter Karl who invested much energy in developing DEFA genre cinema by advocating for film projects, managing productions, and writing the scripts for several *Indianerfilme,* provides an example of this definition. In his remarks on *Signals*, he repeatedly reminded cultural functionaries not only of the young GDR and East European

[127] For their follow-up correspondence, refer to BArch DR 117/BA (II) 1781.

viewers' entertainment needs, but also of the SED educational agenda: "We hope to use this topic [space travel] for dissemination and consolidation of a Marxist worldview, by way of countering the imperialist manipulation with our image of tomorrow in a utopian representation."[128] This statement explains why, despite numerous controversies during the production of utopian films, GDR political officials continued to support these co-productions. It was the agenda for education of a sosialist viewer tied into the artistic task to entertain that made the genre film co-productions welcome on the East European screens.

INDIANERFILME

The didactical project of the utopian films was shared by the other genre that boomed in the 1960s and the 1970s: the *Indianerfilme*. Made in response to the successful Hollywood genre of the Western, the *Indianerfilme* sought to reverse the power relations between white colonizers and Native Americans and to stage the struggle of the oppressed at the center of their narratives. While the utopian films counter visual representations of the future community as found in West European and Hollywood productions, the *Indianerfilme* rectify the history of another community by representing it as unified by notions of brotherhood. Similarly, in DEFA utopian films, an international

[128] My translation of: "Es handelt sich um einen utopisch- abenteuerlchen Stoff aus dem Bereich der Raumfahrt. Er ist geeignet, als niveauvolle Unterhaltung ein Publikumsbedürfnis zu befriedigen, das auch durch die beeindruckende Erfolge bei der Erforschung des Kosmos breiter geworden und ständig im Wachsen ist. Wir hoffen, mit diesem Stoff auf vergnügliche Weise die Verbreitung und Festigung der marxistischen Weltansichten zu nützen, indem wir der imperialistischen Manipulation mittels utopischer Darstellung unsere Auffassung und unser Bild von morgen entgegensetzen" (BArch DR 117/ 23355).

crew overcomes internal disagreements through the unifying force of their mission to save other civilizations from the colonial advances of extraterrestrial enemies.

In the *Indianerfilme,* the notion of brotherhood is postulated based on the agreement over universal (socialist) values such as freedom, collective wellbeing and work. DEFA *Indianerfilme,* moreover, had the task of strengthening the myth of international solidarity when East Germany found itself surrounded by Slavic nations within the East European socialist camp. The fact that most of the *Indianerfilme* were co-productions shot in Eastern Europe and cast foreign actors in the lead roles underscored the importance of this task (Trumpener 2002: 96). In contrast to the utopian films, the *Indianerfilme* facilitated identification with the oppressed through a fascination with the Indians as "noble savages," as well as through "fantasies of compensation and restitution" (*Wiedergutmachungsfantasien*) as thematized by cultural historians Hartmut Lutz and Katrin Sieg (2002).[129] Lutz's distinction between the English term *Indian* (from which the German *Indianer* derives) and the term *Native American* will be useful also in this discussion. The latter signifies the actual persons of indigenous descent in North America, whereas *Indian* refers to an ideological construct conceived by Europeans about these indigenous people (Lutz 2002: 181-182). This distinction is appropriate to our discussion of the DEFA *Indianerfilme* because of the tension between the films' insistence on historically accurate representation and their romanticization of the figure of the Indian as a proponent of peaceful coexistence and fighter against imperialism and injustice. The distinction proposed here is only for the purposes of this analysis, as we

[129] Hartmut Lutz focuses in his research on the social construction of a German national myth as related to the continuous fascination of Germans with things Indian in literature, visual arts, and film; Katrin Sieg has examined impersonations of Indians and the social meanings of Indian hobbyism in East and West Germany since the 1950s and the related unique cross-cultural identification of Germans with Native Americans.

need to stay aware of the fact that the term *Native American* was not common in the GDR and was introduced only post-1989 in the German context.

As in the case of the utopian films, popular literature as well as scientific research prepared the way for the *Indianerfilme*. In literature, the genre dates back to Karl May's widely read stories about the Apache chief Winnetou and his German friend, Old Shatterhand (thirty-five novels published between 1875 and 1909). As film historian Tim Bergfelder argues, "May's conception of Germans abroad as peacemakers, Christian missionaries, cultural educators, and arbiters of justice, can be seen to support imperial Germany's nationalist and colonialist aspirations," especially because they opposed the "good German" to "bad" Anglo-Saxon settlers (2005: 178). Thus after 1945, May's fiction was banned in the Soviet zone due to its "undesirable bourgeois attitudes" (Raundalen 2005: 77). The accusations that Karl May was "the Führer's literary mentor," as mentioned by Bergfelder, contributed significantly to keeping his books out of East German bookstores and libraries. Bergfelder refers in particular to Klaus Mann's polemic written in 1940, which read May's fictional world as prefiguring the hierarchical order of the Third Reich (2005: 175). The Winnetou stories, nonetheless, found an enthusiastic reception in the GDR: many of May's books were distributed underground, and East German youth traveled to Czechoslovakia to see West German film adaptations of May's oeuvre in the early 1960s (Habel 1997: 7).

Along with banning May's work, the East German Ministry for People's Education was well aware of the need for a new type of educational literature. In a directive dated 1950, Minister Paul Wandel encouraged the development of socialist genres to compete with West European young adult fiction and children's books (Borries and Fischer 2008: 43-44). Several authors responded to this need and embraced the Ministry's directive for entertaining stories grounded on scientific and historical facts.

Among these authors were Liselotte Welskopf-Henrich, a history professor at the Humboldt University in Berlin, as well as writer Anna Jürgen and anthropologists Eva and Julius Lips.

Welskopf-Henrich became popular among GDR readers with her debut novel *Die Söhne der großen Bärin* (*The Sons of Great Bear,* 1951) that the KAG Red Circle director Josef Mach adapted for the first DEFA *Indianerfilm*. After the success of the film and the receipt of several literary awards, Welskopf-Henrich published two more sequels to her novel in the 1960s. Her next book, the five-volume work *Das Blut des Adlers* (*Eagle's Blood*, written between 1966 and 1980) had a stronger political message related to the Native American protests in the US of the 1970s and aroused wide interest among Indianist clubs (Turski 1994: 28). An internationally renowned historian, Welskopf-Henrich viewed her work as standing at the intersection of fiction and historical fact and a direct response to the "irresponsible fabulations of Karl May" (Gemünden 1998: 402). In the biography of the *Indianerfilme* hero, Gojko Mitić, Elentraud Novotný commends Welskopf-Henrich's role as a consultant for DEFA's first *Indianerfilm*. As such, the Humboldt professor contributed to a new historicized representation of the Indian as opposed to the one in Karl May's work (1976: 25).

In contrast to Welskopf-Henrich's historical-anthropological approach, Anna Jürgen privileged a strong ideological message in her 1950 novel *Blauvogel: Wahlsohn der Irokesen* (*Blue Bird: Adopted Son of the Iroquois*). "What we all have in common," she said in referring to GDR authors working on adventure novels about Native Americans, "is that we hate oppression and desire freedom. The Indian literature thus participates in the much broader genre of adventure literature and draws the reader's attention to a political agenda calling for a just social order without racial discrimination

and social controversies."[130] Anna Müller-Tannewitz, who used the literary pseudonym Anna Jürgen, studied German and anthropology in Berlin and wrote several children's books about Indians. She made a career in the GDR after being married to Werner Müller, a NSDAP and SS member, who in 1942 became a professor for Native American Studies in Strasbourg and whose research supported policies of racial discrimination in the Third Reich. Much like Karl May, Anna Jürgen composed fictional travelogues and novels after touring the USA with her husband in the early 1930s. Nonetheless, two decades later in 1950, Jürgen's conversion to socialism and her "politically correct" book, *Blue Bird* won her the literary prize of the Ministry for People's Education. In 1979, DEFA director Ulrich Weiß adapted her book to the screen where it became one of the best-received children's films of the year.

Eva and Julius Lips pursued a similar agenda while teaching at the Karl-Marx University in Leipzig and traveling around the GDR to present on the life and culture of Native Americans. Their work adopted the slogan "*Völkerkunde will Völkerfrieden,*" which roughly translates as "Studying the peoples of the world promotes peace among them" (Borries and Fischer 2008: 45). The Lips had emigrated to the US in 1934 where Julius Lips taught at Columbia University in New York and at Howard University in Washington D.C. where he became head of the Anthropology Institute from 1937 to 1939. From 1940, he was a member of the New York New School for Social Research until his return to Leipzig in 1948 where he founded the Institute for Anthropology and Comparative Sociology of Law (Novotný 1976: 61). After her husband's death in 1950, Eva Lips became the head of the institute and published several popular scientific

[130] My translation of "Allen gemeinsam ist der Haß gegen die Unterdrückung, der Wunsch nach Freiheit. Und so lenkt die Indianerliteratur, die nur ein Teil des Genres der bedeutend umfangreicheren Abenteuerliteratur ist, das Augenmerk des Lesers auf dieses politische Anliegen, das nur gelöst wird durch eine gerechte soziale Ordnung, in der es keine Rassenunterschiede und keine sozialen Gegensätze mehr gibt" (cited in Borries and Fischer 2008: 45).

workssuch as *Das Indianerbuch* (*The Indian Book*) in 1956 and *Sie alle heißen Indianer* (*They Are All Called Indians*) in 1976. Together with Welskopf-Henrich's trilogy *The Sons of Great Bear*, Lips's works became the standard books for East German fans and hobby clubs (Borries and Fischer 2008: 45, 75).

CLASSIC WESTERN NARRATIVES FROM A MARXIST PERSPECTIVE

Inspired by this literature as well as by the emerging GDR public discourse on the situation of Native Americans in the USA, DEFA produced twelve films between 1965 and 1983 that thematize the struggle of Native American tribes in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. These films contain many of the elements that visually and narratively construct the Western focus on white settlers' conflicts with the Indians. Six of the DEFA *Indianerfilme* were realized as co-productions, shot on location in Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, Romania, Bulgaria, and even Cuba, while the other six were produced in collaboration with the studios of these countries. These films thus attended first to the GDR cultural policy makers' demand in the 1970s for collaboration with East European partners, as described in the first chapter of this study. Second, as Trumpener argues, the *Indianerfilme* had the ideological project of making East Germans familiar with the landscapes and physiognomy of other socialist countries (2002: 96). Finally, DEFA could not ignore the popularity of Westerns among GDR youth who visited cinemas across the border in Czechoslovakia in large numbers to watch their heroes in action.

Witnessing this pilgrimage for popular culture, DEFA appropriated classic Western frontier narratives from a Marxist historical perspective. The *Indianerfilme* thus came as a response to Harald Reinl's acclaimed cinematic adaptations of Karl May's work, and, in fact, used many of the same Yugoslav sets, locations and extras. This way,

as Gemünden has argued, "the *Indianerfilme* successfully cashed in on the renewed popularity of the Western genre in Europe" including not only the West German, but also Italian Spaghetti Westerns (1998: 339). Like Reinl's Karl May films, the first DEFA *Indianerfilme* were literary adaptations of works, for example by above-mentioned Liselotte Welskopf-Henrich and Anna Jürgen. Later on, DEFA filmmakers (dramaturge Günter Karl, director Gottfried Kolditz, and actor Gojko Mitić) began developing their own original scripts, where they prized historical accuracy in the same way as the authors of the new literary genre.[131]

The seventeen Westerns made by Reinl between 1962 and 1968 did not claim historical authenticity but rather sought to create a blockbuster formula of action-filled adventure pictures starring French film star Pierre Brice and American Lex Barker, best known for playing Tarzan. As Bergfelder shows, the Apache chief Winnetou sequels were indeed "among the most popular films in the domestic market and were among the few West German genres in the 1960s that exported well into other countries" (2005: 172). Realized as co-productions with France, Yugoslavia, or Italy, Reinl's adaptations of May relied on the familiarity of successive generations with his fiction.

DEFA *Indianerfilme* both resembled and differed from the Reinl's Westerns. First, they were realized either as co-productions or relied on tansnational collaborations, multinational film crews, and exchange of services. Second, the DEFA *Indianerfilme* were also intended as a genre that would export abroad and attract Eastern European audiences. In contrast to Reinl's films, the makers of the *Indianerfilme* insisted on

[131] Compare to DEFA dramturge Günter Karl's description of DEFA's agenda for the *Indianerfilme*: "Bei der Entwicklung einer Indianerfilmserie der DEFA lag die Absicht zugrunde, die große Publikumswirksamkeit dieses Genres auszunutzen, geschichtlichen Ereignissen entsprechend unsere historisch-materialistische Geschichtsauffassung filmkünstlerischen Ausdruck zu geben und somit zur Entwicklung und Herausbildung eines wissenschaftlichen Geschichtsbildes unserer Jugend beizutragen" (BArch DR 117/ Vorl. BA (III) 1781, dated 3 November 1970).

historically accurate representation, which would guarantee both their films' success and their educational mission among socialist audiences. This also recalls engagement with Soviet technological advancement in the utopian films.

The protagonist-centered *Indianerfilme* display a new attitude to the story of the North American West, described by DEFA dramaturge Klaus Wischnewski as follows: "We do not want to focus on battles among Indians, but to bring out the significance of the individual. The Indians are the heroes of our stories: our main concern was to achieve the right proportions in the representation."[132] This statement reveals DEFA's corrective approach to Hollywood Westerns, which typically did not place Indians at the center of their narrative. In addition, DEFA's agenda in the *Indianerfilme* was to openly critique the film adaptations of Karl May's works in which Indians appeared freely invented in order to accommodate a positive image of the German (Lutz 2002: 169, Bergfelder 2005: 192). The visual and narrative representation in the *Indianerfilme* thus discloses a political agenda on the part of the filmmakers who aimed at showcasing capitalist expansion yet at the same time focused on the Indian leader as a figure of identification. The socialist star in the *Indianerfilme*, Gojko Mitić, as Gemünden observed, thus represented a "fantasy designed to resonate with the commitment to anti-fascism, the founding principle – or foundational fiction- of the GDR" (1998:403).

DEFA's co-produced *Indianerfilme* usually tell the story of a leader who restores the balance by avenging his people, uniting the Native American tribes against the colonizers, or bringing his people to a new land of prosperity. A common motif and climax in these films is the dramatic fight between a white capitalist/colonizer and the

[132] This statement was made in a debate between East German filmmakers and young moviegoers, which was published in *Junge Welt* from 20 March 1966: "Wir wollen keine Indianerschlachten, sondern einzelne Menschen hervorheben. Die Indianer sind die Helden dieser Geschichte: unser Hauptanliegen war, diese Proportionen richtigzustellen" (cited in Habel 1994: 221).

Indian chief. Such is the case in *Spur des Falken* (*Trace of the Falcon*, 1968, Gottfried Kolditz, GDR/USSR), for instance, where the Dakota chief *Weitspähende Falke* defeats the industrialist Bludgeon, and, at the end, leads his tribe to a better life in the North. In the sequel to *Trace of the Falcon*, the East German/Yugoslavian co-production *Weisse Wölfe* (*White Wolves*, 1969, Konrad Petzold/Boško Bočković), the chief repeatedly risks his life for his people's freedom in the perpetual search of a new home. In contrast, Chief Osceola in the eponymous 1971 East German/Bulgarian/Cuban co-production, directed by Konrad Petzold, wins over his enemies not through violence or battle, but by negotiating with his opponents and by persuading his friends from other tribes to unite against the white colonizers. Similarly, in *Apaches* and its sequel *Ulzana,* from 1973 and 1974 respectively, co-written by director Kolditz and actor Mitić, the Apache is portrayed as a peace-loving Indian chief who leads by example and revenges the genocide of his people by laying down his own life.

CASE STUDY: *APACHES* AND *ULZANA* IN COMPARISON

The story of *Apaches* thematizes the massacre of the eponymous Native American tribe in the area between the Rio Grande and Verde River in New Mexico. The Apaches sign a contract with Mexican settlers and have given them the right to explore for copper in their land, for which the Mexican mining company is under obligation to provide the Native Americans with fruit and meat at an annual market in the city of Santa Rita. However, the geologist Johnson, a representative of an American trust company, believes that there is silver in the area and plots together with Santa Rita's commandant to entrap and kill all 400 members of the Apache tribe when they come to the fair. Ulzana, a young Apache warrior, discovers the American wagons and warns the tribe's chief of a possible plot against his people. However, the chief disregards the warning and emphasizes his

trust for the settlers who have fed the Apaches for many years. After the massacre, which Ulzana escapes only by accident, he avenges his people by attacking Santa Rita and taking Johnson captive. Yet Johnson's many allies, among which is the US Army Captain Burton and some white trappers, arrive in Santa Rita in time to save his life. Upon his recovery, Johnson manages to catch Ulzana and whips him like a slave. A day later, the warriors who survived the massacre in Santa Rita save Ulzana (now declared the Apache chief) so that he can face and defeat Johnson in a final battle.

Ulzana picks up the story several years later, when the Apache survivors have united with another Native American tribe and reside on a reservation in a desert area. They trade with the US Army and invite them for an annual harvest feast. Among the guests are Captain Crook and his deputy, Captain Burton. Many of the Anglo-Saxon settlers in the nearby town of Tuscon, however, resent the Native Americans' newly constructed irrigation system. They plot to destroy it and to drive the Apaches off of their reservation. When Crook is called to Washington, D.C., Burton seizes the chance to demolish the irrigation system and drive the Apaches off of their land, banishing them to certain starvation in the arid area of San Carlos. The Apaches believe that Ulzana died in the shooting during the destruction of the irrigation system, yet he recovers from his wounds with the help of the medicine man Nana. Meanwhile, Ulzana's Mexican wife leaves the reservation to negotiate the relocation of the tribe with Captain Burton, and is taken captive by him. The story ends with the chief's heroic intervention in the town of Tuscon, yet his wife falls victim to the shoot-out, a sacrifice for the future of her people.

While *Ulzana*'s ending invited criticism of racial and gender-related "blindspots" in the *Indianerfilme*, we need to contextualize it within the ideological representation of the individual and the collective, as well as within the educational agenda underlying this depiction. Gemünden, for instance, sees the killing of Ulzana's Mexican wife as a tool

"to propel dramas of revenge and reckoning" and argues that DEFA *Indianerfilme* (especially *Ulzana* and *Fatal Error*) do no better than Hollywood Westerns in their representation of "interracial marriages as always doomed" and of punishment for "mixing of blood" between Indians and other individuals (1998: 401). At the same time, DEFA's focus on the union of the Apaches with other tribes, as well as on Ulzana's deliberate choice to marry a Mexican woman (even though the Mexicans had betrayed his people and participated in the massacre in the film *Apaches*) suggests a different agenda.

It is an ideological agenda, which, as Gemünden rightly points out, did not shy away from the "perpetuation of generic clichés" (401). Yet it also reveals these co-productions' attempt to educate East European audiences about Indians as a "proto-socialist" society (Raundalen's term, 2005: 79), opposed to white settlers and Mexican soldiers who pose a military threat. Moreover, in the approval of the first film script on 4 April 1973, dramaturges Günter Karl and Hans-Joachim Wallstein suggested that the Apaches were shown in "an attempt to settle down" and "to become productive in new conditions," yet the "antagonism between the all-invasive capitalist society and the genteel order of the Indians put them in a conflict of life and death."[133] This is unmistakably grounded in the Cold War rhetoric of the GDR in the 1960s, which propagates fear of invasion by the West coupled with the appeal to resist its influences.

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[133] My translation from: "Der Ausgang des mexikanischen Krieges gefährdete unmittelbar ihre materielle Existenz. Damit war das Problem ihrer Integration in eine kapitalistische Gesellschaft objektiv gestellt und drängte zu einer Lösung. Wie die Apachen gemäß ihrem Entwicklungsstand der Produktivkräfte sich auf die neuen Bedingungen einzustellen vermochten, zeigt der historisch belegte Bau von Bewässerungsanlagen und der damit verbundene Versuch ihrer Seßhaftigkeit. Doch der antagonistische Widerspruch zw. der sich immer mehr auf alle Lebensbereiche ausdehnenden kapitalistischen Gesellschaft und der Gentilordnung der Indianer, bedingte für die Apachen eine Konfliktsituation auf Leben und Tod. Insofern besitzen Grundsituation und Konstellation der Figuren im Szenarium auf der indianischen wie auf der weissen Seite Modellcharakter, dessen Wirksamkeit in den bisherigen Filmen dieses Genres erprobt wurde" (BArch DR 117/ 30658, Stellungnahme zum Szenarium "Apachen II").

Ulzana's revenge and his wife's death, therefore, might also be read as elements in support of this anti-imperialist rhetoric. This reading is suggested by director Kolditz's concept of the Apache stories as combining facts from historical documents with a strong anti-imperialist message. In a 1974 interview for the newspaper *Volkswacht*, Kolditz put emphasis on his and Mitić's desire to infuse their entertainment picture with the critique of the US attempts to subjugate and control Native Amerians, as follows:

> The Indians can not forgo face-to-face battles. [...] This way, the audience is left with the impression that the Whites' assault on the irrigation system of the Membrenos Apaches is not only a cruel but also socially determined action. The film, however, does not want to emphasize aggression, brutality, or ruthlessness. On the contrary, the story should illuminate who is made dependent on whom, and why, and how class inequality perpetuates this dependency.[134]

This ideological agenda translated primarily into the solidarity with which the East German/ Soviet/ Romanian co-productions *Apaches* and *Ulzana* were filmed. For instance, while Romania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia provided actors, assets and horses, Mosfilm representatives found landscapes that supposedly represented the Chihuahuan desert. The films were shot in the exotic Karakum desert and in Samarkand in Uzbekistan and were reused in the sequel *Ulzana*. The recycling of actors, assets and costumes as a model adopted from Hollywood Westerns had a double purpose: on one hand, it alleviated the production costs of each of the film studios involved in the co-productions, yet on the other, it enabled East German and East European audiences to recognize

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[134] My translation of: "Auf die Mann-gegen-Mann-Aktionen können die Indianer nicht verzichten […] Und so kommt es, daß der Zuschauer beispielsweise den Anschlag der Weißen gegen die Bewässerungsanlagen der eben seßhaft gewordenen Mimbrenos in "Ulzana" nicht nur als grausame, sondern auch als gesellschaftlich bedingte Handlungsweise sieht. Der Film will nicht Aggerssivität, Brutalität und Skrupellosigkeit schön bunt in Szene setzen, sondern zeigen, wer darauf und warum angewiesen ist, in wessen Klasseninteresse dies oder jenes geschieht" (Cited in Habel 1997: 117). See also Gemünden's reading of DEFA's attempts to "dispel the image of the Apaches as the war-mongering tribe presented in so many Hollywood films" and his comparison of Kolditz's film to Robert Aldrich's *Ulzana's Raid* (1972, USA), which "explains that Indian violence stems from resistance to assimilation" as well as on "radical cultural alteriority" (1998: 404).

familiar landscapes and physiognomies. The KAG's dramaturge Karl's approval of the script for *Apaches* in March 1972 and for *Ulzana* in April 1973 reinforced the importance of this recycling for the continuity of the genre as did for the reception in the press.[135] Renate Holland-Moritz, for instance, wrote after *Ulzana*'s premiere for the popular film magazine *Eulenspiegel*: „Gojko rides his horse again! And not only that! After *Apachen*, he and director Gottfried Kolditz mounted Pegasus again and composed the script for *Ulzana*" (cited in Habel 1997: 119).

Indeed, both films emerged from the collaboration between a director and a film star, which had no precedent in DEFA's history. The screenwriting duo had worked together since their first film, *Trace of the Falcon,* in 1968, and Kolditz had promoted Mitić's career by inviting him to perform in his utopian film of 1970. In his discussion, Frank-Burkhard Habel shows the extensive research Kolditz and Mitić undertook on the history of the Apaches in New Mexico (1997: 105-107). He argues that the charcters of Ulzana and the scalp hunter Johnson were historical persons, and comments on an 1837 Mexican law that targeted the Apaches and introduced monetary awards for scalps (106). In addition, Habel mentions the 1822 contract between an Apache chief, called in the document "Juan José," and a Mexican mining company in Santa Rita del Cobre, which Kolditz and Mitić adopted as the background for the development of their story.

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[135] On the artistic-ideological foundation of the film, Karl wrote: "Der Film setzte die ideologisch und publikumswirksame Serie der bisherigen DEFA-Filme dieses Genres fort. An der Geschichte der Apachen im 19. Jahrhundert sind typische Stufen einer beginnenden imperialistischen Expasion der USA ablesbar. Der Film erzählt die Geschichte dieses Apachen-Stammes und ihres Häuptlings, der mit dem Beginn dieser Expasion konfronitiert wird […]" (BArch, DR 117/ 23415). Karl reinforced the importance of the sequel one more time in his approval of *Ulzana*'s script in April 1973: "Der bereits fertiggestellten Film "Apachen" spielt in der Vorbereitungsphase dieses ersten Aggressionskrieges der USA. Der nur in Szenariums-fassung vorliegende zweiter Teil zeigt die Situation der Apachen nach Beendigung dieses Krieges. Problemstellung und Figurenenesemble des ersten Teils werden darin folgerichtig weitergeführt" (BArch DR 117/ 30658).

AUTHENTIC REPRESENTATION VS. ROMANTICIZATION

Despite their claim to historical authenticity, however, film historians such as Gerd Gemünden or Anikó Imre argue, DEFA *Indianerfilme* still conceived of the Indians as "noble savages" (Gemünden 1998: 401, Imre 2009: 90). "Soliciting identification with the freedom struggles of such 'noble savages,'" Imre argues, "perpetuated the long-standing exoticization of North American Indians in German culture" (2009: 90). The strategy of casting actors of non-German descent contributed to the exoticized image of the Indian character. In this regard, the fictional Apache chief impersonator, the Yugoslavian actor Gojko Mitić, involuntarily contributed to the casting of Indians as "primitive," "ignorant of a wide spectrum of historical and regional difference" (Gemünden 1998: 90). The credibility of Mitić's performance, as his biographer Novotný has shown, came not only from his on-screen image as a courageous and athletic role-model, but also from his representation in youth magazines and fan books as "disciplined, modest, hard-working, reliable, sympathetic" (1976: 14).[136] Moreover, the author of the largest Mitić fan book to date, Habel, points to the party functionaries' interest in the creation of the invincible Indian hero "who without fear defended the rights of the natives" as a popular star in East European countries (1997: 8).

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[136] Gojko Mitić was born on 13 June 1940 in Leskovac, Yugoslavia. His father was a partisan and participated actively in the Serbian resistance movement against the Nazi regime. Mitić enrolled as a sports student, when he was invited to participate as a stunt actor in some Western productions, and became involved in Harald Reinl's as well as English and Italian Westerns. He was discovered and recruited to DEFA by production manager Hans Malich who in 1967 traveled to Yugoslavia to cast actors for *The Sons of Great Bear* (Habel 1997: 184-186). Gemünden cites DEFA director Petzold's statement on Mitić's commitment to DEFA and socialist cinema as follows: "It is not as if Gojko had no other choice than to portray Indians here in the East. He had, and as far as I know, he continues to have offers from capitalist countries. It's a sign of his straightforwardness [*Geradlinigkeit*], and honesty that he chooses to exclusively work here. He is really serious about this work, and it is of importance to him to participate in the new discoveries and the new developments of this genre, according to our Marxist view of history" (Gemünden's translation of a quote cited in Novotný 1976: 27, Gemünden 1998: 404).

In terms of the cinematic context of the 1970s, in which DEFA *Indianerfilme* emerged, they indeed represent a precedent in their search for the homogenous community in Native American tribes and the romanticization of their everyday life and values. This fact is relevant for our understanding of DEFA's agenda for co-productions for popular entertainment, and even more so, when we view them against the contemporaneous East European recycling of the Western genre. According to Imre, such films in other socialist countries "have typically sustained an element of performativity, evident in playful imaginative transgressions of realism, overt parody, or allegorical deployment" (2009: 87). Such examples include the Czech comic mix of adventure and Western genres by director Oldrich Lipský, *Limonádový Joe aneb Konska Opera* (*Lemonade Joe or a Horse Opera*, 1964, CSSR) and a number of cartoons experimenting with the Western genre already in the late 1950s.

Similarly, Edward Buscombe argues, French New Wave directors exploited the genre of the Western in the early 1970s by creating what he describes as "counter-Westerns" seeking to critique both American cinema and the established capitalist society that created it (2006: 218). However, as Buscombe suggests, French Westerns rarely portrayed Indians, and if they did, such as in the French/Italian co-production *Touche pas* à *la femme blanche* (*Don't Touch the White Woman,* 1974, Marco Ferreri), a good portion of humor necessarily balanced out the political message. In other words, humor and parody were the predominant modes of address at a time, when the big Hollywood Westerns were already history.

In contrast, the co-produced *Indianerfilme* were made with the approval and funding of several communist states that set out to appropriate an inherently American genre in order to appease socialist yearnings for entertainment. Unlike Hollywood Westerns, or parodies of them from the 1970s in France or Eastern Europe, DEFA co-

productions with the Soviet Union, Romania, Bulgaria, and others were made with an educational agenda in mind and insisted on historical accuracy. The fantasies offered through the adventures and struggles of the Indians and their chiefs portrayed by Mitić stress responsibility for the community and willingness to reach peaceful agreement with an enemy that appears overpowering. Granted, these fantasies were utopian, though for people who had to learn how to live behind the Iron Curtain, which in 1961 became a wall of stone and bricks, they provided an important identification not only with the neighboring Slavic community, but also with life in a genteel and innocent society.

The reception of the *Indianerfilme* throughout Eastern Europe was not only extremely positive, but had repercussions beyond the expectations of their filmmakers. Each co-production drew more than one million viewers in the GDR and was successfully released in most European and many non-European socialist countries (such as Cuba, or countries in Latin America). Moreover, these co-productions promoted a long-lasting fascination with the image of the Indian and Indian culture, especially among young people, who often formed Indian clubs and acted out the ideal communities presented on screen.

East German reenactments of Native American culture and rituals from the 1960s as related to the cinematic presence of Indians in films have recently been scrutinized by sociologists and anthropologists as an interesting phenomenon of lived out fantasy, i.e. the recreation of a utopian, imagined, and transnational community. Katrin Sieg, for instance, has studied the East German Indianists (*Indianisten*) located in the cities of Dresden and Leipzig and compared them to West German hobby clubs. She has identified the Indianists' "exclusive focus on Indian cultures" while similar organizations in West Germany display a fascination with a much wider range of Western cultural attributes such as scouts, cowboys, and the US military (Sieg 2002: 223). This is perhaps

explained by the fact that, as she argues, that hobbyists in the GDR "were encouraged by the socialist state to develop an understanding of and solidarity with Indians as emblems of anti-imperialist oppression and resistance" (218).

The Indianists' self-created ideal communities, Borries and Fischer argue, were not only officially recognized by the socialist state, they were even allowed "to build their own Western towns with saloons and streets adopting names from movies" (2008: 35). Moreover, they became very popular in the entire Socialist Bloc with entertaining shows for large audiences from factory workers to ambassadors, in countries such as Poland, CSSR and Hungary. Along these lines, Indian clubs received the status of *Volkskunstkollektive* (folk art collectives) in the GDR and were endowed with prizes for their achievements and constructive contribution to socialist cultural life.[137]

The official language shared among groups across the socialist states propagated international solidarity with the oppressed and an anti-imperialist vision of the world. Especially in the 1970s, East European Indian clubs expressed solidarity with protests of Native Americans in the USA. Such demonstrations included the occupation of the former prison on Alcatraz in 1972 and of Wounded Knee in 1973. The public discourse on Native American history, which DEFA *Indianerfilme* extended to the silver screen, received new dimensions in light of contemporaneous struggles for Native American rights. German Indianist Birgit Turski reports that young activists from her club Pedro Bisonette in Cottbus brought these public debates to the 1973 International Festival of Youth and Students (*Weltfestpsiele der Jugend und Studenten*) in Berlin (1994: 28). As a result, several new Indianist clubs were founded. After heated debates at the festival,

[137] Compare to: "Für ihre Leistungen beim Aufbau des sozialistischen Kulturlebens erhalten die Indianerfreunde eine Vielzahl von Auszeichnungen: Aufbaumedaillen und –nadeln, Ehrungen für ihre Verdienste um das künstlerische Volksschaffen in der DDR, und man ernennt sie sogar zu "Hervorragenden", manche sogar zu "Ausgezeichneten Volkskunstkollektiven der DDR" (Borries and Fischer 39).

Truski identifies the new tendency among younger Indianists in East Germany and Eastern Europe to discuss the present-day problems of Native Americans and to adopt their traditions as a lifestyle. From these ideas, two new "communities of common interests" (*Interessengemeinschaften*) sprung up, the first one engaged with the culture and traditions of the Apaches (in Gadebusch), the second studying the history and life of the Iroquois (1994: 29).

Turski argues that these communities quickly spread their enthusiasm to the rest of the Socialist Bloc. In the first half of the 1970s, she reports, contacts of GDR Indianists instigated the creation of several similar hobbyist groups in Czechoslovakia and Poland (1994: 20). Moreover, the first Indianist society in the USSR, according to Turski, came into being in Leningrad in 1982 and was called "Alcatraz." "As crucial factors in the development of the Indianist movement in the USSR," Turski maintains, "our Lenignrad friends point to the screenings of DEFA *Indianerfilme* and the familiarity with works of Polish Indianist writer Sath.-Ok" (1994: 21).[138] The Indianists sustained and renewed their contacts at annual Pow Wows and organized camps, which took place throughout East Europe and sometimes even resulted in international, i.e. "German-Russian Indian marriages," as Turski claims (21).

But how did *Indianerfilme,* many of which were based on supposedly historically accurate scripts, still provide for a continuing visual fascination with Indians? German studies scholar Yolanda Broyles-Gonzalez argues that the circulation of film and television images fostered more than anything else the cultivation of the Indianist enactments and lifestyle. She points out that this was not an exclusively German phenomenon and that it was practiced beyond German national boundaries in all Central

[138] My translation of: "Auslösende Faktoren für die Entwicklung der Indianistik in der UdSSR waren, nach Aussagen der Leningrader Freunde, die Aufführungen der DEFA Indianerfilme und die Bekanntschaft mit den Werken des polnischßindianistischen Schriftstellers Sath.-Ok."

and East European countries (1989: 70-71). Moreover, she argues that this hobby became popular among all generations, usually entire families. Turski also confirms in her study that most of the participants in all forty-eight groups throughout East Germany were teenagers and students (1994: 10, 31). She claims that in her own hobby group, only the three leaders (founder Dr. Otto, Turski, and her husband) were adults, whereas the majority of participants were predominantly highschool age youngsters united by common interests.[139] Like in the films *Apaches* and *Ulzana*, which, according to Gemünden, "cherish the possibility of a *Nischengesellchaft*, a remote reservation outside the parameters of US imperialism," Truski's representation of the Indianist clubs suggests an escapist utopia (1998: 404).

CONCLUSION

In fact, one can view both utopian films and *Indianerfilme* as filling the cinematic niche created by the lack of Western imports of genre films in the 1960s and 1970s (Stott 2007: 237-239). Whereas East German and especially East Berlin audiences could watch West German and Hollywood films in the early1950s by crossing the border to West Berlin or Czechoslovakia, this had become impossible after 1961 (Pehnert 2009: 161). Therefore, East German cinema of the 1960s and the 1970s embarked on the creation of its own entertainment and genre films. Moreover, the rise of television in the GDR, as discussed in director Maetzig's speech cited at the beginning of this chapter, brought new international and economic developments. The main advantage of the DEFA entertainment films was their capacity to bring back GDR audiences into the ailing

[139] Refer to the following statements in Turki's book: "Innerhalb des Klubs bestand und besteht ein hohes Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl, das im Extremfall sogar persönliche Aversionen überdecken konnte. Begründet ist ist dieses Gefühl in der Spezifik der Hobbies. Nur im Klub selbst konnte man sicher sein, wegen seiner Freizeitbeschäftigung nicht mehr oder weniger angelächelt zu werden" (1994: 15). "Es ist die Romantik des naturverbundenen Lebens, die für kurze Zeit und unter relativ günstigen Bedingungen in den Camps erlebt werden kann" (1994: 18).

cinemas and to improve the image of East German film abroad. In addition, the fact that most of the entertainment films were co-productions demonstrated after 1961 GDR's receptiveness to international collaboration with socialist countries.

By the late 1970s however, and particularly by the 1980s, the policy of GDR film officials with regard to film import had changed significantly. While during the 1960s and the 1970s many Western genre films remained unscreened in the GDR, the 1980s saw East German screens opened for most Western genre productions.[140] It appears that increasing discussions on the relevance of Western imports marked a change in attitude towards Hollywood genre cinema, which had not previously been considered suitable for the GDR cinema program. Commercial entertainment films from Western countries offered, according to film historian Rosemary Stott "strong catharsis" and no critique of GDR society, which became prominent in many home-made DEFA films since the late 1970s (2002: 98). With the opening of East German screens to Hollywood blockbusters, therefore, DEFA genres lost their importance to audiences precisely because they were perceived to have a double agenda – to entertain and propagate socialist ideals.

In this way, the impetus for the promotion of visual, escapist and social utopias, i.e. in often co-produced *Indianerfilme* and the utopian films, lapsed in the 1980s. This was confirmed by the decisions made at the last DEFA filmmakers' conference in 1989: first, to abolish the concept of proportional release of feature and documentary, domestic and international films (reminiscent of Lenin's postulates); second, to ban the system of issuing licenses to films according to their country of origin (as practiced since the

[140] British film historian Rosemary Stott mentions, for instance, an internal discussion between Erhard Kranz, the head of the Film Approval Committee and Horst Pehnert, the head of the HV Film, on 22 July 1980. Both agreed that Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977, USA), together with *Towering Inferno* (1974, John Guillermin, USA), should be released in the GDR (Stott 2002: 94). The latter represented a new genre, the disaster film that had previously been taboo in the GDR.

1950s); third, to give up "running the numbers" (*Zahlenspielereien,* a term referring to the practice in East Germany of assessing films according to the number of movie-goers they attracted, which often lead to fabrication of numbers); and, finally, to close the split between the cinema of responsibility and the cinema for entertainment.[141] The plans made at this conference suggested an extreme opening of East German cinema for imports of contemporary films. As a result, one hundred and tweny international films were shown on East German screens in 1989 versus fifteen domestic and ca. twenty children's films (Lange 1989: 11).

The significance of DEFA co-produced *Indianerfilme* and utopian films in East Germany and socialist Europe, nevertheless, remains in the fact that, like their Western counterparts, they were planned on an international scale. While the Hollywood science-fiction films and West German Karl May adaptations relied on spectacle and adventure, the DEFA entertainment co-productions with East European partners aimed more for scientific or ethnographic authenticity. Although certainly politically subdued and didactic in their representation, these films invited the utopia of integration into an international socialist community as well as escapist fantasies related to the open spaces of the plains or the universe. These fantasies, as ethnographer Turski has shown in her discussion of Indianist clubs, facilitated idealistic political activism and the belief in the ability to overcome ethnic differences. At the same time, it was only in a niche or imagined society that these differences could be overcome.

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[141] "Eindeutige Zustimmung hingegen fanden die Vorschläge der HV Film, formale Zuschauerabrechnungen und Proporzdenken abzubauen, nicht mehr Auflagen für Filme nach Herkunftsländer zu erteilen, Zahlenspielereien aufzugeben, es nicht in ein Kino der Pflicht und der Kür aufzuspalten" (Lange 1989:11).

Chapter 3: Gemeinschaftsproduktionen: International Solidarity and Antifascism in DEFA Co-Productions

In the late 1950s, after the ties to Western filmmakers became more tenuous, East German and East European artists opened up a dialog about the future development of socialist film art in terms of its ideological, thematic and aesthetic orientation. As mentioned in the previous chapters of this study, discussions addressed issues such as reorganization of the concept of genre cinema and re-orientation of the production networks, as well as restructuring of film distribution within the socialist camp. These changes were dictated primarily by the instable political discourse of the time, which ultimately justified the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 and the isolation of the GDR from Western Europe.

To recapitulate: the initial endeavors of the East German studio during the transitional phase of 1947-1955 to contract former UFA employees had failed. While DEFA's co-productions for cultural prestige and popular entertainment came in response to the need of utilizing the production capacity of the largest studios in Europe, the mandate to educate and entertain German audiences, as well as the competition with genre cinema in the West, the co-productions for solidarity displayed a different agenda. DEFA's ambition to achieve cultural prestige by employing West German filmmakers did not resonate anymore with the prerogatives of the GDR government during the early 1960s and its attempts to justify Germany's division. Artists not only in the GDR but also throughout Eastern Europe faced the necessity to discuss where socialist cinema was going now and to show their willingness to support the project of socialism in their work.

Three international film conferences provided the venue for this dialog, bringing together filmmakers from all of the European socialist countries and several Asian

socialist countries: Albania, Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, GDR, Hungary, Mongolia, North Korea, Poland, Romania, USSR, North Vietnam and Yugoslavia. These film conferences' proceedings point to filmmakers' shared preoccupation in the late 1950s and early 1960s with challenges in their directorial and dramaturgical work, as well as to their search for new ways to use already existing international mechanisms of collaboration. Furthermore, the documented debates demonstrate the artists' awareness of the intertwinement of their agenda for solidarity with the overarching political discourse on friendship and brotherhood among socialist nations, which ultimately aimed at legitimization of the ideological divisions during the Cold War. As we have seen in the previous chapters, this agenda contrasted the two other agendas, that of cultural prestige and popular entertainment, which ultimately aimed at the acceptance of DEFA co-productions among West and East European audiences.

NEW COURSE FOR CO-PRODUCTIONS AMONG SOCIALIST STATES

The first international socialist filmmakers' conference took place in Prague in 1957 and underscored the necessity of creating new aesthetic styles and genre formulas, which would draw on progressive, i.e. leftist and pro-socialist, movements such as the Italian Neorealism and would compete with Western popular cinema for the attention of socialist audiences. The second film conference in Sinaia, Romania in 1958 was run under the motto *Dramaturgy in Today's Socialist Film and Reinforcement of Our Film Production in Ideological, Artistic, and Technical Terms*. The debates at this conference focused particularly on the structural and ideological differences between socialist and capitalist filmmaking and introduced new models for efficient collaboration within state-sponsored studios, such as the example presented by artistic collectives in Poland. Both conferences' proceedings attest to the changing role of film as a medium for connecting

and mobilizing socialist societies and to the centrality of antifascist discourse in defining socialist cinema in opposition to West European and Hollywood competitors.[142]

The resolutions at these conferences culminated in the decisions of the third and last international film conference of the socialist states in Sofia, Bulgaria. This convention took place between the 15th and the 20th of November 1960 and provided a discursive space for debates on the development of new directorial styles and on setting a new course in the practice of co-production and film exchange among socialist countries. Sergei Gerassimov, an influential and prolific Soviet film director and Vice President of the Filmmakers' Union of the USSR, delivered the keynote address. In it, he stressed the power of solidarity among socialist filmmakers, which, projected onto the silver screen, would connect the people of all socialist countries:

> We should not deprive our people of our unified voice resounding in friendship, or we would forfeit their friendship and trust. And if this unity remains unbroken, and grows stronger and stronger, so will the artistic film form, which we envision will undoubtedly gain the power that has given rise to the best film works recognized as such everywhere.[143]

Gerassimov's vision of film as a tool to propagate friendship and political unity resonated not only with contemporary attitudes in the GDR where politicians propagated the strengthening of the ties to other countries in the Socialist bloc, but also with the ongoing political liberalization in the wake of Khrushchev's reforms as a result of which art production seemed more and more a channel to respond to people's expectations. Most

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[142] Publication by the DEFA Foundation, Berlin, *Internationale Filmorganisationen*, file 1041.

[143] My translation of: "Wir sollen unserem Volk unsere in Freundschaft tönende Stimme nicht vorenthalten und uns nicht der Freundschaft und des Vertrauens seitens des Volkes berauben. Und wenn dieses Band nicht zerrissen wird, wenn es fest und immer fester wird, so wird auch die künstlerische Form, die wir erträumen, zweifellos jene Stärke erlangen, mit der die besten Filmwerke entstanden sind und die allgemein anerkannt werden" (*Kommunique der Dritten Internationalen Filmkonferenz der sozialistischen Ländern,* Frank Beyer Archive, Film Museum Potsdam, 9/ 2003/ N 024, Box 12: Materialen zu der Filmkonferenz Sofia).

importantly, the terms of trust and friendship between artists and working people, which we might now perceive as ideologically tainted, at that time suggested the burgeoning hopes of filmmakers to be able to reform society through the unifying forces of antifascism and anticapitalism.

The ambition to promote socialist film art beyond the borders of the states that sponsored its production was shared especially by younger directors who had studied together in Prague or Moscow and thus had become involved in one another's projects. Such was the case for East German director Ralf Kirstenwho assisted Polish filmmaker Wanda Jakubowska with her antifascist film *Spotkania w mroku/ Begegnung in Zwielicht* (*Encounters in the Dark*, 1960, Poland/GDR). After the film's release, Jakubowska delivered one of the most moving addresses at the film conference in Sofia, reflecting on an emerging new wave in Polish cinema, as well as on her experience of co-directing this first Polish/East German co-production with Ralf Kirsten. Frank Beyer, another alumnus of the Prague film school, focused his contribution to the debates in Sofia on the growth of, and positive responses to, the East German KAGs. He also praised their collaboration with other filmmaking units in Eastern Bloc for their spirit of artistic solidarity and creativity. Finally, Mikhail Romm, a well-known Soviet director, made an appeal for the concerted efforts of all socialist filmmakers for the creation of new genres and aesthetic styles. He compared these efforts to the force with which Italian Neo-Realism had changed the idea of West European cinema.[144]

The centrality of the issue of socialist solidarity at the 1960 convention was reinforced in the concluding remarks in the official bulletin:

> The main task of our film art is to produce works of high ideological and

[144] All contributions can be found in German translation in Frank Beyer Archive, Film Museum Potsdam, 9/ 2003/ N 024, Box 12: Materialen zu der Filmkonferenz Sofia.

> artistic value, intellectual vision, and audacity, which should foreground today's man, the builder of the new society, the passionate advocate of communist ideals. (...) The convention views as necessary the establishment of various forms of institutional bodies to the purpose of the overall development of the existing ties among filmmakers from socialist countries. The reinforcement of these ties shall contribute towards solutions for the pertinent questions in the development of socialist film art, the realization of co-productions, and the mutual exchange of expertise. Moreover, we view the regular exchange of films as advantageous, especially prints from the archives of participating socialist countries, as well as of their newly made films.[145]

These concluding words attest to both aspects of socialist cinema that the three conferences identified as necessary: first, the understanding of antifascism and shared communist values as means to differentiate socialist film art from West European cinema; and, second, the role solidarity among artists played for successful outreach to socialist audiences. International friendship and cooperation, moreover, had been categories central to socialist political discourse since the 1940s and their re-emphasis at the filmmakers' conferences points to an approximation of the political and the artistic aspirations of the early 1960s. In the wake of Khrushchev's critique of the Stalinist cult in 1956, artists throughout Eastern Europe embraced their role particularly in re-establishing the project of antifascism and in propagating socialist ideals in their respective societies.

Even though the artistic endeavors articulated at these conventions now seem compliant with the political project of promoting solidarity among socialist states and

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[145] My translation of: "Die Hauptaufgabe unserer Filmkunst ist, Werke mit hohen ideologischen und künstlerischen Werten zu erzeugen, mit geistigem Weltblick und großer Kühnheit, in denen der zeitgenössische Mensch, der Erbauer der neuen Gesellschaft, der leidenschaftliche Verteidiger der kommunistischen Ideale, in den Vordergrund tritt (...) Die Konferenz betrachtet es als notwendig, dass Organisationsformen zu allseitigen Entwicklung der Beziehungen zwischen den Filmschaffenden aus den sozialistischen Ländern gefunden werden. Diese Beziehungen sollen zur Lösung der aktuellen Fragen auf dem Gebiet der Filmentwicklung des sozialistischen Films, zur Verwirklichung von Co-Produktionen und zu wechselseitigen Erfahrungsaustausch beitragen. Für zweckmäßig wird ferner gehalten, dass regelmäßig Filme aus den Archiven der sozialistischen Filmfonds der an der Konferenz teilnehmenden Länder sowie die neuen in diesen Ländern geschaffenen Filme beständig ausgetauscht werden." (*Kommunique der Dritten Internationalen Filmkonferenz der sozialistischen Ländern,* p. 48, Frank Beyer Archive, Film Museum Potsdam, 9/ 2003/ N 024, Box 12: Materialen zu der Filmkonferenz Sofia).

peoples, some antifascist films represented atrocity or touched on politically controversial issues, which became at odds with cultural functionaries' expectations. Such was the case of the first Bulgarian/East German co-production, *Sterne* (*Stars*, 1959, Konrad Wolf, GDR/Bulgaria), which in the eyes of Bulgarian politicians failed to accurately represent the partisan movement in the Balkans. Similarly, the film adaptation of Jewish author Jurek Becker's novel, *Jakob der Lügner* (*Jacob the Liar*, 1974, Frank Beyer, GDR), was initially conceived as East German/Polish co-production but premiered in the 1970s as a DEFA co-production with East German television. The well-documented negotiations between the initial partners show their disagreement over the representation of life in the concentration camps and the reality of the Holocaust.

DEFA'S AGENDA FOR INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Against the backdrop of this project of solidarity developed at international conferences among socialist filmmakers, this chapter sheds light on the complex interplay between the project of co-producing and the fulfillment of state expectations. To this end, I focus on the political and institutional significance of the *Gemeinschaftsproduktionen,* film co-productions between equal partners. These films exemplified the concept of solidarity as outlined at the three international conferences and differed from joint projects with Western partners, yet they were realized at the same time as DEFA co-productions with West German and French partners.[146] The introduction of this new form

[146] As discussed in the first chapter of this study, to ensure unproblematic release of prestige film co-productions in the West, DEFA often relinquished the right to be credited in film versions prepared for West German audiences, or the name DEFA appeared only after the phrase *in Zusammenarbeit* (in collaboration with), i.e. not as an equal partner in the co-production. Similarly, prestige co-productions appear in DEFA accounts as *gemeinsame Produktionen* (joint productions), a term that is replaced later by *Gemeinschaftsproduktionen*. This term was used also in West German filmmaking of the 1950s, so it is not restricted to DEFA's production terminology. Yet in the context of socialist filmmaking, the term was employed deliberately to foreground the close collaboration of socialist partners as derived from *Gemeinschaft*. The latter translates as "community," "alliance," or "collective." *Gemeinschaft* was used

of co-production bridges the gap from the earlier discussed DEFA agenda for cultural prestige to the institutionally redefined project of co-producing within the parameters of socialist cinema.

In contrast to DEFA co-productions serving the purposes of international prestige or popular entertainment, *Gemeinschaftsproduktionen* in the 1950s and the early 1960s thematized the shared experiences of exile and discrimination and proposed strategies for the aesthetic representation of the atrocities committed during the Third Reich, including Jewish persecution and suffering. Thus, they channeled emotions and experiences that were not commonly represented in DEFA antifascist films. The first DEFA co-productions with Bulgaria and Poland, Konrad Wolf's *Stars* from 1959 and Wanda Jakubowska's *Encounters in the Dark* from 1960 provide examples of this thematic. The initiators of these early co-productions were mostly East German rémigrés or their children (Konrad Wolf, Jurek Becker), Holocaust survivors (Wanda Jakubowska), or East European artists of Jewish descent (Angel Wagenstein). In the wake of anti-Semitic trials throughout Eastern Europe in the 1950s, such co-productions provided filmmakers with the opportunity to expand public discussions on the atrocities committed against the Jewish people.

Gemeinschaftsproduktionen during the 1970s and the 1980s responded primarily to the Cold War rhetoric of anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism in Eastern Europe. On a smaller scale, these films shared the GDR's official emphasis on the East Germans' long-held antifascist conviction and their willingness to cooperate with East European societies, thus avoiding the necessity to deal with the Nazi past as common to both German states. In other words, DEFA had turned away from the engagement with the

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widely in the GDR's political rhetoric, i.e. in combinations such as *sozialistische Staatengemeinschaft* (the community of socialist states), *Volksgemeinschaft* (unity of the people in socialist societies), etc.

Holocaust typical of the 1950s and early 1960s, which focuses on the transportation of Jewish citizens and life in the concentration camps, to the representation of resistance groups, for instance as in Horst Brandt's *KLK an PTX: Die Rote Kapelle* (*KLK Calling PTZ: The Red Orchestra*, 1971, GDR/USSR), or to the elevated portrayal of socialist leaders, such as Georgi Dimitroff's biopic *Amboss oder Hammer sein* (*Anvil or Hammer*, 1972, Hristo Hristov, Bulgaria/GDR/USSR). These later solidarity co-productions were sponsored mostly by Soviet film studios, but sometimes also by East German political institutions such as the Ministry of Culture or the Ministry for State Security. More importantly, the growing involvement of party officials in commissioning and controlling *Gemeinschaftsproduktionen* suggests the films' increasing subjugation to political objectives and their instrumentalization for the purposes of propaganda.

In order to explain the trajectory of the concept of socialist solidarity in its transformation from artistic endeavor to instrument of propaganda, I examine first its roots. International solidarity as such emerged during the Spanish Civil War and was later ardently promoted in the official rhetoric of antifascism as the founding myth of the East German socialist state. I illuminate the link between the evolution of the solidarity complex on screen and personal experiences of suffering and persecution, of exile and networking, of home-coming and of the search for new ways to address the atrocities committed by the fascist regimes in Europe. To this end, I will look at two groups of returnees who actively shaped the politics, cultural life and the understanding of antifascism and solidarity in the GDR and postwar Germany: the veterans of the Spanish Civil War and Jewish communist returnees. My discussion of the role that these two groups played in shaping GDR society and DEFA filmmaking complements my earlier analysis of the contribution of former UFA directors who returned to DEFA, as outlined in the second chapter of this study.

To contrast the earlier solidarity co-productions to the latter in terms of agency and political influence, in the second half of this last chapter, I engage with films from the 1970s and 1980s that instrumentalized the concept of international solidarity as well as the historical role of antifascism as the unifying force within the European communist community of the 1920s and 1930s. Looking at the initiators of these *Gemeinschaftsproduktionen*, and in particular at the 1971 film *KLK Calling PTZ: The Red Orchestra* as a case study, I show how institutional and ideological interests prevailed over transnational collaboration and artistic exchange. The documented history of this East German/Soviet co-production demonstrates the sometimes uneasy but always powerful alliance between the artists and the regime.

Continuing the discussion of the evolving project of socialist cinema, I also trace the decrease of Czech and Polish filmmakers' interest in co-producing with DEFA, especially during the late 1960s, due to a large extent to the more innovative and formally experimental filmmaking in these countries. I draw here on some examples of failed co-production projects. Finally, I show how the lack of potential for further narrative or aesthetic development in solidarity co-productions of the late 1970s and the marginal interest with which they were received among socialist audiences, resulted in the decline of these films in the late 1980s.

REMEMBERING THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

The concept of solidarity in the political discourse of DEFA, the GDR, and most socialist countries has its roots in the Internationalist movement during the Spanish Civil War. Historian Stanley Payne points to the use of *international solidarity* as a term in the Soviet rhetoric in support of the formation of International Brigades, multinational units of volunteers with communist or antifascist convictions (2004: 154). Similarly,

Gemeinschaft as a concept became central to the GDR official narrative of the Spanish Civil War, which was interpreted as the beginning of the ongoing international struggle against fascism (Barnert 2008: 17). This idea became prominent in DEFA's first co-production with Mosfilm, *Fünf Tage, fünf Nächte* (*Five Days, Five Nights*, 1961, Lev Arnshtam, USSR/GDR) in which the Soviet commander Leonov maintains: "We began the battle against Hitler together in Spain. Here, in Germany, we have won it."[147]

In August 1936, a series of large-scale solidarity campaigns were introduced through Politburo decrees in the Soviet Union, leading to the initiation of efforts among workers and intellectuals to raise humanitarian relief for the Spanish Republic, as well as to public demonstrations and rallies in support of Spanish communists. In his exploration of the Soviet cinematic reflections on the Spanish Civil War, historian Daniel Kowalski sheds light on the great impact these solidarity campaigns had on Soviet filmmakers and the use Stalin and the Soviet leadership actively made of these the campaigns in communist propaganda. Kowalski cites the memoirs of Roman Karmen, who witnessed the large pro-Republican demonstrations in Moscow in 1936 as a young filmmaker and sent Stalin a personal letter in which he offered to go to Spain as a cinematographer.[148]

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[147] My translation of the film quote: "Gemeinsam haben wir in Spanien den Kampf gegen Hitler begonnen. Hier in Deutschland haben wir ihn beendet." The film's story tells of the Red Army's search for and rescue of paintings from the Dresden art gallery. This first German/Soviet co-production is structured around the argument that the transportation of the artworks, which is not depicted in the film, was an act of lived solidarity, of support for Germany's cultural heritage and, ultimately, of preserving this heritage, all undertaken by communists and Soviets who shared antifascist values.

[148] Roman Karmen's footage has been used in many Soviet films on the topic ever since. In his 1967 film, *Grenada, Grenada, Grenada moya* (*Granada, Granada, my Granada*, USSR), co-directed with the playwright Konstantin Simonov, Karmen retold the story of the Spanish Civil War through a voice-over narrative, while introducing the most visually arresting footage from his archival material shot thirty years before. Among the postwar films that transported the Soviet filmgoer back to Spain and whose provenance was Karmen's archival footage was also Andrei Tarkovsky's *Zerkalo* (*Mirror,* 1975, USSR). In this film, the Spanish Civil War represents both the end of childhood innocence and the prelude to WWII (Kowalewski 2007: 17).

Karmen, together with Joris Ivens, who later became one of DEFA's most prolific documentary filmmakers and Ernest Hemingway met in Spain and traveled together while filming the war (Kowalewski 2007: 11). This mixture of artistic collaboration, practiced solidarity and working on state commissions became an inspiration for socialist filmmakers especially in the 1950s and the 1960s. Moreover, much like the Soviet government in the 1930s, GDR politicians in the 1950s placed high value on the potential for cinematic exploitation of the Spanish Civil War for the legitimization of their communist project.

The Spanish Civil War veterans shared the experience of antifascist struggle, exile and survival with many of the émigrés who returned to the GDR after WWII, including artists, intellectuals, prisoners of war and concentration camp survivors. Between 1936 and 1939, approximately 38,000 foreign volunteers served in the International Brigades in Spain; the Germans among them were about 3,000. They were recruited among those living in exile in France, Switzerland or Spain. According to Stefan Soldovieri, half of them died in the war and many of the survivors ended up in concentration camps in Germany (2007: 59). In these camps, the German prisoners of war encountered Jewish and non-Jewish people from all social strata, and shared with them experiences of incarceration, forced labor and annihilation, which shaped their personal and political views.

Citing one of the veterans, historian Arnold Krammer maintains that the German volunteers in Spain were diverse in their political orientations: "an estimated one-third were absolute communists, one-third a mixture of liberals, socialists and democratic anti-nazis, and one-third soldiers of fortune and youths attracted by adventure and war" (2004: 532). What these various groups had in common during and after the war was their aspiration to promote international solidarity with the oppressed, to fight fascism, and to

prevent its spread in Europe. The utopian character of these aspirations together with the romanticization of the struggle and suffering during the Spanish Civil War gave roots to the founding myth in East Germany. "From the ranks of the International Brigades," Krammer asserts, "came trusted and proven ideologues, and from the stories of its heroics came models of socialist sacrifice" (2004: 560).

Veterans from the Spanish Civil War participated eagerly in the East German government and culture and propagated international solidarity in the GDR's literature, art and film. Such "ideologues of solidarity" were Anton Ackermann, the head of HV Film at the East German Ministry of Culture (1954-1958) and Kurt Hager, member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee, who was called "Chief of Ideology" for his work on strategies for propaganda and education through culture, as well as Erich Mielke, the head of the East German Secret Police, the Stasi. Furthermore, several Spanish Civil War veterans initiated a campaign to popularize their memories of the struggle. Willi Bredel, for instance, who was a founding member and President of the Academy of Art in the GDR from 1962 to 1965, wrote a two-volume memoir entitled *Spanienkrieg* (*The Spanish War*) in 1977. Other authors such as Stephan Hermlin and Erich Weinert composed stories about socialist heroism and encouraged former fellow brigadiers to publish their autobiographies (Krammer 2004: 552). The dissemination of the memoirs combined with the widespread political and cultural influence of the veterans popularized this war among artists and audiences.

The Spanish Civil War became a sourse of inspiration and success to pioneering filmmakers as well. DEFA produced several films on the topic, the best-known of which is Frank Beyer's acclaimed *Fünf Patronenhülsen* (*Five Cartridges,* Frank Beyer, 1960, GDR). Filmed for the most part in Bulgaria, Beyer's picture is an allegory of solidarity. It brings to the screen an international group of five heroic brigadiers who fight their way

through several battles to keep the commander's last message from falling into enemy hands. Originally from the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Poland, France, and Germany, the five brigadiers find a common language in their pursuit of justice and through their lived solidarity. Previous to Beyer's war drama, DEFA commissioned two other films about the Spanish War: Karl Paryla's *Mich dürstet* (*Plagued by Thirst*, 1956, GDR) and Martin Hellberg's *Wo du hingehst...* (*Wherever You Go…*, 1957, GDR). Both films use the organized struggle of workers, intellectuals and peasants against fascism as the backdrop for a tragic romantic story. Together with literary works published from the 1950s to the 1970s, these DEFA films attest to the relevance of the preservation of the memory of the Spanish Civil War in GDR culture.

Given the fact that many former brigadiers participated in the GDR's founding, we can understand how both the struggle against fascism and solidarity with the oppressed became crucial arguments in the debates surrounding the legitimization of the socialist German state. Likewise, the veterans' involvement in the East German political and cultural spheres and their desire to narrate and reflect on their experiences explains the significance of solidarity as a concept in the literature of East Germany and, in particular, in the DEFA co-productions. In order to understand the evolution and the function of these joint projects, it is necessary to scrutinize the trajectory of the Spanish Civil War solidarity agenda as it was put to use in the name of antifascism as the founding myth of the GDR.

ANTIFASCISM AS THE FOUNDING MYTH OF THE GDR

Antifascism as a founding myth, according to German political scientist Antonia Grunenberg, represented an ideology of resistance transformed into an order of images and symbols serving the goals of unifying and organically structuring society (1993: 12).

The ongoing engagement with the memory of the fascist regime and its atrocities as we find it in East German film, literature, visual emblems, or in the collective celebration of holidays of international solidarity – such as Labor Day (May 1), International Women's Day (March 8), or the Commemoration Day for the Victims of Fascism (September 9) – served to demarcate a new socialist society, which sought to disengage itself from the responsibilities of the common German past.

The East German Communist Party relativized their relationship to National Socialism by embedding it in a critique of capitalism and by following Georgi Dimitroff's definition of fascism, proposed in 1935 to the Comintern, as "the overt terrorist domination of the most reactionary, the most chauvinistic, and the most imperialistic elements of German finance capital" (Jarausch 1991: 87). In the popular imagination of the GDR society, the Federal Republic of Germany not only had to bear the burden of the Nazi legacy but also appeared as the living proof of "fascism as a past which never ends" (Jarausch 1991: 91). The East Germans disavowed both historical responsibility for and continuity with Nazism. Instead, the GDR embraced the idea of solidarity with the oppressed and employed the past struggle of some citizens against fascism to legitimize its belonging to a community of socialist states. The GDR's official historiography thus interpreted the collapse of the Third Reich as an international victory for those fighting against fascism and as the liberation of the German peasants and workers from Hitler's oppressive regime.

Antifascism as a state doctrine and everyday life antifascism in the GDR were closely related to each other, especially in the construction phase of the socialist state during the 1950s, when, along with Spanish War veterans, a number of Jewish communist and other political émigrés returned to Germany from the Soviet Union, Switzerland, USA, and Mexico. These leftist returnees, for instance Bertolt Brecht,

Stefan Heyman, and Georg and Fritz Eisler, propagated the need for critical engagement with the Nazi regime and prevention of its resurgence. This engagement took place in literature and in antifascist films that helped in preserving the memory of the Nazi regime and reinforced the triumph of an international communist community.

Antifascism had two functions in the GDR society an culture, which existed in a symbiotic relationship, as film historian Anne Barnert has shown: antifascism as "official memory culture" (*offizielle Erinnerungskultur*) was unthinkable without wider acceptance and approval of the GDR society and, similarly, the antifascism of ordinary people (*lebensweltlicher Antifaschismus*) was inseparable from state doctrine (2008: 49). The high percentagew of antifascist films in DEFA's annual production and their intense public reception, evident in critical press, audience numbers, and in special screenings for worker collectives and schools, point to the key role that these films played in the state policy of remembering and practicing antifascism in East German society.[149] Indeed, as Barnert claims, the memory of National Socialism and of the atrocities committed during the Third Reich provided a junction at which art, socialist state doctrine and 1950s East German social aspirations converged (2008: 9).

Already in the late 1940s, as Sabine Hake argues, "the DEFA founders set out to make films that, through their new stories and different characters, countered the forces of nationalism and militarism and promoted the principles of international co-operation" (2008: 95). To date, DEFA's best-known films of the immediate postwar years are the ones that engaged with antifascist and antimilitaristic themes such as the persecution of artists by the Nazi regime, or their compliance with it, as well as the memory of the

[149] This reception was often staged by East German cultural functionaries and the employees of *Progress-Verleih*, DEFA's official distributor in the GDR, who disseminated flyers and advertising materials in factories, schools, and state-owned companies and organized group movie visits. To this end, DEFA often released antifascist films for the anniversary of the founding of the socialist German state, and the film premiere was planned as an event for collective viewing and discussion.

concentration camps and the burdens of survival. For instance, Wolfgang Staudte's *Die Mörder sind unter uns* (*The Murderers Are Among Us*, 1946, Germany) told the story of a physician who returns an emotionally broken man after the war, but recovers with the help of a woman who survived a concentration camp. *Ehe im Schatten* (*Marriage in the Shadows*, 1947, Kurt Maetzig, Germany) showed on screen the tragic fate of a German-Jewish artistic couple, Joachim and Meta Gottschalk, who were driven to suicide. Similarly, *Die Affäre Blum* (*The Blum Affair,* 1948, Erich Engel, Germany) was based on the true story of a Jewish manufacturer in Weimar Germany who was accused of a murder actually committed by an SS member. Such films were granted a license in all four zones of divided Germany but most of them were made in the Soviet sector using the facilities of the former UFA studio.[150]

Many of these early films were motivated by the experiences of their writers, directors and producers as Jews or children of Jewish parents in the Third Reich, now rémigrés in all four zones, such as Israel Beker, Artur Brauner, Erich Engel, Fritz Kortner and Kurt Maetzig. Artists, such as Wolfgang Staudte, Gerhard Lamprecht, Friedrich Wolf and Kurt Maetzig belonged to a group of previously exiled, leftist-oriented writers and directors called *Filmaktiv* (Hake 2008: 95). Such groups emerged sporadically in postwar Germany and were based on already existing contacts among former UFA employees or on networks established during exile. Several of the existing *Filmaktivs* were centralized

[150] Other examples of films which received license in the American sector include the first German film shot in Yiddish in collaboration with former UFA employees, *Lang ist der Weg* (*Long is the Road,* 1947, Herbert Fredersdorf/Marek Goldstein) and the semi-biographical film based on Jewish actor Fritz Kortner's return to Germany after WWII, *Der Ruf* (*The Last Illusion*, 1948, Joseph von Baky). *Long is the Road* is unique in its representation of the real story of Jewish survivors who accidentally land in a camp for displaced persons. On the aesthetic level, this is the first film that used visual metaphors for the annihilation of Jews, such as images of smoking chimneys. Finally, the film is shot in three different languages, Yiddish, Polish, and German, emphasizing in particular their co-existence in the camps. *The Last Illusion,* in contrast, focuses on post-1945 Jewish returnees who had to face the reality of the Shoa and of their own survival.

in 1951 and merged into the Central Film-Planning Commission at the HV Film (*Zentrale Spielplankommission*).[151] The international know-how and varied life experiences these artists brought to the commission translated into a "thematic and aesthetic pluralism" in the cinema of the immediate postwar years (Feinstein 2002: 27). Due to their internationalism and exile experiences, many of the filmmakers based in the Soviet zone cooperated in renowned European productions that critiqued fascism or thematized the Holocaust. Such examples are Roberto Rosselini's *Germania Anno Zero* (*Germany Year Zero*, 1947, Italy), originally planned as a co-production with Babelsberg, as well as Jewish producer Artur Brauner's and West German director Eugen York's *Morituri* (1948, Germany, French license), a film that told the story of the escape of Jewish, Roma, and political prisoners from a concentration camp.

Jewish suffering and the daily struggle for survival in the death camps as the topics of numerous international productions in the immediate postwar years, vanished from the later antifascist films of the 1960s. According to Barnert, the disappearance of these themes from a genre that she calls "the classic DEFA antifascist film" was related to DEFA's deliberate turn toward the representation of antifascist resistance groups, the re-emphasis of Spanish Civil War experiences, and the focus on East European partisan movements (2008: 11-16). In this turn, the 1960s films in question offered a new narrative model, which mainly promoted GDR's distanciation from Germany's Nazi past and propagated the founding myth of the socialist state. The Holocaust could fit only sqarely into such filmmaking agenda and would have been marginalized if it weren't thematized by several co-productions.

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[151] See *Zentrales Filmaktiv: Arbeitsgrundlagen*, 12 June 1952 (BArch DR 1/4616), *Arbeitsrichtlinien für das zentrale Filmarchiv, SFK*, 1952 (BArch DY 27/1532) and *Die kulturpolitische Massenarbeit mit dem Film - eine Hauptaufgabe des Lichtspielwesens*, 1957, (BArch DR 1/4511).

The DEFA co-productions from the late 1950s which opened the discussion on the transportation of Jewish people and on the Holocaust are not only an exception to the "classic" DEFA antifascist films but also have a compensatory function. The exceptional status of these East German co-productions is reinforced by the fact that a majority of them were initiated by Jewish artists and filmmakers encouraged by the spirit of the three international filmmaking conferences mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. For instance, after the first international filmmaking conference in Prague, Bulgarian Jewish intellectual Angel Wagenstein and East German Jewish director Konrad Wolf initiated DEFA's first co-production with Bulgarian partners, *Stars*. In an aesthetically innovative melodrama, these two filmmakers raised questions about the passive compliance of artists and about the conflict between private and political expectations. Due to the visual representation of Jewish transports in Eastern Europe and the collaboration of now-socialist Bulgaria with the Nazis, the film stirred heated debates among cultural functionaries on what was becoming an increasingly sensitive matter in the GDR and other socialist states.[152] Similarly, Wanda Jakubowska, a concentration camp survivor herself, was the only filmmaker to engage with the perspective of Jewish artists and former concentration camp prisoners returning to Germany after the war. As already mentioned, she initiated this first Polish/East German co-production, *Encounters in the Dark*, in the late 1950s and co-directed it with DEFA filmmaker Ralf Kirsten.

[152] In an interview with the author of this study, screenwriter Angel Wagenstein emphasized Kurt Maetzig's rejection of both the script for *Stars* and the Bulgarian author's proposal for its co-production. Maetzig explained his reluctance to work on "yet another Holocaust film" by citing DEFA's new prerogatives. Clearly, this shift was what Barnert has described as a turn to resistance films. When Wagenstein made his proposal in 1957, Maetzig had just directed the Ernst Thälmann sequel (1953-1955) and had committed to a film about the communist resistance, *Das Lied der Matrosen* (*The Sailor's Song*, 1958, GDR).

JEWISH RETURNEES, ANTIFASCISM AND THE POLITICS OF EAST GERMAN FILM

Encounters in the Dark tells the story of Polish Jewish pianist Magdalena Novák, who tours West Germany to give concerts. One of the performances on her schedule leads her to Eltheim, a small Bavarian town, where Magdalena spent several years during WWII in a concentration camp. The place awakens her memories of the forced labor she performed for the Nazis. During her visit in provincial Eltheim, she meets two men whom she knew from her past: Ernst Steinlieb, a shoe factory owner, with whom she once fell in love, and Wenk who had smuggled bread and medications for her. In postwar Germany, Steinlieb is now a manager of a larger shoe concern and was, as it turns out, a Nazi collaborator. He serves as a witness in a trial against Wenk who is convicted for allegedly stealing shoes meant for refugees in postwar Bavaria. Repulsed and deeply disappointed by Steinlieb and the truth about his past, Magdalena leaves the place and returns to Poland.

This first co-production between DEFA and Film Polski provides an allegorical representation of the controversial experience of many Jewish returnees to the GDR. Magdalena's desire to perform in postwar Germany and to change the perspective of its people through her art parallels the desires of Jewish artists who returned to Germany in the 1940s as they reflected on their task as filmmakers or public intellectuals in shaping society. Magdalena's disappointed hopes as she renews acquaintance with Germans who once helped her, however, were also shared in 1952 and 1953 by some of the returnees who, despite their antifascist convictions, experienced the re-emergence of antisemitism in Eastern Europe.

Many of the émigrés returning to Germany after 1945 were Jewish communist intellectuals who, according to Austrian Jewish historian, Frank Stern, "in particular among younger generations […] did not return as Jews, but as antifascists" (1996: 58).

Such was, for instance, the case of DEFA director Konrad Wolf, who spent his formative years among intellectual elites in Moscow and returned to Germany in 1945 as a Red Army soldier and Soviet citizen. Like Wolf and his family, there were circa 4,000 Jews who came back from England, Switzerland, Mexico, Sweden, or the US and settled in the Soviet zone of occupation after WWII. Their intention to participate in the economic, political, culturaland artistic reconstruction articulated aspirations for an antifascist-democratic order in the tradition of Weimar leftist circles (Eschwege 1988: 65, Kessler 2002: 35).

Upon their return to Germany, intellectuals, communists and many survivors of Jewish descent felt connected due to their shared experience of cultural and social displacement during the Third Reich. Their personal and political worldviews, as in the case of the Spanish Civil War veterans, were formed primarily through the experience of persecution and solidarity during exile. For them belonging to a new German society after 1945 meant finding a common denominator between past and future aspirations, "and the common perspective could only be antifascism," as Stern maintains (1996: 59). Among the Jewish returnees and Holocaust survivors, in particular, antifascism represented a complex and at times controversial amalgamation of convictions, hopesand visions of present and past. Referring to these Jewish returnees' aspirations, Stern describes them as follows:

> The Germany they wanted to reconstruct on German soil was the intellectual representation of the imaginary Germany they had taken with them into exile. […] Antifascism outside Germany, and to a certain extent also within the concentration camps, had not only been a worldview or an ideology, it had been a *Lebensgefühl* and *Lebensweise*, the experience of a cultural totality and a way of life.[153]

[153] Stern 1996: 63-64.

Like the veterans of the Spanish Civil War, many Jewish returnees entered politics as communist leaders, for example Friedrich Wolf, Hermann Axen, Gerhart Eisler, Alexander Abusch, Klaus Gysi and others (Hartewig 2002: 48). In what follows, I elaborate on some of the biographies of these returnees in order to show how their return as both convinced communists and Jews who had survived the Third Reich in exile complicates our understanding of their agency in postwar East German society.

After Hitler came to power, Friedrich Wolf immigrated with his family to the Soviet Union. In 1938, he volunteered to go to Spain to work as a doctor in the International Brigades. When WWII broke out, he was arrested in Paris and interned in the concentration camp Le Vernet. While there in 1941, he gained Soviet citizenship and joined his family in Moscow. In 1945, he returned to Germany and became one of DEFA's co-founders. Hermann Axen joined the German Communist party during the years of the Weimar Republic, was subsequently transported to Buchenwald, and after WWII became a Politburo member, an East German diplomat, and one of the leading figures in the GDR's international relations. In the early 1950s, he actively participated in the making of East German film policies and wrote a treatment *On the Questions of the Progressive German Film* in 1952. Similarly, Alexander Abusch, who had spent the late 1930s in exile in France and Mexico, returned to the GDR and made a career first as Vice Minister (1954-1958) and then as Minister of Culture (1958-1961). In the next twenty years, he was a member of the Ministerial Council for Culture and Education for a decade and was head of the East German Culture Union until 1982. Gerhart Eisler was the brother of Ruth Fischer who, as mentioned in the second chapter, stayed in France after the war and functioned as an intermediary between DEFA and French film studios. Like Axen, Eisler and his sister became involved in the German Communist party at the end of the Weimar Republic and left Germany to volunteer in the Spanish Civil War. Gerhart

Eisler was captured and imprisoned for three years, after which he escaped to the US in 1941, and returned to the GDR in 1949. In the East German state, he served as Vice President (1956-1962) and as President (1963-1968) of the State Committee for Radio and Television. Finally, Klaus Gysi became active in the international communist student movement during his studies in Berlin, Cambridge and Paris, and worked closely with Walter Janka during their exile in Mexico in the communist publishing house Aufbau Verlag.[154] Upon his return to the GDR in 1946, Gysi became a member of the Culture Union (*Kulturbund*) and later shaped the cultural policies of the GDR as Minister of Culture from 1966 to 1977.

Not all returnees entered official politics but many played a significant role in East German public life. Stern contrasts an older generation of returnees whom he calls "hard-liners of Jewish origin," such as Friedrich Wolf, Stefan Heym, Stephan Hermlin and Jürgen Kuczynski, to the younger artists "who, years later, simply left the GDR like Wolfgang Biermann, Jurek Becker, Thomas Brasch, Barbara Honigmann, Bettina Wegner and others" (1996: 64). Both generations of GDR returnees wrote and published works dealing with the fascist past of Germany and the experiences of the survivors, but they also questioned their own role as Jewish intellectuals in terms of passive compliance with an oppressive regime and in terms of their task to speak for and shape society. Like Magdalena Novák in Jakubowska's film, the younger generation could not overcome their disappointment with what had become of East Germany, the socialist state, in which they and their parents had once invested their hopes.

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[154] For a comprehensive account on German, Spanish and other European writers and intellectuals in exile, see Moeller 1983: 49-67. Moeller describes the exodus of European literary exiles to Latin America and points to important networks for publishing and distribution of literature, such as journals and door-to-door book sales. Aufbau Verlag had an important role in what Moeller calls "the periphery" or the "culture industry," i.e. book distribution that differed from the commercial book trade (1983: 63).

East Germany was not free of the anti-Semitic campaign that spread over the entire Socialist bloc in the early 1950s. In the wake of Stalinist purges, leading functionaries in Czechoslovakia were blamed for being receptive to imperialist, Zionist and Western influences. The most prominent victim of these allegations was the general secretary of the Czech Communist Party, Rudolf Slánský, but other Jewish party members and state officials also lost their positions and escaped to the West. According to German historian Mario Kessler, the response to these trials in East Germany came with the arrest of Paul Merker and other Jewish intellectuals and rémigrés during the 1952 campaign against Zionism and Cosmopolitanism in the GDR (2002: 41). Kessler describes the intensification of Jewish arrests in fall of 1952, which continued until Stalin's death in March 1953 (2002: 44-47). These arrests and trials had devastating repercussions for East German culture and its artistic community. Many Jewish intellectuals and communists were imprisoned and approximately four hundred had to flee to West Berlin. The majority of these were representatives of Jewish institutions and organizations in East Germany, as well as returnees from Palestine or Israel, who were accused of Zionism (Stern 1996: 65-66, Hartewig 2002: 57). These persecutions put an end to what Stern has called "the short antifascist German-Jewish spring" of the GDR in the late 1940s and early 1950s (1996:66).

These developments had a long-lasting effect on DEFA film projects, and in particular, on their representation of Jewish suffering and the Holocaust. While in the late 1940s, films by Jewish survivors such as *Morituri*, produced by Artur Brauner, Jakubowska's *Ostatni Etap* (*The Last Stage*, 1947, Poland) and Marek Goldstein and Herbert Fredersdorf's *Lang ist der Weg* were welcome on the East German screens, after the Slánsky trial, similar projects found primarily realization in co-productions. Examples of such films include Konrad Wolf's *Stars* (1957), Wanda Jakubowska's *Encounters in*

the Dark (1960) and Frank Beyer's *Jacob the Liar* (1972), which Beyer had proposed in 1965 as co-production with Poland. Similarly, the topic of forced labor performed by Polish or Czech people for the Nazis in work camps was treated only in *Jahrgang 21* (*Born in '21*, 1957, Václav Gejer, CSSR/GDR). As Barnert has shown, in the wider pool of DEFA antifascist films these projects remained an exception (2008: 64-65, 81-83).

The exceptional character of these co-productions is best illustrated by the example of *Stars* as the first attempt of Jewish authors and actors to represent the Holocaust from a new point of view, combining its absurdity with a reconsideration of humanity, as it asks about the artist's reaction to the Holocaust. One of the film's major achievements, consequently, lies in the subtle question about the degree of guilt for deporting Jewish people, and articulating this guilt question in the context of postwar socialist countries that collaborated with the Nazi regime. In this sense, Angel Wagenstein's story undermines in particular the historical and government-propagated myth of Bulgaria's rescue of all the Jews in its territory during WWII.

CASE STUDY: *STARS*

"Konrad Wolf belonged to the few filmmakers I have worked with who actually understood what the plural means," Angel Wagenstein remembered during an interview in December 2007. He referred to *Stars,* the *Gemeinschaftsproduktion* which Wolf and Wagenstein made together while traveling between the cities of Moscow, Berlin and Sofia for casting and shooting, for discussions with artists and censors, and for the premieres of their film. Both filmmakers were committed antifascists and communists who shared the experience of exile as well as their political convictions and active involvement in the politics of the GDR and Bulgaria.

Konrad Wolf was the son of playwright Friedrich Wolf, an active communist, Jewish rémigré, and Spanish Civil War veteran who became famous for his drama about the political conversion of a Jewish physician, *Professor Mamlock*, written shortly after the Wolf family left to Moscow in 1933. As mentioned above, Konrad Wolf returned to Germany in 1945 as a Soviet citizen and became increasingly active in shaping the politics of film, media, and literature in the GDR. He made a career as an internationally acclaimed DEFA director and was President of the East German Art Academy from 1965 to 1982.

Like Wolf, Wagenstein spent his formative years in exile after his communist parents moved to Paris in the 1920s in order to escape persecution by the politically conservative regime in Bulgaria. He returned to Bulgaria after the outbreak of WWII and became active in the communist resistance. Wagenstein was imprisoned and sentenced to death in 1945, however the death sentence was not executed because of the end of the war in Bulgaria with the arrival of the Red Army. In the postwar years, he became one of the most outspoken intellectuals in Bulgaria, an antifascist, a member of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BKP), a diplomat, a Minister of Culture, and screenwriter for more than fifty film productions. He traveled around the world and developed a rich contact network to artists in the former Soviet Union, East and West Germany, France, the US, and China.

After their first meeting in 1950 at the film academy VGIK in Moscow, DEFA director Konrad Wolf and scriptwriter Angel Wagenstein collaborated on three film co-productions, the first of which immediately received wide international acclaim.[155] I

[155] Their second collaboration was a 1966 production for East German television based on Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's 1943 novel *The Little Prince*. The last collaborative project of both filmmakers was the film *Goya* from 1972, discussed in the second chapter of this study.

elaborate on the critically successful production of *Stars* from 1957 to 1959, as well as on the internal process of assessment. It is my contention that this *Gemeinschaftsproduktion* allowed the filmmakers to live up to their utopian ideal of *Gemeinschaft* and solidarity and, at the same time, to challenge the way in which memory of the Holocaust was constructed by official political rhetoric within the national contexts of Bulgaria and the GDR.

The co-production of *Stars* was initiated in 1957 with the support of DEFA dramaturge Walter Schmidt, and, originally, in agreement with one of DEFA's most experienced and prolific directors, Kurt Maetzig. However, the film script's treatment of Holocaust memory appeared problematic from the very beginning. Maetzig, who in 1947 had made the first DEFA film to address the persecution of Jewish artists, *Marriage in the Shadows,* bluntly rejected the contemporary relevance of the topic ten years later by asking: "Who remembers that Jewish question today? Does that still interest anyone?"[156]

When Angel Wagenstein and Konrad Wolf agreed to make the film together in 1957, they used Maetzig's question as a point of departure, suggesting not merely the contemporaneity but also the international significance of the topic. As a way of responding to Maetzig, the film opens and ends with the prompt "But don't you remember!" (*Sie erinnern sich doch!*). The story is narrated in a voice-over (male voice speaking German with a Bulgarian accent), which addresses an imagined international community of viewers as "us" and appeals to "our" solidarity with "their," i.e. Jewish, suffering.

This voice of a Bulgarian partisan who clearly distinguished himself from the deported Jews, was added later as a response to severe complaints by Bulgarian cultural

[156] Cited according Angel Wagenstein's statement in a 2007 interview with the author of this study. See previous footnote.

functionaries about the under-represented figure of the resistance fighter. However, the voice-over also makes the audience aware of the story's allegorical and constructed character, since the narrator does not even remember the names of the protagonists and simply invents their names as "Walter" and "Ruth." Moreover, the act of remembering neither the actual people nor their faces reemphasizes the focus of the story on Walter's political conversion and Ruth's solidarity with those in pain and relativizes the exhortation to remember at the beginning of the film. As the story evolves, Ruth becomes representative of the larger community of Jews, and Walter of German intellectuals, as articulated in one of the dialogues in the film and suggested explicitly by director Wolf: "The grand social and historical conflicts need to be depicted through concrete individual human fates, abstract-humanistic positions are not enough" (Wolf 1989: 43).

Stars portrays the fate of Sephardic Jews brought from Greece to a transit camp in a small town in the Bulgarian mountains around 1943. Approximately 200 adults and 50 children are shown on their way to Auschwitz. Ruth, a young teacher who encourages and speaks of hope to her compatriots, asks Walter, a German corporal with artistic inclinations, for medical help for a Jewish mother delivering a baby. Won by Ruth's altruism, Walter attempts to save her with the help of Bulgarian partisans. It is too late, however, when Walter arrives at the final scene. He can only witness how the train's lights are engulfed by the dark of a tunnel. Before the train to Auschwitz disappears, carrying away Ruth, he finds a Star of David in the mud as rain pours over his desperate face. The story opens and ends with the scene of the departing train, framed simultaneously by a traditional Jewish song encouraging the audience to political action: "If the shtetl is dear to you, put out the fire, put it out with your own blood!" It was not the carefully woven story of the love between a German soldier and a Jewish teacher, but

rather this suggestion of Jewish suffering that became a point of debate among the censors.

Shot at an authentic location in Southwest Bulgaria, the film was made with the collaborative efforts of several Bulgarian Jewish filmmakers who were young and promising at that time. For example, Isaak (Sako) Cheskija (also known as Zako Heskia) began his artistic career as Konrad Wolf's assistant director in *Stars*. Born in Istanbul in 1922, Cheskija grew up in Turkey before moving to Bulgaria and joining the resistance movement as a young man: an experience he had in common with Angel Wagenstein. He studied at the college for cinematography and photography in Sofia, from which he graduated in 1952. Inspired by his work on *Stars*, Cheskija became one of the most prolific Bulgarian film directors. With his film *Goreshto Pladne* (*Torrid Noon*, 1966, Bulgaria), he delivered the first Bulgarian contribution to the Cannes Film Festival since *Stars* in 1959. The cast of *Stars* also included two actors of Jewish origin: Leo Konforti (credited as "the anxious Jew"), one of Bulgaria's most prominent comedy actors, and Itzhak Finzi (cast as a young resistance fighter who spreads the word in the Jewish community about the victories of the partisans). Born in 1933, Finzi began his stellar artistic career in the mid-1950s at the Bulgarian National Theater with the support of prominent Jewish dramaturge Leon Daniel. In the 1980s, Finzi moved to the GDR, where he worked as a theater director. Building upon his father's career, son Samuel Finzi received his education in Germany and is today one of the best-known German film actors of Jewish descent.

This circle of active communist Jewish artists whose careers were sparked by the co-production of *Stars* displayed idealism and enthusiasm similar to the one with which 1950s returnees addressed the issues of remembering the past and of the necessity to fight fascism. Moreover, like these returnees, Wolf and Wagenstein asked questions about

their role as artists in society: How should an artist react to the atrocities of the fascist regime? If Walter's character is constructed as an allegory for the artist in socialism, what do we make out of his ignorance about the fate of Jewish people sent to Auschwitz, while he paints pictures of Bulgarian partisans and a portrait of his colleague, a Nazi officer?

Beginning in the early 1960s, most film critics in Bulgaria, East Germany, and more recently, in Western Europe and North America, have examined these questions and have read Wolf's film as affirming humanity and portraying the evolution of a German soldier into a compassionate man, who not simply was transformed by his love for a Jewish girl, but became primarily a model for contemporaneous Germans as the ideal of the humanistic post-WWII German. However, contemporaneous film reviews critiqued the lack of explicit representation of the war and antifascist resistance in *Stars*. European film historians Thomas Elsaesser and Michael Wedel, by contrast, found the film's artistic value precisely in its continuation of a German genre of melodrama and as a precursor of the feminist film of the late 1980s:

> *Sterne*, furthermore, is an archetypal melodrama of the victim and victimization which in a typically German pattern predating both Wolf and, for instance, Sanders-Brahms, casts women as victims, in order to test the male protagonist's capacity for change, while the women are tested in their endurance in suffering.[157]

Indeed, the film organizes the ideologically and historically problematic material of the Holocaust ambivalently in the genre of melodrama. We may naively view the love story as a catalyst for the development of a Nazi soldier into an antifascist or the story of Ruth as an example for the victimization of women by the Nazi regime. The film might appear striking in its representation of a romantic encounter in an idyllic environment provided by the village nestled high in the Bulgarian mountains. Indeed, the story of Walter and Ruth is striking because it reinforces the humanity of a German soldier motivated by art

[157] Elsaesser 2005: 325.

and utopian idealism, which seems questionable once we place it in the context of the Holocaust and the atrocities of the Hitler regime.

Focusing on the character of Walter, however, we may also decipher a different issue at play: the story is centered not around the victimization of Jews or women, but around the appeal for solidarity with their suffering and the question of what an artist should do in an oppressive regime. Mostly referred to as the "German soldier" by film historians, Walter is, in fact, portrayed throughout the film by his artistic activity, which clearly contests the image of a German Nazi. In one scene, he appears among the simple people, building the transition camp for the Sephardic Jews. Walter appears naïve, playful and still unaware of the purpose of its construction. Instead of the expected portrayal of Walter in the tradition of a brutal and ruthless Nazi, he is construed as an artist who is close to the people and paints to entertain them. In this scene, Walter conspicuously resembles the later representation of Goya as an artist who cares about the people, while his relationship to the regime in power becomes problematic. The true German Nazi, finally, we recognize in Walter's colleague Kurt, whose blind determination to fulfill his "duty" is opposed to the resignation with which the artist observes him— for example in the scene in which Kurt confiscates the medicine in the camp— and to Walter's active decision to collaborate with Bulgarian partisans. This decision construes Walter not as a Nazi, but as one who learns solidarity and compassion from the simple workers.

Those are also the values that Ruth is reinforcing in him, in the rare moments when they can talk to each other. Remarkably, instead of expressing romantic feelings, Ruth is looking at the stars, which becomes symbolic for her idealism and belief in human progress. According to the film critics, her imaginative potential contributes towards Walter's development into a humanist. I argue that Ruth and her idealism serve a

different purpose. On one hand, stargazing is Ruth's strategy for dealing with the present, but at the same time she is coming back to her Jewish roots. The Jewish myth tells that Abraham, the Father of the Jewish nation, looked at the stars, imagining the promise of the generations to come after him. Thus, Ruth's idealist gaze addresses the question of Jewish legacy and identity, which both Wolf and Wagenstein shared, and to which Walter is an outsider.

On the other hand, looking at the stars reinforces the symbol, which communists and Jews had in common, although in different variations – the Star of David and the red pentagram. It was a symbol for the perseverance and utopian hope for the future for both groups. Thus, the symbol of the stars, familiar from many Bulgarian partisan films, appeals in this case to audiences in socialist Europe. And, finally, Ruth's passive idealistic gaze at the stars can hardly serve as encouragement for Walter's battle against fascism. Rather, it constitutes symbolically the credo of the artist, and in particular the socialist artist, who views his art as a project dedicated to future generations.

Despite the film's outright reinforcement of antifascist symbols, the history of *Stars*'s censorship and release points to the political precariousness of its representation of the Nazi soldier's conversion to antifascism and its treatment of memory as a contested category. Wolf and Wagenstein's film introduces several ways of relating to the Holocaust, emphasizing individual, subjective memory, such as Walter's memory of Ruth dictating his decision to join the resistance. Personal memory of the Holocaust (such as Wagenstein's) obviously contested the official rhetoric of the Bulgarian Communist Party. The latter promoted several founding myths such as the occupation of Bulgaria by the Nazis, the active participation of most Bulgarians in the antifascist resistance, and the rescue of all Bulgarian Jews. Consequently, in contrast to the GDR Artist Commission, which interpreted the film as advocating Bulgarian-German friendship and, accordingly,

approved its release on 3 January 1959, Bulgarian censors perceived the film as a stark misrepresentation of Bulgarian partisans. The friendship between Walter' and Petkowas viewed at the discussion in Sofia Film Studio not in terms of international solidarity, but as a hint at Bulgarian collaboration with the Nazis. Therefore, on 5 January 1959, the Bulgarian film commission rejected the credibility of the story and critiqued the way partisans were portrayed in the film. The decision was to deliver *Stars* to the Ministry of Culture with the recommendation that it be banned from Bulgarian screens.

The two radically different positions of the German and the Bulgarian artistic commissions call our attention to the contingencies of political memory construction. The shifting international alliances of Bulgaria after 1945 inevitably influenced the memory of the past. The ban on the film was lifted in Bulgaria only after it appeared as a Bulgarian production at the film festival in Cannes (20 April-15 May 1959) and received positive responses in the French press. *Stars* received the special prize of the jury.

This shows that Wolf and Wagenstein's *Gemeinschaftsfilm* had the potential to reach out to international audiences and to challenge underlying national mythologies. Produced by German and Jewish artists from two socialist studios, these internationalist films, questioned politically promoted concepts of the memory of the Holocaust and the antifascist resistance, yet not the socialist utopia of *Gemeinschaft* per se. At the same time, the idea of *Gemeinschaft,* translated into strategies of transnational collaboration, proved successful for the release of the films, despite criticism from those in power.

In 2003, Wagenstein published in several major Bulgarian papers an open letter entitled "Did Bulgaria really save all its Jews?" In this essay, he asserts that part of his script for *Sterne* is based on his own experience in March 1943, when, as a young man, he was employed to build a transit camp for Sephardic Jews from Greece. He calls attention to the 11,343 Jews who were transported from Macedonia and former

Yugoslavia by Bulgarian soldiers, in comparison to the 43,961 not forcefully transported. He emphasizes the fact that these numbers were mentioned officially as early as in 2003 in the Bulgarian media. Viewing *Stars* today, consequently, raises the question: Why Wagenstein as a public figure and leading intellectual in Bulgaria did not discuss or was prevented from discussing the Bulgarian participation in the Holocaust for more than 50 years, and why did he limit his critique to his film scripts?

FAILED CO-PRODUCTIONS ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST

This question brings us back to the discussion of the damaging effects of the return of antisemitism in the early 1950s on DEFA film projects. The exceptional and controversial status of the two successfully released co-productions about the Holocaust, *Stars* and *Encounters in the Dark,* is best illustrated by Frank Beyer's collaboration with Leonie von Ossowski on an East/West joint production, which was never filmed in the GDR. On one hand, the reason for the failure of the film at the script stage was DEFA's growing reluctance to work with West German authors in the late 1950s. On the other hand, Beyer and von Ossowksi's project touched on the precarious question of whether DEFA would support a children's film about the concentration camps and the experiences of Jewish children who had survived in postwar Germany.

A literary author based in Stuttgart and Mannheim, von Ossowski wrote the script for Beyer's film debut, *Zwei Mütter* (*Two Mothers*, 1957, GDR). Born in a family of German aristocrats, von Ossowski wrote for DEFA under the pseudonym "Jo Tiedemann" and was introduced to Beyer by Kurt Maetzig (Schenk 1995: 23). Her first screenplay for DEFA, *Two Mothers,* discussed, much in a Brechtian manner, the dispute between two mothers about the right to custody of a male child.[158] This story drew

[158] This was a reference to a King Solomon story, as well as to a Brechtian play called *The Caucasian Chalk Cirlce*, which recycled this and a Chinese tale of two mothers arguing over a son. In the biblical

particularly on Brecht's play *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (*Der Kaukasische Kreidekreis*), which was example of Brecht's epic theatre and a parable about a peasant girl who steals a baby and becomes a better mother than the natural parents. The play was written in 1944 while Brecht was living in exile in the United States and its world premiere was a student production at Carleton College, Minnesota, in 1948. Beyer was won over by the anti-war message of von Ossowksi's script and the immediate postwar setting of the story.

After the successful completion and release of *Two Mothers*, in 1958, Beyer and von Ossowski began discussing their second film with a working title *Abiram oder Stern ohne Himmel* (*Abiram or Heavens Without* Stars). Curiously, the planning of this co-production coincided with Wagenstein and Wolf's negotiations on their film *Stars* with the Bulgarian film studio and DEFA. Although the story in *Abiram* shares numerous similarities to Angel Wagenstein and Konrad Wolf's script in thematic and aesthetic terms, Beyer's lack of directorial experience and his stable political reputation as well as von Ossowski's career and residence in the FRG failed to convince both sides in the negotiations, i.e. East and West German sponsors. This early disappointment explains why Beyer only laconically mentions *Abiram* in his 1995 interview with film historian Ralf Schenk (Schenk 1995: 24-25). However, the 48 pages of preserved correspondence in Beyer's archive between Beyer, von Ossowski, and Rudolf Böhm, the DEFA chief dramaturge at the time, , attest to vivid discussion of script and themes, negotiations of numerous changes, of ideas about character development and questions to be posed, and,

myth, two ladies come to King Solomon, both claiming a child belongs to them. His solution is to offer to saw the child in half. The real mother is first to relent because she doesn't want to see the child injured.

above all, attest to the importance of this project to both the young director and the East German studio.[159]

The film was conceived as a co-production with West German partners, as suggested by von Ossowski's references to her existing contacts to Western distributors in the correspondence. The story, based on her just-published novel, *Stern ohne Himmel* (*Star Without Heavens*, 1958), not only explicitly referred to the Star of David as a symbol for both Jewish tradition and persecution, it also explicitly questioned the German sense for responsibility and, most importantly, the phenomenon of children's compliance with the fascist regime during the Third Reich. Von Ossowski told the story of an eleven-year-old Jewish boy Abiram, who escapes the transport to Auschwitz that takes away his parents in 1944 and finds shelter in the St. Thomas Church in Leipzig. A boy from the famous children's choir at the church discovers Abiram and tells his friends about him. The children now have to decide the Jewish boy's fate: do they have to report him to the choir director or not? In a prolonged debate, they decide to tell the director, who hides Abiram, and he eventually survives through the war.

Despite multiple changes to the children's dialogue in the script and facing pressing financial problems, Beyer and von Ossowski failed to convince DEFA's dramaturge to produce a children's film about such a controversial topic. The film, which recalls Roberto Rossellini's engagement with similar themes in *Germany Year Zero*, was eventually made much later, in 1980, as a West German production directed by Ottokar Runze who kept the original title of the novel in his film, *Star Without Heavens*. Fifteen years later, when asked why he didn't make this film, Beyer responded:

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[159] The correspondence took place between 14 May 1957 and 16 January 1958. Today it is stored in the Frank Beyer Archive at Film Museum in Potsdam, 9/ 2003/ N 024, Box 6, *Korrespondenz zu "Abiram und die Thomaner"* (*AT: Vielleicht ist heute der letzte Tag*), *Drehbuch zu "Abiram*.

> Our horizons of experience were too different. Leonie Ossowski has always lived in the West and searched for inspiration there. I was interested in contemporary life in the GDR, for which, understandably, she didn't have the courage.[160]

Within the GDR and the rest of the socialist states during the 1960s, the topic of Jewish deportation and suffering remained unwelcome. With the opening of the concentration camps in Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen as memorial sites in 1958, the discussion of the Jewish annihilation experienced a short resurgence, but was quickly reintegrated into the discourse on antifascism (Barnert 2008: 64).

Along these lines, survivor Bruno Apitz, who was imprisoned for eight years in Buchenwald, wrote an account of its last days before the liberation by US soldiers. Under the title, *Nackt unter Wölfen* (*Naked Among Wolves*), this account appeared in 1958 and was adapted on screen in 1963 by none other than Frank Beyer. The film adaptation became one of the best-known antifascist DEFA films, especially because of its resonance with the Eichmann trial's worldwide reception in 1961. Compared to earlier films on the topic, such as Jakubowska's 1947 *Ostatni Etap* (*The Last Stage*, 1947, Poland), Beyer's film conspicuously complied with the official perspective of the SED. *The Last Stage* brought on screen for the first time the atrocities committed in Auschwitz and the liberation of the camp by the Red Army. A publication by the East German Service for Press and Advertisement (*Progress-Dienst für Presse und Werbung*), however, suggested that, "films such as *The Last Stage* were good for the first years after the end of the war, but today's films about concentration camps have to be made

[160] My transnation of: "Unsere Erfahrungswelten waren zu unterschiedlich. Leonie Ossowski hat die ganze Zeit im Westen gelebt und dort nach Geschichten gesucht. Ich habe mich für die Gegenwart in der DDR interessiert, für die sie logischerweise keinen solchen Nerv hatte" (Schenk 1995: 24).

differently."[161] How differently DEFA expected these films to be made, is suggested in Bruno Apitz's treatment of the film from 1963:

For the first time since 1945, the film *Naked Among Wolves* attempts to guide people into the reality of a concentration camp through the perspective of a witness who participated in many rescue operations and who was saved himself by the solidarity of other inmates. […] In this way, the representation of the concentration camp Buchenwald becomes not only an analogy to the reality in fascist Germany, but it also functions to clear up our presence because it corrects perceptions which represent only the partial truths, showing them in a favorable light.[162]

The rhetoric of rescue and solidarity in Apitz's assertion responded to the official myth of the GDR as an antifascist and socialist state. The emphasis on the "partial truths," furthermore, makes us aware of the numerous changes imposed on Apitz's fictional account of what he remembered about Buchenwald. Moreover, Apitz's statement also suggests the more aggressive intervention in East German filmmaking made on the basis of political prerogatives and the demands made on DEFA. It suggests also that the memory of Buchenwald and the Holocaust had become a very controversial topic, subject to political and ideological revision.

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[161] My translation of: "[…] dass solche Filme wie *Die letzte Etappe* für die ersten Nachkriegsjahre sehr gut waren, dass aber heute ein KZ-Film anders gestaltet werden muss" (BArch DR 117/ BA (I) 1946, *Nackt unter Wälfen*).

[162] My translation of: "Der Film *Nackt unter den Wölfen* unternimmt es, aus der Sicht des Beteiligten, des Augenzeugen, der selbst an vielen Rettungsaktionen mitwirkte und der selbst gerettet wurde durch die Solidarität der Häftlinge, die Menschen zum ersten Mal nach 1945 in ein Konzentrationslager zu führen. […] Dadurch gewinnt diese Gestaltung des Konzentrationslagers Buchenwald nicht nur eine sinngemäße Übereinstimmung mit der Wirklichkeit im faschistischen Deutschland, sondern sie wirkt klärend in unsere Gegenwart, weil sie Auffassungen, die nur Teilwahrheiten darstellen, parteilich korrigiert" ("Nicht Typen, sondern Menschen! Eine notwendige Korrektur. Nach einem Gespräch mit Bruno Apitz, aufgezeichnet von Heinz Hofmann," *Progress-Dienst für Presse und Werbung,* 14 (1963): 2-3, Frank Beyer Archive, 9/ 2003/ N 024, Potsdam).

In his recent book on the practices of visualization of antifascism in the GDR, German film historian Thomas Heimann describes the forceful transformation of the memory of Buchenwald from a site of Jewish suffering to one of liberation and triumph (2005: 71). This overwriting of the history of the concentration camps and the alteration of their remembrance and representation in film and literature was achieved precisely through films such as *Naked Among Wolves*. Even though, as Heimann points out, Apitz's script was bluntly rejected in 1955, at which point Apitz left DEFA and embarked on a career as a freelance writer, by 1962, the Vice Minister of Culture, Hans Rodenberg, voiced his full support of the project with the words: "The film comes still not too late, but is right on time. Not only because it appeals to international solidarity, but also because it demands a decision from everyone, and support for the struggle that we maintain" (Heimann 2005: 71).[163]

The deliberate omission of the object of solidarity with the Jewish victims of the Holocaust in Rodenberg's statement is telling. His reference to the struggle that had been and must continue to be maintained was nothing less than a signal of a shift within DEFA and the entire project of East German art. This shift was toward privileging the representation of antifascist struggle as part of GDR's effort to legitimize its act of segregation after 1961. While many GDR scholars have viewed the years after the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 as a short-lived yet fruitful period of liberalization, Apitz's account of the ways in which the memory of the Holocaust was transformed to fit in the official discourse suggests SED's full control of what messages artistic productions conveyed. His resignation to and disappointment with the mechanisms of silencing the

[163] My translation of: "Der Film kommt jetzt noch nicht zu spät, sondern gerade richtig. Nicht nur, weil er an die Internationale Solidarität appelliert, sondern auch von jedem eine Entscheidung voraussetzt, für den Kampf, den wir heute führen" (*Protokoll zur Rohschnittabnahme* from 25 September 1962, BArch DR 117/ BA (I) 1946, cited after Heimann 2005).

victims of the Holocaust, shared by many of the Jewish returnees in the 1960s, is cited in Barnert's discussion of *Naked Among Wolves* (2008: 95):

> We had to remain silent also about the ambivalences in our existence and life in the camp, such as the fact that the success of the revolt [in Buchenwald, which is thematized in the film *Naked Among Wolves*, M.I.] would be unthinkable without the cooperation of the SS; that this success cost the life of many other inmates from various classes and nations; that the community of prisoners was by no means an egalitarian *Gemeinschaft* of solidarity, but rather a pack of wolves, who - due to the SS terror - had lost their human traits; a community, in which, despite the established rigid hierarchies, *Gemeinschaft* of solidarity still existed. The German *Kapos* represented, however, a privileged elite, who exercised significant power over other inmates.[164] The overarching antifascist comradeship meant in fact the survival of the communist cadres.[165]

In the post-1961 context, where the official rhetoric on the legitimization of the socialist state by an antifascist myth hushed all other voices, it is understandable why both DEFA film projects and co-productions such as *Stars* and *Encounters in the Dark* were discontinued. Despite the enthusiasm for cooperation within the community of socialist artists, as articulated at the international filmmakers conferences in the late 1950s, DEFA had to redefine its agenda of solidarity films according to political prerogatives.

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[164] The term *Kapo* comes from the Italian *il capo* meaning "boss, chief, leader." A kapo was an inmate of the concentration camps who helped the SS to oversee all other prisoners and, usually, enjoyed some privileges such as better food supplies or, occasionally, alcohol. As long as the kapos complied with the demands of SS officers, they were spared from heavy physical labor and the humiliation, which the other, especially Jewish inmates experienced.

[165] My translation of: "Geschwiegen werden musste auch über die Ambivalenzen ihrer konkreten Existenz im Lager: darüber, dass ihr Widerstandserfolg ohne Zusammenarbeit mit der SS nicht zu haben war, dass er viele Opfer unter den Häftlingen anderer Kategorien und Nationen gekostet hatte, dass die Häftlingsgesellschaft keine egalitäre Solidargemeinschaft gewesen war, sondern eine vom Terror der SS entmenschlichte Wolfsgesellschaft, in deren harten Hierarchien es jedoch verschiedene Solidargemeinschaften gab und die deutschen Kapos eine privilegierte Oberschicht mit erheblicher Macht über die anderen Häftlinge darstellten, dass die übergreifende antifaschistische Kameradschaft im Kern das Überleben der kommunistischen Kader bedeutete" (cited after Barnert 2008: 95).

THE MYTH OF ANTIFASCIST RESISTANCE

The redefined position of antifascist films in the DEFA studio amidst an era of GDR rhetoric which employed antifascism as a founding myth and tool of legitimization was once more reinforced at the already mentioned 11th Plenary of the SED in December 1965. In his evaluation of the annual film production one year later, the newly appointed chief DEFA dramaturge Günter Schröder wrote to the HV head, Siegfried Wagner: "Antifascist and anti-imperialist subject matter shall continue to have its guaranteed place in the feature film production plan. They have a great significance for the education of our youth in their historical and class consciousness."[166] The determination in Schröder's words suggests the lack of flexibility among cultural functionaries, who in times of crisis (the shelving of the entire annual DEFA production for the year 1966) could find no other way to cope than to propagate the consolidation of antifascist ideals. The chief dramaturge's statement also heralds the end of artistic liberties and the increasing dependence of DEFA filmmakers and their proposed film projects on the directives of party officials.

Similarly, with the change of the GDR Secretary of State in 1973, when Erich Honecker, one of the main protagonists and fierce proponents of the films' shelving at the 11th Plenary, came to power, the East German Ministry of Culture had to revise its agenda for future filmmaking and submit it to Honecker. This revision focuses on the long-term thematic conception of cultural-political education through film and emphasizes once again the importance of antifascist themes in DEFA's tradition:

> DEFA embarked on its path by making films endowed with the task of raising awareness of our own past. We could only come to terms with this past

[166] My translation of: "Antifaschistische und antiimperialistische Stoffe sollen einen festen Platz im Plan der Spielfilmproduktion einnehmen. Sie sind von Bedeutung für die Erziehung unserer Jugend zum Geschichts- und Klassenbewusstsein" (BArch DR 1/ 4266, p. 2).

> by gaining clarity about the causes, the correlations, and the driving forces, which led to these historical developments. Therefore, our first great filmmaking tradition is the making of films with antifascist themes, such as *Die Mörder sind unter uns*. This central tradition is still powerful and will continue to exercise great influence as an orientation point for virtually every generation of filmmakers when facing difficulties in the process of their artistic maturation.[167]

This affirmation of antifascism's central position in the thematic plans shows that little had changed in the functionaries' position by the beginning of the 1970s. In other words, DEFA's altered agenda for solidarity points to political leaders' tighter control of both the representation of the Holocaust and the myth of the heroic sacrifice of antifascists for the legitimization of the GDR state.

Exemplary in this respect is the increased co-production activity with Mosfilm and Lenfilm, thematizing the liberation of Germany by the Red Army or the significance of antifascist sacrifice for the socialist project. In the 1970s, GDR directors took turns in initiating solidarity co-productions with socialist partners whereas the focus shifted primarily to stories centered around German resistance fighters and communists: the film adaptation of Alfred Kurella's biography, *Unterwegs zu Lenin* (*On the Road to Lenin*, 1970, Günter Reisch, GDR/USSR) and *KLK an PTX / Die Rote Kapelle* (*KLK Calling PTZ: The Red Orchestra*, 1971, Horst Brandt, GDR/ USSR), which thematizes the emergence and development of a resistance organization called Red Orchestra. The 3-hour picture describes all relevant sabotage actions, leaflet distributions, and networking meetings with fellow communists from other international organizations, as well as the

[167] My translation of: "Die DEFA begann ihren Weg mit Filmen, die es sich zur Aufgabe machten, das Bewusstsein für die eigene Vergangenheit zu wecken. Sie konnte nur bewältigt werden, wenn Klarheit über die Ursachen, Zusammenhänge und Triebkräfte gewonnen wurde, die diese Entwicklung bewirkt hatten. Diese erste große Traditionslinie ist daher der Film mit antifaschistischer Thematik (*Die Mörder sind unter uns*). Diese wichtige Traditionslinie wirkt bis heute und wird weiterwirken, weil sich ihr im Prozeß der Selbstverständigung über neue herangereifte Probleme fast jede Generation von Filmschaffenden zuwandte und sich an ihr orientierte" (Ministry of Culture, "Überlegungen zur langfristigen thematischen Konzeption des Filmschaffens in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik," 1 October 1973, BArch DR 1/ 13250a).

tragic death of all members who were captured and hanged or decapitated by the Gestapo.

Most co-productions in the 1970s and the 1980s were dominated by Soviet and Bulgarian initiatives. *Amboss oder Hammer sein* (*Anvil or Hammer*, 1972, Hristo Hristov, GDR/ Bulgaria) and *Die Mahnung* (*The Warning*, 1982, Juan Antonio Bardem, GDR/USSR/Bulgaria) were two biopics about Bulgarian-born communist leader Georgi Dimitroff who was accused of committing arson at the Reichstag on 27 February 1933. His famous speech against Hermann Göring at his show trial in early March 1933, known as the Leipzig Trial or the Reichstag Fire Trial, receives the most attention in these biopics as it complies with the propaganda of the Bulgarian Communist Party, which elevated Dimitroff to a founding father and nonpareil antifascist leader of the Bulgarian socialist state. Other co-productions such as *Soviel Lieder, soviel Worte* (*So Many Songs, So Many Words*, 1976, Julius Kun/ Michael Englberger, GDR/ USSR), *Zwei Zeilen, kleingedruckt* (*Two Lines, Small Print*, 1981, Vitali Melnikov, USSR/GDR), *Alexander der Kleine* (*Little Alexander*, 1982, Vladimir Fokin, USSR/GDR), and *Der Sieg* (*Victory*, 1985, Yevgeni Matveyev, USSR/GDR) were organized around narratives about the Red Army's liberation of Berlin, especially the story surrounding an iconic photograph of Soviet soldiers rescuing an orphan child.

Two examples of Soviet-initiated co-productions need to be highlighted here: *Menschen und Tiere* (*Men and Beasts*, 1962, Sergei Gerassimov, USSR/GDR) and the multinational prodution *Wir bleiben treu* (*Faithfulness We Pledge*, 1989, Andrey Malyukov, USSR/ GDR/Poland/CSSR/Hungary/Bulgaria). Shot on a high budget, Gerassimov's film tells the story of a Soviet soldier who fought in WWII, was captured by the Nazis and put into different concentration camps. After witnessing and enduring much pain and cruelty, he escapes and settles in Argentina to work for a German

landowner who has a Russian wife. After the end of the war, he then returns to Germany to work as a chauffeur for a rich family. He becomes disillusioned with the German people's lack of reflection on the atrocities committed during the war and returns home to Russia after 17 years of exile. As one of Gerassimov's most important films, it communicates the importance of humanism and altruism, and, in some ways, surprisingly recalls the stories of the early East German co-productions, *Stars* and *The Last Stage*.

These Soviet-initiated co-productions point to the East German and Soviet communist party functionaries' revived interest in using the myth of early antifascist struggle in their attempts to channel the representation and the memory of resistance and survival. The DEFA co-production with Soviet partners, *KLK Calling PTX,* which was initiated already in 1966 and released in 1971, also resulted from these endeavors. This film's convoluted production process and the negotiations among various state institutions regarding it shed light on the newly defined role of the solidarity co-productions. Furthermore, this production history demonstrates the interplay between political interests in co-opting a film co-production for propagandistic purposes.

CASE STUDY: KLK CALLING PTZ: THE RED ORCHESTRA

The film opens with documentary material from a commemoration event at the Memorial of the Victims of Fascism in 1970 in East Germany. Employing a strategy reminiscent of *Stars*' cinematography, a hand-held camera surveys the faces of children and young people, families and war veterans, who have come together to commemorate the victims. As in *Stars*, the visual insignia at the memorial site elicits the question "But don't you remember?" Unlike the use of voice-over in *Stars*, however, only the diegetic sounds of the event provide a background to the imagery of antifascist pentagrams, marching soldiers, and staring children. The absence of a voice introducing us to the

narrative is conspicuous. Though the use of documentary footage here conveys verisimilitude and perhaps even historical accuracy to the film's contemporaneous audience, we never learn the names behind these anonymous faces, neither will we ever know what they remember about the victims of fascism. What frames the film narrative here is not a personal narrative, as in the case of *Stars*, but an official discourse of images and sounds, which serves to instrumentalize the memory of a non-communist resistant group for the purposes of propagating the GDR as a socialist and antifascist state.

KLK Calling PTZ focuses on the story of a circle of resistance fighters, the *Rote Kapelle* (Red Orchestra), organized around the young German Air Force officer Harro Schulze-Boysen and the economist Arvid Harnack.[168] Although in real life, the members of the group came from different social strata (workers, Christians, social democrats, artists, writers, members of the 1930s youth communist movement), in the film the figures are reductively characterized as artists and intellectuals with a leftist orientation who readily collaborated with communists and the Soviet secret services (Danyel 1994: 468). The film's narrative, therefore, emphasizes the roles of poet Adam Kuckhoff, sculptor Kurt Schumacher and his half-Jewish wife Elisabeth, writer Günther Weisenborn, as well as two members of the KPD and editors of the communist newspaper *Die rote Fahne* (*Red Flag*): Walter Küchenmeister and John Sieg.

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[168] The name of the resistance group, Red Orchestra, according to Stefan Roloff, did not originate among the group members, but was given them by the Gestapo. It was misleading, because the Gestapo designated with this term a network of resistance fighters who provided the Soviets with confidential military information via radio signals. The component *orchestra* came from the term *pianist*, which in the language of the Nazi secret services designated a person able to communicate via Morse signals. An entire group of such *pianists* formed an *orchestra*. The component *red* was added to the group's name when the Gestapo found out in August of 1942 that they were in contact with Soviet diplomats. However, the intellectual circle around Schulze-Boysen and Harnack was by no means a Soviet spy organization, despite 1968 defamation in the West German press and the fact that their connection to the Soviets was additionally reinforced in the DEFA co-production (Roloff 2002: 146, Tuchel 2005: 233-234).

From the onset, the views and actions of the initial group members are related to the audience through the perspective of both communists who, in fact, had joined the group later. As a consequence, the narrative point-of-view shifts between the actual leaders, Schulze-Boysen and Harnack, and both communist party members, dividing the audience's attention. A prime example is the first conversation introduced in the film between Sieg and Küchenmeister, during which they critically assess the background and motives of the group's members:

> Küchenmeister: A couple of people whom I already knew. They are very different. We meet regularly. Some among them reject fascism on a purely emotional level.
>
> Sieg: What are these people like?
>
> Küchenmeister: It's a circle of intellectuals. Artists. Full of protest against the present conditions. They don't have much theoretical background.
>
> Sieg: Many such spontaneous groups are being formed these days. We need to mobilize them, guide them to our organization, raise their consciousness!
>
> Küchenmeister: These people of strong emotions…
>
> Sieg: That's what I count on![169]

Sieg and his fellow communist agree that the Red Orchestra is a spontaneous group, which needs guidance in Marxist-Leninist theory and must become aware of the actual capitalist conditions within the fascist state. This dialog reveals the film's compliance with the above-mentioned 1970s view of antifascist film as a traditional vehicle for the education of socialist audiences. Indeed, the film was marketed at schools and youth

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[169] My translation of: "Walter Küchenmeister: 'Ein Paar Leute, die ich schon kenne. Ganz unterschiedliche. Wir treffen uns öfter. Einige lehnen rein gefühlsmäßig den Faschismus ab.' John Sieg: 'Was sind das für Leute' – Küchenmeister: 'Ein intellektueller Kreis. Künstler. Sie sind voller Protest gegen die jetzigen Zustände. Ohne großes theoretisches Wissen.' – Sieg: 'Jetzt entstehen viele solche spontanen Gruppen. Wir müssen sie organisieren, an uns heranführen, ihr Bewußtsein entwickeln!' – Küchenmeister: 'Es sind Menschen mit starken Emotionen...' Sieg: 'Darauf vertraue ich!'"

clubs. Many teachers and school principles embraced this as an opportunity to spark ideals of antifascism among their students. Helga Schirmer, for instance, a school principal in Erfurt, wrote to DEFA dramaturge Werner Beck in 1971 to express her fascination with the East German/Soviet co-production. She also articulated her desire to organize a large film event for an audience of circa 1,000 students from eight grades in Erfurt in the context of their *Jugendweihe*, a ceremony during which teenagers received adult social status in the GDR and which replaced the traditional Lutheran communion.[170] Through such initiatives, the film received central placement in the existing oeuvre of antifascist films and literature endowed with the task of initiating East German youth into the rites of socialism.

The strong educational agenda of this film is reinforced by the script, which, like the documentary footage of the commemoration at the Memorial of the Victims of Fascism, frames the story of the Red Orchestra as a reaction to Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. Arvid Harnack therefore appears as a committed communist from the very beginning, starting with a lecture at his university, during which he foregrounds the great new economic model of the USSR in contrast to a withering Nazi German economy. It is questionable whether anyone in 1941 would dare to challenge the decisions of the Nazi government in regard to the state's economic organization and publicly thematize the Soviet Union's leadership. Yet from the perspective of 1970 East Germany, such a narrative twist had great importance. According to the final production report, the objective of the film was to emphasize the unifying forces of antifascism, as well as the fusion of various political and personal views as a result of the group's cooperative effort against fascism. John Sieg and Walter Küchenmeister's status in the

[170] More letters of this kind and documents on the reception of the film may be found in BArch DR 117/ Vorl. BA (III) 3091.

group was thus construed in terms of their undisputed role as mentors and political leaders.[171]

Although the film's narrative poses questions about the artists' and intellectuals' agency in the resistance movement against Hitler, its narrative is couched back into the discourse of ideological conversion and the heroic sacrifice of antifascists. Moreover, the involvement of several filmmakers and relatives of the resistance fighters of the Red Orchestra in the production raises a further question about the complicity of contemporaneous GDR artists in such projects. Walter Küchenmeister's son and daughter-in-low, Claus and Vera, for instance, wrote the film script for the co-production. Initially, they had planned a documentary film on the topic, but their aspirations became obsolete after higher political institutions of control, which will be discussed in more detail later, intervened and commissioned them with the completion of a script for a full-length feature film.

The experienced screenwriting duo had previously worked on several children's antifascist films at DEFA including *Sie nannten ihn Amigo* (*They Called Him Amigo*, 1959, Heiner Carow, GDR), the story of a boy who discovers and saves the life of a political prisoner who escapes a concentration camp. With this reputation and their personal connection to a member of the Red Orchestra, Vera and Claus Küchenmeister were not only an asset to the co-production, they also composed a politically innocuous

[171] In the report we read: "Im Mittelpunkt der Handlung steht das sich Finden und der Zusamenschluss von Antifaschisten verschiedene Weltanschauungen zum gemeinsamen Kampf gegen den Hitlerfaschismus […]. Der Weg zum Zusammenschluss der Menschen mit versch. soz. Herkunft, Berufen usw. stellt sich als ein ständiger Klärungsprozess geistiger, weltanschauulicher Prozesse dar. […] John Sieg und Walter Küchenmeister, die sich aus der Redaktion der "Roten Fahne" kennen, verkörpern die führende Rolle der Partei, die den Wissenschaftler Harnack mit dem Schriftsteller Kuckhoff zusammenführen, über die der Leutnant der Luftwaffe Schulze-Boysen mit Harnack bekannt wird" (*Schlussbericht* from 31 March 1971, BArch DR 117/ 23372).

script, which reflected the vision of party members and higher instances about the Red Orchestra.

For a short time, DEFA considered the involvement of Arvid Harnack's brother, Falk Harnack, a renowned filmmaker who worked at the East German studio during the 1950s and had been in contact with the 1940s Munich-based resistance group, the White Rose. Falk Harnack had quit working for DEFA after his 1951 film *Das Beil von Wandsbeck* (*The Axe of Wandsbeck,* GDR) was banned and had settled in West Berlin, where he worked closely with Artur Brauner. In 1955, for instance, Brauner sponsored Harnack's second film in the Federal Republic, *Der 20. Juli* (*The Plot to Assassinate Hitler*, 1955, FRG). This was one of the first German feature films about the failed 1944 assassination attempt on Adolf Hitler, organized by Wehrmacht officer Claus von Stauffenberg.[172] Nevertheless, DEFA failed in its attempts to attract Falk Harnack as a consultant not only because the studio had ceased working with West German partners since the end of the 1950s, but also because the production process of *KLK Calling PTZ* was in fact focused on representing the view of institutions and was clearly not interested in a single artist's perspective.

Although the film is an East German/Soviet co-production, there is little documentation remaining today of its production history in the Federal State Archive. Internal DEFA documents and correspondence beginning in 1966 suggest prolonged negotiations, since the film premiered on 25 March 1971. The film's impressive length of 178 minutes and its use of expensive 70mm film stock, as in the production of *Goya* during the same year, suggest this project's importance to the DEFA studio. Documents

[172] This film, unfortunately, was eclipsed by former UFA director Georg Wilhelm Pabst's feature *Es geschah am 20. Juli* (*It Happened on July 20*, FRG), which premiered on the 19 June 1955, i.e. only a few days before Harnack's film. Pabst focused, however, solely on the events surrounding the revolt of the Wehrmacht officers on the day of 20 June. Harnack represented the event within the larger context of the time.

by *DEFA-Aussenhandel,* the Office for Film Distribution Aborad, regarding their strategy to distribute the film for the 25th anniversary of DEFA and reporting positive statistics of 2,109,148 visitors in the GDR after the film was screened for only fourteen weeks, give the impression that the film was a considerable box office success. Further information about its distribution in socialist countries such as the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Romania and Czecoslovakia confirms this impression.[173] Yet how can we explain the lack of the typically meticulously preserved correspondence between partners that is usually present in such co-productions?

Two of the few documents to be found in the Federal State Archive file on *KLK Calling PTZ* provide a clue to answering this question and suggest that the film altered the story of the Red Orchestra for the purposes of propagating the KPD's role in the antifascist resistance. The first document is a note written by production manager Wolfgang Renebarth on 14 September 1970 to DEFA head Alfred Wilkening. In this letter, Renebarth explains the addition of 19 more days for shooting to the original time plan as follows:

Because of the addition of new scenes for the purpose of strengthening the role of the KPD [German Communist Party during the 1930s, M.I.], represented by John Sieg in the film, we will need 19 extra days for the shooting. These changes were recommended after approval of the script by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry for State Security.[174]

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[173] The final report on the production, *Schlussbericht*, from 31 May 1971, BArch DR 117/23372, served as the source of this information.

[174] My translation of: "Durch neue Szenen, die geschrieben wurden, um die Rolle der KPD, vertreten durch John Sieg in unserem Film, zu verstärken, werden noch 19 Drehtage mehr anfallen. Diese Änderungen wurden nach Abnahme des Drehbuchs vom Ministerium für Kultur und dem Ministerium für Staatssicherheit empfohlen" (*Aktennotiz* from 14 September 1970, BArch, DR 117/23372).

The second document is a short letter in a telegraph style, which was signed by the second DEFA production manager who worked on the co-production, Heinz Herrmann. While in many co-productions both production companies typically appointed a production manager, in this case, DEFA contracted both managers. In the letter, Herrmann reports about the above mentioned changes to Mr. Dressler, an official not identifiable among DEFA employees, probably a worker in one of the ministries mentioned in Renebarth's note. See Herrmann's letter below:

> The invitation was confirmed. In terms of themes to be compared between both scripts, I suggest: 1. On the question of internationalism; 2. On patriotism- is the topic discussed enough in the script? 3. Where do the roots of today's National Front lie? 4. Is the question of the continuity of the party function from 1932 until 1942 now visible enough? 5. What do we know in general and in particular about the depicted resistance organization? Is its meaning clearly communicated to our youth?[175]

This correspondence places the ideological function of the film at the center of its representation. In addition to the conspicuous lack of correspondence among the partners in the co-production, these two letters suggest that most production questions were discussed internally or with respective agencies at the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry for State Security.

Although film scholars such as Klaus Wischnewski and Daniela Berghahn have emphasized the innovative value of *KLK Calling PTZ* in terms of its representation of a non-communist resistance group, this reading of the film appears undermined by German historian Johannes Tuchel's most recent research (Wischnewski 1994: 254, Berghahn

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[175] My translation of: "Einladung bestätigt. Themenkreis zum Vergleich der beiden Drehbücher, vorgeschlagen: 1. Über Fragen des Internationalismus; 2. Über Patriotismus, ist das Thema genügend besprochen im Buch?; 3. Wo liegen die Wurzeln zur Nationalen Front von heute?; 4. Ist die Frage der Kontinuität der Parteiarbeit von 1932 bis 1942 genügend sichtbar geworden?; 5. Was wissen wir im allgemeinen und im besonderen über die dargestellte Widerstandsorganisation? Wird ihre Bedeutung für die Jugend klar? (Letter by Heinz Hermann to Dreßler dated 22 October 1969, BArch DR 117/ BA (II) 775).

2005: 80, Tuchel 2005). Tuchel illuminates the strong agenda of the GDR Ministry for State Security (Stasi) to manipulate the public imagination through print and screen representations of the Red Orchestra's story. Moreover, the Stasi was interested in collecting data and constructing a coherent narrative on this group in order to be able to present it as its own precursor and to legitimize its existence and function. Tuchel engages specifically with the role of the Stasi in the historical interpretation and instrumentalization of the Red Orchestra's memory. As he argues, both information from the Gestapo's records and oral narratives by witnesses and participants were deliberately altered under the auspices of the Stasi and adapted to their purposes of representing the group as a communist one (2005: 232).

If we look back at the reception of the Red Orchestra during the immediate postwar years, we find memoirs and accounts of relatives of the deceased, such as Greta Kuckhoff or Falk Harnack, who contributed to and sponsored the publishing of an edited volume in 1948. Subsequent press releases and monographs published on the Red Orchestra in both the GDR and the FRG display how the controversies of the Cold War influenced the further representation of the group. The image created in the press in the GDR focused primarily on the various group members' contacts and collaboration with other resistance groups in Europe and especially with Soviet secret services. The reductive perspective of such representations resulted in the complete reinterpretation and manipulation of the memory of the Red Orchestra since the mid-1960s, which Tuchel summarizes as culminating in the collaborative efforts of Stasi and KGB workers to perform large-scale research, including sifting through Gestapo documents, Soviet sources and interviews with the group members' relatives, to the end of creating an image of the group as the Stasi's precursor (2005: 235).

Already in 1965, DEFA head Jochen Mückenberger met with Stasi representatives and, according to correspondence cited in Tuchel's research, he assured them of the participation of East German secret service officials during the preproduction and production stages of the film. Moreover, the growing Stasi database on the Red Orchestra had to provide screenwriters Vera and Claus Küchenmeister with the material necessary for composing the script.[176] Indeed, as Tuchel shows, the Küchenmeisters composed their script after reading through the Stasi database material and meeting with Erich Honecker in 1966 (2005: 263-264).

The documented collaboration of the film's authors with the Stasi points to the control that the Ministry exercised over this particular co-production, but leaves open the question of to what extent this film was, in fact, a co-production. The lack of existing or preserved correspondence between DEFA and Mosfilm representatives, as well as of Soviet actors or technicians in a film in which over 90 German actors were cast, point to the dominant role of East German officials in initiating and directing this production. While it is not clear why Mosfilm still participated in this high-budget film, one of the reasons might lie in the fact that co-productions at this time had become a realm of film services exchange. This end-point for the era of co-productions is examined in detail in the conclusion.

CONCLUSION

In his account of the changes defining the project of DEFA co-productions in the late 1980s, dramaturge Dirk Jungnickel maintains that the role of co-productions had

[176] In a document from 5 August 1965, we read: "Von Genosse Mückenberger wurde zugesichert, dass vom Anfangsstadium der Arbeiten an eine ständige Beratung sowohl zwischen Buch [sic], als auch bei der Produktion des Filmes mit uns erfolgen wird. Zu diesem Zweck soll der Autor bereist ungefähr ab Oktober mit dem bei uns vorhandenen Grundlagenmaterial über die "Rote Kapelle" sich vertraut machen können, soweit es für Außenstehende freigegeben werden kann" (see Tuchel 2005: 263).

gradually decreased in the studio in order to give way to the development of service exchange (*Dienstleistungsaustausch*), which brought convertible currency to the studio. The *Gemeinschaftsproduktionen* of the 1970s and 1980s replaced both the international prestige and the entertainment agendas of the earlier co-productions made with France or other Western partners during the 1950s. Moreover, Jungnickel acknowledges the damaging role of the Stasi in monitoring and sanctioning co-productions or foreign film studio's projects made at DEFA:

> If foreign film studios come to film in the GDR, they have at their disposal a production manager, one or two unit managers, and a director, as well as other technicians, if elaborate shooting requires them. If the film crews come from the so-called "capitalist abroad," DEFA appoints "trustworthy" colleagues […] It has happened before that in some film crews we employed people (such as unit production assistants) who had never before worked for the studio. Some of them returned months later, after the filming was over, to conduct arrests as officers of the Ministry for State Security.[177]

The tremendous official importance assigned to propaganda and politically accurate representation in these films replaced the centrality of the concept of international solidarity and, ultimately, resulted in the loss of audience's interests in these topics. Pictures about earlier communist struggles against capitalism and Nazism, the Spanish Civil War, or communist leaders dominated co-productions also because directors were

[177] My translation of: "Co-Produktionen wie sie in den fünfziger Jahren u.a. mit Frankreich in größerem Umfang abgewickelt wurden, haben heute an Bedeutung verloren. Selbst mit den Studios der Sowjetunion und denen der anderen Ostblockländer wird relativ selten co-produziert. [...] Immer mehr Bedeutung gewinnen dagegen die sogenannten Dienstleistungen – der Deviseneinnahmen wegen. [...] Drehen ausländische Drehstäbe in der DDR, werden ihnen ein Produktionsleiter, je nach Bedarf ein oder zwei Aufnahmeleiter und ein Regisseur zur Verfügung gestellt; sind die Aufnahmen aufwendig, auch Vertreter anderer Sparten. Kommen die Drehstäbe aus dem sogenannten kapitalistischen Ausland, werden entsprechend "zuverlässige" Mitarbeiter abgestellt. […] Es ist vorgekommen, dass in Drehstäben Leute tätig waren (Aufnahmeleitungsassistenten z.B.), die vorher nicht im Studio angestellt waren und Monate nach Abschluß der Dreharbeiten wieder im Studio auftauchten, um dann als Offiziere der Staatssischerheit Verhaftungen vorzunehmen" (Blunk 1990: 55).

on surer ground in this narrative space, since the wellspring of socialism's legitimacy lay in the myth of antifascist resistance.

In the late 1970s, however, East European studios began to lose their interest in co-productions with the GDR. In his post-1989 memoir on his work at the KAG Babelsberg with the subtitle *Unsere nichtgedrehten Filme* (*The Films We Never Made*), DEFA dramaturge Dieter Wolf elaborates on more than ten failed solidarity co-productions with Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia and other East European countries. Most of the failed co-productions were projects that originated in the mid- to late-1960s and became obsolete by the 1970s, which points to the damaging effects of the growing control of the SED over DEFA's collaborations in the 1970s and 1980s. These projects included titles such as *Theresienstädter Requiem*, *Mephisto*, *Hero Against His Will*, *Mercenary and a Partisan* and others. Some of them treated politically precarious topics in the wake of the Prague Spring and others touched on the undesirable themes such as the Holocaust and the atrocities in concentration camps (Wolf 2000: 48).

By the 1980s, DEFA's co-productions dwelt on the mythic past rather than taking on present issues that had to be solved, both in film aesthetic and in institutional terms. Captive to a demanding yet decaying state apparatus, DEFA and East European filmmakers could not realize their ideal of solidarity as articulated at the three international filmmakers' conferences of the late 1950s. Despite their earlier appraisal of and engagement with the Holocaust and Jewish suffering, by the 1980s, DEFA co-productions for solidarity became bound to the GDR state's prerogatives.

The study of DEFA co-productions for solidarity provides yet another insight into the complex nature of the communication between filmmakers and the ones in power. While co-productions mentioned in the previous chapters of this dissertation pointed to the dialog with other West European and East European cinematic traditions of the late

1950s and 1960s, in the next decades DEFA would rarely again attempt dramatic innovations or experimentation in its work with other film studios. By articulating a sense of identity premised on identification with socialist heroes, East German and a few other East European filmmakers facilitated the acceptance of officially imposed myths. Nevertheless, in the conclusion of this study, we will account for the resonance of DEFA co-productions with broader processes of communication between GDR state officials and artists, which enriches our understanding of the parameters and possibilities of filmmaking in socialist societies.

Conclusion

The story of DEFA co-productions with East and West European partners is largely one of experimentation with and negotiation of the imperatives imposed on socialist cinema by Cold War politics. GDR artists and politicians alike desired films that would sustain a positive image of East Germany and cultivate, entertain, and educate socialist audiences while simultaneously confirming the socialist project. Co-productions became central in meeting these goals by seeking to earn prestige abroad, attract socialist audiences with homegrown entertainment genres, and embrace antifascism as a unifying discourse for artists and moviegoers.

Organized around these three agendas, this study has concentrated on the institutional history of DEFA co-productions and on the most vexing problems that filmmakers faced during the production of these films. I have elaborated on the ways in which co-productions provide us with a unique perspective on the historical development of DEFA, especially with regard to its uneasy relationship to the East German state, and, more generally, to the relationship between art and politics within a socialist state. The outcomes of my discussion concern national, international and transnational aspects in filmmaking and film distribution developments. The results of this investigation of DEFA co-productions further yield insights about the complex nature of artistic production within socialist states, as well as the specific evolution and the longevity of film genres and narratives that became possible only as joint projects.

To specify, there are three major implications resulting from this study: First, we have seen that co-productions represent a cinematic model, which, although desired by politicians and artists, posed challenges to the mechanisms of national film production at DEFA. These mechanisms within the studio mirrored the hierarchical organization and

decision-making practices within the East German socialist state. As films produced mostly under the auspices of state-owned film companies, co-productions lent themselves, on the one hand, to the promotion of socialist society as they visually recreated a model of a utopian community. In this sense, these films represent an effort not only to mobilize international resources, but also to live up to socialism's promise as an international movement. They reflected the utopian project of the GDR to participate in an international community of socialist states, to renew their prewar relations to Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, and to collaborate with other countries in Europe. On the other hand, as we have seen in all three chapters, the practical realization of film co-productions was much more controversial than expected by GDR filmmakers and politicians. Co-producing involved the creation not only of a single film but also of a complex and multi-faceted network reinforcing the ideal of friendship among peoples. Yet, we have seen how more often than not conflicting interests and expectations lead to the failure of joint projects. As one of the DEFA dramaturges, Dieter Wolf, has shown, the proposed and unrealized co-productions exceeded three times the number of the fifty-three completed. These statistics and the examples of prolonged negotiations in the history of each case study discussed in this dissertation show that the combination of national, aesthetic, and technical factors that played a role in the films' production and distribution process, in fact, hindered the co-productions.

The second implication this study has is for our understanding of East German film as a medium, which was strongly influenced by international developments both in East and West European cinemas. As I have argued in my first chapter, this influence was made possible through the widespread circulation of films, labor force and resources between DEFA and countries such as France, West Germany, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, USSR, and others. For Western partners, the advantage of

this exchange lay in cheaper production costs and access to audiences behind the Iron Curtain. The respective socialist states supported artistic exchange through travel and educational grants, as well as through willingness to finance co-productions and sponsor work visas for foreign actors and filmmakers. East German directors thus had the opportunity to travel and study abroad, while their film studio was able to hire the foreign colleagues with whom they collaborated during these visits on both domestic productions and international co-productions. The value of such exchanges, as discussed in the second chapter of this study, became crucial to the joint efforts of DEFA and other East European film studios to develop their own film genres and build an internal structure that would allow their artistic collectives relative independence from state control. These co-productions, i.e. the utopian films and the *Indianerfilme*, help to develop and retain a vocabulary of cultural specificity for socialist filmmaking, while undermining the notion of a strictly national cinema limited to the context of East Germany.

Third, the study of co-productions turns attention to the material context of film production and distribution within the socialist states, but also to the reception of the films inside and outside their respective societies. I have argued that the entanglement of art and artists with the state in socialist societies allowed not only for the sanctioning but also for the refinement and modification of specific genres that were typically co-produced, such as utopian films (*The Silent Star*) or antifascist films (*Stars*). The development of these genres within the framework of DEFA co-productions was a complex and prolonged process that enriches our understanding of the entire project of East German filmmaking. They do so because their production histories illustrate how filmmakers successfully challenged the limitations imposed by political authorities on their films and achieved the international release of these films. My project, in this sense,

is corrective to film scholarship that sees former collaboration among Central and East European filmmakers as purely ideology-driven.

Many of the films considered in this study have been previously discussed from perspectives that privileged their narratives, genre, or stars. Such approaches have not facilitated identification or exploration of the films as co-productions, a gap that I seek to ameliorate with my research. For example, in the scholarship on historical epics such as *Goya*, *Copernicus* and even *Jacob the Liar* the narrative-based approach predominates. Discussions of other films, such as the utopian films and the *Indianerfilme* emphasize a genre-based perspective. Nevertheless, as I have shown, all DEFA utopian films were, in fact, co-produced with East European partners. The same applies for the *Indianerfilme*, half of which were joint projects of DEFA and Yugoslavian or Romanian filmmakers, and the rest of which were officially financed by the East German studio and advertised as domestic productions, but relied heavily on landscapes, actors and services from Eastern Europe. Another reason for the lack of consideration of DEFA co-productions as such is perhaps the critical framework that scholars have imposed on East German films as being necessarily antifascist. Thus, co-productions that did not comply with this agenda have been disregarded, or, when they lent themselves to an ideological interpretation, scholars have emphasized their propaganda aspects, rather than examining their rich production history, as in the case of *Stars, On the Way to Lenin,* or *KLK Calling PTZ*. Finally, these films' promotion of international solidarity, as discussed in the last chapter of this study might also be yet another answer to the question why their status as co-productions has never been questioned before.

As an attempt to re-situate East German cinema within the parameters of European cinema, this dissertation project may serve as a stepping stone to future endeavors, such as a comparative study of film genres developed in East European and

West European cinemas, as well as their actual reception among audiences of different ages, backgrounds and nationalities. The methodological frameworks proposed in this study might also be instrumental to scholars who research East German literature or perform comparative studies on East European literary productions. A comparison of the co-production model and agendas developed in East Germany to those in other European countries may also challenge the predominant view of European film industries as resisting hybridization and reinforcing national artistic production during the Cold War. The socialist film festival circuit in Leipzig, Karlovy Vary and Moscow, where GDR directors and filmmakers met other socialist colleagues to watch and discuss each other's work, offers another fruitful area for research. So far, Dina Iordanova and other British film scholars have discussed the exchange at European film festivals, yet there is no published study that engages particularly with exchange among filmmakers based in socialist film studios between 1949 and 1989.

The question of the continuities between filmmakers' co-production efforts during the Cold War and contemporary European cinema is related to this complex of issues. On the one hand, more porous geopolitical borders since 1989 have created new opportunities for mobility and exchange among artists and filmmakers. On the other hand, with the abolishment of the state-owned film studio systems and the continuous cuts to state-sponsored film funds since the early 1990s, directors and actors in former socialist countries have been forced to develop new strategies to realize their projects. Some East European artists have continued their career in unified Germany (for example, Serbian actor Gojko Mitić), while others have initiated East-West communication among filmmakers after 1989, utilizing previous contacts (Bulgarian screenwriter Angel Wagenstein). Some younger directors have immigrated to Germany (Bulgarian Hristo Bakalski) or have worked there on co-productions (such as Bosnians Emir Kusturica and

Danis Tanovic, Macedonian Milcho Manchevski, Bulgarians Ivan Nichev and Iglika Triffonova, and Romanian Radu Mihaleanu). Of particular interest are examples of supra-national networks and their relevance in the utilization of European film funds. For instance, Wagenstein's collaboration with Nichev on the Bulgarian/German co-production *After the End of the World* (1998) resulted in two further co-productions funded by the Council of Europe Program *Eurimages*. Research on the current internationalization of German cinema, however, fails to acknowledge the legacy of vibrant institutional and interpersonal collaboration between East German and East European filmmakers. This study of DEFA co-productions, I hope, will contribute towards redressing this lacuna and will facilitate a dialogue on the continuing negotiation between political and artistic agendas in divided Germany and unified Europe.

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