

**From London to Leipzig and Back  
(Post-)Punk, 'Endzeit' and Gothic in the GDR**

by

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates Goth culture (in the widest sense, including Post-Punk, New Wave, and New Romantic scenes, genres and styles) in the GDR between 1983 and 1989/1990 from state and participants perspectives. Drawing on the major works within Gothic, subculture, and postmodern theory, this thesis explores the ‘subcultural capital’ of the pluriform, multi-scene East German Goth culture in official state documents and in ‘subcultural micro-media’ to answer the key question how Goth scenes were represented by different participants and political actors. Participants are considered as agents whose ‘spectacular style’ brought them in conflict with society and authority, and who performed different politics of representation which varied between self-marginalisation and demystification, and between isolation and ‘liberalisation through negotiation’. The thesis explores the uniqueness of East German Goth(ic) while considering it as a transnational phenomenon in the Cold War Zeitgeist of the 1980s. The ‘local boundedness’ made East German Goth develop both similarly and differently compared to Goth scenes in the West. The study demonstrates that symbolic representations of Goth contain sets of social and political relationships and practices as well as existential conflicts, strategies, and solutions. It will on the one side be shown how social groups which are considered ‘Goth’ produced meaning, identity, and ‘ideology’. On the other side, it will be shown that the state applied the principle of homology and semiological method to understand subcultural phenomena and what the results of this were. The overarching question of this study is dual: How is Gothic culture and how are participants in Gothic culture represented in the individual interpretations and translations of ‘Gothic’ in micro-media produced by participants, and how is Gothic culture and how are participants in Gothic culture represented in official state documents and embedded in the political-ideological narrative and terminology? The dual perspectivity gives insights into what is referred to in this thesis as ‘Post-Punk transition’ in subcultural ‘texts’, and ‘Post-Punk confusion’ in state theory. It will be shown in this thesis how Punk evolved into Goth, what marks this transition in the subcultural micro-media, and how this transition is reflected in official state documentation. The thesis also shows that within both perspectives, there are difference and ambivalence. The representations of Goth in the GDR are an ideal case study to explore how subcultural identities and meanings are constructed through language and rhetoric, and that definitions of ‘subculture’ and ‘Goth’ are fluid and subject to time and space.

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# INTRODUCTION

‘celebration of darkness [...] invites all manner of interpretation’<sup>1</sup>

‘More moral panics will be generated, and other, as yet nameless, folk devils will be created’<sup>2</sup>

‘denn nicht alles ist Gothic, was Schwarz trägt’<sup>3</sup>

‘Gothic just will not die’<sup>4</sup>

## I. Introduction to the Research Topic: Gothic Subculture Made in the GDR

Since 1992, the largest and oldest still existing Gothic festival is held yearly during Pentecost in Leipzig in Eastern Germany. The *Wave-Gotik-Treffen* (hereafter WGT) is rooted in a ‘distinct movement that developed after the peak of Punk’ and which is usually called Post-Punk or New Wave, as Amy Spencer<sup>5</sup> notes. As showcased by various British and American bands like *The Cure*, *Christian Death*, *Siouxsie & The Banshees*, *Joy Division*, *Bauhaus*, *Sisters of Mercy* and *Depeche Mode* in the 1980s, New Wave is a ‘genre which [...] blended together many musical styles and attitudes’<sup>6</sup>. The ‘dark, melancholic sounds’, ‘nihilistic lyrics’ and ‘spooky or dark-mystical outfits’, as Susanne El-Nawab<sup>7</sup> writes, gained many fans in Germany and kickstarted a new youth (sub)culture. In 1986 and 1987, teen magazine

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Hodkinson, ‘Beyond Spectacular Specifics in the Study of Youth (Sub)cultures’, *Journal of Youth Studies*, 15.5 (2012), 557 – 572 (559).

<sup>2</sup> Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1972), p. 172.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Nym, ‘Die Gothic-Szene gibt es nicht’, in *Schillerndes Dunkel. Geschichte, Entwicklung und Themen der Gothic-Szene*, ed. by Alexander Nym (Leipzig: Plöttner Verlag, 2010), pp. 12 – 15 (p. 13).

<sup>4</sup> Victoria Carrington, ‘The Contemporary Gothic. Literacy and Childhood in Unsettled Times’, *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 12.3 (2012), 293 – 310.

<sup>5</sup> Amy Spencer, *DIY. The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture* (London: Marion Boyars Publishers, 2005), p. 257.

<sup>6</sup> Spencer, *DIY*, p. 257.

<sup>7</sup> Susanne El-Nawab, *Skinheads, Gothics, Rockabillics. Gewalt, Tod & Rock ‘N’ Roll* (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen Verlag, 2007), p. 135.

*BRAVO*<sup>8</sup> presented the trend in articles titled *Wave ist eine Lebenseinstellung* and *Schwarz ist heiß*. Wave discos, fanclubs, fanzines and mini-festivals emerged all over Germany.<sup>9</sup>

In his book on the history and development of German Gothic subculture, Alexander Nym states<sup>10</sup> that in the UK and USA, New Wave, Post-Punk and related genres called *Batcave*, *Gothic Rock* and *New Romantic* were short-lived music and fashion fads which offered much needed alternatives to mainstream pop culture and sparked a similar yet different movement in Germany. There, Nym<sup>11</sup> notes, scenes were called *Düsterpunk*, *Edelpunk*, *(Dark-)Waver*, *Death-Rocker*, *Ghoul* and *Grufti*. The term *Wave* is rarely used nowadays and instead *Gothic* has become the umbrella term for that which Nym<sup>12</sup> describes as ‘heterogeneous eclecticism, a stylistic mishmash which covers the spectrum from avantgardistic brutalism via electronic popmusic, old music, (neo-)classic and folk to (Punk)rock, techno and ambient’. This heterogeneity is the reason why, as Michael Bibby and Lauren M.E. Goodlad point out,<sup>13</sup> ‘Goths themselves still elaborately discuss the eternal question of how to define Goth’. Nym<sup>14</sup> confirms that this is certainly the case within the *Schwarze Szene*, as Gothic subculture in Germany is also called, and that *Szene* is hence a misleading label, because different Gothic(-related) scenes, genres and styles have always existed. The WGT reflects this diversity by embracing Gothic tradition and innovation, as Annett Stötzner<sup>15</sup> has written in her fanzine *Graeffnis. Wave Culture and More*, and is the home of an overarching, transnationally shared Gothic ‘Lebenskultur’.

Before participants from the East and West could gather at a festival for the ‘globalised subculture’, as Isabella van Elferen<sup>16</sup> defines Gothic in her case study of Eastern German Gothic after the dissolution of the German Democratic Republic (hereafter GDR) on 3 October 1990, two separate German Gothic subcultures existed. They consisted of

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<sup>8</sup> ‘Wave ist eine Lebenseinstellung’, *Bravo* (1986); ‘Schwarz ist heiß’, *Bravo* (1987).

<sup>9</sup> Arvid Dittmann, ‘Schwarz als Farbe jugendlicher Subkulturen’, in *Schillerndes Dunkel. Geschichte, Entwicklung und Themen der Gothic-Szene*, ed. by Alexander Nym (Leipzig: Plöttner Verlag, 2010), pp. 16 – 25 (p. 22); El-Nawab, *Skinheads, Gothics, Rockabillys*, p. 135; Marlene Schrijnders, ‘From London to Leipzig and Back: A Transnational Approach to The Endzeit (R)evolution (1976 – 92)’, *Britain and the World*, 11.1 (2018), 75-100.

<sup>10</sup> Nym, ‘Die Gothic-Szene gibt es nicht’, p. 13.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 22.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>13</sup> Lauren M.E. Goodlad and Michael Bibby (eds.), *Goth. Undead Subculture* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2007), p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> Nym, ‘Die Gothic-Szene gibt es nicht’, p. 13.

<sup>15</sup> Annett Stötzner, ‘Wave Gotik Treffen’, *Graeffnis. Wave Culture and More*, 1 (1998) (28); <[www.graeffnis.de/html/magazine.html](http://www.graeffnis.de/html/magazine.html) [accessed on 8 November 2018].

<sup>16</sup> Isabella Van Elferen, ‘East German Goth and the Spectres of Marx’, *Popular Music*, 30.1 (2011), 89 – 103 (99).



different scenes which ‘clustered around a specific geographic focus’, as Andy Bennett and Richard A. Peterson<sup>17</sup> write, and were as much subject to the societal conditions and circumstances of their locality, as they were local interpretations and representations of a global (sub)culture which is now commonly known as Gothic.

Rock band *The Cure*, very popular in both Germanies, gave their first East German concert in Leipzig on 4 August 1990.<sup>18</sup> West German concert visitor Oliver Köble wrote in his Wave fanzine *Glasnost*<sup>19</sup> that it was a historical milestone and ‘new chapter for the East German Wave movement’, because the Peaceful Revolution and the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989 had freed it from state repression.<sup>20</sup> In the GDR, Köble<sup>21</sup> wrote, Wave represented a form of opposition and was therefore ‘ideologically incomparable with the West’. The ‘local boundedness’ of East German Gothic subculture, as van Elferen<sup>22</sup> notes, made that, to use Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson’s<sup>23</sup> definition of *scenes*, the East German Wave/Gothic scenes had ‘tight boundaries, distinctive shapes, which have cohered around particular activities, focal concerns and territorial spaces’. In his study of the *Schwarze Szene*, Roman Rutkowski<sup>24</sup> writes that the East German scene was isolated and developed differently in the GDR because Gothic was taboo there. In response to this, this study investigates the conflict between authority and Gothic subculture which Köble and Rutkowski refer to and explores the relationship between Gothic and ideology in East German society, culture and politics.

Why was East German Gothic ideologically different, according to eye witnesses? Clearly impressed by the outfits of East German *The Cure* fans, Köble<sup>25</sup> noted that ‘Waves und Grufts aus allen Teilen der DDR erschienen in fantasievollem Styling. Mit ihren

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<sup>17</sup> Andy Bennett and Richard A. Peterson, *Music Scenes: Local, Translocal and Virtual* (Vanderbilt University Press: Nashville Tennessee, 2004), p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> Oliver Köble, ‘Konzertbericht über The Cure in Leipzig’, *Glasnost Wave-Magazin*, 23 (1990), 19; Sven Affeld, ‘The Cure in der DDR’, *Zillo-Musikmagazin*, (September 1990) (50).

<sup>19</sup> Fanzine *Glasnost* was founded in Freiburg im Breisgau in May 1987 by Oliver Köble. The first edition was called *Glasnost. Zentralorgan für Punk, New Wave, Wave und Avantgarde*, then *Glasnost. Wave Fanzine*, *Glasnost. Wave + Techno Fanzine*, and eventually *Glasnost. Wave Magazine*. The fanzine is listed in the *Verzeichnis der AlternativMedien 1997, ID-Archiv im IISG, Archiv Soziale Bewegungen* Freiburg. For this thesis, several editions of *Glasnost* have been consulted at the *Archiv der Jugendkulturen* in Berlin.

<sup>20</sup> Dieter Köble, ‘Headline, DDR: Zustände!’, *Glasnost*, 23 (1990) (17).

<sup>21</sup> Dieter Köble, ‘Beobachtungen und Analysen of the Szene Ost’, *Glasnost*, 34 (1992) (5).

<sup>22</sup> Van Elferen, ‘East German Goth and the Spectres of Marx’, p. 99.

<sup>23</sup> Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, *Resistance Through Rituals. Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (London: Hutchinson, 1976), p. 14.

<sup>24</sup> Roman Rutkowski, *Das Charisma des Grabes. Stereotyp und Vorurteile in Bezug auf Jugendliche Subkulturen am Beispiel der Schwarzen Szene* (Norderstedt: Books on Demand Verlag, 2004), p. 59.

<sup>25</sup> Köble, ‘DDR: Zustände!’, p 6.

kreativen Frisuren und ausgefallenen Klamotten blieben sie der Konkurrenz aus dem Westen in nichts zurück. Selbstgemachtes und erfinderische Zweckentfremdung war bisher die Devise, wenn es um Wave Mode ging, denn in der Staatswirtschaft gab es die schwarze Kluft natürlich nicht von der Stange zu kaufen'. The suggestion that the absence of certain consumer products in the socialist-communist system was a positive DIY stimulus for the subculture is also given in the recent publication *Behind the Wall. Depeche Mode Fankultur in der DDR*. Dennis Burmeister and Sascha Lange<sup>26</sup> explain that they as fans relied on sewing skills, useful connections and (illegal) imports to not only look like, but also listen to and read about their idols. Burmeister and Lange write that the longer wait for the latest *Depeche Mode* records and news features meant that music was studied more thoughtfully, and that fans developed a much closer relationship to it, and to each other. Characterizing East German fandom similarly, Rutkowski<sup>27</sup> states that East German fans displayed a much more intensive and serious engagement with 'values and ideals reflected in the music'. Burmeister and Lange's book paints a vivid image of East German fan commitment to New Wave music and the way in which participants practiced 'regular communication around a distinctive form of music and lifestyle'<sup>28</sup> with fans in the East and West. Köble's<sup>29</sup> review of the first WGT, with the formal sounding title *Beobachtungen und Analysen of the Szene Ost*, emphasises how their community spirit crossed national and ideological boundaries. He described how he had picked up a strong 'Gemeinschaftsgefühl' and 'family atmosphere' during 'der erste gesamtdeutsche Szenetreff [im] noch jung wiedervereinten Osten',<sup>30</sup> and concluded that he hoped that the 'dull West'<sup>31</sup> would benefit from the lively subculture from the (former) GDR.

My research into East German Gothic began with the basic question of how Post-Punk, New Wave and other Gothic-related genres, styles and scenes emerged, existed and evolved in the GDR. How was it possible that contemporary Gothic culture in the broadest sense experienced its 'Blütezeit'<sup>32</sup> in a political system in which fan meetings equalled illegal

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<sup>26</sup> Dennis Burmeister and Sascha Lange, *Behind The Wall. DEPECHE MODE-Fankultur In Der DDR* (Mainz: Ventil Verlag, 2018), p. 32.

<sup>27</sup> Rutkowski, *Das Charisma des Grabes*, p. 59.

<sup>28</sup> Bennett and Peterson, *Music Scenes*, p. 6.

<sup>29</sup> Köble, 'Beobachtungen und Analysen of the Szene Ost', *Glasnost*, 34 (1992) (5)

<sup>30</sup> Jennifer Hoffert and Alexander Nym, *Black Celebration. 20 Jahre / Years Wave-Gotik-Treffen* (Leipzig, Plöttner Verlag, 2011), p. 12.

<sup>31</sup> Oliver Köble, 'Situation der Wave-Szene in Ostdeutschland', *Glasnost-Musikmagazin*, 34 (1992) (4 – 5).

<sup>32</sup> Philipp Mühlberg and Manfred Stock, *Die Szene Von Innen. Skinheads, Gruffies, Heavy Metals, Punks* (Berlin: Christopher Links Verlag, 1990), pp. 90 – 91; Rutkowski, *Das Charisma Des Grabes*, p. 60.

gatherings,<sup>33</sup> and in which, as Klaus Farin<sup>34</sup> notes, all subcultural scenes and (assumed) oppositional groups were observed by the *Ministerium für Staatssicherheit* (hereafter MfS or Stasi).<sup>35</sup> In his retrospective view on subculture in East Berlin,<sup>36</sup> an eye witness and scene insider carrying the pseudonym *DJ Ørlog*<sup>37</sup> raises the same question: ‘Bedenkt man die Repressalien unter denen die Szene in der DDR zu leiden hatte, erstaunt die doch recht lebhaft Independent-Musik-Szene’.<sup>38</sup> This thesis demonstrates in which ways Gothic thrived and survived despite, or perhaps also partly because of, its politicization.

*DJ Ørlog*’s<sup>39</sup> memories contradict the idea that Gothic was a political threat to the state, as he explains that *Gruftis* differed fundamentally from the radically political Punks. But the key question is then why *Gruftis* were perceived as or perceived themselves as outsiders in East German society, as *DJ Ørlog*<sup>40</sup> suggests, why they did not get along with other scenes, and why they faced public intolerance with daily harassments by fellow citizens, as he writes.<sup>41</sup> Was it because, as *DJ Ørlog*<sup>42</sup> concludes, nobody, not even other subcultural outsiders, could relate to their ‘collective death wish’? Why did Gothic have an isolated social and even subcultural status? Scholars who have studied contemporary Gothic subculture have suggested that it ‘is not driven by an explicit political agenda as in the case of the anarcho-Punk subculture’, as Richard Griffiths<sup>43</sup> writes, and that it is, as Agnes Jasper<sup>44</sup> states, ‘mainly directed inward, not directed outward and actively, politically resistant to dominant culture like the 1970’s Punk subculture’. Mark Fenemore’s<sup>45</sup> remark that ‘the sexual antics of Punks, skinheads, heavy metal fans, Poppers, and graveyard-frequenting *Gruftis* were as much of concern to the authorities in the 1980s as their real or

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<sup>33</sup> Mühlberg and Stock, *Die Szene Von Innen*, pp. 90 – 91; Rutkowski, *Das Charisma Des Grabes*, p. 60.

<sup>34</sup> Klaus Farin, *Die Gothics. Interviews. Fotografien* (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen Verlag, 2001), p. 5.

<sup>35</sup> Dieter Baacke, *Jugend Und Jugendkultur. Darstellung Und Deutung* (Weinheim: Beltz Juventa Verlag, 1993).

<sup>36</sup> DJ Ørlog, ‘Schwarz hören im Osten. Die Szene in der DDR’, in *Schillerndes Dunkel. Geschichte, Entwicklung und Themen der Gothic-Szene*, ed. by Alexander Nym (Leipzig: Plöttner Verlag, 2010), p. 107.

<sup>37</sup> DJ Ørlog, ‘Schwarz hören im Osten’, p. 109.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>43</sup> Richard Griffiths, ‘The Gothic Folk Devils Strike Back! Theorizing Folk Devil Reaction in the post-Columbine Era’, *Journal of Youth Studies*, 13.3 (2010), 403 – 422 (234).

<sup>44</sup> Agnes Jasper, *The Mysts Of the Gothic Underground. An Endo-Ethnographic Perspective on Gothic Subculture. Identity, Consumerism and The Gothic Aesthetic From The Inside Out* (Amsterdam: Universiteit Van Amsterdam, 2006), p. 33.

<sup>45</sup> Mark Fenemore, ‘The Recent Historiography of Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Germany’, *The Historical Journal*, 52.3 (2009), 763 – 779 (770).

potential political beliefs’, also suggests that the authorities were not only interested in a subculture’s political orientation.

Eye witness stories paint an ambivalent picture. There was state repression on the one hand, and a thriving subculture which was visible as well as invisible in the GDR’s cities, on the other hand. Leipzig, Farin<sup>46</sup> states, was the ‘secret cultural capital of the GDR’ for ‘the marginal, the underground and the subcultural’ where the ‘Grufties der DDR’ organised DIY Gothic parties in private homes, local discos, state-run youth clubs and deserted buildings. One such event which Farin, Philipp Mühlberg and Manfred Stock<sup>47</sup> describe, a mini-festival held at a castle ruin called Belvedere in Potsdam in 1987 and 1988 during Walpurgis night, turned out to be a key event in the history of the divided German ‘Wave- und Grufti-Bewegung’.<sup>48</sup> What began with just a hundred locals eventually grew into today’s number one Gothic cult-festival with twenty thousand international visitors.<sup>49</sup> When the WGT celebrated its twentieth anniversary,<sup>50</sup> scene insiders<sup>51</sup> like Farin, Nym, Jennifer Hoffert, Edith Oxenbauer and Marcus Rietzsch paid tribute to the festival’s (grass)roots. In *Black Celebration*, Hoffert and Nym write that no one could have dreamed that ‘aus dem subkulturellen Samen, den ein paar Leipziger Schwarzkittel nichtsahnend in die Welt gesetzt hatten, das größte Szenefestival der Welt werden sollte’.<sup>52</sup>

## II. Literature Review and Relevance of this Study

### II.a. Interpretating Gothic Subculture in Societal and Political Contexts

To understand this remarkable, seemingly ambivalent subculture history, and to explore its participants, developments and dynamics, this thesis investigates how ‘a variety of [...] characteristics emerged in a given time and context [...] and what engagement with those particular sets of sounds and texts might tell us about the distinct orientation, meaning or

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<sup>46</sup> Farin, *Die Gothics*, p. 5.

<sup>47</sup> Hoffert and Nym, *Black Celebration*, p. 4.

<sup>48</sup> Mühlberg and Stock, *Die Szene von Innen*, pp. 90 – 91; Rutkowski, *Das Charisma des Grabes*, p. 60.

<sup>49</sup> Farin, *Die Gothics*, p. 5.

<sup>50</sup> Köble, *Glasnost*, 33 (1992) (17).

<sup>51</sup> Jennifer Hoffert and Alexander Nym, *Black Celebration. 20 Jahre / Years Wave-Gotik-Treffen* (Leipzig, Plöttner Verlag, 2011), p. 12; *Black Celebration* is the title of *Depeche Mode*’s fifth studio album from 1986; Philipp Mühlberg and Manfred Stock, *Die Szene von Innen*, pp. 90 – 91; Edith Oxenbauer and Marcus Rietzsch, *Pfingstgeflüster. Impressionen Und Gedanken Aus Leipzig* (Leipzig: Rietzsch, 2011), p. 10.

<sup>52</sup> Hoffert and Nym, *Black Celebration*, p. 5.

significance', as Gothic scene insider and researcher Paul Hodkinson<sup>53</sup> writes, of East German Gothic. The topic of this thesis first needs to be contextualized within the broader realm of contemporary 'Gothic-related subcultures.'<sup>54</sup> Sara Martin<sup>55</sup> and Victoria Carrington<sup>56</sup> write that as a traditional cultural movement rooted in literature, painting and architecture, Gothic has undergone many changes, revivals and reanimations, and especially during the 1980s. I consider East German Gothic such a reanimation of the Gothic<sup>57</sup> which added a new dimension to it and is now, about thirty-five years later, already history. This subchapter provides a brief overview of some of the recent studies of Gothic subculture and looks at the definitions which are relevant for this study, while this first part of the Literature Review also addresses a key problem, namely the interpretation of such a pluriform subculture.

The 'lack of scholarly analysis [...] about Gothic youth subcultures' Martin<sup>58</sup> addresses means that, as Bibby and Goodlad<sup>59</sup> also point out, 'the wide scope of Gothic subculture has not been sufficiently explored'. Hence, while Gothic is 'forever reanimating and redefining itself'<sup>60</sup>, states, many of the redefinitions have not yet not been fully explored, one of them being East German Gothic. The 'genesis of youth subcultures', to quote Martin<sup>61</sup>, is incomplete, because researchers have studied and interpreted Gothic within the boundaries of their area. As Seth Howes<sup>62</sup> correctly points out, research 'has focused primarily, or indeed exclusively, on the Anglo-American beginnings (and self-styled) endings of punk culture, often to the complete exclusion of non-Anglophone, non-English and non-American, and non-1970s punk phenomena'. This is also the case for (Post-)Punk, New Wave and Gothic-related phenomena in East Germany. Furthermore,

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<sup>53</sup> Paul Hodkinson, 'Beyond Spectacular Specifics in the Study of Youth (Sub)cultures', *Journal of Youth Studies*, 15.5 (2012), 557 – 572, (558).

<sup>54</sup> Sara Martin, 'Gothic Scholars Don't Wear Black. Gothic Studies and Gothic Subcultures', *Gothic Studies*, 4.1 (2002), 28 – 43 (32).

<sup>55</sup> Martin, 'Gothic Scholars Don't Wear Black', p. 32.

<sup>56</sup> Victoria Carrington, 'The Contemporary Gothic. Literacy and Childhood in Unsettled Times', *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 12.3 (2012), 293 – 310 (294 – 295).

<sup>57</sup> Steven Bruhm, 'The Contemporary Gothic. Why We Need It', in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. by Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 259 – 276.

<sup>58</sup> Martin, 'Gothic Scholars Don't Wear Black', p. 29.

<sup>59</sup> Goodlad and Bibby, *Goth. Undead Subculture*; Griffiths, 'The Gothic Folk Devils Strike Back!'; Martin, 'Gothic Scholars Don't Wear Black'.

<sup>60</sup> Catherine Spooner, *Contemporary Gothic* (Reaktion Books: London, 2006); Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Gothic* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>61</sup> Martin, 'Gothic Scholars Don't Wear Black', p. 40.

<sup>62</sup> Mirko M. Hall, Seth Howes, and Cyrus M. Shahan, 'Punk Matters. An Introduction', in *Beyond No Future. Cultures of German Punk*, ed. by Mirko M. Hall, Seth Howes, and Cyrus M. Shahan (London/New York: Bloomsbury, 2018), pp. 1 – 14 (p. 4).

most studies of Gothic subculture are based in Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Studies and not, like this study, in Modern Language (in this case German Studies) and History, and in most of the relevant literature, Gothic subcultures of the present are thematized. Most studies were conducted in the UK or USA with some exceptions, as we will see. Therefore, this interdisciplinary historical-linguistic study, which focuses on the *language in textual representations of East German Gothic*, functions as a bridge between research fields and cultures by exploring the ‘transhistorical quality’, to use van Elferen’s<sup>63</sup> term, of Gothic, and adding a *transnational* dimension.

The question which needs to be answered now is how the study of East German Gothic ties into or adds a new perspective on the recent literature on Gothic subculture.<sup>64</sup> First, it can be concluded that Gothic subculture is often interpreted as a site of existential and social conflict. The impression given in the literature is that it is *Gothic against society* and vice versa. In her study of Gothic subculture in the USA, Carol Siegel<sup>65</sup> makes the valid point that subcultures always contain ‘symbolic meanings’ which are socially and politically relevant. For Siegel, the relevance of Gothic is breaking social norms and taboos. As we have seen, scholars and eye witnesses define Gothic in the GDR similarly, but the political relevance of Gothic seems disputed. When Siegel<sup>66</sup> defines American Gothic as ‘resistance to the dominant values of conservative America’ because of its ‘eroticization or even simple valorisation of appearances and objects associated with morbidity and decay’, we may ask whether ‘America’ might be replaced with another conservative society because Gothic in this definition would inevitably go against social norms in any time or place. For van

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<sup>63</sup> Van Elferen, ‘East German Goth and the Spectres of Marx’, p. 95.

<sup>64</sup> For example, Gavin Baddeley, *Goth Chic: A Connoisseur's Guide to Dark Culture* (London: Plexus, 2002); Dunja Brill, *Goth Culture. Gender, Sexuality and Style* (Oxford: Berg, 2008); Goodlad and Bibby (eds.), *Goth. Undead Subculture*; El-Nawab, *Skinheads, Gothics, Rockabillys*; Nancy Kilpatrick, *The Goth Bible. A Compendium for the Darkly Inclined* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2004); Peter Matzke, *Gothic! Die Szene aus der Sicht ihrer Macher* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2008); Uwe Meisel, *Die Gothic-Szene. Selbst- und Fremdpräsentation der umstrittenen Jugendkultur. Eine jugend- und mediensoziologische Untersuchung* (Marburg: Tectum Wissenschaftsverlag, 2005); Mick Mercer, *Gothic Rock* (Los Angeles: Cleopatra Records, 1992); Klaus Neumann-Braun and Axel Schmidt, *Die Welt der Gothics. Spielräume duster konnotierter Transzedenz* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008); Janalik and Schmidt, *Grufties*; Catherine Spooner, *Contemporary Gothic*; Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*; Beverley Spracklen and Karl Spracklen, *The Evolution of Goth Culture. The Origins and Deeds of the New Goths* (Bigley: Emerald Publishing 2018); Rutkowski, *Das Charisma des Grabes*; Carol Siegel, *Goth's Dark Empire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005); Dav e Thompson, *Schattenwelt. Helden und Legenden des Gothic Rock* (Höfen: Hannibal Verlag, 2003); Natasha Scharf, *Worldwide Gothic. A Chronicle of a Tribe* (Shropshire: IMP Publishing, 2011).

<sup>65</sup> Carol Siegel, *Goth's Dark Empire* (Combined Academic Publishers: Harrogate, North Yorkshire) p. 19.

<sup>66</sup> Siegel, *Goth's Dark Empire*, p. 19.

Elferen,<sup>67</sup> this is the transhistorical quality of Gothic which she defines ‘as an enduring forum for the articulation of uncomfortable issues and anxieties’ and ‘a historically developed form of cultural criticism that foregrounds the dark sides of the self and the margins of culture’.<sup>68</sup> But while we may consider this a transnational quality, we may have found the reason why Gothic subculture has emerged in very different societies in the 1980s, and why it has social, cultural and potentially political relevance, namely its subversive power.

In her interpretation of Gothic subculture as ‘aesthetic, lived commentary on social, political and cultural issues’, van Elferen<sup>69</sup> considers East German Gothic specifically as ‘a mode of Gothic engagement within the specific dynamics of post-unification German history’.<sup>70</sup> Van Elferen<sup>71</sup> claims that ‘Gothic attitudes and East German disillusionment seem to match seamlessly’, and that the reason why Gothic thrived in the Eastern part of Germany after 1990 was that East Germans ‘feel different from the world that they live in and at the same time long for the safety and mutual respect of collectivity’.<sup>72</sup> The question is whether ‘the specific characteristics and internal dynamics of East German Goth subcultures since German reunification’<sup>73</sup> can be disconnected from earlier developments and external dynamics. Van Elferen’s case study<sup>74</sup> ignores the fact that East Germany already functioned as ‘an important centre of Goth activity’ before the fall of the Wall and before Leipzig’s WGT became home to a globalized subculture, and wrongly suggests<sup>75</sup> that Gothic subculture was, and still is, homogeneous. Hodkinson<sup>76</sup> has criticized such case studies of subcultures in which interpretation is based on an assumed ‘essential coherence between content, identity and meaning which often justifies the assumption that the content of music, clothes or other cultural forms holds the key to understanding subcultures’. So how should we then approach a historical, local case of subculture if we seek to understand it?

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<sup>67</sup> Carrington, ‘The Contemporary Gothic’, p. 295; Van Elferen, ‘East German Goth and the Spectres of Marx’; Bruhm, ‘The Contemporary Gothic’, p. 273.

<sup>68</sup> Van Elferen, ‘East German Goth and the Spectres of Marx’, p. 94.

<sup>69</sup> Gavin Baddeley, *Goth Chic. A Connoisseur’s Guide to Dark Culture* (London: Plexus Publishing, 2002).

<sup>70</sup> Van Elferen, ‘East German Goth and the Spectres of Marx’, p.97

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>76</sup> Hodkinson, ‘Beyond Spectacular Specifics’, p. 561.

When Gothic is understood as criticism which ‘historically occurs as a reaction to cultural change’, as van Elferen<sup>77</sup> states, and which gives ‘voice to the tensions emerging across a rapidly shifting scientific, economic and social landscape’, to cite Carrington’s<sup>78</sup> definition, we might ask which tensions and changes East German Gothic reflected and criticized before and not just after the GDR. Van Elferen’s<sup>79</sup> interesting note that Gothic is ‘a critical stance that goes beyond mere social or political dissatisfaction’ raises the question what exactly lies beyond the social and political, and whether the assumed dissatisfaction only has local connotations when Gothic is considered global, and whether the heterogeneous subculture holds not one but different social meanings. In their sociological interpretation of *Grufties* in Germany, Heinz Janalik and Doris Schmidt<sup>80</sup> define the subculture as a ‘Lebenswelt’ in which critical existential questions and answers to social relationships are negotiated. While this again seems rather general, we can ask if Gothic in the GDR was such a ‘Lebenswelt’ and which views on life it represented.

I agree with Hodkinson<sup>81</sup> that ‘van Elferen’s [...] narrow sense of the cultural, historical and intellectual origins and surroundings of Goth in East Germany. [...] rests overwhelmingly on theoretically driven interpretations of the spectacular specifics of Goth and the broader Gothic tradition it is assumed to embody’. Hodkinson<sup>82</sup> is further right to criticize the fact that ‘Siegel’s approach, like that of Van Elferen, is heavily reliant on an assumed seamless coherence between the Goth scene and the broader Gothic literary and cultural tradition’, because Gothic as a subculture is firstly too heterogeneous even when it is studied within a certain locality and time frame, and secondly because Hodkinson’s own empirical-anthropological research paints a different picture of contemporary Gothic subculture. Hodkinson’s studies focus on scene structures, dynamics, participants and self-representations, and are based on observation, media analyses and interviews with scene members in the UK. Hodkinson<sup>83</sup> stresses that rather than applying Gothic theory to living individuals in Gothic scenes, subculture studies should focus more on how individuals themselves interpret, practice, experience and represent being or doing Gothic. Therefore,

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<sup>77</sup> Van Elferen, ‘East German Goth and the spectres of Marx’, p. 99.

<sup>78</sup> Carrington, ‘The Contemporary Gothic’, pp. 294 – 295.

<sup>79</sup> Van Elferen, ‘East German Goth and the Spectres of Marx’, p. 101.

<sup>80</sup> Heinz Janalik and Doris Schmidt, *Grufties. Jugendkultur in Schwarz* (Hohengehren: Schneider Verlag, 2000), p. 3.

<sup>81</sup> Hodkinson, ‘Beyond Spectacular Specifics’, p. 563.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 561.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*; Jasper, *The Mysts of the Gothic Underground*.



Hodkinson has focused on, as Peter J. Martin<sup>84</sup> writes in *Culture, Subculture and Social Organization*, ‘social actions enacted by real people in interaction with each other’ in local Gothic scenes and which DIY Gothic meanings are created in which ways by and for participants.

Inspired by Hodkinson, Jasper<sup>85</sup> also relativizes the interpretation *Gothic against society* through the concept ‘subcultural entrepreneurship’ in her study of the Dutch Gothic scene by demonstrating how the subculture *works*; namely that it necessarily and purposively interacts with mainstream culture and society to meet production and consumer goals and interests. At the same time, Jasper<sup>86</sup> chooses to ‘see Gothic subculture as a specific consumer culture that speaks to its subcultural insiders’, and while I agree that this is a crucial aspect of most subcultures, I argue that such terms and divisions between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’, and between subculture and mainstream can be problematic, and that they need to be questioned in their cultural and social context. Jasper’s<sup>87</sup> point that the biggest paradox of contemporary Gothic subculture is that many Goth(ic)s contest using or being given the label Goth(ic), and Nym’s<sup>88</sup> remark ‘that not everything that wears black is Gothic’, confirm that self-representation is an ambivalent aspect of the subculture which needs further attention. My research has focused on (self-)representations of local Gothic scenes of the past and I adopted a similar approach to textual-empirical sources as Hodkinson and Jasper to provide insights into workings, meanings and interactions of these scenes in their specific cultural, social, political and ideological context. Yet while I agree with Hodkinson and Jasper that subculture is made from differing subjectivities, and that a connection between the Gothic tradition and Gothic subcultures is not necessarily given, there must be something about Gothic which appeals to individuals who, regardless of whether they consider themselves Goth(ic)s or not, participate in Gothic scenes and/or the broader Gothic entrepreneur, producer and consumer (sub)culture.

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<sup>84</sup> Peter J. Martin, ‘Culture, Subculture and Social Organization’, in *After Subculture. Critical Studies In Contemporary Youth Culture*, ed. by Andy Bennett and Keith Kahn-Harris (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmilland, 2004), pp. 22 – 34 (pp. 25 – 26).

<sup>85</sup> Jasper, *The Mysts of the Gothic Underground*, p. 22.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> Nym, ‘Die Gothic-Szene gibt es nicht’, p. 13.

Tying into this is one of the very few non-Western studies<sup>89</sup> of a recent Gothic-related subculture. Masafumi Monden<sup>90</sup> argues that the Gothic Lolita subculture in Japan is ‘a clear fusion of Western and non-Western culture’, because Western Gothic has ‘globalizing, hybridised qualities’. It sparked a new Japanese subculture which, in turn, was adopted in the West where Gothic Lollitas can be seen at the WGT and other subcultural events. Monden’s approach to Gothic is very interesting and relevant for this study because it defines Gothic not as an existential or sociocultural philosophy and critical ideology but as a ‘stylistic alternative’ which, as Monden<sup>91</sup> explains, was integrated into traditional Japanese fashion and pop culture. The question whether, in this case, it is still necessary to distinguish between Western and non-Western Gothic, because Monden’s study<sup>92</sup> of a transnational Gothic-inspired phenomenon points out that culture ‘is in fact a process of eternal hybridisation, interaction and appropriation’. Gothic (sub)culture, or to be more specific Gothic aesthetics, are thus appropriated and reanimated through, as Jeffrey S. Debies-Carl<sup>93</sup> writes, ‘global flows of people, ideas, styles and so forth [which] constantly diffuse and overlap’.

Monden<sup>94</sup> depicts Gothic as a commodity within a globalised consumer culture which transcends cultural boundaries and confirms van Elferen’s definition of Gothic as transgression. Crucially, however, Monden’s case study highlights that the transhistorical and transnational quality of Gothic is not necessarily subversism or critique, but consumerism and style. At the same time, Hodkinson and Jasper point out that Gothic style is precisely one the main reasons why Gothic is often considered subversive. Jasper<sup>95</sup> is right to point out that Gothic style is so distinct that it ‘makes “others” out of Gothic insiders in the bright light of dominant culture’ Hodkinson,<sup>96</sup> on the other hand, criticises the scholarly focus on the ‘spectacular specifics’ of subcultures, and rightfully asks whether, ‘given the presence of so many common or ordinary practices and motivations, there is any benefit in separating groups such as Goths and Punks from other communities across society that are

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<sup>89</sup> Monden, Masafumi, ‘Transcultural Flow of Demure Aesthetics. Examining Cultural Globalisation Through Gothic and Lolita’, *New Voices in Japanese Studies*, 2 (2008), p. 12.

<sup>90</sup> Monden, ‘Transcultural Flow of Demure Aesthetics’, p. 38.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Grossberg cited in Jeffrey S. Debies-Carl, ‘Are the Kids Alright? A Critique and Agenda for Taking Youth Cultures Seriously’, *Social Science Information*, 52.1 (2013), 110 – 133 (p. 118).

<sup>94</sup> Van Elferen, ‘East German Goth and the Spectres of Marx’, p. 95.

<sup>95</sup> Jasper, *The Mysts Of the Gothic Underground*, p. 33.

<sup>96</sup> Hodkinson, ‘Beyond Spectacular Specifics’, p. 570.

involved in consuming, collecting, socialising and sharing an identity'. Hodkinson's note that 'aspects of subcultural motivation, practice, understanding and identity connect to broader equivalents across so-called "normal" or "mainstream" society', is a focal point in my study, as it questions such categories and instead asks how definitions, interpretations and meanings are constructed when, by whom and for which purpose.

But while Hodkinson<sup>97</sup> argues that any sole 'reliance on the textual interpretations of theoretically driven experts as a means to make sense of living, breathing social entities such as subcultures' will result in generalizing interpretations and stereotypical depictions, I argue that the study of the textual (self-)representations of East German Gothic contribute to a broader understanding of stereotypes and juxtapositions relating to Gothic subculture. This thesis therefore also ties into Gothic subculture studies<sup>98</sup> which have critically analysed the very question of (self-)representation. Using Stanley Cohen's<sup>99</sup> term 'folk devils', Griffiths<sup>100</sup> has investigated 'how the Gothic subculture was represented in various media narratives between 1988 and 2004', and how Goths 're-described' themselves in response to media stigmatization after the Columbine High School massacre. In this clear case of *society against Gothic* and vice versa, Griffiths<sup>101</sup> is right to point out that it has not sufficiently been explored by scholars *how* mechanisms of representation, and crucially of stigmatization of a subculture and its participants work, how moral panics are generated by media representations, and how participants represent themselves in response. This directly ties into Dick Hebdige's<sup>102</sup> analysis of representations of Punk in 1976 in which he remarks that 'subtler mechanisms through which potentially threatening phenomena are handled and contained' need further investigating, and that subcultures interact with media and authority. The present study of the politicised Gothic subculture and the intertwinement of Gothic, society and ideology in the GDR, thus ties into this focus on mechanisms and strategies of (self-)representation by looking at representations of Gothic in texts and investigating how Gothics were described and described themselves and which meanings were constructed for which aims and interests and under which conditions and structures.

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<sup>97</sup> Hodkinson, 'Beyond Spectacular Specifics', p. 562.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 561; Griffiths, 'The Gothic Folk Devils Strike Back!', p. 234; Tracy Shildrick & Robert MacDonald, 'In Defence of Subculture: Young People, Leisure and Social Divisions', *Journal of Youth Studies* 9.2 (2006), 125 – 140.

<sup>99</sup> Cohen, Stanley, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1972).

<sup>100</sup> Griffiths, 'The Gothic Folk Devils Strike Back!', p. 234.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Dick Hebdige, *Subculture. The Meaning of Style* (London/New York: Routledge, 1979), p. 123.

Griffiths, Hodkinson and Jasper are right to point out in their case studies<sup>103</sup> that Gothic does not have to be experienced, perceived or practiced as a ‘subversive lifestyle’ but it cannot be ignored that this is how the subculture has often been interpreted by scholars and journalists. Even recent studies<sup>104</sup> have interpreted Gothic subculture as a harmful youth phenomenon. For Martin,<sup>105</sup> one of the reasons why Gothic is an ‘enduring yet misunderstood subculture’, as Kashmira Gander<sup>106</sup> has remarked in her review of the WGT of 2017, and why it has often been represented negatively in media as well as scholarly studies, is that there exists little ‘unofficial knowledge about the diverse Gothic subculture’. The studies by Hodkinson and Jasper have shown that those who consider themselves as insiders are not keen on sharing that which Sara Thornton<sup>107</sup> has called ‘subcultural capital’, and which Thornton<sup>108</sup> defines as the ‘cultural knowledge and commodities acquired by members of a subculture, raising their status and helping differentiate themselves from members of other groups’, with those who they perceive as outsiders.

Subcultural capital is, however shared with ‘insiders’ in, for instance, ‘subcultural micro-media’, to use Thornton’s<sup>109</sup> other useful notion, and which are for example fanzines, fan letters, flyers, posters and song lyrics. Such subcultural knowledge is sometimes stored in dusty boxes at local, relatively unknown archives like the *Archiv der Jugendkulturen*, and has rarely been studied by scholars, or has been trivialized. For example, the claim made by Ralf Hinz<sup>110</sup> about German ‘Independent- und Wave-Magazines’ that they merely focus on what he calls ‘boring music’ and that ‘Brückenschläge zwischen Musik und Politik, wie sie im avancierten Pop-Diskurs immer wieder auftauchen, sucht man in Magazinen wie *CHURCH* und *GLASNOST* [capitals in original] vergeblich’, exemplifies a gap between subcultural sources and scholars who read them. The question is how we can investigate subcultural micro-media of the 1980s with the aim of analysing the bridges between (music)

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<sup>103</sup> Martin, ‘Gothic Scholars Don’t Wear Black’, p. 38.

<sup>104</sup> Carolyn M. Rutledge, ‘Vulnerable Goth Teens: The Role of Schools in this Psychosocial High-risk Culture’, *Journal of School Health*, 78 (2008); Robert Young, Helen Sweeting and Patrick West, ‘Prevalence of deliberate self harm and attempted suicide within contemporary Goth youth subculture’, *BMJ* (2006).

<sup>105</sup> Martin, ‘Gothic Scholars Don’t Wear Black’, p. 29.

<sup>106</sup> Gander, Kashmira, ‘World Goth Day’. <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/world-goth-day-2017-pop-sub-culture-what-is-it-darkness-music-clothes-style-cure-dracula-tim-burton-a7038176.html>

<sup>107</sup> Sara Thornton, *Club Cultures. Music, Media, and Subcultural Capital* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1995), p. 6.

<sup>108</sup> Thornton, *Club Cultures*, 1995

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>110</sup> Ralf Hinz, *Cultural Studies und Pop. Zur Kritik der Urteilskraft wissenschaftlicher und journalistischer Rede über populäre Kultur* (Wiesbaden/Opladen: Springer Fachmedien, 1998), p. 144.

subculture and politics, which, as I argue, are present in the subcultural capital of Gothic. In *Glasnost*, as shown in the first part of this Introduction, and in similar German fanzines<sup>111</sup> from the late 1980s and early 1990s, reflections on music, (consumer) subculture and sociopolitical developments like the end of the Cold War are intertwined. I read this as subcultural discourse. Interestingly, musical innovations like Techno, Industrial and Electronic Body Music are represented here as the pioneering Gothic sounds and voices of *transgression*, modernity and the global generation of the future, while the same fanzines contain elements of Dark Romantic criticism towards modernization and industrialization<sup>112</sup>. It is an example of how a subcultural micro-medium related to Gothic subculture is ‘purposively used by young people to express the personal and social layers of subcultural identity’, as Williams<sup>113</sup> writes, and to create real and ‘imagined communities’<sup>114</sup>.

Hence, whereas Wave and Gothic fanzines indeed primarily discuss music, as El-Nawab<sup>115</sup> also notes, I argue that such fan writings, and crucially the language in subcultural micro-media express that which Carrington identifies as key characteristic of contemporary Gothic; a ‘self-consciousness about its own nature.’<sup>116</sup> This study analyses Gothic self-consciousness in East German Gothic (self-)representations to demonstrate how identities, communities and meanings, or, subcultural capital, are constructed. As also touched upon earlier in this Introduction, Gothic music functioned as a *meaningful* subcultural vehicle which created (imagined) ‘subcultural spaces’<sup>117</sup>, subcultural capital, and (imagined) ‘cohesive social systems’<sup>118</sup> because fans had ‘commonly-targeted social goals’<sup>119</sup>. This study therefore pays particular attention to writings on and in music (lyrics), because these writings tell us something about what Gothic in the sense of a philosophy or ideology, and Gothic subculture in practice (scene life, fandom, fashion styles, commodities, DIY etc.) meant to participants in Gothic-related subcultures in the GDR. *Glasnost* is a West German

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<sup>111</sup> For example, *Glasnost*, *New Life*, *NRG German Electrozone*, *Gothic-Press*. *Gothic und Wavekulturmagazin*.

<sup>112</sup> Köble, *Glasnost*; Köble, ‘DDR: Zustände!’, p. 24; Schrijnders, ‘From London to Leipzig and Back’.

<sup>113</sup> Patrick Williams, Youth Subcultural Studies. Sociological Traditions and Core Concepts, *Sociology Compass*, 1/2 (2007), 572 – 593 (587).

<sup>114</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

<sup>115</sup> El-Nawab, *Skinheads, Gothics, Rockabillys*, p. 138.

<sup>116</sup> Carrington, ‘The Contemporary Gothic’, p. 296.

<sup>117</sup> Bennett and Kahn-Harris, ‘Introduction’, p. 6; Hesmondhalgh, ‘Subcultures, Scenes or Tribes?’, p. 29.

<sup>118</sup> Komarovskiy and Sargent cited in Chris Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of The Social* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publishing, 2004), p. 7.

<sup>119</sup> Merton cited in Bennett and Kahn-Harris, ‘Introduction’, p. 3.

Gothic micro-medium which can be interpreted as an example of how Gothic ‘criticises cultural dichotomies’, to quote van Elferen<sup>120</sup>, by representing a globalizing Gothic subculture as survivor during major social and political crises, precisely because it self-consciously expresses a ‘radical incorporation of ambivalence’. Yet while van Elferen and other scholars tie Gothic criticism and subversism to ‘folk devils’ in dark times and troubled adolescents in times of change, it remains to be seen which interpretations were given to ‘celebration of darkness’<sup>121</sup> in the GDR.

No matter how small-scale, short-lived, or imagined Gothic(-related) phenomena are, they belong to the transnational and transhistorical subcultural capital of Gothic and should therefore not be ignored, especially not when they appear to form exceptions to the rule. This is why a study of the subcultural knowledge from and about East German Gothic is essential to further explore in which ways Gothic relates to existential, social or political conflict.

## **II.b. Towards a (Re-)Definition of Subculture in the GDR**

The second part of this Literature Review focuses on studies of subcultures of the GDR and addresses the issue of the definition of subculture, while contextualizing Gothic subculture in the GDR within the ambivalent interpretation addressed above. First, it must be said that East German Gothic has been widely ignored in the literature on Gothic-related and Gothic-inspired phenomena as well as in studies into subcultures of the GDR. In *A Worldwide Compendium of PostPunk and Goth in the 1980s*, Marloes Bontje and Andy Harriman<sup>122</sup> acknowledge that ‘since the beginning of the subculture, West Germany has been one of the most dedicated nations to the scene’, yet by this imply that nothing significant happened in the GDR. Bontje and Harriman not only ignore East German Gothic and the (re-)unification of *German Gothic*, but also claim that the predecessor of the WGT took place in ‘Grufti Nation’<sup>123</sup> West Germany. El-Nawab<sup>124</sup> remarks that writing a complete history of the German Gothic movement is a challenging task, because the *Schwarze Szene* offers hardly any sources. But as we have seen in the previous part of the Literature Review, subcultural

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<sup>120</sup> Van Elferen, ‘East German Goth and the Spectres of Marx’, p. 95.

<sup>121</sup> Paul Hodkinson, ‘Beyond Spectacular Specifics’, p. 559.

<sup>122</sup> Marloes Bontje and Andi Harriman, *Some Wear Leather, Some Wear Lace. A Worldwide Compendium of PostPunk and Goth in the 1980s* (Bristol: Intellect, 2014), p. 100.

<sup>123</sup> Bontje and Harriman, *Some Wear Leather, Some Wear Lace*, p. 100.

<sup>124</sup> El-Nawab, *Skinheads, Gothics, Rockabillys*, p. 138.

micro-media which appear to be meant for or of interest to scene insiders only can provide valuable insights into subcultural capital and raise vital answers and questions.

Punk- and Gothic-related subcultures were just as popular in East Germany as they were in many other countries in the West and East. And yet, in the literature, the youth and subcultures of the GDR seem isolated from Western roots, influences and counterparts. While studies on Gothic-related phenomena in the GDR are extremely scarce, Punk is well-researched and documented in various publications<sup>125</sup> and has been the topic of several exhibitions<sup>126</sup> in Germany. The reason for this, Sonja Häder<sup>127</sup> explains, is that Punk suffered repression more than any other subculture. This is for example reflected in Jeff Hayton's<sup>128</sup> case study of the 'Härte gegen Punk', the state's zero-tolerance policy against Punk, in which Hayton portrays East German Punk as part of 'the emerging oppositional groups of the mid-1980s' which 'provided the soundtrack and foot-soldiers in the coming protests against the state'. Historian Florian Lipp<sup>129</sup> is right to argue that the historiography of youth and subcultures in the GDR paints a one-sided picture precisely because of such representations of subculture which focus on repression and opposition. I agree with Lipp that the spectrum of (sub)culture in the GDR, of which Gothic was a crucial part, has not been explored, and that the definition and interpretation of subculture as it appears in many GDR histories does not leave space for subcultures like Post-Punk and New Wave which transgress (sub)cultural boundaries.

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<sup>125</sup> e.g. Becker and Furian 2012; Bettendorf 2002; Boehlke and Gericke 2007; Boehlke 2005; Dekker 2016; Furian, 2000; Gerlach, Götze and Lindner 2007; Häder, 2013; Hahn 2013; Havemeister and Galenza 2015; Hayton 2013, 2015; Kowalczyk 2001; Lipp 2015; Mohr 2017; Pehlemann 2018; Pehlemann, Papenfuß and Mießner 2015; Pochop 2018; Rauhut 2002; Teipel 2001; Wächter 2008; Willmann 2012; Wurschi 2005; *Störung Ost*, dir. by Mechthild Katzorke and Cornelia Schneider (ZDF, 1996); *flüstern & SCHREIEN. Ein Rockreport*, dir. by Dieter Schumann and Jochen Wisotzki (DEFA Film, 1988).

<sup>126</sup> *Archiv der Jugendkulturen Berlin; Archiv der DDR-Opposition in der Robert-Havemann-Gesellschaft; Bundesbeauftragter für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen DDR, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung; Thüringer Archiv für Zeitgeschichte; SUBstitut Punk archive Berlin; ostPUNK! / too much future* (Berlin, 2005), (Dresden, 2007), (Halle, 2008) [www.toomuchfuture.de/](http://www.toomuchfuture.de/) [consulted on 1 November 2018]; Ronald Galenza and Heinz Havemeister, *Wir wollen immer artig sein ... Punk, New Wave, HipHop und Independent-Szene in der DDR von 1980 bis 1990* (Berlin: Verlag Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 1999); Häder, 'Zeugnisse von Eigen-Sinn'; Jeff Hayton, 'Härte gegen Punk: Popular Music, Western Media, and State Response in the German Democratic Republic', *German History*, 31.4 (2013), 523 – 549 (41).

<sup>127</sup> Sonja Häder, 'Zeugnisse von Eigen-Sinn. Punks in der späten DDR', in *Der Bildungsgang des Subjekts. Bildungstheoretische Analysen (Zeitschrift für Pädagogik 48)*, ed. by Sonja Häder and Heinz-Elmar Tenorth (Weinheim and Basel: Beltz Verlag, 2004), pp. 68 – 48 (69).

<sup>128</sup> Hayton, 'Härte gegen Punk', p. 41.

<sup>129</sup> Florian Lipp, 'Punk- und New-Wave-Bands im letzten Jahrzehnt der DDR im kultur- und sicherheitspolitischen Kontext', *Totalitarianism and Democracy*, 12.2 (2015), 225 – 248 (236).

Michael Boehlke<sup>130</sup>, East German Punk scene insider and author of *OstPunk! Too Much Future* correctly notes that Punk in the East was just as pluriform and experimental as Punk in the West. The question is then why this is not reflected as such in the literature, and why East German subculture is predominantly portrayed as victim of dictatorship and hero of political underground and opposition. Were all Punk and other subculture variations political? Within the dominant narrative which can be identified in the historiography, subculture, Punk especially, was public enemy number one. As Roland Galenza and Heinz Havemeister<sup>131</sup>, two other scene insiders state in their biographical *Ostpunk*-history titled *Wir wollen immer artig sein ... Punk, New Wave, HipHop und Independent-Szene in der DDR von 1980 bis 1990*, ‘Subkultur in der Diktatur, das konnte nicht gutgehen’. Considering the many dramatic biographies of Punks and other subcultural actors which suffered Erich Mielke’s under ‘Härte gegen Punk’, this statement is valid.

However, since the fall of the GDR, several scholars have pleaded for a careful and nuanced approach in the process of writing its history. And yet, this nuance is lacking from the majority of the literature on the GDR’s subculture history. Considering Peter Bender’s<sup>132</sup> remark from 1992 that ‘the GDR was not just a “Stasi”-state [...] It was not just a gigantic education – and stultification machine, but also a country in which culture thrived’, I argue that it has not sufficiently been explored when, if and how other subcultural phenomena, initiatives and practices in the GDR thrived and survived, and if they indeed suffered less under state repression than Punk. The unexplored Gothic is an ideal subject to challenge the impression given in the historiography and add a fresh perspective. This study questions the assumption that it was always *subculture against the system* and vice versa in the GDR, not by trivialising the repression of subcultures in the GDR in any way, but at the same time not ignoring cases and situations in which the conflict and juxtaposition between subcultural actors and state representatives was less clear.

To answer how Gothic subculture emerged, existed and developed, we must challenge the definition and interpretation of Gothic subculture and subculture in the GDR, because they appear to be too rigid to capture what happened *after* and beyond Punk. Or, as

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<sup>130</sup> *OstPunk! Too Much Future*, dir. by Michael Boehlke, Carsten Fiebeler and Henryk Gericke, (Egoli Tossell Film, Koppmedia, and Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg, 2007); Michael Boehlke, ‘OstPunk! Too Much Future’, *OX*, 72 (2007).

<sup>131</sup> Galenza and Havemeister, *Wir wollen immer artig sein*, p. 12.

<sup>132</sup> Peter Bender, *Unsere Erbschaft. Was war die DDR. Was bleibt von ihr?* (Munich: Luchterhand Literaturverlag, 1992), p. 11.



Spencer<sup>133</sup> points out, ‘although distinct, Punk, New Wave and Post-Punk all shared common ground,’ and they existed alongside each other, but Punk and Post-Punk were far from static, homogeneous phenomena, and are umbrella terms too, as will also be shown in this thesis. Considering the heterogeneity of Punk and Gothic, we can challenge the definition of GDR-subcultures as opposition. Paul Cooke and Nicholas Hubble<sup>134</sup> prefer the term ‘alternative culture’ to emphasize that firstly, culture in the GDR was ‘anything other than homogenous’, and secondly, that non-mainstream culture was not per definition oppositional. Investigating Post-Punk, New Wave and New Romantic scenes in the GDR is vital to test this approach.

In doing so, this study also ties into the works of GDR historians such as Mary Fulbrook, Sara Jones and Thomas Lindenberger who have contested representations of life in the GDR as ‘not much more than suffering from a dictatorship’, as Lindenberger<sup>135</sup> wrote in 1999, and have explored ‘Eigen-Sinn’ and the ‘limits of dictatorship’. These are focal points in this study as these approaches allow us to understand where subculture not only failed but also succeeded, and that they were created for and by young individuals who often simply enjoyed, experienced and practiced certain fashion fads in their own ways, which, regardless of whether they are or were perceived as sub- or mainstream culture, came, faded and transformed continuously. Following Fulbrook’s<sup>136</sup> comment that ‘approaches which stress repression [...] cannot account for the conditions under which internal resistance and opposition may arise and be effective’, I argue that resistance and opposition are terms which need to be applied and interpreted sceptically when investigating subculture, because they were often applied to subcultures out of subjective interests and for political reasons. Gothic is an ideal subject to explore this issue, as this study demonstrates, because the term political, and hence, oppositional too, as we have seen, seems ambivalent in the case of Gothic.

Subcultures of the GDR which cannot be identified or represented as clearly political or oppositional like Punk are interpreted as forms of existential ‘Resignation’, by which Häder<sup>137</sup> means that young people in the 1980s were disillusioned, gave up their hopes and

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<sup>133</sup> Spencer, *DIY*, pp. 257 – 258.

<sup>134</sup> Paul Cooke and Nicholas Hubble, ‘Die volkseigene opposition? The Stasi and Alternative Culture in the GDR’, *German Politics*, 6.2 (1997), 117 – 138 (129).

<sup>135</sup> Thomas Lindenberger, *Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn in Der Diktatur. Studien zur Gesellschaftsgeschichte in der DDR* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1999).

<sup>136</sup> Mary Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship. Inside the GDR 1949 – 1989* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 11-12.

<sup>137</sup> Häder, ‘Zeugnisse von Eigen-Sinn’, p. 81.

dreams and retreated into escapist forms of behaviour and ideology. In his extensive study of youth subculture, society and politics in Thuringia between 1952 and 1989, Peter Wurschi<sup>138</sup> contextualises subcultures of the 1980s as ‘Extremgruppen’, marginal, hedonistic and controversial groups, in what he calls ‘very dark times’. Wurschi is one of the few GDR-historians who mention East German Gothic in a brief case study. Wurschi first distinguishes between conformist and non-conformist East German teenagers and with this confirms the social isolation of Gothic which eye witnesses also emphasise. Wurschi stresses that *Gruftis* were so non-conformist that they formed a ‘Randgruppe’ among other ‘marginal groups’ who, Wurschi<sup>139</sup> adds, looked at them with a suspicious eye primarily because they gathered at local cemeteries. In contrast to Heavy Metal fans, Wurschi notes, *Gruftis* refused ‘double talk’ by dressing in black during working times (‘Pflichtzeit’). Wurschi’s ‘simplistic division of the population of the GDR’, to quote Jones<sup>140</sup>, suggests that Fulbrook’s<sup>141</sup> concept of the ‘double life’ with which many East Germans made daily ‘compromises as a modus vivendi’ does not apply to teenagers who were (assumed) *Gruftis*. While this is a very interesting point that Wurschi makes, the question is if this was indeed the case and if so why.

Following Fulbrook’s<sup>142</sup> remark that East Germans ‘lived more complex lives and were required to make more complex moral and political choices than is frequently posited and that the dichotomy between “state” and “society” does not hold up’, the question is whether Gothic subculture indeed somehow existed on the margins of the margins, ‘outside’ of society and only observed suspiciously by the state and others, or if the dichotomy between state and subculture, society and subculture and between conformist (or mainstream) and nonconformist also holds up. What can be said is that Wurschi’s rigid definition of *Gruftis* and their meaning is problematic. *The Cure* and *Depeche Mode* fans, Wurschi writes, who by the end of the 1980s were considered mainstream because the bands were so popular in the GDR, did not identify with the ‘Weltsicht’ of the *Gruftis*<sup>143</sup> which Wurschi<sup>144</sup> describes as ‘the search for the meaning of life’ regarding the ‘Endlichkeit’ of

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<sup>138</sup> Peter Wurschi, *Rennsteigbeat. Jugendliche Subkulturen Im Thüringer Raum 1952 – 1989* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2007), pp. 235 – 238, 228.

<sup>139</sup> Wurschi, *Rennsteigbeat*, pp. 235 – 236.

<sup>140</sup> Sara Jones, *Complicity, Censorship and Criticism: Negotiating Space in the GDR Literary Sphere* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), p. 203.

<sup>141</sup> Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, pp. 129, 143.

<sup>142</sup> Fulbrook cited in Jones, *Complicity, Censorship and Criticism*, p. 203.

<sup>143</sup> Wurschi, *Rennsteigbeat*, p. 236.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 236, 238

individual existence. But they were nevertheless labelled as *Gruftis* by others, because they also dressed in black. Lange's<sup>145</sup> biographical recollection of being an insider in the fan community clarifies this issue. Lange writes that he and his friends dressed in a *Depeche Mode* or a *The Cure* outfit, purely because to them it expressed their dedication to the band and because they simply liked the 'dark uniform'. Although Lange confirms Wurschi's remark that they distanced themselves from the ideology of the *Gruftis*, he explains that they shared the same music and style tastes. The label *Gruftis*, used as well as rejected by scene participants, eventually became an overarching term like *Gothic*, even when was just one of the Gothic varieties.

What is crucial here and what has not been considered in the literature is the context of the term *Gruftis*<sup>146</sup> (alternatively spelled as *Grufties* and *Gruftys*), because it exemplifies how, in German language, a Gothic definition, interpretation or *meaning* is constructed through *language*. It is a disputed label among scene insiders<sup>147</sup> because it suggests that teenagers dressed in black are freaks who visit graveyards to talk about (after) life and death. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, tabloid press like *BILD Zeitung*<sup>148</sup> contributed to a nationwide demonization of Gothic subculture, for instance by portraying a girl dressed in black in 'ein typisches Gruftie-Mädchenzimmer' while warning readers to watch out for the rise of Satanic youth cults. The question is whether in the GDR, Gothic was represented similarly and whether this triggered moral panics.

Wurschi's uncritical use of the term *Gruftis*, his rhetorical isolation of *Gruftis* as a separate category and simplistic division between mainstream and alternative, and between conformist and non-conformist does not do justice to the broad Gothic culture, including popularized Gothic-related phenomena like the *Depeche Mode* fan scene which transgressed such boundaries. It suggests that 'insiders', or rather, young people who participated in Gothic subculture in one way or another always made clear choices and drew clear boundaries, and that 'outsiders', like political actors or fellow citizens did the same. Instead, I suggest that we should, as Häder<sup>149</sup> recommends, detangle the 'Mischungen und

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<sup>145</sup> Sascha Lange, *DJ Westradio. Meine Glückliche DDR-Jugend* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 2007), p. 118.

<sup>146</sup> Janalik and Schmidt, *Grufties. Jugendkultur in Schwarz*, p. 16.

<sup>147</sup> El-Nawab, *Skinheads, Gothics, Rockabillics*, p. 135; Arvid Dittmann, 'Schwarz als Farbe jugendlicher Subkulturen', p. 23; Janalik and Schmidt, *Grufties*, p. 16.

<sup>148</sup> El-Nawab, *Skinheads, Gothics, Rockabillics*, p. 138; p. 135; Arvid Dittmann, 'Schwarz als Farbe jugendlicher Subkulturen', p. 23; 'Satanskult in Deutschland', *BILD Zeitung* (1990); Klaus Farin, *Die Gothics. Interviews, Fotografien* (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen Verlag, 1999).

<sup>149</sup> Häder, 'Zeugnisse von Eigen-Sinn', p. 82.

Vereinbarkeiten [...] von Resistenz und Loyalität, Eigensinn und Folgsamkeit' within subculture, to grasp the problem which El-Nawab<sup>150</sup> addresses, namely the 'impossible definition or clear subcategorisation into Gothics, Waver, and Grufties'. This is thematised in this thesis as it focuses on the insider-outsider juxtaposition as identity and community construction from different subcultural and political perspectives on Gothic, as will be further explained later in this Introduction. I argue against a rigid definition of Gothic subculture and a rigid definition of subculture in the GDR by demonstrating that boundaries are fluid, that labels are applied within specific contexts and for certain purposes and that perspectives vary and change.

A focal point in my thesis is late 1980s music culture in the GDR because, as will be explained, it crosses cultural, political, national, and crucially, definitional boundaries, and thereby necessarily requires an expanded definition and interpretation of Gothic subculture and subculture in the context in the GDR. Eye witnesses such as Lange<sup>151</sup> and scholars such as Howes<sup>152</sup>, Lipp<sup>153</sup> and Michael Rauhut<sup>154</sup> have written that there existed 'legal ways' within the political system for Punk, New Wave, Gothic and avant-garde bands. Rauhut notes that the state's loss of control over the rock music sector and the dichotomy between policy and reality created a shift from a highly conservative to a more liberal cultural policy which, as Lange writes, supported a thriving East German music subculture from 1987 onwards. This 'Freiraum', as Lange<sup>155</sup> puts it, was not without compromise; bands were only given official performing licences when they performed songs which were not considered hostile towards the socialist state and could be repealed at any time.

Nevertheless, some bands did criticize society, ideology and politics. But the criticism had to be read between the lines and was therefore often too vague to be judged as hostile towards socialism. Ultimately, *die anderen Bands* can be interpreted as 'a cultural space which transcends locality', to quote David Hesmondalgh<sup>156</sup>, because once bands were officially approved by the state, they could play in the many state-run youth clubs and other cultural spaces across the GDR, as described in several works<sup>157</sup>. This, in my view, fits into

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<sup>150</sup> El-Nawab, *Skinheads, Gothics, Rockabillys*, p. 135.

<sup>151</sup> Burmeister and Lange, *Behind the Wall*, p. 93.

<sup>152</sup> Howes, 'Subcultural Studies between the Blocs', p. 85.

<sup>153</sup> Lipp, 'Punk- und New-Wave-Bands im letzten Jahrzehnt der DDR', p. 237.

<sup>154</sup> Michael Rauhut, *Rock in der DDR* (Paderborn: Bonifatius Druck Buch Verlag, 2002), p. 94

<sup>155</sup> Lange, *DJ Westradio*, pp. 137 – 138.

<sup>156</sup> David Hesmondalgh, 'Subcultures, Scenes or Tribes? None of The Above', *Journal of Youth Studies*, 8.29 (2005), 21 – 40 (29).

<sup>157</sup> Burmeister and Lange, *Behind the Wall*, p. 93; Howes, 'Subcultural Studies between the Blocs', p. 85.

Fulbrook's concept of the 'participatory dictatorship'; the idea that 'individuals might simultaneously participate in and be constrained by and openly critical of the apparatus of power.'<sup>158</sup> Here, we can identify overlap and fluidity between the categories 'Resignation' and 'Eigen-Sinn', between resistance and loyalty, between conformist and non-conformist, and between opposition or 'Gegenkultur' and mainstream or popular culture.

*Die anderen Bands* are relevant for this study for two reasons. First, although only a few bands existed in the GDR that played 'Gruftimusik', as *DJ Ørlog*<sup>159</sup> and Lange<sup>160</sup> recall, they were part of 'the other bands' because the mixture of Punk, New Wave, melancholic rock and experimental electronic music showcased in this strand of East German music (sub)culture was very popular among participants in Gothic scenes. Spencer<sup>161</sup> writes about British New Wave artists that they built 'concrete DIY scenes within which to retain their ideals of artistic freedom and mark them outside the corporate music industry within which they could not see a place for themselves'. In the GDR, part of the East German 'art rockers'<sup>162</sup>, and hence the fans, gained as well as created such a subcultural place for their alternative art and lifestyle. Participants were hence able to change certain aspects of the system and thereby change the status of subculture in the GDR from within by performing (sub)cultural agency as a 'youth actor in social transition'<sup>163</sup>.

Tying into this, the present study has investigated mechanisms and strategies of representation by subcultural and state actors within this (sub)cultural transition in the GDR, to show that, as Jones<sup>164</sup> writes, 'static models cannot encompass the widening of boundaries and the gradual erosion of binary structures seen in the relationship between writers and representatives of power', and that 'top-down approaches, which emphasise a clear-cut division between rulers and the ruled and between state and society, do not allow for the cultivation of ambiguous positions within the structures of power and for the possibility of individuals negotiating space within the system for the expression of critical views'. While Jones refers to literary writers, I argue that subcultures were also 'sites of interactions

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<sup>158</sup> Jones, *Complicity, Censorship and Criticism*, p. 203.

<sup>159</sup> DJ Ørlog, 'Schwarz hören im Osten', p. 110.

<sup>160</sup> Burmeister and Lange, *Behind the Wall*, p. 93; Lange, *DJ Westradio*, pp. 137 – 138.

<sup>161</sup> Spencer, *DIY*, p. 257.

<sup>162</sup> Spencer, *DIY*, p. 257.

<sup>163</sup> Axel Pohl, Barbara Stauber and Andreas Walther, *Jugend als Akteurin Sozialen Wandels. Veränderte Übergangsvorgänge, strukturelle Barrieren und Bewältigungsstrategien* (Weinheim: Beltz Verlag, 2011).

<sup>164</sup> Jones, *Complicity, Censorship and Criticism*, p. 208.

between the state and East Germans'<sup>165</sup>, and that 'microstructures of social relationships'<sup>166</sup> within late 1980s subculture in the GDR, as demonstrated through the example of *die anderen Bands* underwent a process which Jones<sup>167</sup> calls 'liberalisation through negotiation'. In this thesis, it is explored if and how a 'plurality of views within cultural discourse and the Party itself'<sup>168</sup>, also applies to Post-Punk and Gothic subcultures. As we have seen, 'Freiraum' for subculture was won, created and used, as scholars<sup>169</sup> and eye witnesses have stressed, but the question is to what extent and which challenges subcultural and state actors faced in the process.

Was it because the state not only continuously created its own enemies<sup>170</sup>, but perhaps also relativized them within the system's, as Jones notes, 'cultivation of ambiguity'?<sup>171</sup> When Hayton<sup>172</sup> argues that 'whenever youths used inventive strategies to consume music beyond SED control, they directly challenged state authorities who interpreted these independent activities as political acts of dissent', and that 'by endowing popular music with such political meaning, the SED positioned itself in opposition to its young citizens whenever youths consumed music outside of state control', we must question whether youth music (consumer) culture and state control were not often intertwined. Or in other words, we should ask whether it was even necessary or possible to consume music 'outside' of state control. I agree with Howes<sup>173</sup> when he writes about this that 'this increasing tolerance, in public spaces, and on the airwaves, for a once-reviled genre's chaotic sound, [...] bespeaks a growing administrative declension of the East German state, never all-knowing, all-seeing, or all-controlling to begin with'. But we should ask whether regardless of what the state did know and see, political rules and meanings attributed to music were not ambivalent and shifting too. As such, Cooke and Hubble's<sup>174</sup> note that 'what is important is the art produced, and the fact that it existed outside the narrow confines of

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<sup>165</sup> Thomas Lindenberger, 'SED-Herrschaft als soziale Praxis, Herrschaft und "Eigen-Sinn". Problemstellung und Begriffe', in *Staatssicherheit und Gesellschaft*, ed. by Jens Gieseke (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), pp. 34 – 47 (p. 31).

<sup>166</sup> Lindenberger cited in Häder, 'Zeugnisse von Eigen-Sinn', pp. 69 – 70.

<sup>167</sup> Jones, *Complicity, Censorship and Criticism*, p. 93.

<sup>168</sup> Fulbrook cited in Jones, *Complicity, Censorship and Criticism*, p. 206.

<sup>169</sup> Lipp, 'Punk- und New-Wave-Bands im letzten Jahrzehnt der DDR', p. 236.

<sup>170</sup> Corey Ross, *The East German Dictatorship* (London: Bloomsbury, 2002), p. 100.

<sup>171</sup> Jones, *Complicity, Censorship and Criticism*, p. 208.

<sup>172</sup> Jeff Hayton, 'Härte gegen Punk', p. 526.

<sup>173</sup> Howes, 'Subcultural Studies between the Blocs', p. 85.

<sup>174</sup> Cooke and Hubble, 'Die volkseigene opposition?', p. 132.

the SED's cultural policy', should be nuanced, because that which Jones<sup>175</sup> identifies as 'the lack of clarity and the process of fragmentation' appears to have affected at least some norms and policies related to (music) (sub)culture too. At least in some parts of the national culture, conservatism was gradually replaced by innovation, experiment and modernisation.

To investigate this process, Chris Jenks<sup>176</sup> point that *how* subcultures function in 'a dynamic and therefore interactive mode with other functioning features of the society' has hardly been explored in subculture studies is useful, because, considering its partial integration into official culture, we can ask the same question for Gothic subculture in the GDR. How did, indeed, subculture interact with the state? When was interaction conflictual and repressive, and when was there space for liberalization through negotiation? The criticism the *Birmingham School for Contemporary Cultural Studies* (hereafter CCCS) received for 'fail[ing] to examine non-oppositional subcultures', as Debies-Carl<sup>177</sup> points out, and hence defining subculture as sociopolitical protest, is also applicable to the historiography of the subcultures of the GDR, as we have seen. To add a different perspective, the interaction between subculture and politics, and between subcultural scenes and authority, is a crucial focal point. Many subcultures were (and sometimes still are) considered 'as undesirable by the members of the dominant or a contrary value system'<sup>178</sup> for the simple reason that subcultures essentially stand for difference and otherness, otherwise they would be mainstream. Considering that although subculture was principally undesirable for socialist authority and ideology, by the end of the 1980s, there was a subculture which was apparently considered 'non-oppositional' and officially allowed, we must ask which role interactions between state and subculture might have played.

By nuancing the dichotomy between subculture and the state, this thesis contributes to the historiography not by trivialising the many victims of the system, but by doing justice to those young East Germans who were agents in cultural and social transition. As Anselma Gallinat writes about Laszlo Kurti's<sup>179</sup> study of 'the interconnectedness' between youth and state in Hungary, Kurti<sup>180</sup> 'portrays youth as contributing creatively to the culture of the

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<sup>175</sup> Jones, *Complicity, Censorship and Criticism*, p. 208.

<sup>176</sup> Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of The Social*, p. 132.

<sup>177</sup> Cagle cited in Debies-Carl, 'Are the Kids Alright?', p. 121.

<sup>178</sup> Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of The Social*, p. 129.

<sup>179</sup> László Kurti, *Youth and the State in Hungary. Capitalism, Communism and Class* (London: Pluto Press, 2002).

<sup>180</sup> Anselma Gallinat, 'A ritual middle ground? Personhood, Ideology and Resistance in East Germany', *Social Anthropology*, 13.3 (2005), 291-305 (293).

wider society’, instead of ‘earlier writings which usually depicted young people as either “exotic others” or subjects of parental socialisation’. Kurti, Gallinat notes, avoids terms like ‘victims’, ‘dissidence’, ‘opposition’ and ‘resistance’, because his book illustrates how the ‘interstitial structural position of young people turns them into important agents in times of social change’.

I consider participants in subcultures in the GDR in a similar way, as consumers but also entrepreneurs who enjoyed, suffered, negotiated, innovated, created, produced, networked, failed and succeeded within the realm of youth (sub)culture in various ways. I consider their (sub)cultural agency, as ‘activities [which] essentially offered alternatives to officially defined state discourses’, to quote Cooke and Hubble<sup>181</sup>, that were met by societal intolerance and state repression but also with steps of liberalization. Subcultural actors, as Martin<sup>182</sup> writes, ‘are themselves the sites of conflicts [and] negotiations [...] concerning all sorts of practical and ideological matters’. And they are therefore in this study not considered as ‘passive objects of structural conditions’ but as ‘active agents’, to quote Debies-Carl<sup>183</sup>. Whereas young people in the GDR were confronted with the restrictions of the system, they did not necessarily have the ‘Mauer im Kopf’, because they were being and doing youth and subculture as much as their Western counterparts and were proactively and creatively finding solutions and opportunities and creating possibilities in DIY mode.

By focusing on the broad Gothic subculture, my research adds a fresh perspective to the literature by showing if, how and when boundaries between ‘friends’ and ‘foes’, as Fulbrook<sup>184</sup> puts it, were blurred in the ‘negotiation of space for alternative views and criticism of specific policies’<sup>185</sup>. By ‘widening of the boundaries of debate’<sup>186</sup> and the historiography of subcultures of East Germany, a subculture like Gothic may not easily be celebrated as ‘icon of dissidence’<sup>187</sup> because the juxtaposition between ‘official state culture’ and ‘autonomous spaces of (youth) communication’<sup>188</sup>, and crucially, subculture itself, was fuzzier than often suggested. The next part of the Literature Review looks at the definition

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<sup>181</sup> Cooke and Hubble, ‘Die volkseigene opposition?’, p. 120.

<sup>182</sup> Martin, ‘Culture, Subculture and Social Organization’, pp. 25 – 26.

<sup>183</sup> Debies-Carl, ‘Are the Kids Alright?’, p. 125.

<sup>184</sup> Fulbrook, *Anatomy of A Dictatorship*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>185</sup> Jones, *Complicity, Censorship and Criticism*, p. 208.

<sup>186</sup> Jones, *Complicity, Censorship and Criticism*, p. 208.

<sup>187</sup> Lipp, ‘Punk- und New-Wave-Bands im letzten Jahrzehnt der DDR’.

<sup>188</sup> Galenza and Havemeister, *Wir wollen immer artig sein*, p. 12.



of subculture and subculture concepts in Anglo-American subculture theory with which the ‘other’ East German subculture can be contextualized.

### **II.c. Subculture Definitions and Concepts: Contextualizing East German Subculture**

The question which needs to be answered is how the study of Gothic in the GDR fits into the scholarly subculture theory as it has been developed within the fields of Anglo-American psychology, sociology and cultural studies. This section looks at definitions and interpretations of subculture in different studies and asks how they can help define and interpret the dimensions, qualities, conflicts and developments of Gothic subculture in the GDR. How can subculture in the general sense be defined and interpreted in the context of the GDR, and does Gothic subculture in particular fit into the existing models of subculture or not? Following Hodkinson’s<sup>189</sup> remark that ‘it may be incorrect to assume that one theory [...] can be used to explain all youth cultural affiliation, and that one might adopt a more cautious case by case approach’, I will demonstrate in this last part of the Literature Review that the case study of the representation of Gothic in the GDR can help broadening the horizon of subculture theory, by answering Jenks’<sup>190</sup> question about ‘how subculture as a social phenomenon can explain the social world’ and vice versa.

*Subculture* is a disputed term, because, as Andy Bennett and Keith Kahn-Harris<sup>191</sup> state, it has become ‘little more than a convenient “catch-all” term for any aspect of social life in which young people, style and music intersect’. Jeffrey S. Debies-Carl<sup>192</sup> argues that the term has lost its validity because it ‘has come to encompass so wide a range of phenomena’. Like Gothic, subculture is thus an umbrella term for ‘a wide range of youth behaviors that cannot easily be classified’<sup>193</sup>, yet that are classified as subculture and therefore interpreted in a certain way, depending on the definition of subculture. Jochen Bonz<sup>194</sup> writes that *subculture* is always subject to and defined by the mainstream culture which it aims to subvert, which means that a subculture’s subversiveness is therefore pre-determined within its social context, or in other words, what is defined as subculture or not

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<sup>189</sup> Paul Hodkinson, *Goth. Identity, Style and Subculture* (Oxford/New York: Berg, 2002).

<sup>190</sup> Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of The Social*, p. 129.

<sup>191</sup> Bennett and Kahn-Harris, ‘Introduction’, p. 1.

<sup>192</sup> Debies-Carl, ‘Are the kids alright?’, p. 121.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>194</sup> Jochen Bonz, *Subjekte des Tracks. Ethnografie einer postmodernen / anderen Subkultur* (Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos, 2008), p. 58.

depends on, as Jenks<sup>195</sup> stresses, ‘where [dominant] culture ends, and subculture begins’. I will now demonstrate how, in subculture theory, this relativity of ‘subculture’ is analysed and what this means for the topic of my research.

From the 1940s until the 1960s, sociologists in the *Chicago School* who sought to understand ‘juvenile crime’ used the term subculture and defined it as ‘a source of prestige that replaced the core values of the “straight” world, sobriety, ambition, conformity, with an alternative value system that celebrated defiance of authority and illicit thrills.’<sup>196</sup> Crucially, as William Osgerby<sup>197</sup> further explains, *Chicago School* scholars like Albert Cohen and Howard Becker ‘argued that “criminality” should be seen as a socially constructed and historically dynamic category whose nature and constitution was shaped by the responses of the law, politicians and the media’. In his influential study on mods and rockers titled *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* from 1972, British sociologist Stanley Cohen<sup>198</sup> described ‘deviant behaviour’ as construct of media narratives which depicted subcultures as a ‘threat to societal values and interests’ and triggered moral panics. The *Chicago School*’s and Cohen’s theories are useful for the study of subculture in the GDR, because they question the very label subculture and the relativity of the definition of subculture (predominantly as a negative social phenomenon). Cohen’s<sup>199</sup> crucial point which applies to Gothic subculture in particular, as shown, is that ‘more moral panics will be generated, and other, as yet nameless, folk devils will be created’. Becker’s<sup>200</sup> note that ‘deviant behaviour is the product of labelling, that social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviances and by applying those rules to particular persons and labelling them as outsiders’ applies to a system in which adolescents dressed and gathered in black were considered suspicious. The question is if, how and when they were also considered, categorized and defined as outsiders and folk devils in political narratives, and what the consequences were.

In comparison it should be noted that there are two related processes which we can identify in East German state documents like police and MfS reports as well as some media from the late 1950s until the late 1960s. First, the othering, stigmatization, criminalization

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<sup>195</sup> Downes cited in Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of The Social*, p. 9.

<sup>196</sup> Simon Frith, *The Sociology of Youth* (Ormskirk: Causeway Press, 1984), p. 40; Osgerby, ‘Subcultures, Popular Music and Social Change’, p. 3.

<sup>197</sup> Osgerby, William, ‘Subcultures, Popular Music and Social Change: Theories, Issues and Debates’, The Subcultures Network (ed.), *Subcultures, Popular Music and Social Change* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), pp. 2, 6.

<sup>198</sup> Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* p. 172.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>200</sup> Becker cited in Bennett and Kahn-Harris, ‘Introduction’, p. 3.

and politicising of youth cultures and young people, as shown in various studies<sup>201</sup>. And secondly, that which Becker called ‘deviance amplification’; namely that ‘initial negative responses of the dominant society result in such subcultures committing further acts of deviance, which in turn reinforces stigmatisation’<sup>202</sup>. We must not only ask how dominant society and crucially in the context of the GDR, authority, responded to Gothic subculture but also whether Gothic subculture responded to dominant society and the politicization, criminalization and stigmatization of (Gothic) subculture and if, to repeat the title of Griffith’s essay about Post-Columbine American Gothic subculture, Gothic folk devils in the GDR struck back and if so why, how and when. Are concepts like ‘folk devils’, ‘moral panics’ and ‘deviance amplification’ even applicable to East German subculture in the 1980s, considering that Cohen applied it to a very different subculture in a very different societal and ideological context, time and place? Considering that shortly before the GDR ended on 3 October 1990, *Junge Welt*<sup>203</sup>, the magazine of the official state youth organisation *Freie Deutsche Jugend*, represented Gothic subculture positively on their front cover and in an article titled *Heute: Die Gruftis. Liebe, Frieden, Harmonie*. A German insider<sup>204</sup> in the *Schwarze Szene* commented in 2018 on the German Gothic website *Spontis* that this positive East German media representation of Gothic differed fundamentally from the overtly negative depiction of *Gruftis* in West German tabloids.

To understand and contextualize such an example of a difference in subcultural representation between the East and West, we must go back a decade to the time when Punk emerged. For the East German government, British Punk was considered ‘a potentially dangerous instrument of Western political subversion’<sup>205</sup>. This political explanation was applied for the emergence of all youth (sub)cultures since the late 1950s which were perceived as ‘capitalist’ or ‘Western’. The basic ideological definition of subculture in the GDR was therefore that it was fundamentally incompatible with and hostile to socialist society. But the crucial point this study makes is that it does not necessarily always end there, because subcultures were not only controlled and repressed by the state in that they were observed by the MfS before being arrested and sent to prison, they were also *studied*.

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<sup>201</sup> Zimmermann, Verena, *Den neuen Menschen schaffen: Die Umerziehung von schwererziehbaren und straffälligen Jugendlichen in der DDR (1945 – 1990)* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2004).

<sup>202</sup> Becker cited in Bennett and Kahn-Harris, ‘Introduction’, pp. 3 – 4.

<sup>203</sup> *Junge Welt*, 227 (September 1990).

<sup>204</sup> <https://www.spontis.de/schwarze-szene/dunkle-vergangenheit/gruftis-liebe-frieden-harmonie/> [accessed 11 November 2018].

<sup>205</sup> Jeff Hayton, ‘Härte gegen Punk’, p. 526.

Teenagers who dressed in a Gothic style, as we have seen, were ‘grouped together [...] and defined as a problem’, use Mike Brake’s<sup>206</sup> words, but the MfS also investigated whether that problem ‘refers to something in the adolescents or makes a statement about society’. The state was interested in knowing all about the political and social relevance, purpose, meaning and threat of a subculture.

In his analysis of how ‘East German commentators understood punk’s relationship to the social and economic contexts producing it’, Howes<sup>207</sup> draws an interesting parallel between Western and Eastern scholarly views on Punk in his case study of ‘non-criminological East German engagements with subcultures and punk,’ by concluding that ‘East German journalist assessments of punk music held the same dim view of its aesthetic quality that the British scandal sheets did’. In his influential study titled *Subculture. The Meaning of Style*, Hebdige<sup>208</sup> describes ‘the ideological form’ of Punk as working-class protest response to capitalist crises which caused a shock effect on society through its spectacular DIY style and sensational media coverage. Hebdige’s analysis of Punk in 1976 had a huge impact on subculture studies and the definition of subculture for the 1980s. Comparing Hebdige’s study with that of East German sociologist Peter Wicke, Howes<sup>209</sup> points out that both describe how the media ridiculised Punk’s musical expression of its ideological form and depicted it as a form of youth protest that was doomed to fail. Nevertheless, the East German societies took the social impact of Punk in the GDR which the spectacular Punk style and music had both in the West and East, seriously, as will also be shown in this thesis. Yet the ‘*symptomatic* [italics in original] explanation of subculture’, as Howes<sup>210</sup> writes, the definition of the ideological form of Punk as anti-capitalist relativized the political threat of Punk, because this explanation ruled out the interpretation of Punk as anti-socialist. In other words, unlike the impression given in the historiography, Punk could not be a sign of socialist failure in this theory, because its societal causes, like unemployment, did (in theory) not exist in the GDR.

And yet, the famous *No Future* slogan appealed to young people in the GDR too, which shows that Punk protest has, like the criticism of Gothic, a transnational quality. But this transnational dimension of Punk- and Gothic-related subcultures, the reason they

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<sup>206</sup> Mike Brake, *Comparative Youth Culture* (Routledge: London/New York, 1985), p. 1.

<sup>207</sup> Seth Howes, ‘Subcultural Studies between the Blocs’, pp. 72, 84.

<sup>208</sup> Hebdige, *Subculture. The Meaning of Style*, pp. 3, 122.

<sup>209</sup> Howes, ‘Subcultural Studies between the Blocs’, p. 83.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

emerged in Western and Eastern societies, has been ignored by scholars. John Savage<sup>211</sup> writes that ‘Punk was black, black, black from the very beginning’, and that the dark, angry aesthetics in Punk, Post-Punk and New Wave fanzines in the UK reflected societal and existential crisis: ‘looking at the images now, I can see distinct themes that emerged out of our fever: claustrophobia, inner-city surfing; the dehumanization of everyday life; the man/machine’. Savage<sup>212</sup> further writes that Punk’s ‘negativity alerted the culture to the terrors and dangers in its midst. This is what your future could be: no future, a nightmare’.

In Germany, the protest slogan *No Future* which became a symbol of worldwide Punk, has a counterpart which is called *Endzeitstimmung*<sup>213</sup> and which translates as the sense of a coming end. Only a handful of publications<sup>214</sup> discuss the subcultural expression of *Endzeitstimmung* in West Germany, and none how the zeitgeist was reflected in East Germany. In this study, it is a core concept which captures the transnational as well as transhistorical quality of Gothic and which can tell us something about the fears and hopes of young people during the Cold War, in response to nuclear threat and the nuclear accident of Chernobyl. The terms *No Future* and *Endzeitstimmung* stand for a globalised zeitgeist which subcultures have expressed themselves in fanzines, music and fashion. The dark mood, like the radioactive cloud, did not stop at the Iron Curtain, but was met by fear, conservatism and moral panics. I consider *Endzeitstimmung* as the ideological-existential (instead of political) form of the Punk and Gothic-related subcultures of the 1980s in East and West Germany which was, however, a transnational mood and criticism that did not relate to one specific nation or one specific ideology but fits into the Dark Romantic tradition. Lange<sup>215</sup> writes about this that *die anderen Bands* were part of this zeitgeist in which a transnational music culture celebrated DIY and innovation while reflecting on the problems of the young generations across national and ideological borders. By exploring the products of this movement, it can be shown that ‘the proliferation of [East German] grass-roots in the 1980s fits into broader, international social and cultural developments’, as Fulbrook<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> Jon Savage, ‘A Punk Aesthetic’, in *Punk: An Aesthetic*, ed. by Johan Kugelberg and Jon Savage (New York: Rizzoli, 2012), pp. 147 – 155 (p. 147).

<sup>212</sup> Savage, ‘A Punk Aesthetic’, p. 147.

<sup>213</sup> Andreas Wirsching, *Abschied vom Provisorium. Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1982–1990* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2006).

<sup>214</sup> Frank A. Schneider, ‘There’s no future like “no future”’, in *1984! Block an Block. Subkulturen im Orwell-Jahr*, ed. by Alexander Pehlemann, Bert Papenfuß and Robert Mießner (eds.), (Mainz: Ventil Verlag, 2015), (pp. 18 – 19).

<sup>215</sup> Burmeister and Lange, *Behind the Wall*, p. 93.

<sup>216</sup> Mary Fulbrook, *German National Identity After the Holocaust* (Oxford/Boston: Polity, 1999), p. 46.

states. Post-Punk and postmodern (sub)culture; the fragmentation of subcultures and the decline of ideological forms, as will be explained later in this subchapter, were such (sub)cultural developments.

The question answered in this thesis is how, compared to Punk, the ideological forms of Gothic are defined in state documents and which explanations were maintained or not, and, when if and how subculture was re-defined and re-interpreted. At the same time this study demonstrates how the zeitgeist of *No Future* and *Endzeitstimmung* was expressed by subcultures in the GDR, if and how their subcultural capital comprises this transnational quality, and asks if the definitions of Gothic and subculture apply to these subcultural (self-)representations. From what we have seen in the Literature Review so far, we can conclude that any too rigid, symptomatic (CCCS) definition or interpretation which might have worked for an initial, temporal or very specific articulation of that subculture, like late 1970s or early 1980s Punk, does not apply to the pluriform (Post-)Punk- and Gothic-related subcultures.

When Howes<sup>217</sup> points out that it was the state's rigid ideological Punk theory that 'necessarily produced a conceptual blind spot within which East German punks (and heavy metal fans, and self-styled New Romantics, etc.) went to work as makers of music, recorders of demo tapes, organizers of concerts and festivals', we must remember that this grey (sub)cultural area was also created by subcultural actors themselves. My research has explored how boundaries were overcome or not overcome, blurred and crossed in this shift. I have called the conceptual blind spot Post-Punk transition for the subcultural perspectives, and Post-Punk confusion for the state perspectives. Howes<sup>218</sup> argues that the label *die anderen Bands* was given to bands which did not clearly fit into 'subculture' according to the symptomatic definition, and that the label 'the other bands' marks a 'terminological shift that denied the music the explicit marker of punk sounds.' The term *andere*, however, points out that the bands did not fit into mainstream either, but the question is how subcultural and state actors perceived their (sub)culture.

What we can say is that previously closed doors to the realm of legitimate, official culture had been opened for (new) subcultural forms and that 'lyrical anomie, punk outfits [...] could now issue forth, with official sanction, on the airwaves'<sup>219</sup>. I argue in my thesis

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<sup>217</sup> Howes, 'Subcultural Studies between the Blocs', p. 84.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

that the conceptual blindspot which gave a boost to East German Post-Punk and Gothic subcultures was not only political. For when ‘constant change and flux have been endemic to the universe of youth subcultures,’ as Osgerby<sup>220</sup> argues, and they are yet ‘often depicted too rigidly and narrowly with too little attention for the “dynamic quality to their styles”’, it becomes clear that the dynamic quality, next to the transnational and transhistorical quality of subcultures, has not sufficiently been explored by GDR-historians and subculture scholars. A subculture which is today commonly known under the umbrella label Punk or Gothic has ‘developed over time making sense in different ways for different groups’ to repeat Osgerby’s<sup>221</sup> words, and this process applied to subculture in the GDR too.

The concept from the subculture theory which captures the core ambivalence of East German subculture on the one hand, the standardized politicizing and criminalizing of subculture vs. the process of relativizing and legalizing within the changing, heterogeneous subcultural landscape in the late 1980s on the other hand, is ‘legitimate subcultures’. David Matza and Gresham Syke<sup>222</sup> define these as subcultures ‘whose system of subterranean values, while deviant in that they offer non-conformist routes to pleasure and excitement, do not challenge or disrupt the dominant society as much’. This is a key concept in this study because it captures the cultivation of ambiguity and the fact that subculture in the GDR meant oppositional underground culture as well as popular teenage culture to which state responses and strategies differed. The concept is so useful because the term ‘legitimate’ captures the fact that subculture does not exist ‘outside’ but inside the society and system and could only receive such a societal and cultural status when certain rules were followed. At the same time, the seemingly contradictory term legitimate subcultures points out that the rules could be bent by subcultural participants too. *Die anderen Bands*, which I argue are a key example of a legitimate subculture in the GDR, can be considered part of a transnational subculture in which artists were critical towards politics, society and ideology. It was a *different* subculture, indeed, the other subculture of the GDR, as we will see in this thesis, compared to East German Punk subculture which, by the mid-1980s, was only one of many post-Punk phenomena.

Concepts like subculture and Punk were thus relative and flexible, even in a system in which they were politicized, as they were transgressing and confusing because norms and

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<sup>220</sup> William Osgerby, *Youth in Britain Since 1945* (Wiley-Blackwell: Hoboken, New Jersey, 1998), p. 76.

<sup>221</sup> Osgerby, *Youth in Britain*, p. 76.

<sup>222</sup> Matza and Sykes cited in Bennett and Kahn-Harris, ‘Introduction’, p. 4.

rules and definition and interpretations of subculture both from the perspectives of the makers and the authorities shifted over time through a process of action, reaction and interaction. And that's a question I address in this thesis. As also shown in this thesis, this caused new conflicts, but not always between subculture and the state, but within subculture too. The question that needs to be answered now is how this subcultural shift, the Post-Punk transgression and confusion, and the shift or expanding in the definition of subculture as subversiveness (in any society) to a definition of subculture as otherness, and thereby as potentially but not definitely hostile, and among all this Gothic subculture, can be captured. When 'any vagueness over the boundaries of the overall culture' creates deviance, as Downes<sup>223</sup> wrote in 1966, then we must ask whether in the GDR, this vagueness as explained above relativised deviance. *Die andere Bands* exemplify the vagueness of the boundaries of cultural policy in the GDR, between mainstream and subculture, and between insiders and outsiders. Whereas in theory, subculture was hostile, in practice, they were not always judged as such. The question is, considering the apparent relativity and apparent flexibility of subcultures or 'other cultures' in the GDR, if, how and when Gothic subculture tested, contested, confirmed and strengthened 'the boundaries of the "centre"'<sup>224</sup>.

The contextual and conceptual relativity of the term subculture tie into Debies-Carl's<sup>225</sup> argument that 'while norms, rules and shared understandings still exist and still matter, they are contingent, temporary and fluid, and cannot be used to delineate a stable configuration that can be labelled "subculture." Just as we cannot locate a clearly identifiable subculture, neither can we distinguish between subcultures or between subculture and external entities that are clearly *not* [italics in original] of the subculture'. It is therefore crucial to investigate subculture in the GDR by considering different perspectives, subcultural as well as political, and hence, the different actions, reactions and interactions which not only include confrontation and conflict but negotiation and compromise too. Hodkinson and Jasper identify survival as one of the core aims of contemporary Gothic subculture.<sup>226</sup> We must therefore ask if, how and when subcultural self-representations of East German Gothic subculture comprise signs of participants and groups performing 'politics of representation, in order to "survive" or have the right to exist as a contemporary

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<sup>223</sup> Downes cited in Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of The Social*, p. 9.

<sup>224</sup> Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of The Social*, p. 132.

<sup>225</sup> Grossberg cited in Debies-Carl, 'Are the Kids Alright?', p. 118.

<sup>226</sup> Hodkinson, *Goth: Identity, Style and Subculture*, p. 173.



social group without fear of societal controls'<sup>227</sup>. When subcultures perform such 'self-consciously meaningful agency [for] social, supportive and critical reasons', as Jenks<sup>228</sup> points out, it can, but does not necessarily threaten the stability of the political system, depending on whether they are considered a 'negative response to the social and cultural structure's demands'<sup>229</sup>. As these demands can vary and change, political responses to the subculture's goals and interests, and hence the subculture's politics of representation differs. Subcultural agency can therefore consist of resistance or be 'Resignation' or be both.

#### **II.d. Subculture Theory: Interpretations of Subcultural Meanings**

This subchapter focuses on strategies used by subculture researchers who believe that subcultures are 'meaningful in the sense of being intentional or having a purpose', as Jenks<sup>230</sup> notes. The East German authorities assigned the police and the MfS with the task to investigate subculture for the same reason, to find out their purpose, meaning. Although several studies thematize MfS surveillance of youth (sub)culture by focusing on its detrimental effect on subculture on the one hand, and the strike-back of subculture on the other hand, it has, however, hardly been explored *how* the MfS system studied the subcultures of the GDR, which strategies were used by departments and functionaries. The question which is answered in this thesis is how Post-Punk and Gothic subcultures were interpreted. If they were defined as representing subversiveness, resistance, criticism or otherness, then the question is how state functionaries decided on their ideological form in the 'larger world of [...] national culture'<sup>231</sup>. When subculture in the GDR per definition cannot have a GDR-relevant ideological form according to the symptomatic explanation, then 'by the very definition of subculture pioneered in (and adapted from) Birmingham,' as Howes<sup>232</sup> argues, it would 'be rebellion without a cause'. Yet we know that the rebellion did have causes and that it at least had one crucial effect in the GDR, namely that many hours and functionaries were spent on gathering details about youth scenes which resulted in a large quantity of political documentation on subculture.

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<sup>227</sup> Griffiths, 'The Gothic Folk Devils Strike Back!', p. 416.

<sup>228</sup> Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of the Social*, pp. 8 – 9, 145.

<sup>229</sup> Downes cited in Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of the Social*, p. 10.

<sup>230</sup> Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of The Social*, p. 54.

<sup>231</sup> Komarovskiy and Sargent cited in Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of The Social*, p. 7.

<sup>232</sup> Howes, 'Subcultural Studies between the Blocs', pp. 84, 86.

CCCS scholars who studied subcultures in the UK from the 1960s until the 1980s, based their interpretation of youth and subcultures on Marxist, feminist and poststructuralist ideas, and contested the *Chicago School*'s idea that subcultural actors were passive subjects of socially constructed criminal categories and (negative) media representation. The CCCS focus on the self-representations of subcultural actors and the effects on and interaction with society and politics. Scholars therefore believed that, as Warren Kidd and Alison Teagle<sup>233</sup> explain, 'underlying collective meanings or functions [...] are not accidental but are highly meaningful attempts to create identity'. In this thesis, subcultural self-representations are considered such constructions of subcultural identity, ideology and community, and ultimately of meanings which were, in turn, subject to varying and shifting interpretation by political actors. Although there are no signs that the MfS was aware of or interested in subculture studies in the West, parallels with the dominant Western subculture model which poses that group practices, styles and symbols 'directly represent and hence reveal particular shared structural circumstances, psychological features or political statements', as Bennett and Kahn-Harris<sup>234</sup> note, can be identified in subculture analyses in MfS files, as will be shown. Because subculture in the 1980s was pluriform, it was assumed that meanings differed. While the MfS considered all youth scenes as rooted in one ideological form, Western capitalism, otherness had many different shapes and colours. And this was precisely the difficulty for observers and analysts.

One of the focal points in subculture research is style, because this is the subcultural form that first meets the eye, and which is believed to be not accidental but meaningful. CCCS scholars who studied different youth scenes applied the semiological method, because they were convinced that subcultural 'styles can be "read" as signs, which can be interpreted'<sup>235</sup>. This method has often been criticised by scholars, as we have seen in the previous subchapter. According to Hodkinson<sup>236</sup>, for instance, the principle of homology, which means that 'nothing is accidental, random or coincidental, each element of the style is there for a reason and each contributes to a distinctive and coherent overall meaning' has too often been contested by empirical studies of contemporary subcultures like Gothic. For Hodkinson, the assumption that there exists 'an inherent coherence between the different

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<sup>233</sup> Warren Kidd and Alison Teagle, *Culture and Identity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

<sup>234</sup> Bennett and Kahn-Harris, 'Introduction', p. 4.

<sup>235</sup> Kidd and Teagle, *Culture and Identity*.

<sup>236</sup> Hodkinson, 'Beyond Spectacular Specifics', p. 561.

elements of each style, the behaviour and identities of participants and the broader significance of the group' which can be read semiologically is problematic. The assumed 'hidden meanings' this method reveals, Kidd and Teagle<sup>237</sup> stress, are always subjective interpretations.

Jones<sup>238</sup> note that within the MfS there existed a 'mosaic of opinions on the best method of dealing with critical writers and critical texts' also applies to MfS surveillance of youth scenes and participants in subcultures like song writers and fan club founders. The primary aim was to gain as much knowledge as possible about them and control them. The question is whether the MfS used specific reading strategies in their extensive surveillance of subcultural scenes and actors. Can we identify strategies in the files which are similar to the semiological method and principle of homology used in the West? How did different MfS departments and functionaries interpret styles, practices, behaviours and symbols attributed to Punk, New Wave, New Romantic and *Gruftis*. Was the search for meaning and purpose really vital in the MfS' study of Gothic subculture and how did the investigation unfold over time?

As CCCS scholar Hebdige<sup>239</sup> interpreted the spectacular style of Western Punk as 'noise' and 'interference in the orderly sequence' which communicates 'significant difference' and considered Punk 'not only as a metaphor for potential anarchy,' but 'an actual mechanism of [...] blockage in the system of representation', we may ask if we can find a similar approach to Punk, Post-Punk and Gothic in MfS files. The question that can then be answered from subcultural as well as state perspectives is if, how and when Gothic self-representation and the representation of socialism are conflictual, intertwined or compatible. According to Hebdige<sup>240</sup>, the main reason why Punk had considerable power to provoke and disturb' in the UK was its expression of 'consciousness of difference' through 'profane articulations' of 'forbidden contents' which transgressed 'sartorial and behavioural codes'. As we have seen, scholars often interpret Gothic subculture as a spectacular expression of social and sexual taboo, while its otherness is perceived as self-conscious deviance. In Jenks<sup>241</sup> definition of subcultural style, Gothic style 'confirms its own otherness, difference and marginalisation', and the question is thus if, when and how Gothic

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<sup>237</sup> Kidd and Teagle, *Culture and Identity*.

<sup>238</sup> Jones, *Complicity, Censorship and Criticism*, p. 204.

<sup>239</sup> Hebdige, *Subculture. The Meaning of Style*, pp. 119, 102.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>241</sup> Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of the Social*, p. 145.

otherness in the GDR was interpreted in similar or different ways by the MfS, and if there is overlap with the Punk-infused 1980s definition of subculture. Hebdige's<sup>242</sup> subculture model in which subculture are perceived by others or outsiders (parents, politicians, journalists) as 'unnatural violations of the authorized codes through which the social world is organized and experienced' is useful for this study, because we can test whether this was the case in the GDR. By a close-reading of political interpretation of Gothic in a system which did indeed judge subcultures as unnatural, we can examine mechanisms of representation, for example how insider-outsider distinctions are made and what otherness meant in the GDR. As we have seen in the previous part of the Literature Review, there were forms of otherness which were relativised and legalised (*die anderen Bands*, for instance) but only when these were not interpreted as disturbing 'noise' with forbidden contents. The question is whether these forms were then interpreted as, to quote David Muggleton<sup>243</sup>, 'merely symbolic responses, "imaginary", "magical" or "ideological" solutions,' and if so to what conflict or problem. When the resistance, criticism or subversion of subculture is interpreted as 'symbolic or magical, in the sense of not being an actual, successful solution to whatever is the problem'<sup>244</sup>, we may explain if, when and how, in a system in which subculture was a political matter, certain forms of subculture had a 'radical political dimension'<sup>245</sup>.

We must, however, ask what happens when semiological and heterogeneous interpretations of subcultural styles are challenged by stylistic changes and ambivalences. For example, when subcultural actors consciously construct subcultural meanings, identities and communities for political reasons and purposes by performing 'subcultural bricolage', to use Hebdige's term. 'The meanings of particular objects and media texts'<sup>246</sup> like existing traditional or ideological symbols such as Swastikas (British Punks) and crosses (Gothics) are not just integrated into subcultural styles but also converted, as Osgerby explains. In studies like Muggleton's book *Inside Subculture. The Postmodern Meaning of Style*, it is argued that the styles of 'postmodern subcultures' are to be interpreted in line with Jean-François Lyotard's<sup>247</sup> 'postmodern condition'; the loss of meaning and therefore the loss of

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<sup>242</sup> Hebdige, *Subculture. The Meaning of Style*, p. 119.

<sup>243</sup> David Muggleton, *Inside Subculture. The Postmodern Meaning of Style* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), p. 17.

<sup>244</sup> Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, p. 161.

<sup>245</sup> Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of the Social*, p. 145.

<sup>246</sup> Lévi- Strauss cited in Bill Osgerby, 'Subcultures, Popular Music and Social Change', p. 11

<sup>247</sup> Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition. A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 26.

any ideological form because the political, ideological and religious grand narrative have all lost their credibility or magic.

The 1980s and 1990s were, as Muggleton<sup>248</sup> writes, ‘decades of subcultural fragmentation and proliferation, with a glut of revivals, hybrids and transformations, and the co-existence of myriad styles at one point in time’. The possibility of ‘style surfing’, as Ted Polhemus<sup>249</sup> writes, means that subcultural meanings are fluid, temporal, inauthentic and depthless. Muggleton<sup>250</sup> argues that the modern youth (sub) cultures of the 1960s, like the Mods, Teds and Rockers, still had clearly defined identities, communities and ideological connotations and that their ‘strong stylistic and ideological boundaries’ meant that scenes inevitably existed ‘in a state of mutual opposition’ to each other, but also to the authorities. In contrast, postmodern subculture is marked by a ‘lack of rules and worries about contradictions between subcultural identities, no authenticity and no ideological commitment’<sup>251</sup>. Muggleton<sup>252</sup> stresses that ‘the need for boundary maintenance becomes negligible as the lines of subcultural demarcation dissolve’. This means that the principle of homology and the semiological method would fail, because the belief in ‘tightly bound and homogeneous cultures’ with ideological meanings that simply need to be empirically deducted is abandoned ‘in favour of fragmentation, difference and bricolage (pick and mix cultures)’, as Tracey Greener and Robert Hollands<sup>253</sup> note.

The fragmentation of Punk and the emergence of the heterogeneous Post-Punk and Gothic subcultures from 1978/1979 (when New Wave was mentioned in British fanzines for the first time)<sup>254</sup> onwards are part of the general ‘growing fragmentation of youth culture’<sup>255</sup> which scholars such as Bennett, Kahn-Harris and Muggleton have identified. But the question is whether the definition of postmodern subculture (as reflection of the postmodern condition) is useful for the study of Gothic subculture and for the study subculture in the GDR in the 1980s. The first problem is that the majority of postsubculture studies<sup>256</sup> do not mention Gothic subculture. The second problem is that the definition of postmodern

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<sup>248</sup> Muggleton, *Inside Subculture*, p. 47.

<sup>249</sup> Ted Polhemus, *Style Surfing. What to Wear in the Third Millennium* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996).

<sup>250</sup> Muggleton, *Inside Subculture*, p. 47.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid

<sup>253</sup> Greener and Hollands, ‘Beyond Subculture and Post-subculture?’, p. 404.

<sup>254</sup> Schrijnders, ‘From London to Leipzig and Back.

<sup>255</sup> Bennett and Kahn-Harris, ‘Introduction’, p. 2.

<sup>256</sup> e.g. Bennett and Kahn-Harris (eds.), *After Subculture*; Greener and Hollands, ‘Beyond Subculture and Post-subculture?’, p. 393; Muggleton, *Inside Subculture*; David Muggleton and Rupert Weinzierl, *The Post-Subcultures Reader* (Oxford: Berg, 2003) 2004; Redhead, *Subcultures to Clubcultures*.

subculture as focused on ‘creative self-expression and stylistic innovation’ and ‘highly complicit with the central capitalist values of entrepreneurial individualism and consumer creativity’<sup>257</sup>, suggest that postmodern subculture is a purely capitalist, Western phenomenon. It is questionable whether Gothic fits into such postsubculture definitions. For example, the definition of postmodern subcultural membership as ‘superficial and transient, and only represents a fraction of an individual’s overall identity’<sup>258</sup> contradicts eye witness representations of East German Gothic subculture who describe at least the Wave scene as a close and engaged community. This needs further exploring.

The third problem is that the scholarly interpretation of subcultures as meaningless may clash with interpretations by participants. It seems to me that the definition for postmodern subculture is too rigid for the pluriform Gothic (sub)culture or for any subculture in the sense of subjective DIY culture. This may explain why Gothic is hardly mentioned in subculture theories and models. Muggleton’s schematic distinction exemplifies that whether a subculture like Gothic fits in or not is a matter of subjective representation:

<i>Modern Subculture</i>	<i>Postmodern Subculture</i>
Group identity	Fragmented identity
Stylistic homogeneity	Stylistic heterogeneity
Strong boundary maintenance	Boundary maintenance weak
Subcultural provides main identity	Multiple stylistic identities
High degree of commitment	Low degree of commitment
Membership perceived as permanent	High rates of subcultural mobility
Stress on beliefs and values	Fascination with style and image
Political gesture of resistance	Apolitical sentiments
Anti-media sentiments	Positive attitude towards media
Self-perception as authentic	Celebration of the inauthentic

The different key points depend on different insider as well as outsider choices, decisions and interpretations. Although Gothic subculture is indeed marked by stylistic heterogeneity and would therefore be postmodern, individual participants seem free to make individual, self-conscious decisions regarding (political) orientations, values and beliefs, on whether they feel committed to a subculture, what authenticity means to them, regardless of (contradicting) meanings attributed to them through scholarly and/or political investigation. They, hence, as the CCCS advocated on behalf of subculturalists, construct their own subcultural identities, purposes and meanings within the freedom of subcultural expression.

<sup>257</sup> Muggleton, *Inside Subculture*, pp. 51, 53.

<sup>258</sup> Greener and Hollands, ‘Beyond Subculture and Post-subculture?’, p. 397.

This includes the ambivalent decision to passionately participate in Gothic subculture as fan or band, while refusing the label Goth(ic) or *Gruffti*, as Hodkinson, Jasper and Nym point out.<sup>259</sup> At the same time, Gothic ‘books, films, music and aesthetics are not only enjoyed by Goths’<sup>260</sup>, because ‘popular Gothic culture’<sup>261</sup> exists alongside, in harmony with, as well as in conflict with Gothic subculture. As Gothic was, as eye witnesses and scholars have pointed out, at least initially or partly a social, political and cultural taboo in the GDR, the question is how free expressions of Gothic could be and how they fitted into MfS models and categories or not.

Although this ambivalence of Gothic might be considered evidence of the postmodern condition, the study of East German Gothic adds a new perspective on (post)subculture theory, because it focuses on the question of ‘how boundaries are constituted’ regarding readings and representations of subculture, and ‘not simply that they are fuzzier than various writers have assumed’<sup>262</sup>. At first sight, it seems that East German Gothic contradicts aspects of the postmodern definition such as commitment and mobility. The political question is, as we will see, highly complex precisely because of the transhistorical and transnational qualities of Gothic. I therefore argue that as Greener and Hollands<sup>263</sup> conclude in their case study of Psytrance, there is ‘postmodern subculture’ which ‘appears to overturn various aspects of subcultural analysis,’ and hence, ‘there are examples of global youth cultures that appear to transcend both subcultural and post-subcultural explanations’<sup>264</sup> of which I consider East German Gothic a historical case example.

This study demonstrates that CCCS, *Chicago School* and postsubculture concepts, although developed in Anglo-American contexts, can be applied to the study of East German subculture, firstly because boundaries between ideologies, societies and cultures are also fuzzier than many scholars have suggested, and secondly, because all grand subculture theories will eventually be (con)tested by ‘local variations in [transnational] youth’s responses to [and in] music and style.’<sup>265</sup> Perhaps ‘a radical expanding of the notion of

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<sup>259</sup> Paul Hodkinson, *Goth: Identity, Style and Subculture*; Jasper, *The Mysts of the Gothic Underground*, p. 31; Nym, ‘Die Gothic-Szene gibt es nicht’, p. 14.

<sup>260</sup> e.g. Paul Hodkinson, *Goth: Identity, Style and Subculture*; Jasper, *The Mysts of The Gothic Underground*; Nym, ‘Die Gothic-Szene gibt es nicht’, p. 13.

<sup>261</sup> Carrington, ‘The Contemporary Gothic’.

<sup>262</sup> Hesmondhalgh, ‘Subcultures, Scenes or Tribes?’, p. 24.

<sup>263</sup> Greener and Hollands, ‘Beyond Subculture and Post-subculture?’, p. 396.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 415.

<sup>265</sup> Murdock and McCron cited in Bennett and Kahn-Harris, ‘Introduction’, p. 8.

*subculture* [italics in original]’, as Howes<sup>266</sup> suggests, is not required to capture such differences in subcultural (self-)representations, because, as Osgerby<sup>267</sup> notes, ‘styles have continually developed over time making sense in different ways for different groups of youngsters at different historical moments’. Therefore, when we investigate specific groups of youngsters at specific moments and places, we can explore both the local and temporal as well as the translocal and transnational and transhistorical qualities of subcultures that have become global.

### III. Research Questions, Methods and Sources

The time frame this study focuses on and zooms into, 1982 to 1989, captures the climax and downfall of the first Punk generation in the GDR which is summarized in Chapter 1, and the emergence and development of Post-Punk, New Wave, New Romantic and *Gruffti* scenes from 1984 onwards which is analyzed throughout Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4. To demonstrate how different Post-Punk and Gothic scenes emerged from and after the first East German Punk wave, and how their (self-)representations differed, this thesis first investigates how Punk is represented in official state representations as well as subcultural micro-media. The first chapter of the thesis thus serves as a stepping stone for the main body of research into 1984 – 1989 as explored in Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

This chronologically and thematically structured study highlights a shift which I have called the Post-Punk transition, and which is in line with the subcultural fragmentation and shift from modern to postmodern (youth) subcultures as discussed in the Literature Review. However, I will illustrate through my analysis of the Post-Punk transition and emergence of Gothic why this division is problematic, and why studying subcultures became more complex after 1984. I call this complexity Post-Punk confusion with which I refer to the ambivalence and relativity of ‘subculture’, the heterogeneous and ambivalent nature and the transhistorical and transnational qualities of Punk- and Gothic-related subcultures. This thesis explores how, when and why the different scenes became confused, conflicted, interacted and compromised, and how, when and why intertwinements between subculture, politics, ideology and authority were fruitful or fatal for subcultural scenes and participants.

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<sup>266</sup> Howes, ‘Subcultural Studies between the Blocs’, p. 86.

<sup>267</sup> Osgerby, *Youth in Britain*, p. 76.



This thesis looks at the representation of East German Gothic (subculture), or, put differently, the representation of Gothic (subculture) in the GDR, from two different perspectives; political-ideological representations and subcultural (self-)representations. The core question of this study is therefore dual too and: 1. How is Gothic (subculture) represented in documents which were produced within the East German state security system (*MfS* and police departments), and how, why and when do representations vary, conflict and shift between 1984 and 1989? 2. How is Gothic represented in (self-)representations in subcultural micro-media and how, why and when do representations vary, conflict and shift between 1984 and 1989? Both opposed as well as intertwined strands of empirical material contain a ‘symbolic representation of certain sets of social relationships and practices’<sup>268</sup>, to investigate ‘representations, practices and modes of appropriation’ related to (Post-)Punk and Gothic subcultures, which, as Jones writes, ‘allow social groups to produce meaning and identity.’<sup>269</sup> This thesis explores how Gothic in the broadest sense is interpreted, defined and communicated in texts embedded in the ideological narrative or/and political investigation, or in texts which function as vehicles of subcultural capital, while these textual representations of Gothic both conflict and interact.

Subquestions asked in order to analyse the Post-Punk transition and confusion, and the unfolding of Gothic subculture in the GDR, and to highlight key moments, characteristics and developments from the perspectives of subcultural actors are: what do the (self-)representations tell us about subcultural identities, communities, purposes and meanings; why and how did individuals and groups identify with that which is known as ‘Punk’ and ‘Gothic’, how is the *Zeitgeist* expressed, is Gothic expressed as an ‘ideology’ or philosophy, and what do the micro-media tell us about subcultural (life)styles and their interpretations, communication and meanings? What are the main ‘Punk’ and ‘Gothic’ themes, tastes, interests, practices, activities, collectivities represented in the texts, and what do they tell us about how young people viewed life in the GDR or life in general? Which emotions are expressed in the texts, and which narratives are constructed in Punk and Gothic micro-media like song lyrics and letters? How do Punks and Goths represent themselves in relation to the self, their peers, scenes, society and ideology? How do they relate meanings of Gothic and Punk to their own existences and their fears, hopes, and desires? How is being and doing

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<sup>268</sup> Martin, *Culture, Subculture and Social Organization*, p. 33.

<sup>269</sup> Jones, *Complicity, Censorship and Criticism*, p. 206.

Goth(ic) articulated, communicated, negotiated and debated? What discourses, patterns, mechanisms and ambivalences can be identified?

And, in contrast, from the perspectives of state actors, I have asked how Punk and Gothic scenes were politicized and criminalized, how they were studied, interpreted or ‘read’ from political-ideological standpoints and for political-ideological purposes, which strategies of interpretation were used, and which societal, cultural, ideological and political meanings were attributed to the subcultures and scenes? How are Punk and Gothic defined in the state documents and how do representations differ and conflict? Which decisions were made? What were the consequences for participants? Were Gothic scenes and participants perceived as a threat to society and authority and why or why not? What overlap between state representations and subcultural self-representations can be identified in texts? How is being and doing Goth(ic) articulated, communicated, negotiated and debated? Where, why and how do views, interests and meanings clash? How does Post-Punk confusion unfold from state perspectives? What discourses, patterns, mechanisms and ambivalences can be identified?

This study combines a history from above<sup>270</sup> with a history from below<sup>271</sup> and was conducted through a method critical, (post)structuralist linguistic close-reading.<sup>272</sup> I have consulted sources such as song lyrics, poems, interviews and letters, as well as some video and audio material through a focus on language; terminology, rhetorics and metaphors. During the close-reading of these sources I focused on details such as repetitive terms, varying descriptions and contradictory arguments to investigate how meanings, narratives, identities and collectivities are constructed. The first strand of empirical material consists of that which I refer to as subcultural micro-media<sup>273</sup> and which comprises unofficial knowledge or subcultural capital. The types of texts I have consulted were produced by and for participants in Punk and Gothic culture (in the broadest sense) in the GDR, or they are texts which contain that which I have considered Punk or Gothic themes. Next to this, I have consulted video and audio material related to East German Punk and Gothic subculture which are considered and have been close-read as texts. The second strand of empirical material consists of official political documents from different departments within the MfS

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<sup>270</sup> Lindenberger, *Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn*.

<sup>271</sup> Lindenberger, *Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn*.

<sup>272</sup> Alison Lewis, ‘Reading and Writing the Stasi File. On the Uses and Abuses of the File as (Auto)biography’, *German Life and Letters*, 56.4 (2003), 377 – 397 (383).

<sup>273</sup> Thornton, *Club Cultures*, p. 137.

(including the *Ministerium des Innern*) and the East German *Volkspolizei* (People's Police), which are interrogation protocols, investigation and observation reports, instructions, analyses, overviews, statements and music-related reviews. These three political institutions functioned as state security organs and hence had as key task the observation, investigation and conviction of (youth) subcultures.

A small section of the sources consulted in this study was exhibited at the *Museum Runde Ecke* in Leipzig (former regional Stasi office) as part of the WGT festival programme. It was during the first exhibition in 2013 titled *Kinder der Nacht. Unangepasst und überwacht, Gruftis, Punks & Co - Alternative Jugend im Visier der Stasi* that the idea for my research project was born. The statement from director Regina Schild of the regional department of the Stasi archives (the *Bundesbeauftragter für die Unterlagen des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit der ehemaligen DDR* or *BStU* in short)<sup>274</sup> that the success of the exhibition symbolized the defeat of the Stasi and the victory of participants in Gothic subculture, exemplifies the focus on repression in the historiography of the subcultures of the GDR. In contrast, the *Stadtgeschichtliches Museum* organized the exhibition *Anfänge der Leipziger Szene*<sup>275</sup> in 2017, during which unreleased archival photo and video material was shown. Both exhibitions were, however, not accompanied by or followed up by relevant studies and publications. Thanks to the fact that the BStU archive in Berlin is, however, accessible to researchers, I was able to consult an enormous quantity of political documentation on Punk and Gothic subcultures and discovered that the MfS files contain unique subcultural material, such as song lyrics, poems, letters, photos and drawings.

This thesis does not intend to answer Jasper's<sup>276</sup> question 'whether resistance is what lies at the core of Gothic subculture,' or whether Gothic subculture in the GDR was political or not, but instead demonstrate if, when, how and why Gothic was politicised, criminalised, marginalised, stigmatised by political actors and/or subcultural actors or not, if, how and when and why young East Germans produced and consumed subcultural capital and performed politics of representation; in which ways and for which reasons and how they were read and which meanings, purposes, causes and effects were attributed to them by

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<sup>274</sup> [www.demokratie-statt-diktatur.de/DE/InDerRegion/Leipzig/Notizen/20140604\\_ankuendigung\\_wave-gotik-nacht.html](http://www.demokratie-statt-diktatur.de/DE/InDerRegion/Leipzig/Notizen/20140604_ankuendigung_wave-gotik-nacht.html); [www.demokratie-statt-diktatur.de/DE/InDerRegion/Leipzig/Notizen/20130518\\_wgt\\_2013.html](http://www.demokratie-statt-diktatur.de/DE/InDerRegion/Leipzig/Notizen/20130518_wgt_2013.html) [accessed on 31 Oktober 2018].

<sup>275</sup> [www.stadtgeschichtliches-museum-leipzig.de/ausstellungen/archiv/archiv-2018-2017/salon-der-erinnerungen-aus-den-anfaengen-der-leipziger-szene](http://www.stadtgeschichtliches-museum-leipzig.de/ausstellungen/archiv/archiv-2018-2017/salon-der-erinnerungen-aus-den-anfaengen-der-leipziger-szene) [accessed on 8 June 2018].

<sup>276</sup> Jasper, *The Mysts of the Gothic Underground*, p. 33.

different actors through which strategies and methods and from which perspectives, for which reasons, with which aims and in which ways.

Based on my research, I can confirm Alison Lewis<sup>277</sup> remark that ‘the files are an infinitely rich source of information about everyday life in the GDR’, of which subcultures were a vital part. However, scholars have disagreed over the value of this source. Cooke and Hubble<sup>278</sup> write ‘all histories of the GDR now contain a sizeable chunk on the Stasi,’ because ‘the role of the MfS has also become of almost obsessional importance to commentators on GDR history as a whole range of researchers and academics attempt to reconstruct life in the GDR from the perspective of the information collected by the Stasi’. However, when I consulted MfS files as historical sources to reconstruct subcultural life in the GDR, I was aware that, as Jones<sup>279</sup> stresses, ‘events are filtered through the lens of ideology, pressure to report success, and a particular vocabulary, that is, they are reported from a particular perspective’. Nevertheless, as Jones adds, ‘the text still refers to past events external to it’, and thus, ‘despite [...] the problem of a language drenched in ideology, this language does describe a reality’. MfS files on subcultures show that the authorities had a ‘a vital political interest in identifying real problems with a degree of accuracy in the interests of effective policy-making and political control’, as Fulbrook<sup>280</sup> writes, and I therefore consider them a valuable source through which realities of subcultures can be explored and at least certain aspects of the history of Gothic in the GDR can be written.

Lewis<sup>281</sup> makes the interesting point that ‘despite their many omissions, the security files offer exhaustive and comprehensive biographical studies of persons who were suspected of committing crimes against the East German state’. Among biographical studies were participants in youth (sub)cultures. Lewis<sup>282</sup> views these as ‘unauthorised biographies’ with ‘harmful and aggressive intentions’, because the biographies of ‘dissident subjects and real or imagined enemies of the state’ are always written from a hostile perspective, as ‘the persons the files describe are alleged to be hostile to the state. I agree with Jones<sup>283</sup> who writes that when we read these files, we must consider ‘the implications of the Stasi

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<sup>277</sup> Lewis, ‘Reading and Writing the Stasi File’, pp. 379 – 380.

<sup>278</sup> Cooke and Hubble, ‘Die volkseigene Opposition?’, p. 118.

<sup>279</sup> Jones, *Complicity, Censorship and Criticism*, p. 91.

<sup>280</sup> Mary Fulbrook, *Interpretations of the two Germanies 1945 – 1990* (Basingstoke/London: MacMillan Press, 2000), p. 7.

<sup>281</sup> Lewis, ‘Reading and Writing the Stasi File’, p. 388.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 383 – 384.

<sup>283</sup> Jones, *Complicity, Censorship and Criticism*, p. 91.

terminology used to classify individual behaviour’, and that, as Häder<sup>284</sup> argues, the language in MfS files with which youth and subcultures are described is highly monotonous, repetitious and ritualized. Lewis<sup>285</sup> notes about the language that even ‘where the rhetoric of the files is not overtly hostile [...] the political and bureaucratic purpose of file writing was always hostile’. But the question is whether this purpose was always fulfilled or maintained.

Lewis<sup>286</sup> rightfully notes that the MfS files exhibit an ‘intricate web of ministerial imperatives, ministerial guidelines and departmental orders to police’ which aimed to confirm a ‘regime of truth’ and ‘discipline difference and dissidence’. But I agree with Cooke and Hubble<sup>287</sup> that ‘allegations about its control of the alternative culture are treated more or less sensitively’ by scholars, and that many works ‘inevitably leave the reader with the impression of a vast omnipresent, omnipotent structure’. The key question for my research was how to ‘go beyond the perception of the Stasi as an all-pervading organ of repression [...] whilst not wishing to underplay the culpability of the Stasi or to sanitise its activities’<sup>288</sup>. I argue that a close-reading of the Stasi files can provide fresh and nuanced ‘insights into the workings of the GDR’<sup>289</sup>, when we first realise that the Stasi’s control over and knowledge of (sub)culture was, as Cooke and Hubble<sup>290</sup> stress, never total to begin with, and that the MfS was not a homogeneous organization and system. While not trivialising any of ‘the negative effects MfS infiltration’, Cooke and Hubble<sup>291</sup> recommend a re-focus in the historiography. This thesis contributes to this by investigating how, when and why the ‘eyes and ears of the MfS’<sup>292</sup> interpreted subcultural phenomena, styles and practices differently.

The study of any subculture in the GDR will confirm the East German authorities’ ‘paranoid distrust of its own citizens and the absurd lengths to which it would go in order to keep them in check’<sup>293</sup>. But the study of Gothic subculture proves that ‘different perspectives result from the different interests of those who were responsible’, to quote Fulbrook<sup>294</sup>, and

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<sup>284</sup> Häder, ‘Zeugnisse von Eigen-Sinn’, p. 68.

<sup>285</sup> Lewis, ‘Reading and Writing the Stasi File, pp. 383 – 384.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid., p. 389.

<sup>287</sup> Cooke and Hubble, ‘Die volkseigene Opposition?’, p. 117.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> Fulbrook cited in Jones, *Complicity, Censorship and Criticism*, p. 23.

that crucially, as Cooke and Hubble<sup>295</sup> argue, ‘whilst the MfS was naturally interested in any activity it could classify as “hostile-negative” or “hostile to socialism”, its *assessment* [italics in original] of the potential nature of such activity determined whether action was taken or not’. As texts are ‘much determined by the *occasion* and *place* [italics in original] of its writing and reading as it is by its formal linguistic or narrative properties’, as Lewis<sup>296</sup> writes, it must be noted that, against the impression given in the historiography, different occasions and places within the MfS and police apparatus and different occasions and places within subculture resulted in different assessments of subculture. Therefore, while keeping in mind the ‘discursive and bureaucratic techniques of stigmatizing suspects through the production of often tedious and trivial reports’, as Lewis stresses<sup>297</sup>, a close-reading of the Stasi’s ‘Verschriftlichungsmanie’<sup>298</sup> of subculture enables valuable insights into subcultural biographies on the one hand, and the ambiguities, inconsistencies and shifts within the Stasi’s studies of and strategies against subcultures on the other hand.

One of such ambivalent shifts has been addressed in the Literature Review and is a focal point within my close-reading of MfS files, namely that the conceptual and rhetorical innovation regarding some forms of subculture took place, as the concept of *die anderen Bands* shows. It has hardly been considered in research that regardless of the politicizing terminology and criminalizing categories in state texts, perspectives within the state security organs differed per department, goal and interests, and that subcultural developments have resulted in revisions of state rhetorics and policies within the dominant political-ideological narrative. While the MfS files consulted in this study are thus perceived as ‘witness to the state’s desire for total control as well as a participant in its means of achieving this’, to quote Lewis<sup>299</sup>, the close-reading of a large quantity of files from a relatively long period (seven years), exhibits how state strategies succeeded as well as failed, and that although total control is suggested in terminology and rhetorics, we can find patterns and mechanisms which reveal that reality was far more fragmented and complex.

Following Hubble and Cooke’s remark that the MfS files ‘must not be relied on as the exclusive source for facts about GDR history,’<sup>300</sup> I have complemented these sources

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<sup>295</sup> Cooke and Hubble, ‘Die volkseigene Opposition?’, p. 130.

<sup>296</sup> Lewis, ‘Reading and Writing the Stasi File’, p. 389.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 388.

<sup>298</sup> Henke and Engelmann cited in Häder, ‘Zeugnisse von Eigen-Sinn’, p. 68.

<sup>299</sup> Lewis, ‘Reading and Writing the Stasi File’, p. 388.

<sup>300</sup> Cooke and Hubble, ‘Die volkseigene Opposition?’, p. 118.

with subcultural sources for the history from below perspective to explore the subcultural capital of Gothic (and for a small part Punk) in the GDR. It should be noted that compared to the large quantity of MfS files on subcultures, subcultural micro-media from the GDR are extremely scarce. Nevertheless, the close-reading of, for example song lyrics, letters, audio and video material which can be found in the Stasi files, online and in a few publications, has proven to be very fruitful, because the subcultural material offers different perspectives, and because the texts are ‘witnesses of the life-moods of epochs’<sup>301</sup> and expressions of ‘unvarnished feelings and views’<sup>302</sup> in a specific historical time frame,<sup>303</sup> as Günther Niggle and Werner Marholz have written. These Punk and Gothic (self-)representations represent scenes, genres, styles, themes, moods, ideologies and emotions and construct realities, meanings, identities and communities associated with the subcultures on the one hand, and with the *Zeitgeist* on the other hand. Like all (historical) forms of writings, it must be kept in mind that we are dealing with subjectivities, but this study shows that within the pieces and fragments of subcultural capital, patterns, structures and dynamics can be revealed that ultimately define the unique as well as universal characteristics and qualities of East German Gothic.

#### IV. Thesis Structure

This thesis is divided into four main chapters. Chapter 1 and 3 explore subcultural (self-)representations, while Chapter 2 and 4 focus on state representations of Goth. Chapter 1 examines how subcultures offered sources of identity, ideology, and community for young East Germans, and how these subcultural identities are represented in interviews, song lyrics, essays, slogans, fanzines, statements. This chapter focuses on how the self is represented in the context of subculture and the GDR, in the light of (No) future fear, *Endzeitstimmung* and existentialism. The chapter analyses how the self-representations thematise, criticise, and negotiate, or, *expand*, the parameters of identity, ideology, and life, and how they differ. The aim of the chapter is *to demonstrate that the Post-Punk transition split subculture in the GDR and resulted into two main subcultural movements*; a second Punk generation with

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<sup>301</sup> Günther Niggl, *Die Autobiographie. Zur Form und Geschichte einer literarischen Gattung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1998), pp. 72 – 73.

<sup>302</sup> Marholz cited in Günther Niggl, *Die Autobiographie. Zur Form und Geschichte einer literarischen Gattung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1998), pp. 72 – 73.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*

clearly defined boundaries of subculture, and a Post-Punk generation which crossed boundaries.

Chapter 2 explores the *Post-Punk confusion* in official state subculture theory which links to the Post-Punk transition in Chapter 1. Keeping the self-representations, ambivalences, and conflicts of Chapter 1 in mind, this chapter first investigates the ‘grand’ Punk theory in police and MfS files to demonstrate how Punk was understood from the state’s perspective, and then explores how the MfS observed and defined the subcultural fragmentation and new Post-Punk and Gothic scenes (New Wave, New Romantic, *Grufiti(e)s*), and how investigators focused on their ‘spectacular styles’ and if, how and when they applied strategies and methods to find their hidden ideological, social, political and cultural meanings, and which meanings, identities and collectivities were constructed. The aim of the chapter is *to investigate how the Post-Punk confusion influenced MfS and police strategies, ‘readings’, and definitions of subculture* and how the new Gothic subculture with its different (sub)scenes, styles, and meanings was defined, represented, and responded to.

Chapter 3 links to Chapters 1 and 2 because both Chapters have shown that subcultural self-representations and representations of subculture show different meanings and readings. This chapter explores a *dichotomy in ‘Goth’ self-representation* by focusing on specific subcultural capital, subcultural spaces vs. public spaces, and fan collectives. The chapter analyses spectacular Gothic self-representations and non-spectacular Gothic self-representation to show how and why participants in Gothic scenes performed politics of representation which comprised negotiation, compromise and confrontation for scene-related conflicts, interests and practices. The aim of the chapter is *to demonstrate that the (sub)culture was not coherent as it meant different things to different teenagers who represented themselves and their scenes differently*, in response to others, societal and ideological issues, while using insider-outsider strategies and building trans-local and transnational networks.

Chapter 4 links to Chapters 1, 2, and 3 by exploring a *dichotomy in the political representation of Gothic* which is directly linked to pluriformity and ambivalence of Gothic culture, the attempts to politicise, criminalise and ideologise it, to read it, and find hidden meanings. The question is why the observations and investigations continued and how. The chapter explores specific police and MfS investigations into youth conflicts and strategies which were considered related to Gothic and if and how it changed the state’s perspectives on Gothic culture. The aim of the chapter is *to demonstrate if, how and when the MfS failed*



*in applying the semiological method and principle of homology to Gothic culture and as a coherent 'subculture', or as a 'subculture' at all, as it turned out that there were many shades of Gothic. The question is how these are represented from state perspectives and how perspectives have changed over time.*

## CHAPTER 1

### DYSTOPIAN FUTURES AND UTOPIAN ENDINGS

### IN (POST)-PUNK AND GOTHIC SELF-WRITINGS

#### Introduction

‘Die deutsche Jugend ist unsere Hoffnung. In Euren Händen wird die Zukunft des Vaterlandes liegen’. During the second party conference<sup>1</sup> of the *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* (hereafter SED) in 1952, it was decided that the *Freie Deutsche Jugend* (hereafter FDJ) carried high responsibility in the ‘Erziehung und Überzeugung’ of the young generation, as described by in various studies<sup>2</sup>. Thirty years later, the people of the future seemed to have lost all faith in the socialist-communist system. Peter Wurschi<sup>3</sup> describes the 1980s as dark times during which the discovery of the self (‘Ich’) clashed with the system’s emphasis on the collective, and a ‘distanced generation’ turned its back on real existing socialism. Wolfgang Rüdtenklau<sup>4</sup> has written about this topic that during the last decade of its existence, the GDR was a society ‘die ein umfassendes “Ich-Sein” nicht zuließ’, and that the constant pressure had left its citizens in a state of disillusion, depression and despair.

In 1983, the FDJ’s publishing organ *Verlag Neues Leben* published a youth book titled *Vom Sinn unseres Lebens*. It can be considered as a political, rhetorical strategy which

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<sup>1</sup> SAPMO BArch, DY 24 / 1064, FDJ, *Abt. Staat und Recht, Jugendkriminalität 1961-1962, Kriminalitätsanalyse für das Jahr 1960, VS-Stelle, Vertrauliche Verschlusssache*, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Erhard-Veit Schulze, *Die Funktionen der FDJ. Eine Studie zur Soziologie der Massenorganisationen in der Volkdemokratischen Gesellschaft, Berlin*, (1960, Marburg), p. 36; Helmut Altrichter and Karl-Heinz Ruffmann, “Modernisierung” versus “Sozialismus”. *Formen und Strategien sozialen Wandels im 20. Jahrhundert* (Erlangen, IGW Verlag, 1983), p. 293; Verena Zimmermann, *Den neuen Menschen schaffen: Die Umerziehung von schwererziehbaren und straffälligen Jugendlichen in der DDR (1945 – 1990)* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2004), p. 210.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Wurschi, *Rennsteigbeat. Jugendliche Subkulturen Im Thüringer Raum 1952 – 1989* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2007), p. 228.

<sup>4</sup> Wolfgang Rüdtenklau, *Störenfried. DDR-Opposition 1986 – 1989* (Amsterdam/Berlin: Basisdruck Verlag, 1992), p. 260.

served to convince young readers that ‘Ich-Sein’ and collectivity were not conflictual at all. Anselma Gallinat<sup>5</sup> explains about the FDJ book that the ‘concept of community-oriented self is underpinned by the acknowledgement of individuality. The expression of this individuality is, however, only possible within and through subordination to collective goals, since individuals are encompassed in a collectively willed society through their membership of different, smaller and larger social collectives’. It is written in *Vom Sinn unseres Lebens*<sup>6</sup> that ‘to develop oneself in all areas as a socialistic personality is a high expectation, a valuable aim in life. This [...] is the way to give life a higher meaning, to become active for personal happiness and the happiness of everyone’. This definition of individual bliss and higher meaning, as Gallinat<sup>7</sup> notes, ruled out ‘glorifying individualism’, to quote Juliane Brauer,<sup>8</sup> and ‘looking for absolute personal freedom’, because ‘Ich-Sein’ was defined by the ‘sozialistische Menschengesellschaft’, as Verena Zimmermann<sup>9</sup> also points out in her book *Den neuen Menschen schaffen*.

In the GDR, hence, (socialist) identity was shaped and constrained by political ideology and social conventions, as Mary Fulbrook<sup>10</sup> writes in *Becoming East German*. Therefore, as Andreas Hadjar<sup>11</sup> notes, ‘it was difficult to drop out of the individual role the state had moulded for each person’. As soon as individuals negotiated, as Fulbrook<sup>12</sup> notes, ‘the parameters of their own individual lives’, for instance when subcultures offered ‘new sources of identity [which] signify difference and change’, to quote Chris Jenks<sup>13</sup>, the SED perceived this as ‘a liberal declaration of freedom of expression, [...] contrary to dominant social conventions’, to use David Muggleton’s<sup>14</sup> description of subculture. Brauer<sup>15</sup> is right

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<sup>5</sup> Gallinat, Anselma, ‘A ritual middle ground? Personhood, ideology and resistance in East Germany’, *Social Anthropology*, 13.3 (2005), 291-305 (291) [Quote from the *Zentraler Ausschuß* (East Berlin: Verlag Neues Leben, 1983), p. 260]. Gallinat, *A Ritual Middle Ground*, p. 296.

<sup>6</sup> Gallinat, *A Ritual Middle Ground?*, p. 260.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 296.

<sup>8</sup> Juliane Brauer, ‘Clashes of Emotions. Punk Music, Youth Subculture, and Authority in the GDR (1978 – 1983)’, *Social Justice*, 38.4 (2012), 53 – 70 (p. 59).

<sup>9</sup> Zimmermann, Verena, *Den neuen Menschen schaffen: Die Umerziehung von schwererziehbaren und straffälligen Jugendlichen in der DDR (1945 – 1990)* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2004), p. 210.

<sup>10</sup> Mary Fulbrook, *Becoming East German. Socialist Structures and Sensibilities after Hitler* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn, 2013), p. 280.

<sup>11</sup> Andreas Hadjar, ‘Non-violent political protest in East Germany in the 1980s: Protestant church, opposition groups and the people’, *German Politics*, 12.3 (2003), 107-128 (p. 121).

<sup>12</sup> Mary Fulbrook, *The People’s State. East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Chris Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of The Social* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publishing, 2004), p. 145.

<sup>14</sup> David Muggleton, *Inside Subculture: The Postmodern Meaning of Style (Dress, Body, Culture)* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2000), p. 161.

<sup>15</sup> Brauer, *Clashes of Emotions*, p. 56.

to note that ‘penalties and exclusion f[e]ll on those who do not conform’ in the GDR, and Fulbrook<sup>16</sup> notes that although ‘every system has its misfits’, ‘this particular system allowed fewer deviations from its ordained worldview and was more committed to a vision of what people should believe [...] the penalties for deviance were far greater’. But this chapter demonstrates that among the ‘sundry possibilities for individual agency’<sup>17</sup> were subcultural possibilities and self-representations in which alternative self- and world-views cross and blurr social, political and ideological boundaries. This chapter focuses on how individual agency in the form of self-writing thematises futures and endings, and how the texts construct identities, representations of ‘Ich-Sein’, in spatial, social and ideological contexts.

This chapter looks at subcultural writings from young East Germans which fit into two different strands of existentialism. I refer to the first strand as No Future anarchy and to the second strand as ‘Endzeitstimmung’ or ‘Endzeit’. I argue that within both strands we find constructions of ‘Ich-Sein’ but that they represent it differently. The texts analysed in this chapter contain existential, ideological and social ‘perceptions and subjectivities of people living at the time’, to quote Fulbrook<sup>18</sup>; namely young people in the GDR between 1982 and 1989 who participated in Punk and Gothic-related subcultures, or who thematised Punk and Gothic-related themes, views and moods in their writings in local, national and globalised contexts of broader social questions, issues and events.

Three intertwined questions are asked in this chapter: how is identity or ‘Ich-Sein’ represented in the self-representations, how does it relate to collectivity, society and ideology, and which meanings, purposes and narratives are constructed regarding life, (no) future and death or ‘Endzeit’? It will be shown which different themes, identities and strategies regarding existential conflict (isolation, fear, apathy, anger) and existential critique, (symbolical) resistance and (symbolical) solutions are offered in these subcultural micro-media.

The chapter is divided into four subchapters: the first two subchapters examine Punk ‘Ich-Sein’ in the GDR in the context of (no) future, ideology, collectivity and life in the GDR. It will be demonstrated which identities, themes, strategies, meanings, purposes and narratives Punk self-representations from 1982 and 1983 construct. The third chapter explores the Post-Punk transition; the end of the first Punk generation and beginning of Post-

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<sup>16</sup> Fulbrook, *The People's State*, p. 292.

<sup>17</sup> Fulbrook, *Becoming East German*, p. 289.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 283, 277.

Punk Gothic-related subcultures. It analyses the shift in the subcultural self-representation regarding identity, ideology, and collectivity in the context of life in the GDR and gives it new, 'higher' negative as well as positive meanings. The fourth chapter investigates the difference between No Future and 'Endzeit' texts by focusing on the different representations of 'Ich-Sein', future and 'the end' in different micro-media.

### I. The Conflictual Self in Critical Punk Texts: 'Ich-Sein' vs. *Too Much Future*

Punk carried 'a simple message, which has been played over generation after generation: the rejection of existing rules, the assertion of the need for change and the desperate call to be yourself. It took many of its primary elements from the early days of rock music, celebrating youth rebellion and individuality above all else', as Amy Spencer<sup>19</sup> writes. Such a celebration was problematic in the West and the East. Dick Hebdige's<sup>20</sup> definition of British Punk as 'blockage in the system of representation' applies to East German Punk self-writings, but it has a different ideological connotation, as will be shown in this subchapter.

Sonja Häder<sup>21</sup> writes that the symbolic resistance of Punk was representative for the mood of a large part of the young East German generation. The *No Future* slogan of Western Punk appealed to teenagers in the GDR too and clashed with that which Martin Sabrow<sup>22</sup> has called 'Zukunftspathos'; the rhetoric and representation of the modernist socialist society and better (Marxist) future with which the SED propagated and justified its rule and policy. Punk 'provoked by means of textual critique', as Patricia Anne Simpson<sup>23</sup> notes, and therefore 'became associated with a critical identity'. The critical identity which we can identify in East German Punk self-writings illustrates how adolescents also wrote their own 'abweichende Biographie', to use Manuela Holdenried's<sup>24</sup> term; a written self-representation

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<sup>19</sup> Amy Spencer, *DIY. The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture* (London: Marion Boyars Publishers, 2005), p. 227.

<sup>20</sup> Dick Hebdige, *Subculture. The meaning of Style* (London/New York: Routledge, 1979), p. 119.

<sup>21</sup> Häder, Sonja Häder, 'Zeugnisse von Eigen-Sinn. Punks in der späten DDR', in *Der Bildungsgang des Subjekts. Bildungstheoretische Analysen (Zeitschrift für Pädagogik 48)*, ed. by Sonja Häder and Heinz-Elmar Tenorth (Weinheim and Basel: Beltz Verlag, 2004), pp. 68 – 48 (p. 81).

<sup>22</sup> Martin Sabrow, 'Zukunftspathos als Legitimationsressource. Zu Charakter und Wandel des Fortschrittsparadigmas in der DDR', in *Aufbruch in die Zukunft. Die 1960er Jahre zwischen Planungseuphorie und kulturellem Wandel. DDR, CSSR und Bundesrepublik Deutschland im internationalen Vergleich*, ed. by Haupt, Heinz G. and Jörg Requate (Weilerswist: Velbrück Wissenschaft Verlag, 2004), pp. 165 – 185.

<sup>23</sup> Patricia Anne Simpson, 'Germany and its Discontents. Die Skeptiker's Punk Corrective', *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 34.3 (2000), 129 – 140 (p. 130).

<sup>24</sup> Michaela Holdenried, *Autobiographie* (Ditzingen: Reclam Verlag, 2000), p. 37.

that clashes with social norms. When we follow Spencer's<sup>25</sup> note that 'punk encapsulates an emotional artistic response, a means for an individual to assert a sense of their own identity in what they see to be a constrictive society,' the question is how the texts construct Punk identity and what characterises 'Punk subjectivities', as Häder<sup>26</sup> also asks. It will be demonstrated that East German Punk texts of 1982 and 1983 can be considered as that which is called a 'reflexive self-experiment' in autobiography theory<sup>27</sup>, in which Punk is represented as a life philosophy and participants as 'Dichter und Denker'. This subchapter analyses the textual critique and critical identity of East German Punk and highlights its ambiguous nature.

Punk was a transnational phenomenon, yet East German Punk has 'specific national characteristics', as Simpson<sup>28</sup> stresses, because, as Jeff Hayton<sup>29</sup> writes, Punk texts are 'condemning life under "real-existing socialism"'. This subchapter answers the question of which specific national characteristics can be identified in East German Punk texts, how they condemn life in the GDR, and how representations of 'Ich-Sein' related to the critical context and the critique. Peter Brandes<sup>30</sup> writes in his essay on 'The Politics of Lyrics in German Punk' that 'at the political level punk lyrics do not so much articulate an anarchistic ideology as enunciate individual or collective identifications by the literary means of rhyme, metaphor, and irony'. This subchapter asks which politics of representation can be identified in East German Punk lyrics from 1982 and 1983, and how East German Punk self-representations articulate ideology and individuality in the ideological context of the GDR.

Answers can be found in a series of interviews which were held in East Berlin in 1982. An eighteen-year old (anonymised) male<sup>31</sup> expresses a nihilist view on 'Ich-Sein': 'irgendwann hat det sowieso mal allet ein Ende. Allet hat doch mal ein Ende. Vielleicht denk ich det zu pessimistisch, [...] wat ick eigentlich sonst nich bin, pessimistisch. Aber ick glaube eben an nischt [Berlin dialect in original]'. The statement is exemplary for the mood

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<sup>25</sup> Spencer, *DIY*, p. 230.

<sup>26</sup> Häder, 'Zeugnisse von Eigen-Sinn', p. 69.

<sup>27</sup> Holdenried, *Autobiographie*, p. 13.

<sup>28</sup> Simpson, 'Germany and its Discontents', p. 129.

<sup>29</sup> Jeff Hayton, 'Härte gegen Punk: Popular Music, Western Media, and State Response in the German Democratic Republic', *German History*, 31.4 (2013), 523 – 549 (p. 340).

<sup>30</sup> Peter Brandes, 'The Politics of Lyrics in German Punk', in *Beyond No Future. Cultures of German Punk*, ed. by Mirko M. Hall, Seth Howes, and Cyrus M. Shahan, (New York/London: Bloomsbury, 2018), pp. 55 – 70 (p. 55)

<sup>31</sup> BStU, MfS, HA IX, 19073, p. 13 [MfS copy of Gilbert Furian's interview transcript]

that Gilbert Furian<sup>32</sup>, an East German human rights activist, captured when he decided to interview seven Punks, among whom were the members of a Punk band called *Planlos*. Thanks to Furian's interviews, the views and moods of young East Germans who represented themselves as Punks have been preserved. When the MfS got hold of a copy of the interview manuscript, Furian was sentenced to two years in prison. In 2002, Furian and Nikolaus Becker published the interviews with retrospective comments from the interviewees and copies of MfS reports in a book called *Auch im Osten trägt man Westen. Punks in der DDR und was aus ihnen geworden ist*.<sup>33</sup> For this chapter, the publication and the copy of the transcript as contained in the MfS file (from the BStU archive) have been consulted. It is written on the website<sup>34</sup> of the publisher *Hirnkost Verlag* that the interviews are exemplary for 'das ganze Unbehagen an den verlogenen und verplanten Lebensumständen in der späten DDR', and that the No Future discussion among Furian's interviews proves that it took a lot of creativity for adolescents at the time to question the world in text and music.

Furian's interview questions triggered a debate among the Punks about anarchy, ideology, future and 'Ich-Sein' in the GDR. The members of the band *Planlos* explained that for them, East German Punk was not a fashion fad and not a copy of Western No Future Punk which they considered as rebellion with a serious cause and therefore as 'no fun'. Whereas East Germans were also 'singing about issues that affected their lives', as Spencer<sup>35</sup> remarks about British Punk music, these issues were not, like in the West, 'unemployment, poverty and the class divide'. Nevertheless, East German Punks also 'believed what they were singing about was the heartfelt truth – that their country was failing them'.<sup>36</sup> Hence, while Western Punk was interpreted by scholars, journalists and politicians as 'a direct attack on society'<sup>37</sup>, East German Punk was also interpreted as such an attack by the East German authorities (as will be further explained in Chapter 2), the political message of Punk thinkers and writers in the GDR, as the interviews<sup>38</sup> illustrate and as will now be further demonstrated, both differed and overlapped with that of Western Punks.

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<sup>32</sup> Information on Furian can be found on [www.stiftung-hsh.de/service/fuehrungen/zeitzeugen/inhaftierte-der-80er-jahre/gilbert-furian](http://www.stiftung-hsh.de/service/fuehrungen/zeitzeugen/inhaftierte-der-80er-jahre/gilbert-furian); [www.zeitzeugenbuero.de/index.php?id=detail&zzp=12](http://www.zeitzeugenbuero.de/index.php?id=detail&zzp=12) [accessed on 6 August 2018].

<sup>33</sup> Nikolaus Becker and Gilbert Furian (eds.), *"Auch im Osten trägt man Westen" Punks in der DDR. Und was aus ihnen geworden ist* (Berlin: Hirnkost Verlag, 2012).

<sup>34</sup> [www.hirnkost.de/programm/a-c/auch-im-osten-traegt-man-westen-punks-in-der-ddr-und-was-aus-ihnen-geworden-ist/](http://www.hirnkost.de/programm/a-c/auch-im-osten-traegt-man-westen-punks-in-der-ddr-und-was-aus-ihnen-geworden-ist/) [accessed on 20 November 2018].

<sup>35</sup> Spencer, *DIY*, p. 240.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Becker and Furian, *"Auch im Osten trägt man Westen"*, p. 36.

The interviews indicate that Punk was a subculture that enabled a transformation of its original ideological form. It was not for no reason that the movement emerged in the West and East. Young people in both systems viewed the future as looking very bleak for their own existence. When Furian asked his interviewees how they saw their future, they translated his question into ‘Wie lange jeder Punk macht?’ and confirmed Furian’s expectation that Punk was currently the most important thing in their lives. Yet something was bothering the adolescents<sup>39</sup>, because they explained: ‘uns graut eben, was morgen is’. When Furian asked them why, the answer<sup>40</sup> he received represented a collective No Future identity which did not differ from the Western No Future message: ‘wir haben ja sowieso nischt zu gewinnen, sind ja sowieso die verlorene Generation’.

However, although ‘German Punks in the 1980s declared “No Future” as one of their main paradigms’, as Dennis Borghardt,<sup>41</sup> writes, some of them who were song writers created their own ideological, rhetoric conversion.<sup>42</sup> *Planlos* member Daniel Kaiser<sup>43</sup> explained that in the GDR, there was no future ‘für jeden seine Entwicklung’, to which his band colleague Michael Boehlke<sup>44</sup> added: ‘schon too much future’. The motto of East German Punk was born. *Too Much Future*<sup>45</sup> mocked the SED’s ‘Zukunftspathos’ as well as the No Future slogan. It symbolised resistance against the ‘Aufbau des Sozialismus’<sup>46</sup> and the shaping and limiting of ‘Ich-Sein’ for the collective future cause, as described by Sabrow<sup>47</sup> and Zimmermann<sup>48</sup>. Punk was thus a critical identity in a system in which ‘modernist confidence, investment and faith in the future constructed lifelong narratives’, as

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<sup>39</sup> Becker and Furian, “*Auch im Osten trägt man Westen*”, p. 18.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>41</sup> Dennis Borghardt, “‘I’d rather choose the curb.’ Topographical Writing in Recent German Punk”, in *Beyond No Future. Cultures of German Punk*, ed. by Mirko M. Hall, Seth Howes, and Cyrus M. Shahan, (New York/London: Bloomsbury, 2018), pp. 17 – 33. (pp. 30 – 31).

<sup>42</sup> Becker and Furian, “*Auch im Osten trägt man Westen*”, p. 18; *OstPunk! Too Much Future*, dir. by Michael Boehlke, Carsten Fiebeler and Henryk Gericke, (Egoli Tossell Film, Koppmedia, and Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg, 2007).

<sup>43</sup> Becker and Furian, “*Auch im Osten trägt man Westen*”, p. 1.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* p. 18; *OstPunk! Too Much Future*, dir. by Michael Boehlke, Carsten Fiebeler and Henryk Gericke, (Egoli Tossell Film, Koppmedia, and Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg, 2007).

<sup>46</sup> Altrichter and Ruffmann, “*Modernisierung*” versus “*Sozialismus*”, p. 293; Sabrow, *Zukunftspathos als Legitimationsressource*.

<sup>47</sup> Zimmermann, *Den neuen Menschen schaffen*, p. 18.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*



Muggleton<sup>49</sup> has written about the shift from modernity to postmodernity. Or in the original words<sup>50</sup> of the members of *Planlos*: ‘Wenn man geboren wird...hat man die Planstelle weg’.

Too Much Future simply expressed the lack of individual choice and autonomy (‘Selbstbestimmung’). Individual wishes, plans and aims would never come true, the interviewees<sup>51</sup> believed: ‘Für die Sache, die du irgendwie mal erreichen willst, haste doch keene Zukunft’. Their *raison d’être* was predetermined from above, and hence, the full potential of ‘Ich-Sein’ failed in all ideologies as many young people considered their future doomed eitherway.

Some of the East German Punk song lyrics thematise Too Much Future in relation to work life. Simpson<sup>52</sup> remarks about this that ‘with no official unemployment to complain about, [...] GDR punk instead negated the prevailing work ethic, whose purpose was to “maintain freedom or strengthen socialism”’. The key point Simpson<sup>53</sup> makes and which will be further explored in this subchapter is that East German Punk lyrics that thematise work ‘never explicitly critiques a specific GDR institution’. Instead, the critique ‘disrupts the endlessly rehearsed narrative of some indefinite future toward which everyone must work’<sup>54</sup>, as we will see.

A song titled *(Scheiß) Norm*<sup>55</sup> by one of the GDR’s most famous Punk bands, *Schleimkeim*, illustrates how ‘Ich-Sein’ is represented within ‘veiled criticism’, to use Simpson’s<sup>56</sup> definition, of Too Much Future. Häder<sup>57</sup> argues that *Norm* refers to one of the ‘Grundwidersprüche des Realsozialismus’ which is the ‘Erosion des legitimatorischen Arbeitsparadigmas’. *Norm*<sup>58</sup> depicts ‘Ich-Sein’ as subordinated to the industrial system: ‘Norm, Norm, Du bist zur Norm geboren. Schaffst du keine Norm, bist Du hier verloren’. The individual is depicted as a cog in a big machine in which ‘TGL’s<sup>59</sup> bestimmen Tag und Nacht’. In the online version of the lyrics, which differs from the MfS copy, this reference

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<sup>49</sup> Muggleton, *Inside Subculture*, p. 44.

<sup>50</sup> BStU, MfS, HA IX, 19073, p. 20 [MfS copy of Gilbert Furian’s interview transcript]; Becker and Furian, “*Auch im Osten trägt man Westen*”, p. 36.

<sup>51</sup> Becker and Furian, “*Auch im Osten trägt man Westen*”, p. 36.

<sup>52</sup> Simpson, ‘Germany and its Discontents’, pp. 129 – 130.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, Hauptabteilung XX. Berlin, 16. Juni 1982, *Hinweise zu jugendlichen “Punkern” in der DDR*, p. 50 [MfS copy of lyrics by *Schleimkeim*, *(Scheiß)Norm*, 1982].

<sup>56</sup> Simpson, ‘Germany and its Discontents’, p. 130.

<sup>57</sup> Häder, ‘Zeugnisse von Eigen-Sinn, 68 – 48.

<sup>58</sup> BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, *Hinweise zu jugendlichen “Punkern” in der DDR*, pp. 50 - 51 [MfS copy of lyrics by *Schleimkeim*, *(Scheiß)Norm*, 1982].

<sup>59</sup> *Technische Normen, Gütevorschriften und Lieferbedingungen*

to the GDR is absent. Instead, the online version contains the phrase ‘Kommst du dann zur Arbeit. Und glaubst du bist befreit. Doch dort mußt du deine Minuten schaffen’. *Norm* does explicitly condemn life in the GDR while the focus of the text is on the duty of working life and the lack of individual freedom. If we compare this to Hebdige’s<sup>60</sup> definition of Mod subculture as ‘a reaction to the mundane predictability of the working week’, we may ask whether *Norm* is a similar subcultural response. Yet while working class Mods in capitalist societies could compensate for work through leisure, *Norm* implies that there is no time off and that the individual merely lives to work and works to live. In *Norm*, there is no escape from industrial and societal norms.

*Norm* is critique towards predictability, conformism and monotony, as the phrase<sup>61</sup> ‘Ein- oder Allseitigkeit ist verbreitet wie die Pest’ illustrates. The use of the extreme metaphor ‘Pest’ suggests a no-cure and no-hope situation. Similarly, *Endresultat* by a band with a name which fits into this metaphorism, *Letzte Diagnose*, criticises<sup>62</sup> the collective work ethic: ‘Ich hasse den lebenden Tod und die Betriebe, sie gehen wie die Schafe zur Schur’. The metaphor ‘Schafe’ signals that the criticism is not only addressed at the system but at the collective of obeying factory workers too. Crucially, *Endresultat* does not depict life in this system or the system itself as illness, but in an exaggerated sense as living death. When we apply Jenks’<sup>63</sup> definition of subculture, *Endresultat* can be interpreted as critique towards ‘modernity’s [...] manifestations such as industrialization [...] and bureaucracy and all of the consequent corrosive vectors that were instilling in the social system such as anomie, alienation and neurosis’. We may therefore argue that *Norm* and *Endresultat* carry a key societal message that has been attributed to Western youth (sub)cultures since the 1920s, namely that ‘you can’t win’ in the wider society [...] they’re out to get you’, to use Talcott Parson’s<sup>64</sup> interpretation of ‘deviant youth’. As we will see now, such a defeatist mood (‘Resignation’) is a key characteristic of the self-representation of East German Punk.

*Norm* and *Endresultat* thematise the gap between the self and the ideology. This conflict is ambivalent, as the key phrase ‘Ich schäme mich schon lang nicht mehr für meine

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<sup>60</sup> Hebdige, *Subculture. The Meaning of Style*, p.191.

<sup>61</sup> BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, *Hinweise zu jugendlichen “Punkern” in der DDR*, p. 51 [MfS copy of lyrics by *Schleimkeim*, (*Schleiß*)*Norm*, 1982]

<sup>62</sup> BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, 1982, *Hinweise zu jugendlichen “Punkern” in der DDR*, p. 55; BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, Hauptabteilung XX, *Streng Geheim, Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen “Punkern” in der DDR*, 1983, pp. 78 – 79.

<sup>63</sup> Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of The Social*, p. 134.

<sup>64</sup> Talcott Parsons, *The Social System* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951), p. 355.

Heimat, die DDR'<sup>65</sup> from *Schleimkeim*'s song *Ende (DDR)*<sup>66</sup> illustrates. The lyrics represent Punk 'Ich-Sein' in the GDR as an inner conflict. The use of the term 'Heimat' is remarkable, because of its affectionate and nostalgic connotations, like family ties, belonging, social and cultural rootedness.<sup>67</sup> While 'meine Heimat' therefore implies an emotional connection, in the whole phrase, the relation between the 'Ich' and the GDR is clearly problematic. 'Heimat' can thus be considered schizophrenic symbolic space in this self-writing in which a sense of attachment clashes with disillusion and ultimately results in 'Resignation'. The 'Ich' has abandoned a negative emotion regarding their 'Heimat', shame. It may be that they have given up being bothered about that which caused the existential conflict in the past. While they may have stopped caring about the 'Heimat', however, the term leaves the impression that the 'Ich' feels torn. They may have reached a state of indifference or apathy, yet their identity cannot be entirely disconnected from their natural roots and ties. It is possible that the term 'Heimat' is applied purely ironically or sarcastically. Yet the powerful message does point at the core ambivalence in East German Punk self-writing. Being Punk means being, to quote Ken Gelder<sup>68</sup>, 'displaced' and 'homeless' while simultaneously 'firmly rooted in a place and/or space'. Punk singer Henryk Gericke<sup>69</sup> describes this existential conflict: 'In der DDR fühlte man sich gewissermaßen im eigenen Hause fremd'.

Borghardt's<sup>70</sup> argument that 'German punks do not write stories *about* cities in a narrow sense – but rather write *them*' applies to an untitled text<sup>71</sup> by *Schleimkeim* which is filed in an MfS case from 1982. Similar to *Norm* and *Endresultat*, metaphors are used to describe the GDR from the perspective of a conflicted 'Ich-Sein'. The lyrics describe the inner-German border marked by minefields, barbed wire, and armed guards. A phrase like '40 Meter im Quadrat nur Minenfeld und Stacheldraht' expresses a literal political critique towards the Cold War threat, next to a veiled critique towards the inner workings of the GDR. The GDR is not a 'Heimat' but an artificially and politically constructed space, as the

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<sup>65</sup> BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, *Hinweise zu jugendlichen "Punkern"*, p. 51 [MfS copy of untitled lyrics by *Schleimkeim*, 1982; lyrics partly similar to online version for *Ende (DDR)* by *Schleimkeim*, 1983].

<sup>66</sup> Online version of lyrics for *Ende (DDR)* by *Schleimkeim*, 1983, different from MfS copy <https://www.lyrix.at/t/schleim-keim-ende-ddr-4c6> [accessed on 10 August 2018].

<sup>67</sup> Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman, *Heimat. A German Dream: Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890-1990* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>68</sup> Ken Gelder, *Subculture. Cultural Histories and Social Practice* (London: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>69</sup> Henryk Gericke, 'Tanz den Kommunismus' in *Leck mich am Leben. Punk im Osten*, ed. by Frank Willmann (Berlin: Verlag Neues Leben, 2012).

<sup>70</sup> Borghardt, 'I'd rather choose the curb', p. 30.

<sup>71</sup> BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, *Hinweise zu jugendlichen "Punkern" in der DDR*, p. 54 [MfS copy of untitled song lyrics by *Schleimkeim*, 1982; lyrics partly similar to online version for *Ende (DDR)* by *Schleimkeim*, 1983].

phrase ‘ich wohne in der Zone’<sup>72</sup> exemplifies. ‘Zone’ is a pejorative term which downgrades the status of the GDR as merely a (temporal) occupied military territory within a political-ideological division. In *Ende*, the GDR is the opposite of an anthropological space; a country with a history of collective memories and traditions.

The lyrics represent the GDR as Marc Augé’s<sup>73</sup> ‘non-place’ in which people are anonymous, lonely, and without identity and attachment. Crucially, the term ‘Zone’ not only downgrades the GDR but the forcefully attached and emotionally displaced self too. The rhetoric can also be interpreted as a strategy of emotional disconnection, although the other phrases of the song suggest that the ‘Ich’ does care. The ‘Ich’, written in this (auto)biographical text from a subcultural perspective, presents their life as a symbolic ‘nomadic existence’, to use Gelder’s<sup>74</sup> words, in the spatial political ideology.

We can identify this core, unveiled criticism of East German Punk in different texts, namely the rhetoric that the non-place is, as also suggested through metaphors in *Norm* and *Endresultat*, without a cure and without an exit: ‘Hab mir den Fleck hier nicht ausgewählt, hab auch keine Lust mich hier abzuquälen. Jedoch muß ich bleiben bis zur Agonie, denn es hält mich fest die Ideologie’. While the text<sup>75</sup> represents the self in the context of the unescapable space an ideology, they construct a victim identity. The ‘Ich’ is victim of Too Much Future in this narrative and ‘Ich-Sein’ is doomed. The mood expressed in the text which sits somewhere in-between rhetorical indifference and fatalism regarding the self. As Ralf Mattern<sup>76</sup>, frontman of the East German rock band *Aufbruch* accurately captures the mood in a song text: ‘Angst und ewiges Berechnen macht uns krank und dumm’.

*Endresultat*<sup>77</sup> by *Letzte Diagnose* also represents ‘Ich-Sein’ as existential dead-end street, but the self-representation is more self-centred, diffuse, and expresses a more veiled yet also more radical nihilism. In *Endresultat*,<sup>78</sup> the ‘Ich’ is both subject and object of a mystified, Kafkaesque context: ‘Ich bin das Subjekt, ich bin der Gegenstand von nutzlosen,

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<sup>72</sup> BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, *Hinweise zu jugendlichen “Punkern” in der DDR*, p. 54 [MfS copy of untitled song lyrics by *Schleimkeim*, 1982; lyrics partly similar to online version for *Ende (DDR)* by *Schleimkeim*, 1983].

<sup>73</sup> Marc Augé, *Non-Places. An Introduction to Anthropology of Supermodernity*, (Le Seuil: Verso, 1992).

<sup>74</sup> Gelder, *Subculture*, 2007.

<sup>75</sup> BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, *Hinweise zu jugendlichen “Punkern” in der DDR*, 1982, p. 51; MfS copy of lyrics by *Schleimkeim*, (*Scheiß*)*Norm*, p. 51 [MfS copy of song lyrics for (*Scheiß*) *Norm* by *Schleimkeim*, 1982; online version differs].

<sup>76</sup> Ralf Mattern, *Verbotene Lieder, Verlorene Lieder. Texte aus der DDR 1984 – 1987* (Berlin: Books on Demand, 2001), p. 94.

<sup>77</sup> BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, *Hinweise zu jugendlichen “Punkern” in der DDR*, p. 55; BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, *Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen “Punkern” in der DDR*, 1983, pp. 78 – 79.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

zukunftslosen, endlosen, sinnlo-sen Debatten'. The criticism is veiled because there is no concrete reference to the GDR. The identity construction lacks a spatial, social or ideological context like a 'Zone', 'Betrieb', 'Heimat' or 'Arbeit'. Instead, 'Ich-Sein' is itself a text and discourse and captured in 'Debatten' which are not specified further than that the 'Ich' is their 'Subjekt/Gegenstand'. The 'Debatten' are described pejoratively in relation to the past ('endlos'), present ('nutzlos, sinnlos'), and future ('zukunftslos, endlos'). These four different notions with a similar negative connotation emphasise that the discourse is meaningless; it does not lead anywhere, does not offer solutions, nor make a difference from this perspective. The critical yet obscure text suggests that there is, just like in *Ende (DDR)* and *Norm*, no hope. In *Endresultat*, it is, however, clear that the 'Ich' has lost faith in reason and rationality, as their (non-)identity is the centre of a No Future conversation.

*Endresultat* can be interpreted as criticism towards the negative state response to Punk, as well as to the 'Zukunftspathos' and its consequences for self-determination. Crucially, the subject/object in *Endresultat*, although central to the mentioned unspecified debate, is represented as completely isolated and deattached. The following sentence from the song<sup>79</sup> signals that they perceive themselves negatively: 'Ich bin der Dreck, auf den jeder tritt. Ich bin die Waise, die niemand will'. Through the term 'Waise', the lyrics construct an ambivalent identity, because it suggests that the 'Ich' was once at home in this society, but that the natural rootedness and belonginess were suddenly or violently cut off, and that the self has become a social misfit and loser in the eyes of others.

We may identify a reference to the division of Germany, but it is unclear. What is clear is that 'Ich' does not appear indifferent regarding their (involuntary) disconnection from a 'Heimat' and their consequential negative social status. The 'Ich' is merely a passive, powerless observer of their own 'final diagnosis'. The death and illness metaphors used in the Punk texts analysed in this subchapter can be interpreted as references to Too Much Future, the Cold War context and the politicization and criminalisation of Punks who were indeed often treated as mentally disturbed.<sup>80</sup> While 'Ich-Sein' is represented as worthless and society and the system as incurable, the critical Punk identity in these texts comprises a fundamental incompatibility between individuality or 'Ich-Sein' and the collective within the grand narrative.

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<sup>79</sup> BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, *Hinweise zu jugendlichen "Punkern" in der DDR*, p. 55; BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, *Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen "Punkern" in der DDR*, 1983, pp. 78 – 79.

<sup>80</sup> Simpson, 'Germany and its Discontents', p. 130.

## II. Rhetorical Resistance: ‘Anarchiepathos’ as Biographical Punk Strategy

In the interview<sup>81</sup> with the band *Planlos*, the members remarked that they observed a trend which worried them, namely that other Punks gradually turned into ‘konservative Konformisten’, as they put it. At the same time, the Punk musicians<sup>82</sup> describe this process rationally, as they explained that Punk identity was not meant to last a life time because individuals grew older and too faint-hearted to be Punk. Interestingly, Punk was thus not only in conflict with the GDR, but with Punk identity too. Like any movement, Punk depended on collectivity, mutuality and solidarity, and this, the band members<sup>83</sup> suggested, was hanging by a thread: ‘Wenn der letzte Punk weg ist, ist Punk zuende’. The pessimist-nihilist mood expressed in the critical Punk texts analysed in the previous subchapter can therefore be interpreted as a sign of the decline in ‘faith in collective life’<sup>84</sup>.

Interestingly, some of the critical Punk texts express a sense of optimistic nihilism, or at least contain a symbolic resistance against Too Much Future and the loss of faith in Punk collectivity. Some Punk writers (re-)wrote their own fate by writing critical Punk texts with the aim to convince the conformed collective of people who ‘glauben an Illusionen, aber erkennen nicht die Realität’, as it is stated in the MfS version of *Norm*<sup>85</sup>. The metaphoric word play ‘Junge Menschen werden rote Brillen aufgesetzt’ implies that reality was veiled by a propagandistic representation of socialism, or, as formulated in *Norm*,<sup>86</sup> by ‘Demagogie, bewußte Volksverführung, totalitaristische demagogische Verirrung’. This critique towards the GDR represents the writing Punk as a self-reflective, enlightened voice that brings the truth. Yet as shown in the previous subchapter, Punk is also represented as imprisoned by the same collective illusion. The message here is thus self-reflective; while ignorance was bliss for those who followed and believed in the utopian promise, while daily life was the dystopian reality for the rational Punk thinkers.

Punk in the GDR included creative artists whose self-reflective societal and political critique was part of their identity, for example in band names like *Schleimkeim* and *Letzte Diagnose*. Whereas these symbolise the nihilist no-cure mood, calling a Punk band *Planlos*,

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<sup>81</sup> BStU, MfS, HA IX, 19073, p. 13 [MfS copy of Gilbert Furian’s interview transcript].

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Becker and Furian, “*Auch im Osten trägt man Westen*”, p. 18.

<sup>84</sup> Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of the Social*, p. 135.

<sup>85</sup> BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, *Hinweise zu jugendlichen “Punkern” in der DDR*, p. 55; BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, *Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen “Punkern” in der DDR*, pp. 78 – 79.

<sup>86</sup> BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, *Hinweise zu jugendlichen “Punkern” in der DDR*, p. 51 [MfS copy of lyrics by *Schleimkeim*, (*Scheiß*)*Norm*, 1982].

on the other hand, refers to Too Much Future while it also symbolises ironic resistance. The term ‘planlos’ translates as ‘no plan’, ‘without a plan’ or ‘aimless’. It can be considered as a rhetorical strategy which beat the ‘Zukunftspathos’ with its own stick. ‘Planlos’ also translates as disorganised and unsystematic, and thus, it represents the Punk self as resistance *within* the collective, because it depicts both the self and the system as meaningless. Refusing work or education, founding or joining a Punk band and writing critical songs was thus meaningful individual agency in this context which anyone could do. The East German Punk slogans suggest that every young East German citizen held the key to instant change in their biography in their own hands. The fatalist-activist message is expressed in cynical dichotomous rhetoric: ‘Ihr habt keine Chance also nutzt sie’, ‘Du hast keine Zukunft – mach was draus!’ and ‘Stirb nicht im Warteraum der Zukunft’. Such nihilist-optimist No Future slogans<sup>87</sup> mockingly mimic state ‘Zukunftspathos’ slogans<sup>88</sup> like ‘DDR. Staat mit Zukunft’, ‘Der modernen sozialistischen Gesellschaft gehöre die Zukunft’, and ‘Uns Gehört Die Zukunft’ which were meant to express ‘modernist confidence, investment and faith in the future’<sup>89</sup>.

The message of *The Sex Pistols*<sup>90</sup> echoes in the slogans, while the Punks represented themselves as (dying) flowers in the Marxist dustbin. The slogans symbolically turn powerlessness into agency and can therefore be perceived as blockage in the system of representation, as young people negotiated the parameters of ‘Ich-Sein’ by resisting future and embracing the now. Frank A. Schneider<sup>91</sup> who has written about Punk and New Wave in Germany writes that No Future had a liberating effect for rebellious teenagers like himself, because the Sex Pistols’ lyrics sounded like a ‘soothing promise’ which justified ‘einfach in den Tag zu leben, jetzt, und nicht erst später’. Or, as Muggleton<sup>92</sup> notes, to not ‘wait for an empty promise’ but to ‘want to future now’. A ‘degree of cynicism and irony’, as Fulbrook<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>87</sup>BStU, MfS, HA IX, 19073, p. 19 [MfS copy of Furian’s interview transcript]; <[www.hirnkost.de/programm/a-c/auch-im-osten-traegt-man-westen-punks-in-der-ddr-und-was-aus-ihnen-geworden-ist/](http://www.hirnkost.de/programm/a-c/auch-im-osten-traegt-man-westen-punks-in-der-ddr-und-was-aus-ihnen-geworden-ist/) [accessed on 20 November 2018].

<sup>88</sup> SAPMO, BArch, SgY27/211; [http://www.bstu.bund.de/DE/Wissen/DDRGeschichte/17-juni-1953/Ursachen-des-Aufstands/\\_node.html](http://www.bstu.bund.de/DE/Wissen/DDRGeschichte/17-juni-1953/Ursachen-des-Aufstands/_node.html), [accessed on 2 January 2017].

<sup>89</sup> Muggleton, *Inside Subculture*, p. 44.

<sup>90</sup> *The Sex Pistols, God Save The Queen*, 1976.

<sup>91</sup> Frank A. Schneider, ‘There’s no future like “no future”’, in *1984! Block And Block. Subkulturen im Orwell-Jahr*, ed. by Alexander Pehlemann, Bert Papenfuß and Robert Mießner (eds.), (Mainz: Ventil Verlag, 2015), (pp. 18 – 19).

<sup>92</sup> Lash and Urry cited in Muggleton, *Inside Subculture*, p. 44..

<sup>93</sup> Fulbrook, *The People’s State*, p. 3.

notes, and that which John Savage<sup>94</sup> has pointed out, namely that ‘it’s easy to forget, if you are blinded by the rhetoric, that punk could be and was fun, that it had an excellent, black sense of humor’, appears to be a pivotal element of the ambiguous critical Punk self.

By (re-)writing their own ‘abweichende Biographie’, individuals symbolically as well as practically rejected the future from above and the life purpose imposed on them by the system. Some Punk texts emphasise while others expand the boundaries of ‘Ich-Sein’ by giving themselves a *raison d’être*; having nothing no chance meant having nothing to lose. No Future resistance of below from the people of the future proved the perfect weapon against the SED’s patriarchic self-representation. Indeed, as Wurschi<sup>95</sup> writes, subculture undermined the SED’s future certainty, albeit only through rhetorical strategies in subcultural micro-media. Punk humour could, as we have seen, at least lift the gloomy mood, while hope ‘for some real improvements’, to cite Fulbrook,<sup>96</sup> had become redundant in an ‘all-consuming concentration on the now’, as Savage<sup>97</sup> defines the aesthetics of British Punk fanzines.

Was the political conflict between a part of the young generation and authority also a generation conflict in which conservatism and youth emancipation clashed, as the Punk slogan<sup>98</sup> ‘lieber sterben als genornt sein’, which is also printed in Furian’s interview manuscript, suggests? When the parent culture of any society is fundamentally incompatible Punk subculture, a Punk identity, as the slogan above suggests, meant absolute commitment to the non-conformist collective, but it was a shown, limited to the adolescent life phase. In the GDR, community spirit appears to have been trouble by the generational issue as well as state repression. Time was in this view, not on their side, while writing critical Punk texts, and even conducting interviews<sup>99</sup> with Punks, as said, equalled a crime, because, as Häder<sup>100</sup> writes, ‘Eigensinn’ and ‘Zeugnisse von Eigen-Sinn’ were considered in conflict with collective bliss. The fact that they were politically criminalised is another key theme in Punk song lyrics.

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<sup>94</sup> Jon Savage, ‘A Punk Aesthetic’, in *Punk: An Aesthetic*, ed. by Johan Kugelberg and Jon Savage (New York: Rizzoli, 2012), pp. 147 – 155 (p. 149).

<sup>95</sup> Wurschi, *Rennsteigbeat*, p. 7.

<sup>96</sup> Fulbrook, *The People’s State*, p. 3.

<sup>97</sup> Savage, ‘A Punk Aesthetic’, p. 147.

<sup>98</sup> BStU, MfS, HA IX, 19073, p. 13 [MfS copy of Furian’s interview transcript]; Becker and Furian, “*Auch im Osten trägt man Westen*”, p. 11.

<sup>99</sup> [www.radiobremen.de/bremenzwei/sendungen/zwei-nach-eins/gilbert-furian108.html](http://www.radiobremen.de/bremenzwei/sendungen/zwei-nach-eins/gilbert-furian108.html) [7 Oktober 2018].

<sup>100</sup> Häder, ‘Zeugnisse von Eigen-Sinn’.



In the lyrics<sup>101</sup> of the *Schleimkeim* song *Untergrund ist Strategie*, the ‘Ich’ states ‘ich bin ein Staatsfeind’ and has thus adopted the politically hostile Punk identity. The existential strategy (resistance) in this text suggests acceptance of this social and political status and fate, which, on the other hand, is represented as the expression of total and genuine commitment to the (collective) Punk cause. Crucially, the ‘Staatsfeind’ is not homeless, displaced or isolated (anymore) because they belong both to the state in a negative way, and to a subcultural home space called ‘Untergrund’. ‘Untergrund’ can be considered as a synonym for subculture when subculture is defined as a group that has a deviant biography as it has no legal status in society and can only perform resistance from below.

The (self-)proclaimed ‘Staatsfeind’ is not alone but member of a subculture. The success of underground resistance against the state depends on anarchist collectivity. When Furian asked his young interviewees<sup>102</sup> what anarchy meant to them, an interviewee answered: ‘a way out’. When Furian asked where to, the Punks ambivalently stated that anarchy way to achieve radical social change and a revolution, but that they did not think it offered a real solution and that the socialist-communist utopia which they supported would never come true. The real existing socialist society, they stated, was ruled by power and money just like capitalism. Both ideological systems, the interviewees added, let the young generation down. Hayton<sup>103</sup> cites a young East German Punk who expressed a similar view: ‘people think that because I am not positive towards this country that I would like to go to the West. But I think that there is the same shit here as well as over there. There is always a government, a power that wants to stay in power and will use force to hold onto it [translated into English in original]’. The Punk resistance and anarchy described in unveiled critical political songs can hence be interpreted as youth rebellion against any form of authority. At the same time, Punk is represented as a form of subcultural authority, as we will see now.

The lyrics in *Untergrund ist Strategie*<sup>104</sup> have a moralist, educational tone which can be considered ‘Anarchiepathos’ because, like ‘Zukunftpathos’, its purpose was to convince others. The Punk slogans we have seen are also expressions of ‘Anarchiepathos’, but the lyrics are more explicit. The *Schleimkeim* song *Untergrund ist Strategie* speaks to a third person and construct their identity or ‘Ich-Sein’ in an ideological, military context:

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<sup>101</sup> BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, *Hinweise zu jugendlichen “Punkern” in der DDR*, p. 54 [MfS copy of lyrics for *Untergrund ist Strategie* by *Schleimkeim*, 1982; online version differs].

<sup>102</sup> Becker and Furian, “*Auch im Osten trägt man Westen*”, p. 16.

<sup>103</sup> Hayton, *Härte gegen Punk*, p. 539.

<sup>104</sup> BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, *Hinweise zu jugendlichen “Punkern” in der DDR*, p. 54 [MfS copy of lyrics for *Untergrund ist Strategie* by *Schleimkeim*, 1982; online version differs].

Laß Dich nicht verführen und organisieren, von [sic] Führer und Partei – mach Dich frei. Denn machtlos macht nichts, Du hast nichts zu verlieren. Verweigere Dich, laß Dich nicht verführen. Laß Dich nicht belehren, Gehirn auskehren zu deutschen Marionetten, wie sie's gerne hätten. Ach, Junge, laß Dich nicht verbraten zum Soldaten für Armee und Vaterland.<sup>105</sup>

In the lyrics, the third person is victimised as they are depicted as 'machtlos'. At the same time, it is emphasised that while they have nothing to lose, they have something worth more to fight for. 'Ich-Sein' is thus simultaneously de-victimised and empowered through this rhetorical stimulus. The promise is freedom. The 'Anarchiepathos' is contained in the imperative 'Verweigere Dich' which suggests that resistance is a choice and offers a real solution. The author chose to use the term 'German', instead of 'East German' which could be interpreted as a reference to the German past, as the powerful terms 'Führer und Partei' also suggest. The army metaphor has patriotic and totalitarian connotations (like 'Vaterland' and 'Heimat') and emphasises duty, uniformity, hierarchy and subordination. In the lyrics, the individual stands in-between conformism and resistance and must make the decision themselves. They are warned of being turned into a 'Marionette' for the army of the 'Vaterland' and are advised to change their own fate. The lyrics emphasise the possibility to turn powerlessness into agency, by the act of 'Verweigern' which means the act of making oneself physically and mentally incompatible with the ideology, and immune to political propaganda and service. Yet 'verführen' implies that immunity was not guaranteed.

The 'Marionette' inevitably turned into a 'Staatsfeind' when they resisted and needed a place of refuge. Rüdtenklau<sup>106</sup> writes that the only 'Lebensmöglichkeit' for subculture was offered by the 'underground church'. *Untergrund ist Strategie* shows that political Punks strived for independence and autonomy, which implies that their 'Untergrund' functioned as a 'secret club, a gang of like-minded people' which offered a 'tribal experience'.<sup>107</sup> While East German Punks indeed 'tried to shock society around them [...] more extreme and enraged than any that had been seen before', *Untergrund ist Strategie* is

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<sup>105</sup> BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, *Hinweise zu jugendlichen "Punkern" in der DDR*, p. 54 [MfS copy of lyrics for *Untergrund ist Strategie* by *Schleimkeim*, 1982; online version differs].

<sup>106</sup> Rüdtenklau, *Störenfried. DDR-Opposition 1986 – 1989*, p. 26.

<sup>107</sup> Spencer, *DIY*, p. 229.

functions as piece of ‘secret news’<sup>108</sup>. ‘Untergrund’ is represented in the text as an autonomous organisation: ‘Untergrund ist Strategie. [...] Untergrund so schwarz wie nie. In der Straße schlägst Du zu, dann hat Dein Gewissen Ruh. Untergrund so stark wie nie.’ The street is depicted as a polarised and violent spatial context, while the underground collective is represented as worthy opponent. This exemplifies how ‘Untergrund’ functioned as survival strategy for young people who rebelled against the system and became ‘Staatsfeinde’, as the lyrics<sup>109</sup> show and is also illustrated in Geralf Pochop’s<sup>110</sup> book *Untergrund war Strategie. Punk in der DDR: Zwischen Rebellion und Repression*.

*Untergrund ist Strategie*<sup>111</sup> appears to be the East German Punk manifesto that was indeed celebrated as such by the second Punk generation. The song<sup>112</sup> concretely attacks two authorities through pejorative extreme metaphors: ‘Kirche lebt im Mittelalter doch die DDR wie Sklavenhalter’. Both the church and state are depicted as the representatives of a dark past of ‘pre-modern irrationalities of myth, religion and superstition and aimed at rationality, science and technological progress’. The enlightened ‘Dichter und Denker’ Punk underground calls for the downfall of these two entities in the GDR which are depicted as archaic and inhumane.

At the same time, the phrases<sup>113</sup> ‘Nieder mit dem deutschen Staat!’ and ‘Drum schieß ich auf Deutschland’ do not distinguish between East and West Germany and suggest that the ‘Staatsfeind’ is not national but transnational. Anarchy, in this depiction, serves a collective cause which makes national identity redundant: ‘Es ist doch völlig egal, ob jemand schwarz ist oder weiß [...] ob aus der Türkei oder Deutschland, schieß egal ob jemand aus Hamburg ist oder Dresden’. This phrase<sup>114</sup> ties into the communist concept of ‘Völkerfreundschaft’ and represents leftist-socialist values like tolerance and equality by constructing an imagined community which has no geographical and cultural boundaries and thus rejects spatial concepts like ‘Heimat’ and ‘Zone’. Pessimist-nihilist and optimist-nihilist ‘Ich-Sein’ are replaced in the following phrase<sup>115</sup> by a future-optimistic ‘Wir-Sein’: ‘Einst

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<sup>108</sup> Spencer, *DIY*, p. 229.

<sup>109</sup> BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, *Hinweise zu jugendlichen “Punkern” in der DDR*, p. 51.

<sup>110</sup> Pochop, Geralf, *Untergrund war Strategie. Punk in der DDR: Zwischen Rebellion und Repression* (Berlin: Hirnkost Verlag, 2018).

<sup>111</sup> BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, *Hinweise zu jugendlichen “Punkern” in der DDR*, p. 54.

<sup>112</sup> Muggleton, *Inside Subculture*, p. 37.

<sup>113</sup> BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, *Hinweise zu jugendlichen “Punkern” in der DDR*, p. 54 [MfS copy of lyrics for *Untergrund ist Strategie* by *Schleimkeim*, 1982; online version differs].

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, *Hinweise zu jugendlichen “Punkern” in der DDR*, p. 54 [MfS copy of lyrics for *Untergrund ist Strategie* by *Schleimkeim*, 1982; online version differs].

wird der Tag gekommen sein, dann knasten wir die Bullen ein, dann wird sich Deutschlands Jugend endlich wieder einig sein'. Social roles have swapped after the revolution in the utopian new Germany. Here, 'Anarchiepathos' is a strategy of hope for 'Staatsfeinde' and 'Marionetten' which contradicts the strategy of future-denying instant action. The promise to the future generation is a united Germany.

Considering the depicted happy end in *Untergrund ist Strategie*, the last phrase in the song *Ende (DDR)*<sup>116</sup> 'der Herrscher ist tot. Ende' can be interpreted as the end of the SED and GDR during a time when, as Fulbrook<sup>117</sup> notes, 'the end was not given', while No Future had set the mood. It was followed by 'Endzeitstimmung', the sense of a coming end, which became a hot Cold War topic in different media, as Wirsching<sup>118</sup> has written, and as we will see in the next subchapters. The Punk texts we have looked at represent life in the GDR as an endless daily individual struggle. Society is depicted as an inhumane, monotone, calculating, ill and meaningless system in which resistant, rational and social youth collectivity is the only hope for the 'Blank Generation'<sup>119</sup>, and Punk the voice of 'grassroots discontent'<sup>120</sup>. But faith in this form of instant action and collectivity appeared fragile, and the overall mood described by eye witnesses was that of gloomy disillusion, isolation and alienation. Hence, individuality and the self are sites conflict not only because of the denied self-determination, but also because, as Mattern<sup>121</sup> wrote in 1984: 'Ich denke, dass ich alleine diese Welt nicht ändern kann [...] wer baut schon Mauern, Mauern um sich herum?'

### III. Post-Punk Transition: 'Other Bands' and Politics of Punk Representation

Six years after Johnny Rotten<sup>122</sup> sang 'I gotta go over the Berlin Wall', a vinyl album featuring the bands *Schleimkeim* and *Zwitschermaschine* presented East German Punk to the West.<sup>123</sup> It was recorded in a private studio in Dresden and smuggled into West Berlin to record label *Aggressive Rockproduktionen*. The raw sounds and cover artwork of *DDR von*

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<sup>116</sup> BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, *Hinweise zu jugendlichen "Punkern" in der DDR*, p. 51 [MfS copy of lyrics for *Ende (DDR)* by *Schleimkeim*, 1982, online version differs].

<sup>117</sup> Fulbrook, *Becoming East German*, p. 277.

<sup>118</sup> Wirsching, Andreas, *Abschied vom Provisorium. Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1982–1990* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2006).

<sup>119</sup> Spencer, *DIY*, p. 232.

<sup>120</sup> Fulbrook, *Becoming East German*, p. 287.

<sup>121</sup> Ralf Mattern, *Verbotene Lieder, Verlorene Lieder*, p. 94.

<sup>122</sup> *The Sex Pistols, Holiday in the Sun*, 1977.

<sup>123</sup> Wächter, Marc and Boeck, Sven, *Punk! Too much future*, 2006.

*Unten / eNDe*<sup>124</sup> express the DIY spirit of Punk, while the message, as we have seen in the previous subchapter, was different and ambiguous. Sascha Anderson,<sup>125</sup> member of *Zwitschermaschine*, stated that the East German Punk record proved that the call for anarchy could also sound from the most surveilled country in the world.

Anderson was not a Punk but a thirty year old writer who was later uncovered as an *Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter* in the MfS.<sup>126</sup> In an essay<sup>127</sup> titled *Von einem Beteiligten* (dated September 1982), Anderson wrote that by the time Punk arrived in the GDR, the Western protest movement had died out: ‘Als wir mit dieser Musik in der DDR begannen, war sie in Westeuropa schon längst kultiviert und vermarktet’. Nevertheless, Anderson saw an opportunity and explained why East German artists like himself needed Punk music:

Wir waren eine Gruppe von Dichtern, Malern und Theaterleuten und wir benutzten die Expansivität dieser Musik in einer Situation, wo wir uns neu orientieren mußten. Nicht, daß unsere künstlerischen Mittel versagt hätten, nicht daß wir meinten, mit malen, schreiben usw, aufhören zu müssen, aber nach uns kam eine Generation, deren Denken, deren Tun in der Gesellschaft – die sie ablehnt – uns nicht mehr nachfühlbar war. Wir mußten, um für sie nicht Zombis [sic] zu werden, mit ihren Mitteln mit ihnen sprechen.<sup>128</sup>

When Anderson<sup>129</sup> decided in 1982 that Punk music was the most effective communication tool to spread ‘geistreiche Werte’, the problem was, as Tim Mohr<sup>130</sup> explains, that he belonged to a circle of writers in the GDR whose neo-dadaist protest against the ‘fathers’

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<sup>124</sup> Daniel Ryser, *Slime. Deutschland muss Sterben* (München: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 2013); James Greene, Jr., *Brave Punk World: The International Rock Underground from Alerta Roja to Z-Off* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017), p. 116.

<sup>125</sup> Galenza, Ronald and Havemeister, Heinz (eds.), *Wir wollen immer artig sein ... Punk, New Wave, HipHop und Independent-Szene in der DDR von 1980 bis 1990* (Berlin: Verlag Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 1999), p. 131; Tim Mohr, *Burning Down the Haus: Punk Rock, Revolution, and the Fall of the Berlin Wall* (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 2018), p. 160; Greene, *Brave Punk World*, p. 116.

<sup>126</sup> Mohr, *Burning Down the Haus*, p. 69; Brauer, *Clashes of Emotions*, 2012; Hayton, *Härte gegen Punk*, 2013.

<sup>127</sup> Anderson, Sascha, *Von Einem Beteiligten*, 1982; Galenza, Ronald and Havemeister, Heinz, *Wir wollen immer artig sein*, p. 130.

<sup>128</sup> BStU, MfS, HA, XX, AKG, 1486, Hauptabteilung XX, *Streng Geheim, Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen ‘Punkern’ in der DDR*, [1983], p. 50; the MfS report about *DDR von Unten*; Galenza and Havemeister, *Wir wollen immer artig sein*, p. 130; Anderson, Sascha, *Von Einem Beteiligten*, 1982.

<sup>129</sup> Galenza and Havemeister, *Wir wollen immer artig sein*, p. 130; BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6070, Abteilung XX/2 Rockstock, 17. Januar 1989, p. 45.

<sup>130</sup> Mohr, Tim, Fricke, Harriet, and Dabrock, Frank, *Stirb nicht im Warteraum der Zukunft. Die ostdeutschen Punks und der Fall der Mauer* (Dresden: Heyne Verlag, 2017).

and ‘antiquated politicians’, as Anderson put it, did not resonate with a new, Post-Punk<sup>131</sup> generation. Anderson used ‘Zombies’ as a pejorative metaphor for the older generation in his essay, while the new Punks celebrated the metaphor as shock aesthetic in their apocalyptic ‘Endzeit’ texts. The cover of a German Punk compilation album with a title that matched the zeitgeist, *Soundtracks zum Untergang* (released by *Aggressive Rockproduktionen* in 1980 and 1982) shows Zombies in a post-apocalyptic urban landscape.

This *Neuer Deutscher Punk-Underground*<sup>132</sup>, as Post-Punk was called in West Germany, was also on the rise in East Germany. The new wave of Punk art, style and music, with songs titled *Tot Geboren*, *Frisch aus England*, *Technischer Fortschritt*, and *Depressionen*, had transnational quality and provoked a similar negative response in the East and West. In West Berlin, *Soundtracks zum Untergang* was confiscated and banned from sale during a police raid, while the authorities, as Florian Lipp<sup>133</sup> explains, conducted an inquiry into Punk scenes and participants called the ‘Punkerkartei’. In the GDR, the first East German Punk generation reached both its climax and downfall in 1983 as many Punks were imprisoned during Erich Mielke’s ‘Härte gegen Punk’, as Hayton<sup>134</sup> notes in his essay. The ‘staatsfeindliche’ song lyrics, as Lipp<sup>135</sup> and Häder<sup>136</sup> note, by *Schleimkeim* and some other Punk bands justified zero-tolerance from a political perspective, but after 1983, subculture fragmented and eventually, as will be shown in Chapter 2, (in)tolerance did too.

Five years after *DDR von Unten*, in March 1989, West German fanzine *Aardvark*<sup>137</sup> praised the ‘DDR-Urknall’: the rise of new East German underground bands. The first East German underground record label, called *Trash Tape Rekords* (or *Records*), was founded by the second-generation Punk band *Zwecklos* in 1986. The MfS did not report about the label until 1988.<sup>138</sup> While the ‘Anarchiepathos’ represented by first Punk generation bands like

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<sup>131</sup> e.g. Simon Reynolds, *Rip it Up and Start Again: Post-Punk, 1978–84*, Faber and Faber, London, 2005; Jon Savage, ‘A Punk Aesthetic’, in Johan Kugelberg and Jon Savage (eds), *Punk: An Aesthetic*, Random House, New York, 2012; Schneider, Frank APunkt, *Als die Welt noch unterging. Von Punk zu NDW*, Ventil Verlag, Berlin, 2007; Schneider, Frank APunkt, *There’s no future like “no future”*, in: Pehlemann, Alexander, Papenfuß, Bert, Mießner, Robert (eds.), *1984, Block an Block. Subkulturen im Orwell-Jahr*, Ventil Verlag, Berlin, 2015, p. 17 – 18;

<sup>132</sup> Schneider, *There’s no future like “no future”*, 2015, p. 18; <https://www.discogs.com/de/Various-Soundtracks-Zum-Untergang-2/release/962658>, consulted on 4-7-2018, 15:34

<sup>133</sup> Florian Lipp, ‘Punk- und New-Wave-Bands im letzten Jahrzehnt der DDR im kultur- und sicherheitspolitischen Kontext’, *Totalitarianism and Democracy*, 12.2 (2015), 225 – 248 (p. 230).

<sup>134</sup> See Hayton, *Härte gegen Punk*, 2013, pp. 523-549.

<sup>135</sup> Lipp, ‘Punk- und New-Wave-Bands im letzten Jahrzehnt der DDR’.

<sup>136</sup> Häder, ‘Zeugnisse von Eigen-Sinn’, pp. 68 – 48.

<sup>137</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6070, Abteilung XX/2 Rostock, 20. März 1989, *Zwischenbericht zum OV “Panik”*, p. 41.

<sup>138</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6070, Abteilung XX/2 Rostock, 17. Januar 1989, p. 45.

*Planlos* symbolised ironic youth rebellion against the ‘Zukunftspathos’, the first *Trash Tape*, titled *Ausbruchsversuch*, was presented as a political statement. The tape was introduced as ‘erste Inland-Polit-Sampler UDDR, mit zum Teil schon historischen Underground-Hits’<sup>139</sup> like *Untergrund ist Strategie* by *Schleimkeim*. East German Punk was historicised, and the song was given cult status as a symbol of the survival of Punk in the GDR. At the same time, the happy ending depicted in *Untergrund ist Strategie*, the end of the GDR and German reunification, would also mean the end of ‘DDR von Unten’. This end is not given in the new Punk texts. Punk slogans<sup>140</sup> which were used by the radical leftist West German Punk movement such as ‘Macht kaputt, was euch kaputt macht’ and ‘Deutschland muß sterben, damit wir leben können’ were now also used by East German Punks to represent themselves as part of a transnational attack against the German-German society and state.

The founders of *Trash Tape Records* were clearly ambitious when they stated that their label ‘soll zum Begriff für Underground-Musik werden’ and defined underground music as the soundtrack of GDR-based German Punk anarchy. Crucially, their ‘Begriff’ rejected music which did not fit into their definition of ‘underground’. By 1989, *die anderen Bands* had proven that tolerance and legal ways for subculture and alternative music were possible. Yet the representatives<sup>141</sup> of *Trash Tape Records* stated that they offered bands the chance ‘auch außerhalb dieses Rahmens seine textlichen Aussagen und künstlerischen Ideen zu verwirklichen’, and that ‘wir wollen all den Leuten der Subculture unsere Namen anbieten, die wirklich zum Untergrund gehören und aus verschiedensten Gründen keine andere Möglichkeiten bekommen oder sich generell nicht den bekannten Spielregeln anpassen wollen’. With this statement, the label owners made a clear distinction as only the ‘aktivsten Punk-, Avantgarde-, Wave- und Psychodelic-Bands’<sup>142</sup> fulfilled the requirements of subcultural identity and collectivity in their view.

*Trash Tape Records* defined Punk as, to quote Spencer,<sup>143</sup> an outlet for frustrations, and an ‘aggressive, a violent assault on society’, while the songs they featured contain ‘angry lyrics [which] helped them express their anger, as did the bands names they came up with’. The key difference that can be identified in the lyrics and names in comparison to the first

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<sup>139</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6070, *Einleitungsbericht zur OPK “Panik”*, Rostock, 14.05.88, Abt. XX/2, p. 74.

<sup>140</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX 6070, Kreisdienststelle Rostock, Referat III, *Einleitungsbericht zur Einleitung der OPK*, Rostock, 31.7.1988, p. 102.

<sup>141</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6070, Abteilung XX/2 Rostock, 28. November 1988, *Eröffnungsbericht zum operativen Vorgang Panik. Illegales Punk-Label*, p. 51.

<sup>142</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6070, *Illegales Punk-Label*, p. 51.

<sup>143</sup> Spencer, *DIY*, pp. 239 – 240.

generation is the absence of ‘Anarchiepathos’, hope or strategies of motivation. Crucially, the ‘Anarchodemokratie’<sup>144</sup> the members of *Planlos* celebrated in 1982 did not exist anymore, because the doors of the ‘Untergrund’ were closed for young East Germans who did not fit in to the rules set by the label. It is stated<sup>145</sup> on the first *Ausbruchversuch* tape that it was ‘nicht für Thälmannpioniere und FDJ-Funktionäre’. In one of the songs, titled *Jugend made in DDR*,<sup>146</sup> ‘Ich-Sein’ is juxtaposed against the rest of the young East German generation: ‘Ich grenze mich ab von der Jugend made in DDR. Überall dasselbe, nur das gleiche Bild. Sie kotzt mich an, die Jugend made in DDR. Uniform im Gleichschritt gibt schon lange nichts mehr her. Ich grenze mich ab von dem um mich her. Sie macht mich krank, die Jugend made in DDR’. This self-representation is ambivalent, because the ‘Ich’ perceives appears to not perceive themselves as made in the GDR. It constructs an alternative East German identity and self-consciousness which is disconnected or orphaned from the GDR.

Similar to the rhetoric in texts from 1982 and 1983, ‘Ich-Sein’ is depicted in the new Punk songs from 1988 as a continuous struggle against the threatening surroundings, as the song texts<sup>147</sup> *Der Gefangene*, *Depression* and *Virus X* and *Ich muß mich tarnen um zu überleben* exemplify. But the difference is that the criticism is more explicit, political and angrier, as an untitled song text<sup>148</sup> exemplifies: ‘Verwirrter Geist, zerstörtes Ich. Plastikwelt nichts für mich. Parteigebunden. Vorprogrammiert. Umsonst geschunden, ausradiert. Keimfrei schonen Experimente. Verarschungslöhne bis zur Rente’. In the lyrics<sup>149</sup> for *Sicherheit*, MfS surveillance is explicitly criticised: ‘Sicherheit wird groß geschrieben, Sicherheit ist eine Norm. Siehst du nicht die grauen Schatten und die Wanzen winzig klein. Willst du deinen Brief dann lesen ist der Inhalt schon bekannt. Sie ist vorher dargewesen, Sicherheit. Sprichst du dann am Telefon, läuft das Band mit’. The strategy used in this identity construction is polarising and (hostile) othering. The ‘Ich’ appears not only torn but aware of surveillance and paranoid towards their own home environment.

The attack was not only addressed at the SED, MfS and GDR, as the phrase from an untitled song<sup>150</sup> ‘Die Partei will Dich nur betrügen. Rebellen kennen bessere Pflicht als sich

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<sup>144</sup> Becker and Furian, “*Auch im Osten trägt man Westen*”, p. 42.

<sup>145</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6070, *Illegales Punk-Label*, p. 51.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., p. 52 [MfS copy of lyrics for *Jugend made in DDR*, author unknown].

<sup>147</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6070, *Zwischenbericht zum OV ‚Panik‘*, p. 41.

<sup>148</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6070, *Illegales Punk-Label, Anlage, Auszug aus einem der Texten*, p. 59 [MfS copy of untitled song lyrics, author unknown].

<sup>149</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6070, Abteilung XX/2 Rostock, *Illegales Punk-Label*, 1988, p. 53.

<sup>150</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6070, *Illegales Punk-Label*, p. 58.



ins Joch zu fügen. Sich fügen heißt lügen!’ exemplifies. The lyrics construct a dichotomy between rebels and conformists who are convicted as liars. Unlike the *Schleimkeim* texts, hence, this rhetoric would make some listeners feel like they were meant, and as if they are enemy of the ‘Staatsfeind’, instead of victim of the state who can be saved by collective Punk anarchy. Rebels, in turn, are subordinated to subculture, and non-rebels are depicted the lyrics<sup>151</sup> as others who can never be convinced or saved: ‘Es hat keinen Sinn, sich für andere zu plagen. Jeder Versuch wird aufs Neue zerschlagen. Es ist alles zwecklos, vergiß das nie’. In *Jugend made in DDR*<sup>152</sup> (1988), the GDR’s young generation is condemned for being supportive of and working for soviet and socialist authorities. The mechanism we can identify in this construction of identity and collectivity is that which Dunja Brill<sup>153</sup> describes as ‘discriminating between social groups and measuring cultural worth, which is based on drawing distinctions between “us” and “them”’. Subculture is represented as a secret club of insiders who did not compromise or negotiate with the outside world, and who are part of a minority that is fundamentally incompatible with the majority. The ‘Untergrund’ had dugged itself deeper into the underground and built rhetorical walls around its autonomised subcultural space.

Häder<sup>154</sup> describes this shift in the Punk self-representation as the ‘Übergang von der symbolischen Distanznahme zur Politisierung der Punks’ and argues that state repression was not the only reason, but that Punks were isolated from society and despised by the majority of the population; ‘ein Umstand, der [...] die gesellschaftliche Marginalisierung der Punks förderte und damit wiederum ihren Selbstbehauptungswillen noch stärker forcierte’. These politics of representation rule out compromise as the conflict it refers to could ‘no longer be resolved or integrated within the known dominant system’, to quote Jenks<sup>155</sup>. Or, as the owners<sup>156</sup> of *Trash Tape Rekords* declared: ‘Die ganze Umwelt, um im Klartext zu sprechen, ist hier extrem und substantiell krank’. Although they<sup>157</sup> stated that the reason they had founded the label in the first place was to fight ‘Intoleranz, Passivität und Massenverdummung!’, they ambivalently wrote in their statement<sup>158</sup> that they saw ‘keine Möglichkeit der Gesundung’.

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>153</sup> Dunja, Brill, *Goth Culture. Gender, Sexuality and Style* (Oxford: Berg, 2008), p. 27.

<sup>154</sup> Häder, ‘Zeugnisse von Eigen-Sinn’, p. 81.

<sup>155</sup> Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of The Social*, p. 89.

<sup>156</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6070, *Abteilung XX/2 Rockstock, 17. Januar, 1989*, p. 45.

<sup>157</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6070, *Illegales Punk-Label*, p. 51.

<sup>158</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6070, *Abteilung XX/2 Rockstock, 17. Januar, 1989*, p. 45.

Meanwhile, other music that did not fit into the concept of underground as defined by *Trash Tape Records* was gaining popularity in the GDR. A letter<sup>159</sup> from the label addressed to the band *Expander des Fortschritts*<sup>160</sup> exemplifies that the label owners hoped to influence some ‘other bands’: ‘Ich hoffe ihr behaltet Euer Konzept bei und werdet langsam aber sicher noch schärfer und stachliger. Es gibt ja gerade in Sachen Politik bei uns dermaßen viel Schwachsinn und Müll, den es anständig und clever aufs Korn zu nehmen gilt. Leider sind die meistens “Anderen Bands” in der Beziehung viel zu harmlos.’ The statement is polarising as it divides between ‘other bands’ who are depicted as too unpolitical and those who were apparently of interest to the label.

Schneider<sup>161</sup> writes about this that the avant-garde music of *die anderen Bands*, like *AG Geige*, ‘passte natürlich überhaupt nicht im Bild vom bedauernswerten DDR-Underground, der immer mit einem Bein im Knast stand’. Indeed, their concept did not consist of an ‘offene Anprangerung des Sozialismus [...] und Verbreitung auf illegalem Wege, um eine größere Interessengemeinschaft dafür zu gewinnen’, as formulated in the MfS file.<sup>162</sup> Instead, *die anderen Bands*, as said, represented a legal way for subculture in the GDR, because, like some texts from the first East German Punk generation, their criticism was veiled. When political criticism was not explicit or not even considered political, they were not, as formulated in an MfS report<sup>163</sup> about *Trash Tape records*, producing ‘Tonaufzeichnungen [die] geeignet sind, den Interessen der DDR zu schaden’, and therefore the other strand of Post-Punk subculture in the GDR, represented subcultural identities, moods and views which apparently clashed with the strand of subculture that was considered political ‘Untergrund’.

The shift in the subcultural landscape and division between ‘Politpunk’ and *andere Bands* marks the beginning of an expanding of the definition of subculture within the East German context. This expansion was possible because ‘the years up to the mid-1980s were

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> <http://www.die-anderen-bands.de/expander.html> [accessed on 15 April 2018]; Pehlemann, Alexander (ed.), *Zonic Nr 20, Almanach für kulturelle Randstandsblicke & Involvierungs Momente* (Mainz: Ventil Verlag, 2013); Frank A. Schneider, ‘Es ist sehr finster im Fisch, aber es ist noch jemand drin ... Die Unwahrscheinlichkeit der AG Geige’, in *Zonic Nr 20, Almanach für kulturelle Randstandsblicke & Involvierungs Momente*, ed. by Alexander Pehlemann, (Mainz: Ventil Verlag, 2013), pp. 139 – 147 (pp. 140 – 142).

<sup>161</sup> Schneider, ‘Es ist sehr finster im Fisch’, p. 141.

<sup>162</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6070, *Illegales Punk-Label*, p. 55.

<sup>163</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX 6070, Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Rostock, Abteilung XX an Ministerium für Staatssicherheit Hauptabteilung XX/2 Berlin. Rostock, den 21. September 1988, *Information über die Existenz eines illegalen “Punk-Labels” mit der Bezeichnung “Trash-Tape-Records”*, p. 77.

completely characterized by persecution by State Security, whereas the second half of the decade was characterized by compromises and attempts at integration. Now, under the label of “the other bands”, this recently persecuted music was heard on state radio and was funded and supported by the FDJ’, as Lipp<sup>164</sup> writes. Similarly, Simpson<sup>165</sup> writes that ‘there appeared to be a change of taste and of tactic in the official response’, and that ‘this shift reflected a transformation of official cultural policy; its success can be attributed to the activism and taste of a few individuals who worked within the institutional media’. According to ‘Politpunk’ representatives, as shown, artists who cooperated with and/or worked within the system were considered conformist liars, traitors and cowards who did not fit into East German subculture with a self-proclaimed relevant purpose and message.

While ‘various music styles were homogenized under the rubric of “the other bands”’, as Simpson<sup>166</sup> points out, the representatives of this music subculture were not concretely attacking the state and majority of the population but instead paving ways for a legitimised, alternative subculture in the GDR. Henryk Gericke<sup>167</sup> calls this strand of East German subculture as ‘Offground’, instead of underground’, and defines it as ‘eine [...] obscure Konstellation aus allen möglichen Anwandlungen, die in ihren Anfängen nicht festgelegt und durchcodiert waren’ which was a blossoming and rich mix of different genres and representatives. These ‘cross-over bands’, as Simpson<sup>168</sup> defines them, ignored stylistic and linguistic rules in their, as Schneider<sup>169</sup> writes, ‘privatistische Sprachexperimente [...] zwischen Dichtung und Musik’. These cross-over projects crossed the boundaries of subcultural meaning, identity and collectivity and ‘schleuderten der staatlichen Äußerungskontrolle einen merkwürdigen Brei vor die Füße, der deren Kategorien gezielt überforderte’.<sup>170</sup> Band names like *Expander des Fortschritts* and *Demokratischer Konsum*, Schneider points out, deliberately mimicked ‘offizielle DDR-Sprachmaschinen’, yet their criticism was far less explicit than that of Punk. These avantgardistic concepts were, in Schneider’s words, a form of ‘innere Republikflucht’ which, like ‘Resignation’ means a retreat from society by individual self-exploration and self-experiment towards ‘Ich-Sein’ and the meaning of life. Schneider notes<sup>171</sup> that this existential strategy is expressed by the

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<sup>164</sup> Lipp, ‘Punk- und New-Wave-Bands im letzten Jahrzehnt der DDR’, p. 225.

<sup>165</sup> Simpson, ‘Germany and its Discontents’, p. 131.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Gericke, ‘Tanz den Kommunismus’.

<sup>168</sup> Simpson, ‘Germany and its Discontents’, p. 131.

<sup>169</sup> Schneider, ‘Es ist sehr finster im Fisch’, p. 142.

<sup>170</sup> Schneider, ‘Es ist sehr finster im Fisch’, p. 142.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

incomprehensibility of the texts. They created a ‘grey area’ which, according to Schneider, was political, alternative and independent and yet fundamentally different from ‘Politpunk’.

Alexander Pehlemann<sup>172</sup> defines this subculture as the ‘DDR-Post Punk-something-Szene’ which had found a new language to express critical, existential views and emotions. Schneider writes about *AG Geige* that he had the impression that they were not from the GDR but from another world, far away, from another dimension which was not socialist or anti-socialist, not conformed nor anti-norm. At the same time, Schneider<sup>173</sup> argues that this form of ‘Gegenkultur’, as he calls it, did not exist in the West and that it was a subcultural non-place: ‘Sie hatte als Musik keinen Ort, zumindest keinen, von dem sie sich abstoßen musste. Denn nichts von dem, was die AG Geige auf die Bühne brachte, wirkte unfrei oder frustriert, eingesperrt oder wie eine Mangelerscheinung’. The description of ‘off-ground’ music and performance implies that in this subcultural space and the subcultural capital it produced, ‘Ich-Sein’ was free, at least in the representations of subculturalists.

Another parallel subcultural as well as societal development put ‘Ich-Sein’ in a very different perspective, while it explains why the seemingly escapist music appealed to a new generation. ‘Endzeitstimmung’ spread and the fear of ‘Atomtod’<sup>174</sup> became a major transnational music in various macro- and micro-media. While ‘Endzeit-Literatur’<sup>175</sup> refers to fiction which thematises the apocalypse and post-apocalyptic dystopia, the 1980s saw a wave of No Future and ‘Endzeit’ pop and rock music. Sascha Lange writes that this music explained the world and its actual political, societal and environmental crises better to young people than adults could.<sup>176</sup> While scholars<sup>177</sup> have described the relation between youth, subculture and ‘Endzeitstimmung’, no study has focused on environmental ‘Endzeit’ texts in or from the GDR. And this is necessary because, to quote John Tomlinson, they show how

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<sup>172</sup> See Pehlemann, *Zonic Nr 20*, 2013, p. 135; See Pehlemann, Alexander, *Zonic Nr 20, Almanach für kulturelle Randstandsblicke & Involvierungs Momente*, Ventil Verlag, Berlin, 2013, p. 138

<sup>173</sup> Schneider, ‘Es ist sehr finster im Fisch’, p. 142.

<sup>174</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX 6070, KD Mitte, Berlin 19.12.85, *Einleitungsbericht zur OPK ‚Rheinsberg‘*, p. 82 [MfS copy of untitled lyrics, author unknown].

<sup>175</sup> Wirsching, *Abschied vom Provisorium*, p. 430; Härtling, ‘Der spanische Soldat’, p. 86.

<sup>176</sup> Dennis Burmeister and Sascha Lange, *Behind the Wall. DEPECHE MODE-Fankultur In Der DDR* (Mainz: Ventil Verlag, 2018), p. 95.

<sup>177</sup> e.g. Klaus Allerbeck and Wendy Hoag, *Jugend ohne Zukunft? Einstellungen, Umwelt, Lebensperspektiven*, München: Piper Verlag, 1985); Philipp Bauer, ‘Nukleare Untergangsszenarien in Kunst und Kultur’, in *“Entrüstet Euch”: Nuklearkrise, Nato-Doppelbeschluss und Friedensbewegung*, ed. by Christoph Becker-Schaum, Philipp Gassert, Martin Klimke, et al. (Paderborn: Schöningh 2012), pp. 325-33; IG Dreck Auf Papier, *Keine Zukunft war gestern: Punk in Deutschland 1976-?* (Berlin, Hirnkost Verlag, 2012); Alexander Pehlemann, Bert Papenfuß, and Robert Mießner (eds.), *1984, Block and Block. Subkulturen im Orwell-Jahr* (Mainz: Ventil Verlag 2015); Schneider, Frank APunkt, *Als die Welt noch unterging. Von Punk zu NDW* (Berlin: Ventil Verlag, 2007).

‘global dangers set up global mutualities’<sup>178</sup> and how these are expressed from local micro-perspectives.

For instance, in 1984, a schoolgirl from Thuringia wrote an essay in which she criticises the ‘Menschheit’ and gives a gloomy, graphic description of the impact of nuclear warfare (referring to Hiroshima and scientific reports).<sup>179</sup> The reason this essay is considered as a subcultural micro-medium is firstly that it is an example of individual agency which expresses ‘Endzeitstimmung’, and secondly because it was used as evidence in an MfS investigation<sup>180</sup> which accused school pupils who were fans of New Wave of rebelling against teachers and signing an illegal petition against nuclear warfare. What is interesting about the girl’s essay<sup>181</sup> is the representation of a local community that feels threatened by the transnational Cold War and worries about the survival of humanity. This essay is only one example of many texts written by young East Germans or ‘Jugendliche die Angst haben’, as they represented themselves in these micro-media.<sup>182</sup> The texts<sup>183</sup> construct a collective victim identity through convincing, warning and us against them strategies, for instance in the phrase ‘Wann wacht Ihr endlich auf und wehrt Euch gegen die Idioten, die unsere Umwelt zerstören?’ Other ‘Endzeit’ texts write<sup>184</sup> an inhumane, unnatural life environment: ‘Menschen in Beton und Stahl, graue Mauern überall’. For the schoolgirl from Thuringia, reason was the solution and hence, it can be concluded that individual agency in the form of writing<sup>185</sup> about such fears, was considered meaningful resistance for a collective cause.

#### IV. Gothic Return: The End of the Doomed and Rise of the Dark Romantic Self

Several alternative East German collectives thematised the ‘Endzeit’ theme in their art and performances. This, as we will see, adds a different dimension to self-representation and

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<sup>178</sup> John Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), pp. 205, 114 [citing Beck, 1992].

<sup>179</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Suhl, KD Suhl 1629, Ministerium für Staatssicherheit, Bezirksverwaltung Suhl – Leiter. Suhl, 16.3.1984, *Information über nicht genehmigte Unterschriftensammlung an der POS*, pp. 33, 37, 34.

<sup>180</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Suhl KD Suhl 1629, Ministerium für Staatssicherheit. Bezirksverwaltung Suhl – Leiter. Suhl, 9.5.83, *Information über Probleme der Durchsetzung der staatlichen Jugendpolitik, insbesondere an den POS und EOS des Bezirkes*, p. 7.

<sup>181</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Suhl, KD Suhl 1629, *Information über nicht genehmigte Unterschriftensammlung*, 1984, p. 34.

<sup>182</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Suhl, KD Suhl 1629, pp. 6 – 7; BStU, MfS, HA, XX, 6070, *Einleitungsbericht zur OPK Rheinsberg*, p. 83.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX 6070, KD Mitte, Berlin 19.12.85, *Einleitungsbericht zur OPK Rheinsberg*, p. 82. [MfS copy of untitled lyrics, author unknown].

<sup>185</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Suhl, KD Suhl 1629, *Information über nicht genehmigte Unterschriftensammlung*, p. 37.

‘Ich-Sein’ in the context of the GDR as shown in the analysis of Punk. Simpson<sup>186</sup> for instance writes about *Die Skeptiker* that their songs speak of ‘the inner lives of people who found themselves at odds with society’. Yet this form of ‘Resignation’ cannot be interpreted as an ‘innere Republikflucht’, because the conflict the ‘Endzeit’ lyrics address is not specific to the GDR. Instead, as Simpson<sup>187</sup> argues, ‘the lyrics responded to contemporary conditions of life (in both Germanys) with visions of anarchy and apocalypse, performed to the beat of punk and postpunk’. *Strahlende Zukunft* is critique against nuclear energy with a mocking reference to the SED’s ‘Zukunftspathos’ in the phrase ‘strahlend soll die Zukunft sein, hat man uns erzählt’. Simpson<sup>188</sup> writes about this that the song is ‘a self-impugning parody of those values held so dear in the vocabulary of the GDR [...]’. While the lyrics of this song indict the rhetoric of the future, they also call in the debts of the past, the promises’ like ‘Arbeit’, ‘Sicherheit’ and ‘Glück’.<sup>189</sup> While the same terms also appear in critical Punk songs, they are depicted in these Punk texts not as empty promises which prove the GDR’s failure, but as dystopian concepts in a GDR that functions according to plan.

While the song by *die Skeptiker* beats the SED’s self-representation with its own rhetorical stick, the rising East German environmental movement took a transnational approach. An art project<sup>190</sup> by the GDR’s anti-nuclear protest group AKW, titled *Postkunst-Aktion gegen die Ingenieure strahlender End-Zeiten / A Mail Art Project against the engineers of a radiant future*, which interestingly translates ‘End-Zeiten’ into ‘future’ in the English version. Especially after Chernobyl, people in the East and West feared doomsday. This fear made (lost) faith in utopian future designs or concerns about work, conformity and monotony seem redundant. Many East Germans felt that *Tschernobyl ist in der Nähe* as Mattern<sup>191</sup> named his according protest song<sup>192</sup>, and that it was only a matter of time before they would become the fatal victims of the nuclear accident to: ‘Wieviele noch sterben, das ist noch im Dunkel, dafür fehlt noch das Licht.’ The anonymous authors of an East German subcultural micro-medium called *Moaning Star*<sup>193</sup> wrote about the growing fear of death

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<sup>186</sup> Simpson, ‘Germany and its Discontents’, p. 131.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>190</sup> Robert-Havemann-Gesellschaft, Archiv der Jugendopposition, TH 02/05a, p. 2.

<sup>191</sup> Ralf Mattern, *Verbotene Lieder, Verlorene Lieder*; Ralf Mattern, *Tschernobyl ist in der Nähe*, 1986.

<sup>192</sup> Mattern, *Tschernobyl ist in der Nähe*, 1986.

<sup>193</sup> Robert-Havemann-Gesellschaft, Archiv der Jugendopposition, RG/B 08, p. 2.

among people in the GDR and named<sup>194</sup> the ‘brennende globale Probleme unserer Zeit’ as the biggest cause.

Song lyrics which thematise atomic ‘Selbstvernichtung’, as it was called in *Moaning Star*<sup>195</sup> and which express ‘Endzeitstimmung’ prioritise life itself over society and ideology. In an untitled and undated ‘Endzeit’ text<sup>196</sup> which is contained in the MfS file on *Trash Tape Rekords*, an anonymous voice blames humanity for the (coming) apocalypse:

Die Menschheit produziert Millionen Waffen. Man könnte durchaus besseres schaffen. Anstelle friedlicher Kernenergie, Atomraketen wie noch nie. Sie wollen Selbstzerstörung! Wie sie knobeln und probieren, die Totgeweihten [sic] stets marchieren. Toxine, Gase, Viren, Pest – nur der Zeitpunkt steht nicht fest. [...] Die Menschheit gibt sich selbst den Rest. Selbstzerstörung. [...] Hilferufe aus der Betonstadt. Letzte Laute der Vergangenheit. Es gibt niemanden, der noch schreit. Abgasnebel versperren uns die Sicht. Durch das Grau dringt kein bißchen Licht. [...] Letzte Rufe, Hilferufe. Letzte Rufe, holt uns hier raus. [...] die Strahlung frißt uns auf.

Using the illness theme not in metaphorical but literal sense, and the death theme in both senses, the lyrics paint a powerful image of the devastating impact of nuclear doom on ‘uns’. The end is certain in this narrative, although its exact date is unknown, which enhances fear, as it is made clear that the fatal process is continued by humanity and hence irreversible. The terms ‘Toxine, Gase, Viren, Pest’ express the author’s fear of the threat to his physical existence, a threat which is, crucially invisible and slowly progressing.

The lyrics constructs a dichotomy between ‘Menschheit’ and victims, ‘uns’, of ‘Selbsterstörung’. The anonymous voice represents the distancing of an anonymous ‘uns’ from the ‘Menschheit’, as if ‘uns’ were a minority and victim of its own kind. Interestingly, the author is not against all use of nuclear energy, as the term ‘friedliche Kernenergie’ suggests. But the criticism against military use of nuclear energy is specific. The song can therefore be considered as a pacifist message from an anonymous actor who performs agency on behalf of victims who can, however, not win or survive this conflict. The texts hold a

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<sup>194</sup> Robert-Havemann-Gesellschaft, Archiv der Jugendopposition, PS 109, p. 1.

<sup>195</sup> Robert-Havemann-Gesellschaft, Archiv der Jugendopposition, RG/B 08, , p. 2.

<sup>196</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6070, Abteilung XX/2, *Auszug aus einem der Texten*, p. 58 [MfS copy of untitled lyrics, author unknown].

strong sense of hostility towards an unnamed, war-obsessed ‘Sie’ that not only performs ‘Selbsterstörung’ but also wants it, while the victims, ‘Totgeweihten’, march, (a military metaphor) along in the self-destructive machine. While ‘Betonstadt’ could be a specific reference to the Berlin Wall, it can also refer to an unnatural and inhumane ‘non-place’ where there is no escape from environmental pollution and nuclear radiation. The song offers no hope but instead constructs a clear graphic ‘Endzeit’ scenario with a gloomy atmosphere. It rationally describes the causes and emotionally describes the deadly effects. The ‘Endzeitstimmung’ is driven both by anger and fear.

A similar ‘Endzeit’ text titled *Dritter Weltkrieg*<sup>197</sup> by a band called *Die Kündiger* paints a graphic image of a pre- and post-apocalyptic world after or during global war:

Zufriedene Gesichter, glückliche Menschen; keiner mehr von der Arbeit gestresst.  
Sie blicken nicht über die grenzen [sic], wie einer den anderen aufhetzt. Ihre Gräber  
werden gegraben, solange sie noch Frieden haben. Ein Fehlalarm, der Knopf  
gedrückt. Die Männer am Pult sind verrückt. Sie nehmen andere das Leben, ihr  
eigenes wollen sie nicht geben. 3. Weltkrieg. Die Erde ist verbrannt. Der Tod nimmt  
deine Hand. 3. Weltkrieg. Keim aus Satans Brut. 3. Weltkrieg. Nimm deinen Mut!  
Menschen in den Tod geführt, die Erde überfüllt von Ratten. Millionen Menschen  
sind verglüht, An Wänden nur noch ihre Schatten.

In the lyrics, the term ‘Satan’ is used as metaphor for fatal disease (‘Keim’) and ‘Schatten’ for the dead. What is interesting is that the text uses the strategy of convincing by emphasising individual agency, and that it thematises ‘Arbeit’ as a way of criticising ‘Menschen’ who are conformed to ignorant bliss. Similar to *Strahlende Zukunft*, this collective happiness is depicted as an illusion, because doom awaits the earth. The ‘glückliche Menschen’ do not see what the text describes, that World War 3 is coming, and while the people are not blamed for their own fatal fate, the real enemy is described abstractly as ‘die Männer’. The unnamed and unlocated ‘Männer’ are described as irrational, selfish and murderous entity who can destroy the illusionary peace simply by pressing a button. The contrast between the first sentence and the last sentences which depict the post-apocalyptic scenario is particularly strong, because there is no reference to a nation. Instead, this anti-

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<sup>197</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, KD Görlitz, 70007, p. 18 [MfS copy of lyrics for *Dritter Weltkrieg* by *Die Kündiger*, 1989]



Cold War song text<sup>198</sup> criticises any form of militarism and military ‘Sicherheit’: ‘Wozu noch eine Armee, die nichts nützt, wenn sie unser Leben nicht beschützt? Ich werde lieber Pazifist der auf seine Knarre pisst! He, nimm keine Waffe in die Hand, steck deinen Kopf in den Sand’. Similar to *Schleimkeim* lyrics, the listener is directly addressed and asked to resist not necessarily the authority that is too powerful, but to not perform ‘Resignation’ and instead disconnect themselves mentally from any political-ideological cause.

The ‘Endzeit’ texts analysed in the previous part of this subchapter exemplify the shift from Punk to Post-Punk in which dystopian ‘Endzeit’ narratives blur ideological, spatial and existential boundaries and restore meaning of life and ‘Ich-Sein’ to life itself in the most physical sense, instead of questioning the success or failure of political utopian promises and constructing a victim or perpetrator identity as a symbol of resistance. Such an approach to ‘Ich-Sein’, a different symbolic existential strategy used in subcultural self-representation is the topic of the last part of this subchapter which focuses on the rise of Gothic music (in the widest sense) in the GDR. Klaus Farin and Klaus Neumann-Braun<sup>199</sup> write that state-owned youth radio station *DT64* with moderator Lutz Schramm<sup>200</sup> played bands like *The Cure*, *Joy Division*, *Alien Sex Fiend*, *Bauhaus*, *Cocteau Twins*, *The Smiths*, *Dead Can Dance*, *Clan of Xymox*, *Marquee Moon* during a show called *Parocktikum*<sup>201</sup> which aired between 1986 and 1993.

In 1988, a participant in a Gothic scene in the GDR stated<sup>202</sup> during an MfS interrogation that the reason why the music of British and American Post-Punk, New Wave and Gothic rock bands was so popular in the GDR was that he and his peers liked how innovative and modern the sounds of the electronic (rock)music were and that it was unlike anything else they had ever heard before. But there was a second reason why the music appealed to them, as the report<sup>203</sup> indicates, namely that song lyrics critically thematised

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<sup>198</sup> BStU, MfS BV Dresden, KD Görlitz 70007, p. 18.

<sup>199</sup> e.g. Neumann-Braun, Klaus and Schmidt, Axel, *Die Welt der Gothics. Spielräume duster konnotierter Transzedenz* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008), p. 257; Farin, Klaus, *Die Gothics. Interviews. Fotografien* (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen Verlag, 2001), p. 90.

<sup>200</sup> Galenza and Havemeister, *Wir wollen immer artig sein*; William Jay Risch (ed.), *Youth and Rock in the Soviet Bloc. Youth Cultures, Music and the State in Russia and Eastern Europe* (Lanham/Maryland: Lexington, 2014); Sascha Trültzsch and Thomas Wilke, *Heißer Sommer, Coole Beats. Zur populären Musik und ihren medialen Repräsentationen in der DDR* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009).

<sup>201</sup> e.g. Galenza and Havemeister, *Wir wollen immer artig sein*; Risch, *Youth and Rock in the Soviet Bloc*; Trültzsch and Wilke *Heißer Sommer, Coole Beats*; <http://www.parocktikum.de/wiki/index.php/Schadstoff>, [accessed on 15 November 2017].

<sup>202</sup> BStU, MfS, HA IC, 14164, Neuruppin, 06.01.1988. *Vernehmung der Beschuldigten*, p. 11.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

‘Frieden und Menschlichkeit’ in the context of actual crises. Lange<sup>204</sup> writes about this topic that he and his fellow New Waver fans liked bands that experimented intelligently with ‘Düsterrock’. Two of the East German bands which fit into this category, as we will see, thematised that which Wurschi<sup>205</sup> has described as characteristic for Gothic in the GDR, namely the ‘Suche nach dem Sinn des Lebens angesichts der Endlichkeit des Individuellen Daseins’ in a fundamentally different way than Punk self-writings.

To contextualise this shift from a critical focus on political ideology and an industrialised society to an existentialist experiment, the strong thematic connection between the environmental discourse and Punk, Post-Punk and Gothic themes and narratives needs to be highlighted. When we for example examine the *Umweltblaetter*,<sup>206</sup> critical texts from the environmental protest groups in the GDR, we can identify thematic overlap with the criticism in Punk and Post-Punk texts and the self-writings by *Schleimkeim* and *Letzte Diagnose*, when an anonymous author<sup>207</sup> for instance blames<sup>208</sup> militarism and suppression and writes: ‘Der Mensch ist zum bloßen Diener der von ihm geschaffenen Institutionen und Apparate, zum Zahnrad degradiert. In einem von der Wiege bis zur Bahre geregelten, ge- und versicherten Leben gibt es keine Notwendigkeit mehr für selbständiges Denken, nachbarschaftliche Hilfe und Verantwortlichkeit.’ The author of this text<sup>209</sup> refers to the ‘Resignation’ of the people which, in their view, was the result of fear, meaninglessness, lack of perspective and societal isolation. Such individual existential crisis was, as stated, wide-spread and had a negative effect on society.<sup>210</sup> The existential solution presented in the analysed lyrics by *Die Skeptiker* and *Die Kündiger* is the replacing of ‘Ich-Sein’ with ‘Wir-Sein’ by representing ‘Mensch-Sein’ and ‘Menschheit’ as the actual site of conflict; as both cause and victim of ideological (self-)delusion.

In the *Umweltblaetter*, a pro-socialism perspective combines Marxist-communist rhetoric with religious ‘Endzeit’ language. For example, in an essay from 1986 titled *Bibelarbeit zur Apokalypse*, the anonymous author<sup>211</sup> greets readers as ‘Liebe

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<sup>204</sup> Burmeister and Lange, *Behind The Wall*, pp. 31 & p. 94.

<sup>205</sup> Wurschi, *Rennsteigbeat*, p. 236.

<sup>206</sup> Robert-Havemann-Gesellschaft, Archiv der Jugendopposition, RG/B 08, *Protokoll der Gründungssitzung des Friedens- und Umweltkreises in der Evangelischen Pfarr- und Glaubensgemeinde Lichtenberg, in der Glaubenskirche am 28.6.1983*

<sup>207</sup> Robert-Havemann-Gesellschaft, Archiv der Jugendopposition, RG/B 08, *Protokoll der Gründungssitzung*, 1983, p. 2.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>209</sup> Robert-Havemann-Gesellschaft, Archiv der Jugendopposition, PS 111, p. 2

<sup>210</sup> Robert-Havemann-Gesellschaft, Archiv der Jugendopposition, RG/B 08, p. 2.

<sup>211</sup> Robert-Havemann-Gesellschaft, Archiv der Jugendopposition, PS 116/02, p. 1.

Endzeitgenossen' and states<sup>212</sup> 'es geht ein Gespenst um in Europa, das Gespenst der Apokalypse' to make the point<sup>213</sup> that any rational thinking human being could foresee the end. The author's pessimistic remark 'es geht schließlich alles kaputt'<sup>214</sup> and promise to perform symbolic resistance until the end<sup>215</sup> fits into the 'Anarchiepathos', while the statement 'Die Angst vor der Zukunft ist mir zur Angst um die Zukunft geworden'<sup>216</sup> fits into the idea of No Future. What must be noted here is that the author<sup>217</sup> added that 'Endzeitstimmung' had been around for centuries and that 'Endzeit' prophecies had never come true. The 'Endzeit' metaphors the author addressed were, as such, merely metaphors in people's search for the meaning of life. When they feared the future, the author<sup>218</sup> concluded, they were drawn to political and religious ideology; to the grand narratives which promised to save them and offer them a brighter future. In the 1980s, young people in all societies were, however, keener on pop music that thematised 'Endzeit'.

Bands that were founded by young East German fans of Gothic music were called *IC*, *Rosengarten*, *Die Art*, *Happy Straps*, *Die Vision*, *The Happy Cadavres* and *The Calyx of Rose*.<sup>219</sup> They were considered part of *die anderen Bands*, but unlike several Punk, Post-Punk and Avant-Garde bands, little information is available. One East German Gothic band was called *Rosengarten* (initially *Keimzelle* and *Art of Steel*) after the song *Rosegarden Funeral of Sores* by the British band *Bauhaus*. *Bauhaus* was founded in 1978 and is today considered the first Gothic rock band and its first single *Bela Lugosi's Dead* the first Gothic rock song.<sup>220</sup> Other than the information that *Rosengarten* produced the tapes *The Funeral of Sores* (1986), *Blut & Liebe* (1987), *Exorcism And Return* (1988), and *Viva Now* (1989), there is no further information available in the *Parocktikum* online music encyclopaedia. This subchapter therefore focuses on another East German Gothic band called *Schadstoff* which is described in the encyclopedia as a Wave/Gothic band that performed all over the GDR with some of the most successful East German alternative bands *Rosa Extra*, *Feeling B*, *Die Skeptiker*, *Herbst in Peking*, *Die Firma*.

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., pp. 1 – 2;

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>219</sup> Klaus Neumann-Braun and Axel Schmidt, *Die Welt der Gothics. Spielräume düster konnotierter Transzendenz* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008), p. 257.

<sup>220</sup> [www.parocktikum.de/wiki/index.php/Rosengarten](http://www.parocktikum.de/wiki/index.php/Rosengarten); [www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVZLBSOvQ8g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVZLBSOvQ8g); [accessed on 9 Oktober 2018].

*Schadstoff* is also mentioned in an MfS document<sup>221</sup> titled *Operative Information. Einschätzung zur nichtlizenzierten Musikgruppe "Schadstoff"* from Schwerin<sup>222</sup>. The song lyrics are described in the report as 'Inoffiziell beschaffte Texte der Band "Schadstoff"'. According to the document, the band consisted of three young men from the town Krakow in the north of the GDR. The report<sup>223</sup> describes the lyrics as follows: 'die Texte der Band beinhalten [...] typische ideologische Lebensauffassungen der Gruftis, wie z.B. die Auferstehung des Menschen nach dem Tod und okkultistische Denkweisen, die den Glauben an übersinnliche und überirdische Kräfte darstellen'. The lyrics, as we will see, exemplify how 'Ich-Sein' is represented in a Gothic narrative and language, and which symbolic existential strategy or 'magical solution', to use Stanley Cohen's<sup>224</sup> term, it consists of. We will see that it radically differs from Punk self-representation. A metaphor used in a political essay<sup>225</sup> in the *Umweltblaetter* captures this difference; it is stated that socialism is dead but that the underground movement had faith in its 'Wiederauferstehung' in a unified Germany. The 'Endzeit', death and resurrection metaphors, as we will see, are crucial in Gothic rhetoric and differ from Punk rhetoric.

The band name *Schadstoff* is upon itself a metaphor which matches the negative Punk self-representation as the band represents itself (and its music) as a pollutant. But *Schadstoff* was also one of the key terms in the environmental discourse, as the according micro-media<sup>226</sup> exemplify.<sup>227</sup> In 1987, *Schadstoff* produced a video clip for their song *The World Is Going Down*. The lyrics of the song construct a short 'Endzeit' narrative, but the video adds a different interpretation of 'Endzeit'. The video<sup>228</sup> was uploaded to *YouTube* in 2015 and contains the English description:<sup>229</sup> 'The GDR in 1987 - underground band video originally filmed on super8 using a live recorded track'. The person who filmed the clip and uploaded it to *YouTube* explained that he was an acquaintance of the band who owned a

<sup>221</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, Nr. 3109, *Einschätzung zur nichtlizenzierten Musikgruppe "Schadstoff"*, p. 14; BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6070, *Einleitungsbericht zur OPK "Panik"*, Abt. XX/2, p. 76.

<sup>222</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, Nr. 3109, Abteilung XX/2, Berlin, 26. April 1989, *Operative Information. Einschätzung zur nichtlizenzierten Musikgruppe "Schadstoff" (Bezirk Schwerin)*, p. 14; BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6070, *Einleitungsbericht zur OPK "Panik"*, Rostock, 14.05.88, Abt. XX/2, p. 76.

<sup>223</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, Nr. 3109, *Einschätzung zur nichtlizenzierten Musikgruppe "Schadstoff"*, p. 14.

<sup>224</sup> Cohen, Stanley, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1972), p. 161.

<sup>225</sup> Robert-Havemann-Gesellschaft, Archiv der Jugendopposition, PS 111, p. 2.

<sup>226</sup> Robert-Havemann-Gesellschaft, Archiv der Jugendopposition, PS 074, p. 18 „*Morsche Meiler – Reader zum 3. Berliner Ökologieseminar. 28.-30. November 1986*“ (*Die Umwelt-Bibliothek Berlin*) „*Atomkraft in der DDR – weaternutzen oder Ausstieg?*“, 25.-26.04.86.

<sup>227</sup> Robert-Havemann-Gesellschaft, Archiv der Jugendopposition, PS 072/12, p. 72, p. 74: and p. 73: 'S

<sup>228</sup> [www.youtube.com/watch?v=KwqNbEk6oE8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KwqNbEk6oE8) [accessed on 16 November 2017].

<sup>229</sup> [www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8ZZdtDgmiY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8ZZdtDgmiY) [accessed on 16 November 2017].

super-8-camera and could therefore make a semi-professional video. *Schadstoff* also produced a tape titled *Fly* that contains description<sup>230</sup>: ‘Aus den frühen Nachwendetagen, Wave- und Indieklänge aus Güstrow, Deutschland Schadstoff - "Fly" (tape, 1992 - Amöbenklang)’. *In Memory* contains a very positive description<sup>231</sup> of the band and the music: ‘...sehr geile Post-DDR Darkwave-Band!!! Großartige Songs (Studio) mit sehr groovigem Zusammenspiel und der richtigen Portion Aggressivität! Genau wie bei State Of Emergency fließen hier Einflüsse von The Smith, The Cure und britischem C86-Noisepop mit ein, wobei beide Bands etwas völlig eigenes daraus gemacht haben...sowas geiles gibt es heute gar nicht mehr! ...deutsche Gothic-Rarität!!!’

*Schadstoff* was founded in 1986 or 1987 and was one of *die anderen Bands*. As there are not many video clips from East German bands except for videos showing live footage available online, we may assume that not many videos were produced, which can be explained by the fact that video equipment was expensive and scarce among young people. Partly because of this *The World Is Going Down* is worth examining closely. The video contains fragments of the band playing at what seems like a rehearsal room in a garage, as well as filmic footage with a narrative with a beginning and (un)happy end. It seems that the band had a specific idea of their self-representation as a band and the story of the song. In this video, ‘Endzeitstimmung’ is visualised to match the ‘Endzeit’ lyrics, which evolves around the representation of a Gothic ‘Ich-Sein’. Themes and symbols in the narrative can be considered Gothic because the death topic is prominent, but what is most interesting is can be interpreted in two different ways.

Death is visualised in the video as the end as well as a new beginning, or resurrection. In the narrative, which features two male protagonists and one female protagonist who are all dressed in black, a band member has died in a road accident. Upon his death, the second male protagonist holds a necklace with a cross. The cross is one of the strongest symbols which exist and can be interpreted as a metaphor for death or life, a life-time commitment to religious or spiritual faith with the promise of after-or eternal life in heaven.

In the narrative, the female protagonist carries a picture of the boy with a black ribbon which visually confirms his death to the audience. But the story takes a surprising turn when the boy reappears wearing white face make-up, which suggests that he is not as alive as he seems. The emotional response of the girl is fear; she runs away when she sees her living

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<sup>230</sup> [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZK8eFHwvKLo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZK8eFHwvKLo) [accessed on 7 Oktober 2017].

<sup>231</sup> [www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBKHSKr7q6Y&t=16s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBKHSKr7q6Y&t=16s) [accessed on 7 Oktober 2017].

(dead) or undead friend. But in the end of the video, they are reunited, standing in a circle of fire in the forest. At first sight, the narrative in the song lyrics differs from the visual language in the video:

The world is going down – die Welt geht unter  
I see the houses flying over the street.  
And in 27 minutes the world is going down.  
I'm walking through the streets and cry.  
It's too late, it's too late. The world is going down  
I see the walls flying over the street.  
I see the houses flying over the street  
The permanent is burning.  
Save your souls.  
It is there.  
The world is going down.<sup>232</sup>

The first sentence, the (English) title of the song, is sung both in English and German. The fact that the rest of the lyrics are in English is unusual, as most East German bands, including the most successful bands, wrote and sung in German. The reason for this could be that *Schadstoff* was primarily inspired by Anglo-Saxon bands, and that they wanted and hoped to be heard by an international audience. The lyrics are brief and direct which may be the result of limited knowledge of English. At the same time, the 'Endzeit' message is powerful because it mystifies spatial, social or ideological context while the scenario is concrete.

The 'Endzeit' lyrics do not correspond with the Gothic video when they are interpreted in a literal sense. In contrast to 'Endzeit' narratives in (Post-)Punk texts, the apocalyptic narrative in *The World is Going Down* seems to have to be interpreted as a metaphor. The final number of minutes given in the scenario could be arbitrary, but it could also be a symbolic reference to the guardian angel number, or to the so-called *Forever 27 club* which refers to the death of several famous rock artists who died aged 27. The element of fire is a parallel between the text and the video, and like the cross, fire is a strong metaphor which also has an ambivalent meaning; it symbolises destruction as well as fertility, as new

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<sup>232</sup> *Schadstoff, The World Is Going Down*, 1987.

life rises from ashes. In the lyrics, 'the permanent is burning'. In the video, the (un)dead male protagonist and the female protagonist are placed in a ring of fire. Life is permanent in this depiction of resurrection and after-life. Yet it comprises a change of identity and appearance; the undead Gothic 'Ich-Sein' in black clothes. It is a visualisation of the 'transitory identity'<sup>233</sup> which Jochen Bonz attributes to identity in postmodern subculture.

Whereas the lyrics express fear and sadness over the coming end and lost world, the clip visualises how souls are saved. 'Sein', as in human being and existence, ends whereas 'Ich-Sein', the soul lives on in the Gothic body. The Gothic physique represents the permanent, which is the soul that blurs the boundaries between (physical) life and (symbolic) death. The meaning of life is symbolically expanded in this self-representation, as 'Endzeit' is not the end but merely a transition to another world or another existence and does not have to be feared. The forest, where the crucial part of the story is situated functions as a symbolic natural space which contrasts with the modern urban or industrialised space, and which is associated with history, the uncanny, mystery, fertility, and mythology.

*The World is Going Down's* lyrics seem to express the same critique as the Post-Punk 'Endzeit' texts and represent the 'Ich' as witness of inevitable global doom in his direct surroundings. Yet instead of describing the trapped, ill, paranoid, alien or corrupted body and mind of the self and humanity as the enemy, and instead of expressing pessimism or nihilism, fear, anger or anarchic resistance, the ambivalence of the metaphors offer a dark romantic solution, a resistance to the idea of death as the end of life. We may interpret this artistic interpretation of 'Endzeit' and expression of 'Endzeitstimmung' as existentialist therapy which symbolically expands life, 'Ich-Sein' and 'Wir-Sein' beyond the mortal physical existence on earth and in which death is a passage to another state of 'Sein'. What the texts have in common is that fate, or death, is inescapable and that the strategy offered in the rhetoric of the lyrics is indeed, as Cohen<sup>234</sup> wrote about subcultural resistance 'not being an actual, successful solution to whatever is the problem'. Therefore, the resistance can only be symbolic or magical, and not make an actual change to that which is inevitable. In this Gothic self-representation, hence, the essence of the self or 'Ich-Sein', the soul and not the body that is captured, ill or transitory, is disconnected from ideological

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<sup>233</sup> Jochen Bonz, *Subjekte des Tracks. Ethnografie einer postmodernen / anderen Subkultur* (Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos, 2008), p. 82.

<sup>234</sup> Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*

metanarratives with norms, rules and truths, from physical realities, spaces, norms and bodies because all this will not matter when the world goes down.

Beyond the 'Endzeit' depiction, the narrative in the video for *The World is Going Down* can be interpreted as a dark romantic love story because the male protagonist and female protagonist who seem doomed by the inescapable ring of fire are (re-)united in afterlife. Both their souls will be saved from their mortal existence and become immortal. Their love (bond) is depicted as absolute commitment, as it is also in another *Schadstoff* text titled *Follow Me in Death/Folge Mir in den Tod*. It exists both in an English (with grammatical errors) and a German version. Here, the death/love theme visualised in the metaphor of *The World Is Going Down* is more specific:

I see in your eyes and I see in a mirror, a mirror, which say [sic] me: "She is your life and your death and she smile [sic], come with me. Come with me, in another world and follow me in the [sic] death. Follow me in the [sic] death!"<sup>235</sup>

Ich sehe in deine Augen und ich sehe in einen Spiegel, einen Spiegel, welcher mir sagt: "Sie ist dein Leben und dein Tod" Und sie lächelt, kommt mit dir, kommt mit dir in eine andere Welt und folgt mir in den Tod. Folge mir in den Tod! Du sagst zu mir: Ich liebe dich und Ich küsse deine kalten Lippen, deine weißen Hände oder nimmst meine Hand und sie sagt zu mir: komm mit mir. Folge mir in den Tod!<sup>236</sup>

The lyrics seem to match the narrative in *The World Is Going Down*, by symbolising death as unity for lovers, in Carol Siegel's<sup>237</sup> definition of Gothic, a 'a mode of being sexually undead and loving it', and not as a definitive end, but merely a different (endless) place, 'eine andere Welt' and identity. Love and the loved one are called life and death, symbolising their inseparability. The 'Sinn des Lebens angesichts der Endlichkeit des Individuellen Daseins', to repeat Wurschi's<sup>238</sup> interpretation of Gothic in the GDR, is then the collective 'Sein'.

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<sup>235</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, Nr. 3109, *Einschätzung zur nichtlizenzierten Musikgruppe 'Schadstoff'*, 1989, p. 15 [MfS copy of song lyrics for *Follow me in Death* by *Schadstoff*]

<sup>236</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, Nr. 3109, *Einschätzung zur nichtlizenzierten Musikgruppe 'Schadstoff'*, 1989, p. 15 [MfS copy of song lyrics for *Follow me in Death* by *Schadstoff*]

<sup>237</sup> Carol Siegel, *Goth's Dark Empire* (Combined Academic Publishers: Harrogate, North Yorkshire) p. 19.

<sup>238</sup> Wurschi, *Rennsteigbeat*, p. 236.



We have seen that Punk, Post-Punk and Gothic texts thematise utopia, dystopia, inescapability, fear, doom and death but that 'Ich-Sein' is represented differently in this context. In Punk texts, 'Ich-Sein' is strapped in a Too Much Future system of conformity and monotony ('lebender Tod') which it feels alien to ('Weise') and which it wants to resist (symbolically). While little faith is expressed towards (youth) collectivity and a better future, anarchy is depicted as an effective existential strategy; as an escape with political and violent consequences ('Staatsfeind'). Post-Punk texts do not offer any hope for a better future because the 'Ich' observes coming doom and slow as well as sudden death ('Endzeit'), while the collective is victim as well as perpetrator, and the only existential strategy is symbolical resistance.

In the Gothic texts, 'Endzeit' can be interpreted in two different ways. While doom and death are depicted as inevitable, they are not the end, because the soul ('Ich-Sein') is resurrected in afterlife ('eine andere Welt') and has escaped fate, while the physical identity has changed. What we can identify here is a symbolic existential strategy that which Agnes Jasper<sup>239</sup> describes as 'the home that Gothic insiders create for themselves [...] with the same imagery, the same aesthetics. [...] a home with no revolutionist suggestions for a different mainstream culture [...] that seeks escape, that builds cultural memory on sensuous experience [...] Being ephemeral seems the only way to be "free", to feel "at home".' As such, Gothic criticism does not comprise the us against them rhetoric (as Punk criticism does), because physical realities and bodies are impermanent, while universal, traditional values remain. The creation of a separate world and different approach to life testify of, to quote Jenks,<sup>240</sup> a 'changing consciousness about space' which has an 'inevitable impact on visions of future utopian societies and universal notions of the "good"'. When we compare the idea of the symbolic Gothic existence to the last section of the online version of the lyrics<sup>241</sup> for *Norm* by the Punk band *Schleimkeim* from 1983: 'Kommst du dann in Himmel. Und fühlst dich wie neugeboren. Nun ist alles scheißegal. Denn im Himmel gibt es keine Norm', the same thematical overlap can be identified through 'a lexicon through which anxieties both personal and collective can be narrativized', as Sara Martin<sup>242</sup> defines the language of Gothic criticism. Whereas this Punk text criticises conformed others who believe

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<sup>239</sup> Jasper, Agnes, *The Mysts of the Gothic Underground. An Endo-Ethnographic Perspective on Dutch Gothic Subculture: Identity, Consumerism and the Gothic Aesthetic from the inside out* (Amsterdam: Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2006).

<sup>240</sup> Jenks, *Subculture: The Fragmentation of the Social*, p. 131.

<sup>241</sup> <http://jedermenschistzuviel.stabo.org/texte.php?show=2&what=5048> [accessed on 23 November 2018]

<sup>242</sup> Spooner, Catherine, *Contemporary Gothic* (Reaktion Books: London, 2006), p. 9.

in the ‘good’, Gothic subculture is, as Martin<sup>243</sup> points out, ‘above all, about living one’s own life within a self-made fantasy Gothic world’ which blurs the juxtaposition between ‘good’ and ‘bad’.

In the context of physical space and existence which feel threatened by (opposing) ideology, subcultural micro-media in the form *The World Is Going Down* and *Follow Me in Death* belong to an off-ground, experimental grey area which opposes an underground niche in which individuals construct and struggle with external and internal limits. In any reality, there are norms and rules, but in poetry, there are no such boundaries as fears and dreams can be written freely. When a subculture is represented as having no relation whatsoever to the (mortal) system and its people, and the subculture stands for an ideology which is not political, social, military or industrial, but rather a form of spiritual-philosophical existentialism which turns inwards and not outwards, then it cannot be repressed by the system’s norms, rules and limits. The question whether, considering this representation of a boundless, self-reflective and self-(sub)conscious Gothic identity and ideology, this subculture can still be defined and interpreted as a subculture will be answered in Chapter 2.

Death as a metaphor in subcultural micro-media for absolute individual freedom and a higher meaning of life move beyond No Future and Too Much Future, beyond ‘Zukunftspathos’ and ‘Anarchiepathos’, because it celebrates ‘Resignation’ not as an individual and ideally collective strategy against societal pressure, as an ‘innere Republikflucht’ because there is no Republik in the Gothic fantasy world, but as a celebration of ‘Ich-Sein’ in any form the subcultural actor chooses. When this celebration of life and inner release consisted of a symbolic celebration of one’s own death, like the East German band *Eiswolf* did when they placed a (fake) gravestone with the text *Hier ruht in Frieden Eiswolf*<sup>244</sup> on stage, and performed the songs *Laßt Uns Sterben* and *Die Toten Sterben Niemals aus* as part of an underground church event, we might conclude that the self-irony and (dark) humour of this death rhetoric functioned as a subcultural survival

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<sup>243</sup> Martin, Sara, ‘Gothic Scholars Don’t Wear Black. Gothic Studies and Gothic Subcultures’, *Gothic Studies*, 4.1 (2002), 28 – 43 (p. 40).

<sup>244</sup> BStU, MfS HA IX 9832, Hauptabteilung IX/2 Berlin, 16. Und 20. November 1987. *Vorschlag zur Prüfung der Einleitung rechtlicher Maßnahmen gegen die Mitglieder der Gruppe Eiswolf / Rechtliche Stellungnahme*, pp. 72, p. 80.

strategy<sup>245</sup> for young people in the East and West during the final phase of the Cold War, while not every fan of Gothic music might have taken life and subculture deadly serious.

## Conclusion

The texts analysed in this chapter fit into the transnational mood of the 1980s. Punk texts focus on political ideology, individuality, (non-)conformity, existential crisis, future fear, and the end of Punk identity and collectivity which, ironically, comprises the fear that the inescapable, monotonous existence is endless (Too Much Future). The lyrics represent a ‘Dichter und Denker Punk’ which performs ‘Anarchiepathos’ as actual and symbolic resistance. The Western subculture Punk had offered some stylistic and rhetoric strategies which young East Germans adopted and transformed to fit into their own specific existential crisis in the GDR. What we see is that the texts thematise an ambivalent inner conflict towards the ‘Heimat’ and ‘Zone’, and a dichotomy between activist-optimist anarchy and nihilist-pessimist ‘Resignation’. In Punk texts, the GDR is a political-ideological and monotonised-ritualised, undead non-space and meaningless and endless discourse from which there is no escape for enlightened, all-knowing and all-seeing thinkers. The individual existential strategy offered is to resist any form of conformity, deny any future design and reject any national identity. While the ‘DDR von Unten’ rejects the GDR, they claim their own subcultural space, ‘Untergrund’, from which they can collectively operate as blockage in the political-ideological system of representation. The Punk revolution would, however, mean the end of ‘DDR von Unten’ because its purpose is attached to the GDR. The end of Punk, as participants indicate, would be a symbolic death, because Punk is the sole *raison d’être*.

This chapter has answered three key questions in relation to Punk, Post-Punk and Gothic self-writing. Whereas Punk functions as disturbance of the system in the text, the criticism is often veiled or ambivalent because it either does not specify the system or nation, and it appears that, as was also confirmed in the texts by the second Punk generation in the GDR, that the criticism is addressed at both Germanies. We have also seen that the criticism can be interpreted as expression of ‘a generational clash, as always youth culture was rebelling against the attitudes and ideals of what had gone before, struggling to be different’,

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<sup>245</sup> Marjolein 't Hart and Dennis Bos, *Humour and Social Protest* (eds.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

to quote Spencer.<sup>246</sup> Yet we can also identify suspicion regarding the young East German generation in texts from the first Punk generation. This is confirmed by and radicalised in Punk lyrics from 1987 – 1989. The individual in the texts from 1982 – 1983 seems, however, primarily concerned about their own future, about growing older losing the courage to rebel. In Schneider's<sup>247</sup> words, the parental future appeared to be the most threatening image, almost like it was the real apocalypse. The solution, as we have seen, was to reject the future designs of the 'Vaterland', because they were considered archaic, inhumane and dishonest, and instead focus on 'Ich-Sein' in the here and now.<sup>248</sup>

The Post-Punk transition comprises a subcultural dualism, as we have seen, as well as a shift in the construction of identity, collectivity and meaning. The pluriform alternative culture of the GDR comprised different new 'other bands' among which (Dark) Wave/Gothic bands who, although scarce, have produced subcultural micro-media which sheds a new light on East German subculture. While representatives of the second Punk generation had very clear, one might say elitist and polarising views on the meaning and purpose of this subculture, 'underground' clashed with 'off-ground' criticism because 'Ich-Sein' was contextualised outside the GDR's borders and beyond us against them and good vs. bad juxtapositions. Limits and taboos are obscured in the rhetoric with the aim to explore higher, universal meanings which have survived through centuries and systems. The dark sides of ideology and modernity, nuclear threat, were global, and existential crises were not limited to rebels. Crucially, the meaning of 'Mensch-Sein' or 'Sein' and life were revisited beyond ideological, spatial and temporal boundaries. Here we can identify the transnational and transhistorical quality of a literary theme which lies at the essence of Gothic, life and death in different double metaphors. The Post-Punk transition in the GDR can be identified in the different approach to subculture; subculture vs. political, conformed or older 'others', or subculture as a philosophy of life and experiment of the (imagined) self.

Although the resistance of these subcultures is thus indeed highly symbolic, these texts were heard and read by other young people to whom a dark romantic approach to life appealed, and/or who simply liked the 'dark' themes, aesthetics and sounds. All the texts we have analysed fit into the Zeitgeist of the rise of individualism, 'global dystopian fear'<sup>249</sup> and the postmodern fall of the grand narratives, but unlike Punk and Post-Punk, Gothic is

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<sup>246</sup> Spencer, DIY, p. 229.

<sup>247</sup> Schneider, 'There's no future like "no future"', pp. 18 – 19.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Barry Smart, *Modern Conditions: Postmodern Controversies* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 219.

meaning, identity or collectivity that does not seem to relate to the physical here and now but to the imagined, ancient and transcendent. It is therefore not a subculture in the original sense but a 'kulturelle Formation, die ihren Subjekten mittels Idealisierungen, Größenfantasien eine Welt macht' to use Bonz'<sup>250</sup> definition of (postmodern) subculture. In this world, Gothic is the elitist, romantic otherness and resistance against that which is perceived as inhumane, calculated and constrained. Through subcultural self-writings and self-representations, young people escape reality, this was as much true in the GDR as it was anywhere else, because most will always feel conflicted with others and aspects of society, while they will be connected to those they share subcultural styles, identities, collectivities, meanings, ideals, fears, tastes and interests with, wherever in the world they may be or go.

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<sup>250</sup> Bonz, *Subjekte des Tracks*, pp. 23, 25 – 26 [Referring to Lacan's 'imaginary identification'].

## CHAPTER 2

### SHIFTING IDEOLOGICAL FORMS

#### POLITICAL (RE)INTERPRETATIONS OF PUNK AND GOTHIC PHENOMENA

### Introduction

In 1981, the term Punk is put in inverted commas in official state documents, because, as Brauer<sup>1</sup> writes, the SED denied Punk in the GDR the status of authentic Punk, and therefore, it was merely defined as pseudo-Punk. When Hebdige<sup>2</sup> described Punk in the UK as ‘authentic’, what he meant was that their resistance, expressed in their spectacular style, was genuine and logically explainable disturbance in capitalist society. Spencer<sup>3</sup> notes that conservatism and societal crisis in post-war Britain created a ‘grim situation’ for many people, and that British Punks reflected this like no other subculture. Punk was as such, as Lipp<sup>4</sup> notes a ‘Krisensymptom in Westeuropa für dessen Existenz es in der DDR folglich keine objektive Grundlage gäbe’, while its ‘inextricability from capitalism’, as Howes<sup>5</sup> writes, resulted in depictions of Punk in MfS documents<sup>6</sup> as a Western movement which ‘vereinigt [...] Jugendliche und Jungerwachsene in den kapitalistischen Ländern, die keine Arbeit haben und der Zukunft hoffnungslos entgegensehen’. As have seen in Chapter 1, the

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<sup>1</sup> Juliane Brauer, ‘Clashes of Emotions. Punk Music, Youth Subculture, and Authority in the GDR (1978 – 1983)’, *Social Justice*, 38.4 (2012), 53 – 70 (57).

<sup>2</sup> Dick Hebdige, *Subculture. The meaning of Style* (London/New York: Routledge, 1979), p. 119.

<sup>3</sup> Amy Spencer, *DIY. The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture*, Marion Boyars Publishers, London, 2005, p. 239

<sup>4</sup> Florian Lipp, ‘Punk- und New-Wave-Bands im letzten Jahrzehnt der DDR im kultur- und sicherheitspolitischen Kontext’, *Totalitarianism and Democracy*, 12.2 (2015), 225 – 248 (p. 230).

<sup>5</sup> Seth Howes, ‘Subcultural Studies between the Blocs. Unexpected Cosmopolitanism and Stubborn Blind Spots in East German Theories of Punk’, in *Beyond No Future. Cultures of German Punk* ed. by Mirko M. Hall, Seth Howes, and Cyrus M. Shahan (London/New York: Bloomsbury, 2018), pp. 71 – 88 (p. 73).

<sup>6</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam, Abt. XX 929, *Bezirksbehörde der deutschen Volkspolizei, Potsdam, 25.4.1985, Information zur Entwicklung der Punkbewegung im Bezirk Potsdam*, p. 14.

No Future mood appealed to young people in the GDR because of forced (working) life paths and societal isolation, alienation and marginalisation.

Howes<sup>7</sup> notes that ‘mockeries of Punk’ appeared in German media such as youth magazine *Neues Leben* which depicted Punk in March 1978 as ‘The Newest Wave of Western Pop Music’. About four years later, the ‘product of capitalism’s failure’<sup>8</sup> had ended up as a capitalist product and was criticised for it by scene insiders and journalists, while in the GDR the Punk movement blossomed. From the perspective of the SED, Punk in the GDR was a symptom of the incapability of a youth minority to contribute to and appreciate the higher meaning of collective life and the *Sinn unseres Lebens*<sup>9</sup> in socialist society.

As noted in the annual report<sup>10</sup> of the *Ministerium des Innern* and *Kriminalpolizei* from 1985, Punks were young people who ‘begreifen sich als Aussteiger aus einer Welt, die ihnen keine Perspektive bietet’. Considering that the GDR was represented as the society which offered clearly outlined perspectives and promised a bright future, East Germans should be immune to that which is depicted as a purely Western disease. In the GDR, that which was called Punk in quotation marks was therefore not a subculture in the Anglo-American definition of subculture as working-class struggle, as Howes<sup>11</sup> has noted. By 1984, however, after the climax and downfall of East German Punk, a pluriform Post-Punk, Avantgarde and Gothic subculture unfolded which questioned the societal and political meaning of Punk and subculture in the context of the GDR.

East German Punk was a subculture from subcultural as well as state perspectives (police and MfS) because it was considered incompatible with societal norms, rules and values. The Punk texts analysed in Chapter 1 indicate that ‘social subordination’, as Cohen<sup>12</sup> has defined subculture is the essence of Punk critique, and that the subculture offered them a form of (symbolic) self-protection against it. Yet the authorities used German synonyms for participants in Punk subculture, ‘Aussteiger’ which defined Punk as a phenomenon that was alien in and hostile to the GDR and participants as unwilling to participate in society and more pejoratively, ‘Staatsfeind’, which defined participants as political enemies. The

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<sup>7</sup> Howes, ‘Subcultural Studies between the Blocs’, p. 73.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>9</sup> Gallinat, Anselma, ‘A ritual middle ground? Personhood, ideology and resistance in East Germany’, *Social Anthropology*, 13.3 (2005), 291-305 (p. 291) [Quote from the *Zentraler Ausschuß* (East Berlin: Verlag Neues Leben, 1983), p. 260].

<sup>10</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6170, *Sonderheft 1/1985 – MfI Informationen Kriminalpolizei*, p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> Seth Howes, ‘Subcultural Studies between the Blocs’, p. 84.

<sup>12</sup> Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1972), p. 61.

two perspectives, as we will see, were intertwined and overlapped, because, as shown in Chapter 1, Punks represented themselves as ‘Aussteiger’ and ‘Staatsfeinde’.

Within the ‘clear definition of a normative socialist youth’, to quote Brauer,<sup>13</sup> any ‘alternative interpretation of the world’, to use Kevin C. Dunn’s<sup>14</sup> words, as expressed by young people in subcultural micro-media or (life)style symbolically ‘stepped out’ of the world that was called the GDR and represented as perfect society. As Brauer correctly stresses and as will be demonstrated in this chapter, it should be examined how ‘the state dealt with deviant youths in the GDR and how these policies changed in 1980’ by focusing on ambivalences in state representations of Punk and subculture, and on subcultural phenomena that came after the first generation of East German Punk.

In Chapter 1, we have seen how Punk, Post-Punk and Gothic texts differ in the contextualisation, interpretation and representation of life and the self in the context of the Too Much Future / No Future GDR as well as a global(ised) ‘Endzeit’ context. In this chapter, it will be demonstrated how, why and when the SED’s symptomatic explanation which rated Punk in specific and subculture in general as a meaningless, purposeless, alien phenomenon in the socialist-communist system was revised after 1983. As we will see, the blockage in the system of representation, to repeat Hebdige’s<sup>15</sup> useful term which unfolded during the 1980s proved to be the system of representation itself. It will be explored how and why this was and which subcultural theories, models, categories, interpretations and investigation and analysis strategies and methods can be identified in the MfS files.

As we have seen in the Introduction chapter, scholars, journalists and even scene participants still struggle with the definition of subculture themselves. At the time when (sub)cultural developments were unfolding very rapidly amidst rapidly changing Western and Eastern societies, state actors who were attributed with the task to observe and interpret the different groups, (spectacular) styles, noises, practices and behaviours of young people appeared overwhelmed by the postmodern fragmentation and globalisation of subculture.

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<sup>13</sup> Brauer, ‘Clashes of Emotions’, p. 57.

<sup>14</sup> Kevin C. Dunn, *Global Punk. Resistance and Rebellion in Everyday Life* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing), 2016, p. 179.

<sup>15</sup> Hebdige, *Subculture. The meaning of Style*, p. 119.



Häder<sup>16</sup> makes the interesting point about the MfS files on subcultures that there is a monotony in them which demonstrates that the MfS analysed the causes of subcultures without reaching new insights because the Western capitalist-imperialist ‘Klassenfeind’ was always to blame. Häder furthermore argues that there was little flexibility regarding the methods and strategies with which the SED aimed to maintain or restore the system’s ‘Sicherheit’. However, this chapter illustrates that although the files show that the political study of subcultures was textualised through standardised rhetoric and terminology, the Post-Punk transition did affect the narrative regarding subculture and flexibilised political explanations and strategies of control.

Punk as well as Post-Punk lyrics, as demonstrated in Chapter 1, were ‘calling for an undefined revolution’, to quote Spencer<sup>17</sup> through veiled as well as well as unveiled criticism. The question answered in this chapter is how the MfS interpreted this criticism. As the self-representation of Punk is ambivalent, the question is how the MfS read contradicting moods, views and signs, and if, how and when this changed when the subcultures changed. The question is if, how and when subcultures were studied semiologically and how, if and when the aim to determine their societal meanings and political purposes was achieved. The question that will also be answered is how different MfS and police departments and actors read subcultural styles, texts, practices, identities and collectivities, and how perspectives on subculture varied, conflicted and changed within the political observations, assessments and departments. I argue that the Post-Punk transition, that is, the shift from Punk to Post-Punk and Gothic-related scenes, groups and bands was indeed, in Spencer’s<sup>18</sup> words, ‘a source of much confusion and misunderstanding’. It will be shown in this chapter how the Post-Punk confusion is reflected in MfS files, and if, when and how it effected, changed and conflicted the ‘government regulation and persecution’ which, according to Brauer<sup>19</sup>, remained the same.

This chapter asks three interrelated questions: how was Punk represented, and how was the definition of Punk maintained, applied, and/or changed after 1983, and how were the new Post-Punk genres, styles and scenes represented? The chapter is divided into four

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<sup>16</sup> Sonja Häder, ‘Zeugnisse von Eigen-Sinn. Punks in der späten DDR’, in *Der Bildungsgang des Subjekts. Bildungstheoretische Analysen (Zeitschrift für Pädagogik 48)*, ed. by Sonja Häder and Heinz-Elmar Tenorth (Weinheim and Basel: Beltz Verlag, 2004), pp. 68 – 48 (p. 68).

<sup>17</sup> Spencer, *DIY*, p. 258.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

<sup>19</sup> Brauer, ‘Clashes of Emotions’, pp. 64 – 65.

subchapters. The first subchapter explores the Punk theory and investigates how Punk was defined, and how subculture was defined within this narrative. The second subchapter focuses on Post-Punk confusion in state texts. It will be shown how the Post-Punk transition is described in the texts and if, how and when the emergence of new subcultural forms resulted in re-interpretations and re-definitions of subcultures in the GDR, and how this influenced the grand theories, policies, methods and strategies. The third subchapter looks at how the emergence of Gothic-related subcultures in the GDR is described and analysed in state texts, by which I mean Post-Punk, New Wave, New Romantic and *Grufiti(e)* styles, genres and scenes. The fourth subchapter investigates how these are described and analysed in the state texts, and if, how and when observations and investigations of these scenes resulted in new, different and conflictual interpretations and definitions of subcultural ideologies, meanings, identities and collectivities. The key question of the present chapter is how state-representations conflict or overlap with self-representations of Punk and Post-Punk between 1982 and 1986, and the Gothic self-representations between 1987 and 1989.

### I. Political Punk Theory: Alienated Subculture, Ambivalent Resistance

‘Perspektivlosigkeit, Unverstandensein und Nichtgebrauchtwerden in der Gesellschaft’, as it is formulated in a report<sup>20</sup> from 1987 from Hauptabteilung XX titled *Information über beachtenswerte Erscheinungen und Entwicklungen unter negativ beeinflussten Jugendlichen und Jungerwachsenen in der Hauptstadt der DDR, Berlin*, was a Western problem. At least in the official narrative which rated signs of ‘deviant collectivity’, to use Talcott Parson’s<sup>21</sup> term from 195, in the GDR as a youth and not a problem rooted in East German society or politics. It did become a political problem, however, because the ‘nihilism of Punk’, to use Spencer’s term,<sup>22</sup> required a political answer. The reason for this was that local police departments like the department<sup>23</sup> in Potsdam observed that the *Entwicklung der Punkbewegung im Bezirk Potsdam* in 1985 comprised an ‘Anti-Haltung gegen alle sittlichen Werte und Normen’. Punk was thus very real existing and visible in the streets. Crucially,

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<sup>20</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX 6097, *MfS Berlin, 16.3.1987, Information über beachtenswerte Erscheinungen und Entwicklungen unter negativ beeinflussten Jugendlichen und Jungerwachsenen in der Hauptstadt der DDR, Berlin*, p. 145

<sup>21</sup> Talcott Parsons, *The Social System* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951), p. 355.

<sup>22</sup> Spencer, *DIY*, p. 258.

<sup>23</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam Abt. XX 929, *Bezirksbehörde der deutschen Volkspolizei, Potsdam, 25.04.1985, Information zur Entwicklung der Punkbewegung im Bezirk Potsdam*, p. 15.

interpreting Punk as an ‘Anti-Haltung’ disconnects Punk from ideological context, because it says *all* values and norms. In this definition, hence, Punk was, but Punk anarchy was not an alien, Western symptom but an attack against real existing socialism just as it was considered disturbance capitalist norms, rules and values. Characteristic for Punks was refusing ‘Teilnahme am Produktionsprozess’, Wurschi<sup>24</sup> writes, which matches Punk self-representations we have seen in Chapter 1. This form of real resistance was so effective because, Wurschi stresses, ‘mit dieser Absage an zwei wesentlichen Identitätskonstrukte der DDR-Gesellschaft’, as we have also seen in the Punk texts in Chapter 1, ‘nämlich der “Arbeit” und dem “Zukunftsglauben”, stellten sie sich von Anbeginn auf Kontrontation ein’.

The confrontation was judged by the MfS in Potsdam<sup>25</sup> in 1983 as extremely ambivalent and distorted form of protest but crucially, as nothing more as an expression of apathy.<sup>26</sup> By trivialising the causes and effects of Punk protest, this MfS department used a strategy which Howes<sup>27</sup> has identified as the core of the official definition of Punk, namely the representation of Punks as politically confused. However, as we will see, different MfS departments and investigators represented different views on Punks’ motivation and ‘power to provoke and disturb’<sup>28</sup>. To highlight this development, we need look at a report by MfS *Hauptabteilung XX* (hereafter HA XX) from June 1982. Being one of thirteen MfS departments, HA XX<sup>29</sup> represented ‘the core of political repression and surveillance’ and was responsible for the observation and control of ‘political underground activity’ and consisted of a network of ‘Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter’ or ‘unofficial collaborators’, as Cooke and Hubble<sup>30</sup> explain. While the term Punk does not appear in a HA XX<sup>31</sup> titled *Analyse zur politisch-operativen Lage unter jugendlichen Personenkreisen in der DDR*, the analysis explains that because young people had a natural curiosity for ‘Neue[s] und revolutionären Veränderungen’, capitalist subcultures could emerge in the GDR at any time and place. That

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<sup>24</sup> Peter Wurschi, *Rennsteigbeat. Jugendliche Subkulturen Im Thüringer Raum 1952 – 1989* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2007), p. 234

<sup>25</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam, Abt. XX 929, *Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Potsdam, Abt. XX/2. Potsdam, den 1.8.1983*, p. 9.

<sup>26</sup> Howes, ‘Subcultural Studies between the Blocs’, p. 78.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>28</sup> Hebdige, *Subculture. The meaning of Style*, p. 119.

<sup>29</sup> e.g. <https://www.bstu.de/mfs-lexikon/>

<sup>30</sup> Paul Cooke and Nicholas Hubble, ‘Die volkseigene Opposition? The Stasi and Alternative Culture in the GDR’, *German Politics*, 6.2 (1997), 117 – 138 (121).

<sup>31</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 1487, *Hauptabteilung XX. Berlin, 14. Juni 1982, Analyse zur politisch-operativen Lage unter jugendlichen Personenkreisen in der DDR*, p. 4.

subculture would also take on so many different forms could not be foreseen by the MfS at that moment.

In a document which is dated only two days after the HA XX report<sup>32</sup>, titled *Hinweise zu jugendlichen "Punkern" in der DDR*, the term 'Punkern' is placed in quotation marks. This is to make clear that East German adolescents who 'identifizieren sich mit derartigen Erscheinungen und übernehmen die durch westliche Massenmedien gezielt propagierten Auffassungen und Verhaltensmuster' are thus, as Brauer<sup>33</sup> explains, merely victims of conspirative depictions of youthful rebellion. It is an example of one of the standard 'Stasi formulae regarding the Western-influenced decadence of punk (and other subcultural) appearances' that Howes has identified.<sup>34</sup> Häder<sup>35</sup> explains about this that terms that appear in MfS reports<sup>36</sup> such as 'dekadente Lebensformen', 'negativ-dekadent' and 'asoziale Verhaltensweisen' subsume 'solche Verhaltensformen [...] die – nach Auffassung der Begriffskonstrukteure – erstens den Normen des sozialistischen Zusammenlebens widersprechen, zweitens die öffentliche Ordnung und Sicherheit beeinträchtigen und drittens schließlich eine negativ politisch-ideologische Öffentlichkeitswirksamkeit erzeugen können'. In other words, HA XX argued that youth behaviour which fitted into this category was 'geheimdienstlich relevant' because it the Western enemy was behind it. In this narrative, young people themselves could not be blamed for desiring 'Freiräume' and 'alternative politische Lösungen', as formulated in the HA XX analysis<sup>37</sup>, and were at the most copycats and not real Punks.

Any yet, the SED feared that the disturbance of 'Sicherheit' and 'Ordnung' would spread. As we have seen in Chapter 1, some Punks doubted the effectiveness of anarchic resistance against 'Sicherheit', 'Arbeit', 'Norm', authority and conformity and perceived Punk as at the most symbolic existential resistance which was not going to change the future yet was still meaningful for them personally in the present. HA XX needed to find out 'Wie

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<sup>32</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 1486, Hauptabteilung XX., Berlin, 16. Juni 1982, *Hinweise zu jugendlichen 'Punkern' in der DDR*, p. 2 / BStU, MfS, HA XX, 900, p. 21.

<sup>33</sup> Brauer, 'Clashes of Emotions', pp. 64 – 65.

<sup>34</sup> Howes, 'Subcultural Studies between the Blocs', p. 84.

<sup>35</sup> Häder, 'Zeugnisse von Eigen-Sinn', pp. 68 – 69.

<sup>36</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 1487, *Analyse zur politisch-operativen Lage unter jugendlichen Personenkreisen in der DDR*, p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

und warum wird ein Jugendlicher zum Punker?'.<sup>38</sup> According to Brauer<sup>39</sup>, the answer was that Punk offered a new identity and an outlet for emotions which clashed with the system's 'emotional norms', to use Brauer's<sup>40</sup> term and, in Jenks'<sup>41</sup> words, with the 'standards and expectations in society'.

A key aspect of the definition of Punk in local MfS reports from 1983 refers to behaviour, attitudes and moods, as a file from the department in Potsdam<sup>42</sup> exemplifies: 'ihr Verhalten wird vor allem durch Emotionen geprägt und ist daher nicht durch Zielstrebigkeit gekennzeichnet'. Because the 'Verhalten der Punkanhänger'<sup>43</sup> was considered chaotic, emotional and unpredictable, it had the same power to provoke that Hebdige had attributed to British Punk, even when the cause and shape was very different. The MfS in Potsdam<sup>44</sup> judged a focus on the emotional self as the cause of the disturbance: 'Punks wollen sich so geben, wie sie sich gerade fühlen'. Anarchy is defined in a report from HA XX Berlin<sup>45</sup> titled *Hinweise zu jugendlichen "Punkern"* as 'der Sturz der bestehenden Gesellschaftsordnung [...], wodurch eine Unordnung, das Aufheben von Normen des Zusammenlebens erfolgt und dadurch ein "Chaos" entsteht'. This (supposed) purpose of Punk and anarchy was considered a threat because chaotic Punks would simply have to be their chaotic selves in public to have a shocking impact. At the same time, they were considered too chaotic to form a protest movement or start an actual revolution.

Different MfS files from 1983 indicate that Punk was not as perceived as coherently by the state as scholars<sup>46</sup> have suggested, and that there were two forms of Punk in the GDR. First, a clear distinction was made between copycats and young 'Aussteiger'. Interestingly, the two different forms of youth rebellion were both considered as ideological forms, 'ideologische Richtungen', but the term 'ideologisch' was used in a flexible way for youth (sub)cultures, as we will see. Following the idea that Punk was phenomenon which was

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<sup>38</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 1486, Hauptabteilung XX, Streng geheim, Information, Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen 'Punkern' in der DDR, 1983, p. 10

<sup>39</sup> Brauer, 'Clashes of Emotions', p. 56.

<sup>40</sup> Brauer, 'Clashes of Emotions', p. 56.

<sup>41</sup> Chris Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of The Social* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publishing, 2004), pp. 87 – 88.

<sup>42</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam, Abt. XX 929, *Potsdam, den 1.8.1983*, p. 9.

<sup>43</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 1486, Hauptabteilung XX, Streng Geheim, Information, Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen 'Punkern' in der DDR, 1983, p. 7.

<sup>44</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam, Abt. XX 929, *Potsdam, den 1.8.1983*, p. 9.

<sup>45</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 1486, Hauptabteilung XX., Berlin, 16. Juni 1982, Hinweise zu jugendlichen 'Punkern' in der DDR, p. 2 / BStU, MfS, HA XX, 900, p. 21.

<sup>46</sup> Brauer, 'Clashes of Emotions', pp. 64 – 65.

triggered by curiosity and imitated by teenagers, the department in Potsdam<sup>47</sup> reported in August 1983 that Punk was not only to be interpreted as a Western protest movement, ‘aber auch eine Art Modeerscheinung unter den Jugendlichen’ which, although Western too, was not a form of anarchy. HA XX concluded in its report<sup>48</sup> titled *Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen “Punkern”* that these were just ‘Nachahmungserscheinungen der westlichen “Punk-Bewegung”’, and thus not real but pseudo-Punks. With this rhetoric, we may assume that HA XX sought an explanation for political Punk protest in the GDR, while it acknowledged that Punk aesthetics and sounds had also become fashionable.

When Punk was defined as a fashion fad, it could be expected that it would disappear as soon as it emerged. The main reason why fashion Punks were not perceived as a direct threat to society was, as the report<sup>49</sup> indicates, that ‘bei diesen losen Konzentrationen kommt es zu einem häufig wechselnden Personenkreis und somit zu keiner stabilen Organisationsform’. HA XX<sup>50</sup> concluded that the ‘losen jugendlichen Punk-Konzentrationen’ consisted of ‘Sympathisanten’ who represented ‘weniger [...] oppositionelle bzw. negative gesellschaftliche Haltungen’. The statement implies that there also existed oppositional and negative attitudes towards society, but that these formed a minority, and that the majority was too disorganised to form a serious political opposition against the state. However, this did not mean that Punk was not considered a threat to conformity.

The files show that there were at least two possible interpretations of Punk, a fashion fad vs. a ‘chaos-ideology’, albeit without clear boundaries except for the expected level of threat to society that was attributed to some groups and participants. The SED seemed concerned that ‘Erziehung und Überzeugung’ strategies were lost on at least a part of the young generation which identified with Punk. HA XX reported<sup>51</sup> that East German teenagers were aware of the societal and political meaning of (Western) Punk. According to the *Hinweise zu jugendlichen “Punkern*, police interrogations<sup>52</sup> had revealed that ‘das Auftreten

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<sup>47</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam, Abt. XX 929, Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Potsdam, Abt. XX/2. Potsdam, den 1.8.1983, p. 8.

<sup>48</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 1486, Hauptabteilung XX, Streng Geheim, *Information, Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen ,Punkern‘ in der DDR, 1983*, p. 6.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 1486, Hauptabteilung XX., Berlin, 16. Juni 1982, *Hinweise zu jugendlichen ,Punkern‘ in der DDR*, p. 2 / BStU, MfS, HA XX, 900, p. 21.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

gegen jegliche staatliche/gesellschaftliche Ordnung, Streben nach Anarchie und Chaos werden anerkannt und für richtig befunden'. Similarly, police functionaries<sup>53</sup> in Potsdam reported 'unter ihnen war die allgemeine ideologische Grundposition vorherrschend, sich gegen jeden normalen Ablauf des menschlichen Zusammenlebens zu wenden, was sie durch ihre äußerliche Erscheinung zum Ausdruck bringen wollten'.

As stated, young people deliberately turned against 'normal human life' by exhibiting behaviour which opposed 'approved or acceptable behaviour', to quote Jenks<sup>54</sup>, and by this formed a subculture. Crucially, it is noted that they represented an ideology and suggested that these were adolescents who knew what they were doing. This is confirmed by the statement<sup>55</sup> that young people who identify themselves with Punk 'übertragen sozialismusfremde Denk- und Verhaltensweisen [...] kritiklos auf die gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse in der DDR'. Although the term 'kritiklos' confirms the interpretations of Punks as copycats and irrational emotional teenagers, whereas as we have seen in Chapter 1, a part of them represented them as critical and rational, the MfS feared that they were ignored vehicles of a hostile ideological form. This sufficed to a close watch on all Punk groups.

HA XX's<sup>56</sup> decision that young people who considered themselves or were considered Punks had a 'feindliche Einstellung zur DDR' turned them into official 'Staatsfeinde'. They were, as said, considered a minority, but this 'harter Kern', it was stated,<sup>57</sup> had 'Öffentlichkeitswirksamkeit' not just because of their 'shock aesthetic'<sup>58</sup>, but also because of their shock rhetoric. Certain Punk groups, bands often, were defined by HA XX<sup>59</sup> as 'festgefügtten Punk-Gruppierungen mit einem harten Kern von Mitgliedern die jegliche Gesellschaftsordnung ablehnen, sich mit anarchistischem Gedankengut befassen, den absoluten Freiheitsbegriff verherrlichen und sich mit Aktionen der Gewalt beschäftigen', they could be persecuted. Not only were these Punks, according to this statement, organised, anarchic and violent, they also glorified their individual freedom

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<sup>53</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam Abt. XX 929, Bezirksbehörde der deutschen Volkspolizei, Potsdam, 25.04.1985. information zur Entwicklung der Punkbewegung im Bezirk Potsdam, p. 15.

<sup>54</sup> Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of The Social*, pp. 87 – 88.

<sup>55</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 900, p. 59 [Undated]; BStU, MfS, HA XX 6097, p. 145.

<sup>56</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam, Abt. XX 929, Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Potsdam, Abt. XX/2. Potsdam, 1.8.1983, p. 8.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Howes, 'Subcultural Studies between the Blocs', p. 82.

<sup>59</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 1486, Hauptabteilung XX, Streng Geheim, Information, Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen 'Punkern' in der DDR, 1983, pp. 6 – 7.

which, as we have seen, was conflictual. The definition of this form of Punk as a ‘Gefährdung der öffentlichen Ordnung’<sup>60</sup> was confirmed in reports from Potsdam<sup>61</sup> and Leipzig<sup>62</sup> which state that crimes had been committed ‘gegen die Grenzsicherungsanlagen,’ that slogans with ‘anarchistischem Charakter’ had been spread, and that ‘bewußt Konfrontationen mit Sicherheitsorganen oder anderen Ordnungskräften’ had been provoked. The ‘Anti-Haltung’, as reported by the police<sup>63</sup> in Potsdam, ‘drückt sich durch sinnlose Zerstörungen und Trotzreaktionen aus’ and while these Punks may have been considered as too chaotic to form organisations, any self-conscious chaotic individual act disturbed the ‘Ordnung’ of the mainstream social world.<sup>64</sup>

The part of the subculture which was not considered a form of political opposition was thus, in the state representation, articulating ‘forbidden contents’ which transgressed ‘sartorial and behavioural codes’, to use Hebdige’s<sup>65</sup> formulation, through their spectacular style. A police report<sup>66</sup> from Potsdam from 1985 describes it as ‘Abgrenzung durch äußerliche Kennzeichnung’, and as stated in a report from the regional XX department<sup>67</sup> in Potsdam, this was to be interpreted as a ‘Bekundung gegen bestehende Normen’, and according to the more specific formulation in a HA XX<sup>68</sup> document, an ‘öffentliche [...] Demonstrierung der Abkehr von üblichen gesellschaftlichen Normen’. The MfS departments<sup>69</sup> in Leipzig and Rostock agreed about the local Punk scenes that ‘diese Jugendliche sich bewußt und vor allem demonstrativ in der Öffentlichkeit als Außenseiter der Gesellschaft, als Abschaum, [...] darstellen’. The same negative self-perception appears in Punk texts, as shown in Chapter 1.

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<sup>60</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 1486, Hauptabteilung XX, Streng geheim, Information, Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen ‚Punkern‘ in der DDR, 1983.

<sup>61</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam, Abt. XX 929, Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Potsdam, Abt. XX/2. Potsdam, 1.8.1983, p. 8

<sup>62</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Rostock, Abt. XX 585 S. 61 Leipzig, 23.2.84.

<sup>63</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam, Abt. XX 929, Bezirksbehörde der Deutschen Volkspolizei, Potsdam, 25.4.1985, Information zur Entwicklung der Punkbewegung im Bezirk Potsdam, p. 14.

<sup>64</sup> Hebdige, *Subculture. The Meaning of Style*, p. 119.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam, Abt. XX 929, Bezirksbehörde der Deutschen Volkspolizei, Potsdam, 25.4.1985, Information zur Entwicklung der Punkbewegung im Bezirk Potsdam, p. 14

<sup>67</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam, Abt. XX 929, Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Potsdam, Abt. XX/2. Potsdam, den 1.8.1983, p. 9

<sup>68</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 1486, Hauptabteilung XX, Streng geheim, Information, Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen ‚Punkern‘ in der DDR, 1983, p. 7

<sup>69</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Rostock, Abt. XX, 585, Leipzig, 23.2.84, p. 61.



In MfS rhetoric,<sup>70</sup> these East German citizens which are described as ‘Punker’ in the document had made a self-conscious choice, by committing ‘innere Republikflucht’ because it was said that they themselves ‘betrachten sich als “Aussteiger” aus der sozialistischen Gesellschaft, gekennzeichnet durch Pessimismus, Inaktivität’. The problem was that this self-representation was, as stated in the HA XX report<sup>71</sup> was visible because ‘Punker [...] dokumentieren dies nach Außen, zum Teil durch das demonstrative Tragen anarchistischer Symbole an ihrer Kleidung bzw. durch das An schmieren von dekadenten und zum Teil antisozialistischen Losungen und Slogans (u.a. “Macht kaputt, was Euch kaputt macht”) in der Öffentlichkeit’. There is, however, a key ambivalence in this representation of Punk resistance; the ‘Aussteiger’ is depicted as both passive and active. This is reminiscent to some of the self-writings in Punk texts analysed in Chapter 1.

A crucial aspect of HA XX’s *Erkenntnisse*<sup>72</sup> is captured by the statement that the ‘stark geprägten renitenten Verhaltensweisen’ of Punks turned against ‘gesellschaftliche Erziehungsträger’ with which school teachers, pedagogues, FDJ representatives and parents were meant. Here, the behaviour of Punks is defined as ‘oppositional behaviour’ which exhibits the intertwining of ‘Erziehung’ and politics. Indeed, the key issue addressed here was considered a political problem. Brauer<sup>73</sup> writes that police functionaries held ‘personal conversations with punks and punk fans about their mindsets’, but that the MfS did not consider this ‘inefficient and of negligible value as an educational strategy’. Apparently, adolescents who were accused of ‘rohes Gewaltdenken und Handeln’, ‘mangelnde Lern- und Leistungsbereitschaft’ and ‘Disziplinlosigkeit, aggressives Verhalten’, as the report<sup>74</sup> from Potsdam shows, were considered incorrigible. Brauer<sup>75</sup> argues that between 1977 and 1983, the phase of the first Punk generation, there was ‘the realization on the part of the state of the limits of its educational claims and goals,’ and that ‘reeducation was increasingly replaced by a preference for suppression and persecution.’ This was indeed the case for a part of the first Punk generation which was considered a concrete political threat because it seemed immune to ‘Erziehung und Überzeugung’.

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<sup>70</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 1486, Hauptabteilung XX, Streng geheim, Information, Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen ‚Punkern‘ in der DDR, 1983, p. 7.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Brauer, *Clashes of Emotions*, p. 60.

<sup>74</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam, Abt. XX 929, Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Potsdam, Abt. XX/2. Potsdam, 1.8.1983, p. 8, p. 38.

<sup>75</sup> Brauer, *Clashes of Emotions*, p. 56.

In a sense, the Punk in the street was not the biggest problem for the SED, because they were visible and at least physically approachable. In contrast, those ‘Aussteiger’ who were drawn to the underground church,<sup>76</sup> a place of refuge which offered rehearsal and performance opportunities and held Punk-friendly events<sup>77</sup> with themes like ‘Isolation der Jugend und Hoffnungslosigkeit’, ‘anarchistische Utopien’ and ‘Keine Zukunft’ were entertained and influenced by the other enemies of the state. Signs of cooperation between Punk and the political and clerical underground alarmed the SED, as the HA XX report<sup>78</sup> from 1983 exemplifies. At the same time, however, HA XX estimated that the underground was not organised enough and that there were only a few Punk groups which felt drawn to the church.

In contrast, HA XX observed ‘ein relativ enges Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl zwischen den “Punkern”<sup>79</sup> which contradicted the idea of a loose, disorganised community. It is noted in the report<sup>80</sup> that ‘verstärkt negativ-dekadente Jugendliche als sogenannte “Punker” in der DDR in Erscheinung treten’, and that Punks increasingly isolated themselves from other social groups and youth scene will have alarmed Mielke and motivated the zero-tolerance policy against Punk despite the fact that it had been decided that Punk was also fashion. When Hayton<sup>81</sup> writes that the harsh repression ‘alienated the subculture definitively’, it should be kept in mind that the Post-Punk transition which began only one year later stirred things up from both state and subcultural perspectives.

The ambivalence of Punk, active political anarchy vs. passive nihilism and apathy, and the Post-Punk transition can be identified in HA XX’s<sup>82</sup> seemingly confused reading of song lyrics. The ‘feindliche Einstellung zur DDR’ is defined only vaguely, as it is noted in the *Erkenntnisse* report:<sup>83</sup> ‘nicht zu übersehen sind dabei auch Tendenzen des

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<sup>76</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 1486, Hauptabteilung XX. Streng geheim, Information, Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen ‚Punkern‘ in der DDR. 1983, p. 10.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam, Abt. XX 929, Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Potsdam, Abt. XX/2. Potsdam, den 01.08.1983, p. 8 / BStU, MfS HA XX / AKG 1486, Hauptabteilung XX. Streng geheim. Information. Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen ‚Punkern‘ in der DDR. 1983, p. 60.

<sup>79</sup> BStU, MfS HA XX / AKG 1486, Hauptabteilung XX. Streng Geheim. Information. Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen ‚Punkern‘ in der DDR. 1983, p. 13.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Hayton, ‘Härte gegen Punk’, p. 542.

<sup>82</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam, Abt. XX 929, Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Potsdam, Abt. XX/2. Potsdam, 1.8.1983, p. 8.

<sup>83</sup> MfS HA XX 6014, p. 76-, Hauptabteilung XX, Streng Geheim. Berlin, 25. November 1983. Information. Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen ‚Punkern‘ in der DDR. / MfS – HA XX / AKG 1486, Hauptabteilung XX. Streng Geheim. [1983] Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen ‚Punkern‘ in der DDR, p. 78.

Zukunftspessimismus (“No Future”), des oft anarchistischen bis hin zu rechtsextremen faschistischen Elementen’. The problem with this rhetoric analysis is that such lyrics, as Brauer<sup>84</sup> writes, ‘became the sole evidence used to accuse the musicians of state defamation’. As evidence, such a statement is based on the terms ‘rechtsextrem’ and ‘faschistisch’, the standardised politicising rhetoric towards subculture and the symptomatic explanation of Punk. However, the actual analysis<sup>85</sup> of the lyrics is vague, as it is noted that ‘der Inhalt ihrer Musik (laute aggressive Songs) wird charakterisiert durch eine pessimistische Grundhaltung (“Weltuntergangsstimmung”), durch Streben nach “absoluter” persönlicher Freiheit bzw. Unabhängigkeit und eine brutale Interpretationsweise’. The reference to absolute personal freedom and a No Future mood could be politicised as in conflict with the socialist collective and the ‘Zukunftspathos’, but there is no note of a direct critical attitude against the GDR. Hence, as Brauer<sup>86</sup> points out. The MfS could therefore not always reveal a ‘rejection of socialist values’ or ‘state slander’ in Punk texts. At the same time, bands like *Schleimkeim* had a reputation for critical songs and HA XX<sup>87</sup> decided that such songs ‘Dinge ansprechen, die vom Staat nicht erwünscht sind’, even when the critique had to be read between the lines.

Chapter 1 has demonstrated how this theme is represented in Punk texts and discussed by Punks and has analysed how texts differ in the context of a much wider-spread ‘Weltuntergangsstimmung’. Regardless of whether lyrics contained anti-GDR sentiments, founding an alternative band and writing and performing alternative music was considered at least an attempt to undermine the state. HA XX<sup>88</sup> noted in 1983 that ‘sich Punkgruppen immer mehr bemühen, nicht nur durch ihr äußeres Erscheinungsbild, sondern auch durch Verhalten und gezielte Aktivitäten, unter Einbeziehung des sogenannten Punk-Rock, als oppositionelle Gruppen darzustellen’. Again, the term ‘opposition’ is used to justify political repression, even when it is written that the ‘oppositional’ activity of Punk Rock groups is rated purely as the act of self-representation (‘darzustellen’).

When song contents were not explicitly anti-GDR, the politicisation of Punk bands based on the standardised rhetoric that Punk was per definition a threat to society and a

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<sup>84</sup> Brauer, ‘Clashes of Emotions’, p. 65.

<sup>85</sup> MfS HA XX 6014, p. 76-, Hauptabteilung XX, Streng Geheim. Berlin, 25. November 1983. Information. Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen ‚Punkern‘ in der DDR. / MfS – HA XX / AKG 1486, Hauptabteilung XX. Streng Geheim. [1983] Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen ‚Punkern‘ in der DDR, p. 78.

<sup>86</sup> Brauer, ‘Clashes of Emotions’, p. 65.

<sup>87</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX 6070, KD Mitte, Berlin 19.12.85, *Einleitungsbericht zur OPK “Rheinsberg”*, p. 83.

<sup>88</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 1486, Hauptabteilung XX. Streng Geheim. [1983] Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen ‚Punkern‘ in der DDR, p. 6.

possible threat to the state if it was not controlled. The main reason for this was that HA XX<sup>89</sup> observed ‘Zusammengehörigkeit’ and expected that ‘diese Musikformationen wesentlich zur weiteren Verbreitung und Ausstrahlung des ‘Punk’ insgesamt sowie pessimistischer, anarchistischer u.a. Grundgedanken beitragen’. The gloomy mood of a minority, in this view, could become the mood of a generation. Whereas the meanings of Punk had been determined within the political-ideological rhetorics, the biggest struggle to fit every form of Punk into this rhetoric was caused by the fragmentation of subculture which could not be foreseen in 1983.

## II. Post-Punk Confusion: Reading the New Shades of Punk

The MfS’ ‘diagnosis of the basis for the break with the main society and its value system’, as Parsons<sup>90</sup> wrote about youth cultures in the USA, was thus ambivalent because this basis, a fixed and rigid definition of subculture and Punk, was outdated by 1984. Howes<sup>91</sup> has pointed out that ‘a gradual movement towards a tolerance of punk’ began in 1988, but the MfS files signify a movement which was not necessarily the tolerance of Punk as Punk was defined in 1983, but a tolerance regarding (popular) youth (sub)culture. The ‘Stasi’s wrestle with the meaning of punk’<sup>92</sup> which Jeff Hayton identifies in the MfS files, can be seen as confusion and an according experimental and innovative shift in terminology and rhetorics regarding subculture. As we will see, reading all the old and new ‘ideologische Richtungen’ had become a more complex task for the MfS, while their standard language had to expand.

In 1985, a report titled *Entwicklung der Punkbewegung im Bezirk Potsdam* seemed to bring good news about the ‘Härte gegen Punk’. The police<sup>93</sup> in Potsdam reported that Punks ‘grundsätzlich alles ablehnen, was nach Organisation aussieht’. At the same time, department XX warned this did not mean that Punks were not organising themselves and that ‘hartnäckigen und verfestigten Punks in zunehmenden Maße Regeln der Konspiration

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<sup>89</sup> MfS HA XX 6014, p. 76-, Hauptabteilung XX, Streng Geheim. Berlin, 25. November 1983. Information. Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen ‚Punkern‘ in der DDR. / MfS – HA XX / AKG 1486, Hauptabteilung XX. Streng Geheim. [1983] Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen ‚Punkern‘ in der DDR, p. 78.

<sup>90</sup> Parsons, *The Social System*, p. 355.

<sup>91</sup> Howes, ‘Subcultural Studies between the Blocs’, p. 84.

<sup>92</sup> Jeff Hayton, ‘Härte gegen Punk: Popular Music, Western Media, and State Response in the German Democratic Republic’, *German History*, 31.4 (2013), 523 – 549 (535).

<sup>93</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam Abt. XX 929, Bezirksbehörde der deutschen Volkspolizei, Potsdam, 25.04.1985. information zur Entwicklung der Punkbewegung im Bezirk Potsdam, p. 17.

anwenden um den ‘Spitzeln’ keine Chance zu geben’. It is stated in the report that<sup>94</sup> Punk groups ‘tauchen organisiert unter’<sup>95</sup> and that they planned their collective ‘Flucht’ to secure themselves.

The departments in Rostock and Leipzig had already warned<sup>96</sup> in 1984 that arresting and imprisoning Punks was no real solution, because ‘diese Personen befinden sich nach wie vor in unserem Territorium und haben ihre ablehnende Haltung zu den gesellschaftlichen Verhältnissen in der DDR auch nicht geändert’. The ‘Aussteiger’ were perceived as incorrigible and it was expected that ‘auch im Jahre 1984 aus dem Kreis der Jugendlichen neue Personen zur Punk-Bewegung stoßen’. One year later, the department in Potsdam<sup>97</sup> confirmed this expectation and noted that ‘in Zukunft mit einem verstärkten Auftreten von Punks zu rechnen ist, obwohl diese bei der Bevölkerung insgesamt auf Ablehnung stoßen’.

These departments appear to not perceive Punk as a passing fashion fad but as a subculture which would rejuvenate and expand. The dualism of two ‘ideologische Richtungen’ was abandoned, because Punk was now considered a ‘Bewegung’ which posed a real threat to the present and future. At the same time, the department in Leipzig<sup>98</sup> wrote in March 1985 in a report that a ‘Differenzierungsprozess’ took place, and that several new ‘Modeerscheinungen’ had emerged in the GDR. According to department XX<sup>99</sup> in Rostock, there now existed five different ‘Hauptrichtungen in der Musik- und Modeszene junger Bürger der DDR’ which were clearly distinguishable from one another by their styles and music tastes. Crucially, the categories are referred to as ‘richtungstypischen Ideologieprofile’ in an overview<sup>100</sup> titled *Beschreibung der Gruppierungen, ihrer Herausbildung und ihrer gegenseitigen Verbindungen: Heavy Metal, Skinhead, Punk, New*

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<sup>94</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam Abt. XX 929, Bezirksbehörde der deutschen Volkspolizei, Potsdam, 25.04.1985. information zur Entwicklung der Punkbewegung im Bezirk Potsdam, p. 17 / BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam Abt. XX 929, Bezirksbehörde der deutschen Volkspolizei, Potsdam, 25.04.1985. information zur Entwicklung der Punkbewegung im Bezirk Potsdam, p. 18.

<sup>95</sup> BStU, MfS, BV für Staatssicherheit, Abteilung XX. 11. Februar 1985, Charakteristik bekannter bzw. neu in Erscheinung tretender jugendlicher Einzelpersonen und Gruppierungen, p. 8.

<sup>96</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Rst Abt. XX 585, MfS BV Rostock Abt. XX 585 S. 61, Leipzig, 23.2.84, pp. 13, 64.

<sup>97</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam Abt. XX 929, Bezirksbehörde der deutschen Volkspolizei, Potsdam, 25.04.1985. information zur Entwicklung der Punkbewegung im Bezirk Potsdam, p. 18.

<sup>98</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Rst Abt. XX 585, p. 175 BV Leipzig, KD Leipzig-Stadt. 28.3.85. Information über Erscheinungen der sogenannten ‚Heavy-Metal‘-Fans in der Stadt Leipzig [...].

<sup>99</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Rostock Abt. XX 585, Untersuchungsergebnis zu operativ bedeutsamen Gruppierungen Jugendlicher, insbesondere zu Heavy metals, Skinheads und Punkern. p. 5 Beschreibung der Gruppierungen, ihrer Herausbildung und ihrer gegenseitigen Verbindungen: Heavy Metal, Skinhead, Punk, New Romantic, Popper.

<sup>100</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Rostock Abt. XX 585, Untersuchungsergebnis zu operativ bedeutsamen Gruppierungen Jugendlicher.

*Romantic, Popper*. The title indicates that the department assumed that the scenes were connected despite their differences.

However, department XX in Rostock<sup>101</sup> reported in its *Untersuchungsergebnis zu operativ bedeutsamen Gruppierungen Jugendlicher, insbesondere zu Heavy metals, Skinheads und Punkern* that ‘die Phase des friedfertigen Nebeneinanders der verschiedenen Gruppierungsrichtungen nähert sich genau in dem Tempo ihrem Ende’, and that scenes were radicalising and becoming violent towards each other. The report states that especially the Punk and Skinhead scenes were enemies and that there was ‘Unverträglichkeit’ between them, because, as stated in the investigation report,<sup>102</sup> their different ‘Lebensweise-Konzepte’ clashed.

In a report<sup>103</sup> from Leipzig from 1985, it is noted that the ‘Auftreten der Punk’s’ in the city had decreased considerably. Yet HA XX and HA IX, the main MfS department responsible for political investigation, concluded<sup>104</sup> that ‘die zahlenmäßig abnehmenden Punks werden von einer Militanz der Punks noch übertreffenden Welle überrollt’, and relativised the qualitative threat of Punk. The conflict between these two scenes, it is further stated<sup>105</sup>, triggered a process of segregation between all the subcultures: ‘Auseinandersetzungen mit körperlichem Gewalteinsatz beschleunigen den Profilierungsprozeß innerhalb der verschiedenen Richtungen [sic] und spalten Gruppierungen’. The problem for the MfS and the police had thus become bigger than the control of Punk subculture alone, and the nationwide observed ‘Differenzierungsprozess’ required more observation and investigation.

Wurschi<sup>106</sup> describes the ‘Differenzierungsprozess’ in his study on youth (sub)cultures in the 1970s and 1980s as a process among non-conform East German adolescents which overlapped with the process of individualisation and subcultural

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<sup>101</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Rostock Abt. XX 585, Untersuchungsergebnis zu operativ bedeutsamen Gruppierungen Jugendlicher.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig KDfS Leipzig-Stadt 00040 / 01, BV für Staatssicherheit, Abteilung XX. 11. Februar 1985, p. 8.

<sup>104</sup> BStU, MfS HA IX 14183, p. 38, Konzeption zur Vorbereitung des Forums in der GO der FDJ der HA IX. Thema: Erscheinungsformen von Angriffen auf die Jugendpolitik in der DDR [ohne Datum]; BStU, MfS HA XX 6014, Hauptabteilung XX/2 Zuarbeit Zur Analyse über Schwerpunkte und aktuelle Gesichtspunkte des Vorgehens des Gegners auf dem Gebiet der PID, p. 229.

<sup>105</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Rostock Abt. XX 585, Untersuchungsergebnis zu operativ bedeutsamen Gruppierungen Jugendlicher.

<sup>106</sup> Wurschi, *Rennsteigbeat*, p. 229.

fragmentising in the West. Wurschi writes that because young East Germans were trapped in their own 'Lebenskontext', they adopted Western youth styles and developed a 'Meinungs- und Lebensvielfalt' which broadened the gap between youth and the state. According to Wurschi, state representatives were left with nothing but the 'operative Überwachung' of the different youth groups and scenes and their different lifestyles, moods and views. The question that will be answered now is how the state observed, analysed and characterised them, what the diversity of opinion and life consisted of in the view of MfS functionaries, and if, when and how it was interpreted, categorised and politicised within the political-ideological narrative and its according (Punk) subculture theories and rhetorics.

Reports from 1985 depict Punk as the largest subculture in the GDR, but this misleading because the 'Differenzierungsprozess' also took place with the Punk category. In a document from main department XX/2 titled *Zuarbeit Zur Analyse über Schwerpunkte und aktuelle Gesichtspunkte des Vorgehens des Gegners auf dem Gebiet der PID*, the fragmentation of Punk is addressed. In an analysis from HA XX/2<sup>107</sup>, it is written that the police observed that 'sich 1984/1985 innerhalb der sogenannten Punker eine qualitative Differenzierung vollzog'. HA XX<sup>108</sup> considered this process 'von außerordentlicher politischer und politisch-operativer Bedeutung', but the question is why and what followed this decision. It appears that the focus on the 'operative Bearbeitung' of Punk was shifting from a focus on quantity (banning Punk from East German society) to a focus on quality.

This necessarily meant that MfS and police representatives became mere observers of subcultures who had to wait and see. Seeing meant that they used a semiological method to read the different subcultural scenes by focusing on style elements and difference. Standard criminalising and politicising terms like 'negativ-dekadent', 'kriminell-gefährdet' and 'oppositionell' were still in use but were losing their meaning as the new (sub)scenes required new definitions, categories and characterisations. Observations of Punk scenes in Gera in 1986 resulted in the conclusion<sup>109</sup> that Punk was a heterogeneous subculture: "Punker" untergliedern sich selbst noch einmal hinsichtlich bestimmter Interessen bzw.

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<sup>107</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX 6014, Hauptabteilung XX/2 Zuarbeit Zur Analyse über Schwerpunkte und aktuelle Gesichtspunkte des Vorgehens des Gegners auf dem Gebiet der PID, p. 229.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> BStU, MfS HA XX, AKG 1486, Hauptabteilung XX, p. 60, Berlin, 1986. Information zu aktuellen Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negativ-dekadenter Jugendlicher, sogenannter Punker in der DDR / BV Gera KD Gera 4993, p. 1 Charakteristik der sogenannten 'Punk-Bewegung' (gem. Rückinformation Nr. 26/86 LH. BV VVS 351/86.

äußerer Merkmale in verschiedene Arten'. This report exemplifies how a local MfS department reported back to HA XX about the fragmentation of Punk in that locality. The report<sup>110</sup> describes the differentiation of Punk through the new Punk labels *Mode Punk*, *Pseudo Punk*, *Hard-Core-Punk*, *Schmuddel-Punk* and *KID-Punk* without mentioning characteristics or difference. The labels themselves do, however, signify that each Punk subscene added a specific new meaning to Punk and suggest a significant difference between fashion or pseudo-Punk and hard-core Punk. Crucially, 'Pseudo' implies that this variant of Punk was not authentic or genuine, but, as we have seen before, a copycat trend.

The optimistic remark in a HA XX report<sup>111</sup> from 1983 that 'Punker sich wegen ihres Äußeres und Verhaltens in der Öffentlichkeit abheben' and that they were therefore 'relativ leicht erkennbar und operativ zu erfassen' was still valid. However, the crucial difference and problem for MfS and police functionaries was that different Punk styles were assumed to have different meanings, and that cross-over styles which combined elements of Punk like a Mohawk with other style elements which were not considered Punk. The result of this is visible in MfS and police observation reports<sup>112</sup> in which it is for example stated that 'die Kleidung der kontrollierten Personen bewegt sich zwischen Popper und Punker', and that 'die Kleidung der Personen ist gepflegt und bewegt sich in Richtung Popper. Der Haarschnitt in Richtung Punker'. The police who checked these adolescents were unsure whether they were Punks or Popper who were considered apolitical fans of Western pop and disco music and fancy clothing. We may argue that these reports describe the beginning of post(modern) Punk (sub)culture in the GDR and such examples subcultural bricolage and style surfing confused observers because the old definition of Punk was challenged by exceptions and variations. Or, in the words<sup>113</sup> of a functionary from the local MfS department in Leipzig: 'eine genaue Defination [sic] ist nicht möglich'. This statement also proves that a precise definition was what the MfS strived for, but that this aim had become problematic by the mid-1980s.

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<sup>110</sup> BStU, MfS HA XX, AKG 1486, Hauptabteilung XX, p. 60, Berlin, 1986. Information zu aktuellen Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negativ-dekadenter Jugendlicher, sogenannter Punker in der DDR / BV Gera KD Gera 4993, p. 1 Charakteristik der sogenannten 'Punk-Bewegung' (gem. Rückinformation Nr. 26/86 LH. BV VVS 351/86.

<sup>111</sup> MfS HA XX 6014, p. 76-, Hauptabteilung XX, Streng geheim. Berlin, 25. November 1983. Information. Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen 'Punkern' in der DDR. / MfS – HA XX / AKG 1486, Hauptabteilung XX. Streng Geheim. [1983] Erkenntnisse zu jugendlichen 'Punkern' in der DDR, p. 83.

<sup>112</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX 6014, KD Leipzig-Land. 9.11.87, p. 37

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.



What we can identify in the files are creative solutions to capture crossover Punk scenes and styles with new subculture labels which attribute specific meanings to the new subcultural forms. The reports indicate that the fragmentation of Punk differed per locality. For example, a document<sup>114</sup> from Weimar titled *Gespräch mit dem Punk-Anhänger* mentions that there existed three variants of Punk: ‘Faschistische Punks – Skinheads’; ‘Nazipunks’ and ‘Anarchistische Punk’. The title of the report and the labels imply that the different Punk scenes were political scenes and that the terms were used by participants. Crucially, there apparently existed cross-over Punk scenes which combined styles and/or ideologies of (assumed) hostile ‘Hauptrichtungen’. But some of the described Punk variations and mixforms appear to have no concrete political orientation or connotation.

In 1987, departments HA XX<sup>115</sup> in Leipzig and HA XX/2<sup>116</sup> in Berlin introduced the terms ‘Neopunker’, ‘Edelpunker’ and ‘Gruftpunk’. Here we see an example of a scene or genre considered Punk which contains a Gothic element. The reports do, however, not mention the origins of the terms nor do they define the different types of Punk and we therefore do not know whether they were invented by state representatives or by adolescents themselves.

What is most interesting about the labels is that they capture the Post-Punk transition linguistically, because they indicate that Punk was now not just a term for a subculture, scene, movement or participant anymore, but also for a style or style elements. The additions ‘Neo’, ‘Edel’ and ‘Gruft’ questioned the original definition and ideological form of Punk. When a Punk was described as ‘chic’ or ‘gepflegt’, this contradicted the pejorative descriptions of Punk appearance from 1983 in which Punk clothing is described as ‘verschlissene sowie ungepflegte Kleidung’,<sup>117</sup> abgetragene, zerrissene und bemalte Kleidung’,<sup>118</sup> and ‘dreckige Kleidung’.<sup>119</sup> The term ‘Edelpunker’ can therefore be considered as a sign of change in the pejorative state rhetoric regarding subculture. As Punk

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<sup>114</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Erfurt KD Weimar 376 Bl. 114 Kreisdienststelle Weimar. Weimar, 14. April 1986. *Gespräch mit dem Punk-Anhänger*.

<sup>115</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX 6014, p. 37 KD Leipzig-Land. 9.11.87.

<sup>116</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin Abt. XX Nr. 3109, p. 14 /1 Abteilung XX/2, Berlin, 26. April 1989. Operative Information. Einschätzung zur nichtlizenzierten Musikgruppe ‚Schadstoff‘ (Bezirk Schwerin).

<sup>117</sup> BStU, MfS HA XX 476 245 Dresden, 2.6.84. MfS Bezirksverwaltung Dresden. Information über bekannte negativ-dekadente jugendliche Gruppierungen, die durch ihre Öffentlichkeitswirksamkeit eine Beeinträchtigung bzw. Gefährdung der öffentlichen Ordnung und Sicherheit darstellen, p. 247.

<sup>118</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX 6170 Sonderheft 1/1985 – MfI Informationen Kriminalpolizei, p. 10.

<sup>119</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 1486, Hauptabteilung XX. *Berlin, 16. Juni 1982, Hinweise zu jugendlichen ‚Punkern‘ in der DDR*, p. 2.

style was initially interpreted<sup>120</sup> negatively as a ‘Suche nach offener Konfrontation mit der Umwelt’, the question is whether a cross-over post-Punk style was interpreted in the same way and where, if and how state language varied, conflicted and changed. Subcultural bodies were considered deviant but when subcultural styles which were considered incompatible were mixed, then the (assumed) ideological forms of subcultures were blurred too.

Consequently, HA XX<sup>121</sup> admitted in its *Ergebnisse in der Entwicklung von Gruppierungen und ihre Charakteristik* that subcultural fragmentation complicated the MfS’ task: ‘Im Jahr 1987 ist es nicht mehr möglich, Punks und Skin-Heads sicher anhand von Kleidung und Haartracht zu unterscheiden. Zu Beginn der 80er Jahre war die äußere Erscheinung noch eindeutiges Erkennungszeichen der Gruppenmitglieder untereinander und zugleich Bedingung für die feste Zugehörigkeit zu einer Gruppe’. Hence, the MfS recognised this shift, while this statement also exemplifies how subcultural styles had been key to surveillance and how style mixing complicated the criminalisation and politicisation of (organised) individuals and groups.

For HA XX<sup>122</sup>, the fact that it knew or assumed that ‘die Gruppen existieren dennoch’, but that it recognised that official MfS knowledge and control were now questioned, was a huge problem, as the statement<sup>123</sup> ‘Den Umfang der Punks können wir nicht einschätzen’ exemplifies. The reason why the MfS could not determine how many Punks were actual Punks, as noted in the report,<sup>124</sup> was that ‘seit 1986 haben sich die hinlänglich bekannten Erscheinungsbilder als Modetrend generell verbreitet’ demonstrates that every subcultural style could no longer be read as evidence of a hostile societal and/or ideological attitude, purpose or ‘Zusammengehörigkeit’, or in other words, that the semiological method they had apparently applied to subcultural scenes and groups no longer matched the purpose, rhetoric and language of the political investigation into subcultures. Or, as noted in a HA XX report<sup>125</sup> titled *Aktuelle Erscheinungsformen negativ-dekadenter bzw. kriminell gefährdeter Jugendlicher in der DDR*, ‘die soziologische Analyse diente dem

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<sup>120</sup> Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urla (eds.), *Deviant Bodies. Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 6.

<sup>121</sup> MfS HA XX AKG 80, *Aktuelle Erscheinungsformen negativ-dekadenter bzw. kriminell gefährdeter Jugendlicher in der DDR*, p. 78 *Ergebnisse in der Entwicklung von Gruppierungen und ihre Charakteristik*.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

Auffinden dieser gruppenbildenden Faktoren’, but these semiotic criteria were now considered partially invalid.

The statement with which HA XX<sup>126</sup> concluded its report about the *Entwicklung von Gruppierungen und ihre Charakteristik* that ‘die Bekleidung ist kein sicheres Kriterium mehr’ might be one of the most important statements the MfS has made in the 1980s. It admits that its knowledge, investigation methods and analyses, as well as its control were outdated, incomplete and insufficient. This loss of meaning within the diversity (original) ideological forms of subcultures questioned the very fundamentals of MfS theory and intelligence. The authenticity of subcultures had to be questioned because the very concept of authenticity, just like the definition of subculture was blurred.

Hayton<sup>127</sup> writes about the ‘distinguishing between outer fashion and inner ideals’ that it was officially decided in the ‘2 February 1988 decree’ that ‘young people should be judged not by their appearance of their specific views in matters of fashion and music, but by their attitude towards socialism and their benefits for society’. Howes<sup>128</sup> also notes about this that youth and culture policies were turned upside down and that ‘cultural gatekeepers outside the police force, like programmers at the FDJ clubs where concerts could take place, began to mitigate their own stance’. According to Peter Wicke<sup>129</sup>, the process of individualisation and subcultural differentiation resulted in the basic principle that individuals were to be judged by their achievements for socialism and not their music tastes or outer appearances. Nevertheless, investigation into new scenes and participants for which there was no concrete evidence of any hostile intent, continued. In May 1987, the criminal police department<sup>130</sup> reported in its *Einschätzung der Arbeit unter der Jugend. Feststellung des Personenkreises des Punks sowie aller anderen Schattierungen und ihr Aufenthaltsort zur Verhinderung, Aufdeckung und Aufklärung von Straftaten* that ‘Angaben zur Zielstellung dieser Gruppe können zurzeit noch nicht gemacht werden’. The police thus admitted that the

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<sup>126</sup> MfS HA XX AKG 80, Aktuelle Erscheinungsformen negativ-dekadenter bzw. kriminell gefährdeter Jugendlicher in der DDR, p. 78 Ergebnisse in der Entwicklung von Gruppierungen und ihre Charakteristik.

<sup>127</sup> Jeff Hayton, ‘Härte gegen Punk: Popular Music, Western Media, and State Response in the German Democratic Republic’, *German History*, 31.4 (2013), 523 – 549 (347).

<sup>128</sup> Howes, ‘Subcultural Studies between the Blocs’, p. 84.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Erfurt KD Weimar 376, p. 102, Volkspolizei Kreisamt Weimar – Kriminalpolizei Komm. I. Weimar, den 11.05.1987. *Einschätzung der Arbeit unter der Jugend. Feststellung des Personenkreises des Punks sowie aller anderen Schattierungen und ihr Aufenthaltsort zur Verhinderung, Aufdeckung und Aufklärung von Straftaten.*

different ‘shades’ of Punk, including New Romantic, could not be criminalised at that point. But HA XX and HA IX did not give them the benefit of the doubt, as we will see.

The MfS had two main problems with its surveillance of subcultures. First, the differentiation, popularisation and stylisation of Punk (as mapped by new German terms for post-Punk subscenes and cross-over styles) made it harder to read and judge scenes and participants, while it was observed that young people developed certain ideals (or ‘ideologies’). Second, observations of a new scene with a for that time and context remarkable style indicated that fashion was not always and entirely meaningless. The problem was, as will be illustrated with examples from the files, that symbols and (assumed) meanings did not always fit into the criminal-political categories. While HA XX recognised that studying subcultures did not necessarily produce relevant knowledge yet did all to keep track of the subcultural evolution, different departments in different localities reported different developments.

For instance, in Zwickau, the police<sup>131</sup> reported that the local Punk scene had transformed into three new scenes called *Popper*, *Teds*, and *New Romantics*, by which it is implied that Punk subculture had vanished as the term is not used in any way. However, a report<sup>132</sup> from Leipzig in which it is stated that ‘echte Punk’s schließen sich den “New Romantics” an’, implies that that which had been authentic Punk had transformed into a new subculture called ‘New Romantic’, and that the ideological form of Punk had taken a new (stylistic) subcultural identity. The ‘Differenzierungsprozess’ within Punk subculture, in this view, also consisted of the emergence of subcultural scenes that did have a stylistic relation to Punk, but that there was an ideological connection. It seems that the definition of Punk as a hostile ideological form rooted in capitalism was initially maintained by the MfS. We may assume that despite or because of HA XX’s realisation that the process of subcultural fragmentation blurred the boundaries and shook the fundamentals of its terminology and methodology, the political (anti-)Punk rhetoric was applied to subcultures which were considered post-, neo- or pseudo-Punk because it was most convenient.

The problem was that some subcultures, like *Poppers*, had become socially accepted, and that they were less a subculture than a form of teenage popular culture. Although it was

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<sup>131</sup> BStU, MfS, BV KMSSt KD ZW 240, Band 1, „Bearbeitung von jugendlichen Gruppierungen im operativen Material ‚Grufti‘“ 1984 – 1989, p. 96 Volkspolizeikreisamt Zwickau. 27.09.1984. Protokoll

<sup>132</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig KDfS Leipzig-Stadt 00040 / 01, BV für Staatssicherheit, Abteilung XX. 11. Februar 1985, p. 8.

perceived as capitalist, the files indicate that they were by far not considered as as criminally or politically relevant as Punks and Skinheads. This decision was still open for the New Romantics and the files which will be analysed now illustrate how and which questions were raised, answers were provided, conclusions were drawn and rejected. The key question, it appears, was whether New Romantic was a new form of Punk. We may assume that many state representatives were not aware that New Romantic was one of London's alternative fashion scenes which existed alongside Post-Punk, New Wave and (early) Gothic scenes. David Rimmer<sup>133</sup> describes New Romantic an avant-gardist, artesque, theatrical fashion- and music-oriented scene which offered 'a glimpse of past and future all at once: the prototype sounds of tomorrow, the reanimated styles of tomorrow. A confusion as to just what's all about is reflected by the media's vain attempts to slap a label on to the phenomenon'. The confusion is also visible in police and MfS reports. In May 1987, the police in Weimar decided<sup>134</sup> that New Romantic was one of the many Punk 'Schattierungen'.

If we focus on the representation of New Romantic in the MfS files, we see that several different reports from between 1984 and 1987 mention the scene(s) and describe them differently. HA IX, the criminal investigation department<sup>135</sup> characterised<sup>136</sup> New Romantic as a fashion-focused youth scene which had emerged in 1984 under the influence of Western rock-, pop and disco music. In Zwickau, the police<sup>137</sup> reported in 1984 that New Romantic was the largest new scene in that area. A document titled *Übersicht Subkulturen: Ted's, Tramper/Penner, Skinhaed's, Punk's, Heavy's, New Romantik's, Popper* from the department in Leipzig<sup>138</sup> from 1984 mentions 'New Romantik's' and 'Neue Romantik(er)' in this half English and German spelling.

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<sup>133</sup> David Rimmer, *New Romantics. The Look* (London: Omnibus Press, 2003).

<sup>134</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Erfurt KD Weimar 376, p. 98 Volkspolizei Kreisamt Weimar – Kriminalpolizei Komm. I. Weimar, den 11.05.1987. Einschätzung der Arbeit unter der Jugend. Feststellung des Personenkreises des Punks sowie aller anderen Schattierungen und ihr Aufenthaltsort zur Verhinderung, Aufdeckung und Aufklärung von Straftaten.

<sup>135</sup> <https://www.bstu.de/mfs-lexikon/>

<sup>136</sup> BStU, MfS, HA IX 14183, Konzeption zur Vorbereitung des Forums in der GO der FDJ der HA IX. Thema: Erscheinungsformen von Angriffen auf die Jugendpolitik in der DDR [ohne Datum], p. 37.

<sup>137</sup> BStU, MfS, BV KMSSt KD ZW 240, Band 1, „Bearbeitung von jugendlichen Gruppierungen im operativen Material ‚Grufti‘“ 1984 – 1989, p. 96 Volkspolizeikreisamt Zwickau. 27.09.1984. Protokoll.

<sup>138</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig KdfS Leipzig-Stadt 00040 / 01, p. 5, *Übersicht Subkulturen: Ted's, Tramper/Penner, Skinhaed's, Punk's, Heavy's, New Romantik's, Popper* (1984).

Another variant appears in a report<sup>139</sup> from Weimar from 1987 in which the term ‘New Mentick’ is used. Apart from the different spellings, New Romantic was also interpreted differently by different departments. The department in Leipzig<sup>140</sup> estimated in 1984 that New Romantics represented the ‘gleiche Einstellung und Charakteristik wie Punker’ with which it was meant<sup>141</sup> ‘gleiche negativ-ablehnende bis feindliche Positionen wie Punks’ and in 1985 the same department further strengthened this comparison<sup>142</sup> by noting that New Romantics had ‘ebenfalls wie die Punks eine negative Einstellung zur Gesellschaft’.

The definition of New Romantics also appears in a HA XX<sup>143</sup> document in which it is formulated that ‘die New Romantics vertreten wie die Punks eine ablehnende Haltung gegenüber der sozialistischen Gesellschaft’ which concretises that the attitude of New Romantic was not simply negative, hostile, anti or anti-social but specifically anti-GDR, and that despite the different names, both shared the same ideological form. The MfS in Leipzig considered both as belonging to the ‘Aussteigerbewegung’<sup>144</sup> and thereby politicised them as adolescents who performed ‘innere Republikflucht’ while potentially preparing a real escape. Local departments like the MfS in Weimar<sup>145</sup> decided that ‘einige Anhänger dieser Richtung haben sich aus ehemaligen Anhängern der sogenannten Punktbewegung [sic] entwickelt’ to confirm this definition of New Romantic. More specifically, a report from the regional MfS office in Görlitz<sup>146</sup> notes that ‘die Anhänger der New Romantics suchen Kontakte zu gleichgesinnten in der gesamten DDR und im Ausland, bevorzugt in der BRD. Ähnlich wie “Penner” oder “Panker” [sic], finden sie bei Zusammentreffen sofort Kontakt

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<sup>139</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Erfurt KD Weimar 376, p. 169, Kreisdienststelle Weimar, Weimar, den 13. Januar 1987. Information zur Person.

<sup>140</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig KDfS Leipzig-Stadt 00040 / 01, BV für Staatssicherheit, Abteilung XX. 11. Februar 1985, p. 8, Charakteristik bekannter bzw. neu in Erscheinung tretender jugendlicher Einzelpersonen und Gruppierungen.

<sup>141</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig KDfS Leipzig-Stadt 00040 / 01, p. 5, Übersicht Subkulturen: Ted’s, Tramper/Penner, Skinhaed’s, Punk’s, Heavy’s, New Romantik’s, Popper (1984) / BV Gera Abt. XX SA 0097, p. 1 Übersicht zu Erscheinungsformen unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen.

<sup>142</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig KDfS Leipzig-Stadt 00040 / 01, BV für Staatssicherheit BV für Staatssicherheit, Abteilung XX. 11. Februar 1985, p. 11, Charakteristik bekannter bzw. neu in Erscheinung tretender jugendlicher Einzelpersonen und Gruppierungen.

<sup>143</sup> BStU, MfS HA IX 14183, Konzeption zur Vorbereitung des Forums in der GO der FDJ der HA IX. Thema: Erscheinungsformen von Angriffen auf die Jugendpolitik in der DDR [ohne Datum], p. 37.

<sup>144</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig KDfS Leipzig-Stadt 00040 / 01, p. 5, Übersicht Subkulturen: Ted’s, Tramper/Penner, Skinhaed’s, Punk’s, Heavy’s, New Romantik’s, Popper (1984).

<sup>145</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Erfurt KD Weimar 376, p. 169, Kreisdienststelle Weimar, Weimar, den 13. Januar 1987. Information zur Person.

<sup>146</sup> BStU, MfS BV Dresden, KD Görlitz 70007, Kreisdienststelle Görlitz. Abschrift – IM-Bericht. Görlitz, den 17.04.87. Betrifft Treff Milchbar, pp. 461, 472.

zueinander'. Hence, activities which were attributed to Punks and said to have been observed for New Romantics functioned as evidence of this political-ideological classification of New Romantic.

What is interesting about this example is the change and ambivalence in the use of the term 'Aussteiger'. It was no longer exclusive to Punk and while 'Aussteiger' initially stood for deviant individuals, the emergence of New Romantic and New Wave resulted in the term 'Aussteigerbewegung'. The question is if 'Aussteiger' remained the same concept when it was applied to different scenes. An MfS report<sup>147</sup> from Gera describes New Wave as: 'Aussteigerbewegung zum Großteil aus Punk's/New Romantiks hervorgegangen'. While New Wave is defined as a mix of Punk and New Romantic, the statement suggests that all three had something in common, but while it was assumed by other departments that the connection was ideological, the report<sup>148</sup> from Gera is more vague about this, while it is specific in the description of the spectacular New Romantic style: 'In ihrem äußeren Erscheinungsbild besonders auffällig durch stark geschminktes Gesicht, mehrfarbig gefärbtes Haar, extremer Haarschnitt, vertreten gleiche negativ-ablehnende bis feindliche Positionen wie Punks/New Romantiks, verherrlichen Anarchie, keine klare Abgrenzung zu Fragen der Gewaltanwendung'. The depiction is conflictual because the assumed certainty regarding the similarity with Punk and vagueness regarding the question of violence clash with HA IX's definition<sup>149</sup> which states that '[New Romantics] distanzieren sich jedoch von Punk, Heavy Metal und Gewalt'. It also conflicts with a report<sup>150</sup> from Leipzig in which it is noted that New Romantics 'lehnen aber jede Form von Gewaltanwendung u. Verherrlichung ab'. The term 'aber' signifies that New Romantics were considered an exception to subcultures that were apparently generally considered as violent. In Halle,<sup>151</sup> the local MfS judged New Romantics as 'negativ-dekadenter Jugendlicher mit Tendenz zu Punk', but it

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<sup>147</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Gera Abt. XX SA 0097, p. 1 Übersicht zu Erscheinungsformen unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen, 'New Waves'.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> BStU, MfS HA IX 14183, Konzeption zur Vorbereitung des Forums in der GO der FDJ der HA IX. Thema: Erscheinungsformen von Angriffen auf die Jugendpolitik in der DDR [ohne Datum], p. 37.

<sup>150</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig KdFS Leipzig-Stadt 00040 / 01, p. 5, Übersicht Subkulturen: Ted's, Tramper/Penner, Skinhaed's, Punk's, Heavy's, New Romantik's, Popper (1984) / BStU, MfS, BV für Staatssicherheit, Abteilung XX. 11. Februar 1985, p. 11.

<sup>151</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle Abt. XX 1036, p. 178.

can be argued that ‘Tendenz’ expresses doubt, while it conflicts with a report<sup>152</sup> from Bautzen which uses the vague terms ‘pazifistische Tendenzen’.

The conflictual interpretation of New Romantic not only differed between departments but also the very same reports. In what seems to be an attempt to fit New Romantic into the Punk definition, the department<sup>153</sup> in Weimar wrote in January 1987 that ‘ausgehend von der englischen [sic] Musikinformation “The Cuve” [sic], deren Texte sich in anarchistischer Richtung bewegen bzw. Zerstörung um aufzufallen, als Ziel angeben, kann davon ausgegangen werden, daß diese Gruppierung ähnlich der der Punker einzuordnen sind’. Song lyrics by the (wrongly spelled) band *The Cure* are presented here as evidence that New Romantics and Punks shared the same purpose. We do not know whether the MfS functionary or author of the report had listened to *The Cure* songs. The uncertainly phrased formulations ‘anarchistische Richtung’ and ‘kann davon ausgegangen werden’ imply that they were not convinced of this interpretation and that the material was too ambiguous or vague for them.

This is confirmed by the second part of the same report<sup>154</sup> which contradicts the connection between New Romantic, Punk and anarchy: ‘Sie beschäftigen sich vor allem mit der Musik der englischen Musikgruppe “The Cure”. Bei dieser Gruppierung handelt es sich um Jugendliche, die mit der Richtung “Punk” nichts zu tun haben bzw. zu tun haben wollen’. The depiction is ambivalent because the analysis of the lyrics implies that they give evidence to the characterisation of New Romantic as anarchic and therefore related to Punk, while scene participants, *The Cure* music fans, are described as the complete opposite. Similarly, the MfS in Görlitz concluded<sup>155</sup> from observations at the local ‘Milchbar’, a type of 1960s-style café which serves coffee, ice cream and milkshakes and was very popular among teenagers since the late 1950s, that ‘die Anhänger dieser neuen Welle trennen sich ganz entschieden von der Penner- oder Pankerbewegung [sic] ab’. According to this local report,<sup>156</sup> the music which New Romantics preferred was not evidence of an ideological connection between New Romantic and Punk as implied in the report from Weimar, but

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<sup>152</sup> BStU, MfS BV Dresden KD Bautzen 9343, p. 1 Erscheinungsformen dekadenter Jugendlicher und Jungerwachsene.

<sup>153</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Erfurt KD Weimar 376, p. 169, Kreisdienststelle Weimar, Weimar, den 13. Januar 1987. Information zur Person.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> BStU, MfS BV Dresden, KD Görlitz 70007, Kreisdienststelle Görlitz. Abschrift – IM-Bericht. Görlitz, den 17.04.87. Betrifft Treff Milchbar, p. 461.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.



evidence of their fundamental difference, as it is written that ‘die Anhänger bevorzugen eine bestimmte Musik, ruhige melodische Rockmusik’, and that ‘sie haben einen eigenen Tanzstil, ruhige Bewegungen auf der Stelle’. The report<sup>157</sup> from Bautzen adds homosexuality as a further characteristic to New Romantic and uses another new term, ‘subjektiv-idealistische Sichtweisen’, which are both characteristics that do not appear in any other subculture category. New Romantic is depicted as a fundamentally different subculture.

Next to interpretations of music lyrics and sounds, dance and sexual behaviour and assumptions regarding inner ideals, ambivalent readings of New Romantic also appear in descriptions of New Romantic appearance. In a HA XX report<sup>158</sup> titled *Erscheinungsformen von Angriffen auf die Jugendpolitik in der DDR*, the colour combination black and red is interpreted as a metaphor for anarchy. The reason for this may be that evidence was needed to confirm that New Romantic was a form of Punk and to start a criminal investigation. However, when the local department in Leipzig<sup>159</sup> created an overview of the different ‘Subkultur’ in the city, based on observations in 1984, the colour red was not mentioned, as it is instead stated that New Romantics dressed either in black or grey. As a further characteristic, the report mentions that New Romantics had dyed black hair which covered their eyes. Interestingly, department XX<sup>160</sup> in Leipzig wrote in February 1985 that New Romantics are ‘äußerlich kaum auffallend’, and hence rated the New Romantic style as unspectacular.

To summarise the ambivalent state representation of New Romantic: New Romantic is depicted in the files as a new subculture and (subcultural) ideology which differs from all other subcultures. The reports demonstrate that MfS investigation into New Romantic was based on the observation, description and interpretation of external appearance, subcultural capital and individual and group behaviour and practice. The characterisation in the files focuses on style (clothing and hairdo), content (texts and sounds) and physical behaviour (dance, sexuality). The pacifist, introverted, passive and ‘subjective-idealist’ attitude attributed to New Romantic is the key aspect of the political interpretation. It caused a

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<sup>157</sup> BStU, MfS BV Dresden KD Bautzen 9343, p. 1 Erscheinungsformen dekadenter Jugendlicher und Jungerwachsene.

<sup>158</sup> BStU, MfS, HA IX 14183, Konzeption zur Vorbereitung des Forums in der GO der FDJ der HA IX. Thema: Erscheinungsformen von Angriffen auf die Jugendpolitik in der DDR, p. 6.

<sup>159</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Lpz KD Lpz-Stadt 00040/01 p. 5, Übersicht Subkulturen: Ted’s, Tramper/Penner, Skinhaed’s, Punk’s, Heavy’s, New Romantik’s, Popper (1984).

<sup>160</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig KdFS Leipzig-Stadt 00040 / 01, BV für Staatssicherheit, Abteilung XX. 11. Februar 1985, p. 8.

rhetorical conflict because, compared to the depictions of Punk and acknowledgement of the subcultural differentiation with the violent clashes between subcultures (Punks and Skinheads) on the one hand, and the fashionable subcultural styles on the other hand, the files indicate that the attitude and ideology of New Romantic were considered less of a threat to society and the state.

At the same time, the MfS assumed that New Romantic did have meaning and purpose and depicts New Romantic as standing out from the rest. It was considered a 'Neue Welle aus der BRD'<sup>161</sup> and therefore suspicious within the standard anti-Western narrative. However, the definition of New Romantic in the *Übersicht Subkulturen* (MfS Leipzig) as a 'gesellschaftsfähigere Form'<sup>162</sup> can be seen as a political re-definition of subculture and subcultural ideology, firstly because it 'diverged sharply from the Stasi's criminological theory of punk'<sup>163</sup>, and secondly because this subcultural form as not perceived as a disturbance to societal norm and order, while it did offer young people in the GDR a new (alternative) source of identity and community. Hence, New Romantic 'tested, confirmed and strengthened the mechanisms of control'<sup>164</sup> while MfS subculture surveillance in the years 1984 – 1986 resulted in shifting and differing perspectives within the organisation. That which 'had seemed inconceivable a few years earlier, now quickly became reality', as Howes writes;<sup>165</sup> the possibility of legitimate subculture in the GDR which would unfold during the last three years of its existence. However, the key statement<sup>166</sup> contained in reports from the department in Leipzig, HA XX and HA IX that New Romantics 'in ihrer gesellschaftlichen Passivität und Desinteresse Wirkungen der politisch-ideologischen Diversion des Gegners zu erkennen sind' initially overruled this possibility, because the emergence of groups dressed in black and listening to Gothic-related music genres all over the GDR raised political and societal concerns.

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<sup>161</sup> BStU, MfS BV Dresden, KD Görlitz 70007, Kreisdienststelle Görlitz. Abschrift – IM-Bericht. Görlitz, den 17.04.87. Betrifft Treff Milchbar, p. 461.

<sup>162</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig KDfS Leipzig-Stadt 00040 / 01, p. 5, Übersicht Subkulturen: Ted's, Tramper/Penner, Skinhaed's, Punk's, Heavy's, New Romantik's, Popper (1984).

<sup>163</sup> Howes, 'Subcultural Studies between the Blocs', p. 85.

<sup>164</sup> Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of The Social*, p. 87.

<sup>165</sup> Hayton, 'Härte gegen Punk', p. 347.

<sup>166</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig KDfS Leipzig-Stadt 00040 / 01, BV für Staatssicherheit, Abteilung XX. 11. Februar 1985, p. 8 / MfS HA IX 14183, Konzeption zur Vorbereitung des Forums in der GO der FDJ der HA IX. Thema: Erscheinungsformen von Angriffen auf die Jugendpolitik in der DDR, p. 6 – 7 (without date) MfS HA XX/AKG 1487, p. 151- Berlin 15.5.1985. Einschätzung ausgewählter Probleme der politisch-operativen Lageentwicklung unter jugendlichen Personenkreisen im Jahr 1984.

### III. The Mysterious Subculture: Between ‘Aufklärung’ and Moral Panics

Several MfS departments mention a second Gothic-related subcultural phenomenon that appears to have emerged suddenly and nationwide in or before 1986. East German teenagers who dressed in black and listened to *The Cure*, *Depeche Mode* and similar bands were called *Grufti(e)s* (hereafter Gruftis). Not only the spelling differed from department to department (*Gruftys*, *Grufts*, *Grooves*, *Groovies*, and *Guffits*). The files indicate that there was no consensus within the MfS whether Gruftis were politically relevant and therefore, different local departments began to investigate. The aim of their inquiries was the *Erfassung jugendlicher Gruppierung “Grufti”* in their area, as one such report<sup>167</sup> from Luckenwalde is titled. ‘Sammelsuchaufträge’ were conducted to determine the precise number of scenes and members and establish their identities which were then listed in the *Sammelkartei der “Gruftis”*<sup>168</sup>.

In Dresden, the criminal police department<sup>169</sup> reported about the *Situation unter den Gruftys*, that ‘die Gruftys sind als neue Erscheinungsform unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen bekannt geworden’. The statement shows that teenagers were already considered ‘negativ-dekadent’ although it is implied that they had just heard of the new subcultural phenomenon. The report lists different localities where Gruftis were said to have been spotted: ‘ersten Informationen zufolge gibt es in folgenden Bereichen Gruftys: Dresden-Stadt, Dresden-Ost/Tolkewitz, Dresden-Nord/Trachenberge, Sebnitz, Tanzgaststätte in Wilschdorf. Weitere Informationen sind dazu nicht vorhanden’. According to the police<sup>170</sup>, the local scenes were expanding because there were ‘Tendenzen zur Ausprägung der Überörtlichkeit von Kontakten’. Once it was known where assumed Gruftis were located, who they were, and who they interacted with, the responsible department<sup>171</sup> ordered that: ‘zur weiteren Klärung der operativen Bedeutung dieser Gruppierung erfolgen im Zusammenwirken mit der DVP [...] Vorbeugungsgespräche mit den aus unserem VB

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<sup>167</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam, AKG 1312, Luckenwalde 11.11.1986, Information zu einer jugendlichen Gruppierung namens ‚Grufti‘, pP. 211 – 212.

<sup>168</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig, KDfS Leipzig-Stadt 01760/01, KD Leipzig-Stadt. Ref. XX/1 me. Leipzig, den 09.10.87. Betr. Erfassung in der VSH der KD Leipzig-Stadt, p. 122.

<sup>169</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, Abt. VII, 7484, BDVP Dresden, Kriminalpolizei, Dezernat I, Dresden, 09.12.1987. einschätzung der operativen Lage unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen im Bezirk Dresden, p. 142: Situation unter den Gruftys.

<sup>170</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6162, MDI Informationen. Sonderheft 1/1988. Kriminalpolizei, p. 18

<sup>171</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam, AKG 1312, Luckenwalde 11.11.1986, Information zu einer jugendlichen Gruppierung namens ‚Grufti‘, pP. 211 – 212.

stammenden Jugendlichen, um den Charakter herauszuarbeiten'. The criminal police<sup>172</sup> in Dresden seemed convinced that an 'umfassende Aufklärung ihrer ideologische Haltung, der Ziele und Vorhaben' was needed and that the 'Aufklärung' would bring criminalising evidence.

The 'Aufklärung' strategy aimed at a rapid information gathering and gaining of control over the new subcultural phenomenon. But the 'Aufklärung' was confusing. Some reports first confirm the political relevance of the investigation before they relativise it again. For example, in a report titled *Information über negative Gruppierungen ("Gruftis", "Break-Dance-Gruppe") in Leipzig* from December 1987 from department XV, a subdepartment within the *Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung* (HVA, the GDR's foreign espionage organ), it is noted: 'in diese [Grufti] Gruppe bestand der Plan, am 21.10.1987 über die CSSR Republikflucht zu begehen'. At the same time, the criminalising evidence is relativised in the same report<sup>173</sup> as it written that 'der Plan wurde aber wahrscheinlich als unsinnig einschätzt und von den meist minderjährigen Mitgliedern der Gruppe nicht ernsthaft in die Tat umgesetzt'. Yet the fact that the highly charged political term 'Republikflucht' had been mentioned in combination with a subculture that was still relatively unknown at that time raised suspicion. Information retrieved from 'Vorbeugungsgespräche' with young people was not perceived as valuable because it was expected that it would be ingenuine or incomplete.

Especially in small-scale communities, local Gruftis were not only reported by the police and MfS but also to the police and MfS by other citizens, like school staff or pupils who 'äußerte sich über die Existenz [sic] jugendlicher Gruppierungen in der DDR die sich als "Gruftis" bezeichnen'.<sup>174</sup> and who informed the local police and MfS about Gruftis. The files show that information was often based on rumours, assumptions and moral panics. In Brandenburg, for instance, pupils<sup>175</sup> stated about a sixteen-year-old fellow pupil that he 'seit Mitte dieses Jahres aktiv in einer Gruppe von "Gruftis", welche in seinem Heimatort tätig ist, mitwirkt'. The example shows that teenagers who were not themselves Gruftis were

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<sup>172</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, Abt. VII, 7484, BDVP Dresden, Kriminalpolizei, Dezernat I, Dresden, 09.12.1987. einschätzung der operativen Lage unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen im Bezirk Dresden, p. 142.

<sup>173</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig KdFS Leipzig-Stadt 01760/01, Abteilung XV. Frankfurt (O), 1.12.87. Information über negative Gruppierungen ("Gruftis", "Break-Dance-Gruppe") in Leipzig, p. 135.

<sup>174</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, Nr. 3109, Information. Berlin. 7. Dezember 1987, p. 163.

<sup>175</sup> BStU, MfS, HA IC 14164, Abschrift. K/I Brandenburg. 21.11.1986 [an] Leiter Kriminalpolizei. Information, p. 195.

considered a valuable source of information for the local police and MfS, because Gruftis appeared to be a hot topic: ‘Bei dieser Gelegenheit hatte ihnen der [Junge] etwas über die “Gruftis” erzählt, da sich die anderen Jugendlichen unter diesem Begriff nichts vorstellen konnten. Die “Gruftis” sollen sich nach Aussagen [...] auf Friedhöfen und in leerstehenden Kirchen und Gebäuden treffen, um sich zu unterhalten und Musik zu hören’. The term ‘sollen’ signals that the information was not confirmed because it was based on word of mouth and that there was an air of secrecy and mystery about Gruftis.

Similarly, in Weimar, the local MfS<sup>176</sup> reported that it had been in contact with a concierge who reported ‘daß sich auf dem Friedhof von Ehringsdorf [...] in letzter Zeit häufig sogenannte ‘Gruftys’ aufhalten. Hierbei handelt es sich nach Aussagen [...] um 2-3 Jugendliche im Alter um die 18 Jahre. [...] Aus einem Gespräch was die [...] [Reinigungskraft] auf dem Friedhof gehört hat wollen die Genannten heute Abend wieder auf dem Friedhof kommen’. The local cemetery was now the focus of a new inquiry, and, like the abandoned churches and buildings mentioned in the report from Brandenburg, provided a clue about the mysterious new subculture. In Berlin, information from a school director about ‘eine solche Person, der Name ist nicht bekannt, der aus Leipzig stammt und “Grufis” [sic] wäre’ was reported to department XX in December 1987. It is stated in the report<sup>177</sup> that group behaviour (‘Verhaltensweisen’) of Gruftis consisted of: ‘Alkohol beschaffen, diesen auf Friedhöfen im Schein einer brennenden Kerze konsumieren und dann zu rowdyhaften Handlungen neigen’. It should be noted there that ‘rowdyhaft’ was a standard pejorative term for youth behaviour which had been used since the mid-1950s as discussed in several studies.<sup>178</sup> It criminalised the behaviour of Gruftis but the ‘Handlungen’ are not specified which indicates that the word of mouth information was vague, and that the term ‘rowdyhaft’ was meaningless in this context because it did not specify their intent.

In Greiz, department HA Ic<sup>179</sup> reported about a female Grufti who had apparently drawn the attention from the staff at a home for adolescents. It is stated that there were problems with the girl because ‘sie würde einer Sekte angehören, welche sich die “Gruftis” nennen. Diese würden den Tod verherrlichen, sich auf alten Friedhöfen aufhalten und als ein

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<sup>176</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Erfurt, KD Weimar 539, p. 5 Weimar, 30.06.88 KD Weimar.

<sup>177</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, Nr. 3109, Information. Berlin. 7. Dezember 1987, p. 163.

<sup>178</sup> e.g. Gerlach, Götze, Janssen 2009; Janssen 2010; Fenemore 2009; Stahl 2010; Schrijnders 2012; Liebing 2005, Paleczny 2013, Poiger, 2000.

<sup>179</sup> BStU, MfS, HA Ic, 14164, neg. dek. Jugendl. („Grufti“), Greiz, 9.12.1987. Information, p. 172.

Höhepunkt dieser “Truppe” ist das übernachten in alten Gruften auf Friedhöfen’. The group, it is noted consisted of ‘Strafentlassenen und asozialen Bürger’, but again, the information is not confirmed because of the verb ‘würde(n)’ is used to signify that the information was secondhand. Crucially, it is written that the girl did not cause problems during working times. And yet it was a problem that, according to the report, ‘auch würde dieses Mädchen Andere beeinflussen, eine Art Geisterbeschwörung durchführen und aus der Hand lesen. Eine Besonderheit sei ferner, sie würde stets ganz schwarz gekleidet gehen, das Gesicht weiß gepudert damit es bereits vom Äußeren wie der Tod aussehe!’ The term ‘sei’ is another indication that the information in the report was given by someone who had not actually seen the girl who was said to not only glorify but also look like death. The notification to the MfS that ‘die Mitarbeiter wüssten nicht wie sie sich verhalten sollten. Deshalb ist der Anruf mit der Bitte um Unterstützung’ sufficed to conduct further ‘Aufklärung’ which, as the report indicates, was an ‘Aussprache’ with the girl, her parents, and the ‘Heimleiter’.

It appears that the ‘Öffentliches Auftreten von Anhängern der “Gruftis”’<sup>180</sup> confused or shocked adults and caused moral panics despite the note that it was not taking place inside institutions and working times. The described spectacular appearance, morbid interests and spiritual activities (‘Kulthandlungen’) of adolescents sufficed to involve the police and MfS. Klaus Farin<sup>181</sup> and Wurschi<sup>182</sup> note that members of the public, especially at schools and working environments, cooperated with the police and MfS by discriminating and reporting Gruftis. Although the girl appeared to fulfil her work duties, and a male suspect in the report<sup>183</sup> from Brandenburg is described as a ‘Lehrling mit guten Leistungen [...] der [...] nur durch sein Äußeres auffällig wird [...] im Klassenkollektiv nimmt er keine gesonderte Stellung ein’, their leisure practice, after-work life, or double life, concerned different authorities. As shown, information was vague, and hence, department XX<sup>184</sup> had to admit that ‘inwieweit diese Hinweisen den Tatsachen entsprechen kann nicht eingeschätzt werden,

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<sup>180</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 5940, Cottbus, 30.5.1988. Berichterstattung über Entwicklungstendenzen unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen sowie die Wirksamkeit politisch-operativer Maßnahmen zur Zurückdrängung – Zeitraum 1.1.1988 bis 20.5.1988, p. 33.

<sup>181</sup> Klaus Farin, *Die Gothics. Interviews. Fotografien* (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen Verlag, 2001), p. 89.

<sup>182</sup> Wurschi, *Rennsteigbeat*, p. 6.

<sup>183</sup> BStU, MfS, HA IC 14164, Abschrift. K/I Brandenburg. 21.11.1986 [an] Leiter Kriminalpolizei. Information, p. 194.

<sup>184</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, Nr. 3109, Information. Berlin. 7. Dezember 1987, p. 163.

die Angaben sind nicht überprüft'. Some MfS representatives therefore questioned<sup>185</sup> the reliability of the information and the sources: 'ob es sich bei der Info um Vermutung der Jugendlichen oder eigene Feststellungen handelt ist ebenfalls nicht bekannt'. In some cases, information about a group of Gruftis needed to be corrected, as it was decided<sup>186</sup> that it was a 'Konzentration jugendlicher Punks' that was seen in a specific place, and often, statements from the local police clashed with those in MfS reports, and descriptions and interpretations of Gruftis in the MfS and police files are often conflictual.

When teachers, pupils or relatives of MfS functionaries reported<sup>187</sup> to the local police or MfS that they had spotted Gruftis in a specific area, because they had seen adolescents dressed in black with white painted faces, it was implied that these adolescents had something to hid. From the perspectives of observers, as a report<sup>188</sup> from Halle from April 1988 illustrates, in which it is noted that 'zu diesen männlichen Jugendlichen' who were dressed in black 'gesellten sich weibliche Jugendliche, diese waren normal gekleidet', Gruftis were different from 'normal adolescents'. Both the external and internal Grufti were considered deviant to social and moral norms both internally (spiritual practices) and externally (Gothic style). We may assume from these examples of individual Grufti cases in MfS files that Gruftis did initially not so much emerge or exist as an actual subculture or as subcultural scene, but as a term which was used to label Gothic appearances of individuals and forms of behaviour associated with the Gothic style. This, as we have seen, triggered moral panics while rumours amplified further assumptions, stigmatisation and marginalisation about the phenomenon.

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<sup>185</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle, KD Halle, VIII 1460/88, 11.4.88 Ergänzung zur Info ‚Gruftis‘ Halle Silberhöhe, p. 42; BStU, MfS, BV Halle, VIII, 1460/88, KD Halle, KD Saalkreis. Halle, 7.4.88. Operative Info, 11.4.88 Ergänzung zur Info ‚Gruftis‘ Halle Silberhöhe, p. 41.

<sup>186</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle, VIII 1460/88, KD Halle, VPKA Halle – VP-Revier, Abschnitt 29. Halle 7.6.88, Auskunftsbericht über eine jugendliche Gruppierung ‚Punker‘ auf der Silberhöhe in dem Innenhof Str. d. Technik, Str.d. Aufbaues und Str.d. Aktivisten, VPKA Halle, Kriminalpolizei. 19.05.1988. Sachstandsbericht zur Konzentration jugendlicher Punks im Bereich Halle – Silberhöhe, Straße der Aktivisten, p. 72.

<sup>187</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle, VIII, 1460/88, KD Halle, KD Saalkreis. Halle, 7.4.88. Operative Info, 11.4.88 Ergänzung zur Info ‚Gruftis‘ Halle Silberhöhe, p. 41.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

#### IV. Hidden Ideology? Surveillance of Gothic Styles and Black Gatherings

New Romantics are mentioned in the MfS files alongside Grufti cases from 1984 until 1987. Information about the Gruftis who were introduced to surveillance in 1986, as shown in the previous subchapter, was based on hearsay. The rumours and clues the MfS received from shocked citizens regarding young people who dressed in black and who listened to certain bands might explain why the mysterious appearance of the supposed subculture was followed by an intensified investigation into New Romantic in 1987. Although observations in different localities did not confirm political or criminal intent, HA XX<sup>189</sup> decided that ‘sich hinter diesem “Modetrend” der “New Romantiker” ein ideologischer Hintergrund verbirgt’.

Consequentially, HA XX ordered that all local departments should give full ‘politisch-operative Aufmerksamkeit’ to reveal the assumed hidden ideology of New Romantic, while the same was ordered for the (assumed) Gruftis. It is stated in a report<sup>190</sup> from Halle titled *Übersicht zu den bekannten Anhängern des Punk und ähnlich gelagerter Strömungen unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen, einschließlich zuzuordnender illegaler Musikgruppen im Bezirk Halle* from October 1986 that the department had identified seven adolescents who ‘sich selbst der sogenannten Strömung der “New Romantiker” zuordnen’. They appear in a report<sup>191</sup> titled *Eröffnungsarbeit zum Anlegen des Operativvorgangs “Romantiker”* from March 1987 which introduces the observation and infiltration of a ‘New Romantiker Gruppierung’ in Quedlinburg. It is stated in the report<sup>192</sup> that the inquiry was motivated by ‘operativ-bedeutsame Hinweise über deren politisch-ideologische Positionen im Sinne einer Verherrlichung des Faschismus [...], die jedoch einer weiteren Präzisierung bedürfen’. While the ‘Hinweise über das Auftreten einiger Mitglieder dieser Gruppierung mit [operativ] relevanten Verhaltensweisen’ are not specified in the document<sup>193</sup>, it seems that HA XX estimated that they were reliable.

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<sup>189</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX 900, Teil 1, BV für Staatssicherheit Halle, Kreisdienststelle Quedlinburg. 02.03.1987. *Eröffnungsarbeit zum Anlegen des Operativvorgangs ,Romantiker‘*, p. 92.

<sup>190</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX 900/Abteilung XX. Halle, 15. Oktober 1986 *„Übersicht zu den bekannten Anhängern des Punk und ähnlich gelagerter Strömungen unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen, einschließlich zuzuordnender illegaler Musikgruppen im Bezirk Halle*, p. 127.

<sup>191</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX 900, Teil 1, BV für Staatssicherheit Halle, Kreisdienststelle Quedlinburg. 02.03.1987. *Eröffnungsarbeit zum Anlegen des Operativvorgangs ,Romantiker‘*, p. 94.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibd.*

<sup>193</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX 900, Teil 1, BV für Staatssicherheit Halle, Kreisdienststelle Quedlinburg. 02.03.1987. *Eröffnungsarbeit zum Anlegen des Operativvorgangs ,Romantiker‘*, p. 93.



The description that the seven ‘Mitglieder der Gruppierung öffentlichkeitswirksam in Erscheinung treten’ is inspecific but the standard terms ‘öffentlichkeitswirksam’ and ‘operativ relevante Verhaltensweisen’ rhetorically justified<sup>194</sup> ‘die Notwendigkeit, den Nachweis des dringenden Verdachts der Begehung von Straftaten [...] zu führen bzw. solche Straftaten vorbeugend zu verhindern’. Three years after New Romantic was reported, it was thus decided that although they were different subcultures, Punk and New Romantic both disturbed society and that the operation to prevent actual disturbance was taken very seriously: ‘Die vorhandene politisch-op. Situation erfordert eine konsequente zielgerichtete [operative] Bearbeitung’. The main reason for this, as the report<sup>195</sup> shows, was that ‘laut bisher vorliegenden Informationen soll die schwarze Kleidung in Verbindung mit der typischen Frisur bzw. dem Anlegen von Koppeln eine Anlehnung an das äußere Erscheinungsbild der organisierten “Hitlerjugend” des faschistischen Deutschlands darstellen’. Again, the verb ‘soll’ indicates that the information was provided by a third party, but the very same source apparently contradicted the relevance of the operation: ‘Auf der Grundlage der vorliegenden Information ist davon auszugehen, daß gegenwärtig nur ein geringer Teil der “New Romantiker” Quedlinburgs über diesen ideologischen Hintergrund informiert ist und sich aus diesem Grunde mit den “New Romantikern” äußerlich identifiziert’. Although the clothing style of the group was interpreted as a political metaphor and a sign of hostility against the GDR, it did not suffice as empirical evidence to convict the whole New Romantic group because it is stated that the majority of (assumed) participants were not aware of the ideological meaning a colour black.

According to the report<sup>196</sup> from Quedlinburg, one participant in the group was convicted because the hostile ideological meaning of his clothing style was easy to read; it is written that the boy’s clothing contained upside-down images of Lenin and the FDJ-logo, and that an IM had revealed ‘daß mit dieser bewußten Trageweise zum Ausdruck gebracht werden soll, daß man mit den gesellschaftlichen Verhältnissen in der DDR nicht einverstanden ist’. The key word is, again, ‘bewußt’, as HA XX now had the evidence it needed to convict a New Romantic of an anti-GDR attitude. The resistance was not only symbolic, according to the report, because it is noted that the boy was one of the regular

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

visitors of the local discos ‘die aufgrund das vorrangigen Abspielens der typischen Musikrichtung der “New Romantiker” auch hauptsächlich von diesem Personenkreis aufgesucht werden’.

What is interesting is that a certain music genre was considered typical for the scene, while HA XX was mainly interested in the information that the boy ‘die Besuche dieser Veranstaltungen nutzt, um eine negative politische Einflußnahme auf andere Jugendliche auszuüben’, and that he was hoping to gain followers through his network which is said to comprise members of the underground church and environmental movement. As he was only one individual, however, the visible ‘gruppenbindender Faktor’ of New Romantic as it had been described in the MfS files about the subcultural fragmentation, which was the colour black, could not be interpreted as evidence of the supposed hidden ideology. Furthermore, by the end of 1987, the criminal police and MfS in Leipzig noted that black was a fashionable colour because many adolescents copied the styles of their favourite music groups.

Crucially, the term New Romantic is not used in MfS files after 1987. Whether the scene disappeared, or whether the term was simply dropped or replaced, is unclear, but considering the popularity of the related phenomenon (New) Wave in the GDR, the term *Gruftis* offers an answer, as we will see later in this subchapter. MfS inquiry *OV Romantiker* was closed, according to department XX<sup>197</sup> in Halle, because it had been determined that ‘die Konzentrationen bilden sich sporadisch bei der Durchführung von Veranstaltungen und tragen losen Charakter’ and because there was no clear evidence of ‘negativ-dekadenten Handlungen’. The MfS department in Leipzig reported<sup>198</sup> in November 1987 that New Romantics ‘bilden keinen operativen Schwerpunkt’ because they were ‘bisher in der Öffentlichkeit nicht in Erscheinung getreten’. This implies that while the department knew that the scene existed in their area of responsibility, they were not considered a disturbance of the public sphere because they were said to not be organised enough.

At the same time, other police and MfS departments in different areas of the GDR did report about young people who were dressed in black and who were organising themselves. In June 1986, an *Auswertungs- und Kontrollgruppe*<sup>199</sup> (MfS/police control

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<sup>197</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle Abt. XX 1036 OV ‚Romantiker‘, p. 5.

<sup>198</sup> MfS HA XX 6014, BV Leipzig, KD Leipzig-Stadt, 26.11.1987. Übersicht über Erscheinungsformen negativ-dekadenter Jugendlicher innerhalb der DDR, p. 14.

<sup>199</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 473, Auswertungs- und Kontrollgruppe, Schwerin, 17.6.1986. Ergänzung zur Einschätzung ausgewählter Probleme der polisch-operativen Lageentwicklung unter jugendlichen Personenkreise (Jugendanalyse) vom 15.5.1986, VVS 68/86, p. 49.

group) reported about a gathering, a ‘Treffen’ at a castle ruin in Schwerin. Investigators concluded that it was the second edition of the *Reppiner Burgfete*, as the gathering was called. The first edition of a small-scale local festival had apparently remained unnoticed or was not reported to the MfS by the local police. While the *Auswertungs- und Kontrollgruppe*<sup>200</sup> reported that it had ‘bisher noch nicht bestätigte [...] Hinweise’ that the organisers intended to hold a third ‘Treffen’ in October 1986, the MfS’ task was to investigate it further and, ultimately, prevent it.

The *Burgfete* appeared to be a planned gathering with the intention to be held regularly, and according to the report,<sup>201</sup> it was semi-professionally organised: ‘Darüber hinaus liegen Erkenntnisse vor, daß von namentlich bekannten vermutlichen Organisatoren/Mitorganisatoren der ‘Burgfete’ [...] Personen schriftlich dazu eingeladen worden sind. [...] Das Treffen ist offensichtlich langfristig vorbereitet worden’. The report does not mention New Romantics or Gruftis or any other subcultural scene, and we therefore do not know whether the *Reppiner Burgfete* was subculture-related or a scene gathering. Considering that a thriving Gothic scene existed in Schwerin, that a neo-Gothic/Romantic castle ruin seems a perfect location for a Gothic event, and that *Carpe Noctem e.V.*<sup>202</sup> organised a Gothic party during Walpurgis Night (a popular date among Gothics) in 2003 at the same location, it is likely that the *Burgfete* was something similar. That the report does not mention a scene can be explained by the fact that the terms New Romantic and Gruftis were not commonly known at that time.

The police officers who discovered the second *Burgfete* reported<sup>203</sup> to HA XX about their findings on scene, which were hundred-and-fifty visitors and sheets with the following messages: ‘Bleib im Bett liegen und laß dir die Haare wachsen für den Frieden’, ‘Man lebt nur einmal, aber das muß man erleben’, ‘Wer Gewalt sät, braucht sich nicht wundern, wenn er auf die Schnauze was kriegt’, and ‘Lebe intensiv, liebe heftig, sterbe jung’. While the last text reminds of Gothic lyrics (as shown in Chapter 1), a sheet with the text ‘II. Reppiner Burgfete [...] Wir begrüßen auch unsere Freunde der VP recht herzlich’ alerted the MfS investigators to the fact that the organisers were aware yet not afraid of police intervention,

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>202</sup> <http://www.carpe-noctem-ev-schwerin.de/partys02.html> [accessed on 15 November 2016].

<sup>203</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 473, Auswertungs- und Kontrollgruppe, Schwerin, 17.6.1986. Ergänzung zur Einschätzung ausgewählter Probleme der polisch-operativen Lageentwicklung unter jugendlichen Personenkreise (Jugendanalyse) vom 15.5.1986, VVS 68/86, pp. 49, 50.

and that they prepared the event thoughtfully to protect themselves: ‘Von diesen Personen sind vorab Absprachen getroffen worden, keine Angaben zu den Personen zu machen, von denen die “Fete” organisiert wurde’. This statement in the report<sup>204</sup> that ‘sich zumindest die Organisatoren der Ansammlung der Gesetzwidrigkeit der Handlungen bewußt waren und von einer möglichen Konfrontation mit der VP ausgegangen wurde’, gave HA XX the evidence it needed to convict the organisers, again by using the term ‘bewußt’. Crucially, the actual content of the gathering (activities, music etc.) is not mentioned in the report which implies that this was not politically relevant and because the gathering was convicted as an act of ‘Gesetzwidrigkeit’ (§218 StGB Zusammenschluß zur Verfolgung gesetzwidriger Ziele). The fact that, as Rutkowski<sup>205</sup> explains, this conviction of ‘riotous assembly’ only required more than individuals who gathered in the public sphere without official permission from the local authorities. This, as will be demonstrated, became a problem for participants in Gothic scenes as well as for the police and MfS.

While the reports about New Romantics and Gruftis from 1984 until 1987 suggest that the scenes are not organised and that only in some cases individuals could be accused of a deviant or hostile attitude, different MfS and police departments reported<sup>206</sup> about gatherings of young people dressed in black in public spaces. One of the most popular meeting places was Alexanderplatz where participants in the Gothic-related scenes from all over the GDR gathered at the *Weltzeituhr*, as Rutkowski<sup>207</sup> writes.

Without mentioning a subcultural label, HA XX<sup>208</sup> reported about a gathering in March 1988 that ‘diese Personen sollen eine total schwarze Kleidung tragen, als Trefforte, neben Gaststätten auch Friedhöfe nutzen, sogenannten “schwarze Predigten” abhalten und Anhänger aus “Knochen” tragen’. The information is vague because it says ‘angeblich sollen Treffen [...] auch auf dem Alexanderplatz in Berlin, meist Sonnabend, stattfinden’ (weitere

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<sup>204</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 473, Auswertungs- und Kontrollgruppe, Schwerin, 17.6.1986. Ergänzung zur Einschätzung ausgewählter Probleme der polisch-operativen Lageentwicklung unter jugendlichen Personenkreisen (Jugendanalyse) vom 15.5.1986, VVS 68/86, p. 50.

<sup>205</sup> Roman Rutkowski, *Das Charisma Des Grabes. Stereotyp Und Vorurteile In Bezug Auf Jugendliche Subkulturen Am Beispiel Der Schwarzen Szene* (Norderstedt: Books on Demand Verlag, 2004), p. 59.

<sup>206</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 5940, Cottbus, 30.3.1988. bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Abt. XX. an MfS Hauptabt. XX Leiter, Berlin. Monatliche Berichterstattung über Entwicklungstendenzen unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen sowie die Wirksamkeit politisch-operativer Maßnahmen zur Zurückdrängung – Monat März 1988 – VVS o017 – 86/88, p. 4.

<sup>207</sup> Philipp Mühlberg and Manfred Stock, *Die Szene Von Innen. Skinheads, Grufties, Heavy Metals, Punks* (Berlin: Christopher Links Verlag, 1990), pp. 90 – 91; Rutkowski, *Das Charisma des Grabes*, p. 60.

<sup>208</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 5940, Cottbus, 30.3.1988. bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Abt. XX. an MfS Hauptabt. XX Leiter, Berlin, p. 4.

Erkenntnisse liegen dazu bisher nicht vor)'. The title of the report,<sup>209</sup> *Zuführung von 9 Jugendlichen aus dem Bezirk Halle auf dem Berliner Alexanderplatz* shows that the gatherings were indeed treated as a crime.

One such gathering was reported to have taken place on a day with political meaning, 13 August 1986 (13 August being the day the building of the Berlin Wall commenced). It was observed that 'am Brunnen stellten sie sich nebeneinander, faßten sich an den Händen, die sie teilweise nach oben hoben. Dabei spreizten sie die Finger zu einem 'V'. Ein Jugendlicher dieser Gruppe fotografierte diese Stellung der Gruppe'. Department XX<sup>210</sup> decided that the gathering represented solidarity with demonstrations against the Berlin Wall taking place elsewhere in the city at the same time, as noted in the report. In a document titled *Befragung des Jugendlichen*<sup>211</sup>, it is written that one group member had stated to the police that the group wanted to show their sense of modern (black) fashion in public, and that 'sie wollten als Gruppe auffallen und haben so ohne Zielstellung gehandelt', whereas another member testified that he was aware of the demonstrations, because his father had warned him.

Dennis Burmeister's and Sascha Lange's *Behind the Wall. Depeche Mode-Fankultur in der DDR* shows photos of *Depeche Mode* fans with the finger peace symbol, so it is possible that the nine had no political intent, but from the perspective of the MfS, the symbolic connection was suspicious. The context allowed for a political-criminal reading of group style and behaviour and simply the fact that the group was a group. The case<sup>212</sup> was taken seriously was the involvement of several state security organs ('Mitarbeiter der HA IX, der BV Berlin, Abt. IX und der K. der VPI Berlin-Mitte') indicates. It was decided to persecute the adolescence, while department IX<sup>213</sup> was responsible for further 'Bearbeitung'. The case shows that from a state perspective, the gathering of a group of young people in

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<sup>209</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, Abt. XX 2053, 15.8.86 BV Berlin. Information. *Zuführung von 9 Jugendlichen aus dem Bezirk Halle auf dem Berliner Alexanderplatz*, p. 349 / MfS – HA XX 900, Teil 2, p. 272-, Abteilung XX/2, p. 349 15.8.86 BV Berlin. Information. *Zuführung von 9 Jugendlichen aus dem Bezirk Halle auf dem Berliner Alexanderplatz*.

<sup>210</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX 3113, VPI-Marzahn, Kriminalpolizei. Berlin, 11.8.86. *Befragung des Jugendlichen*, pp. 13 – 14.

<sup>211</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, Abt. XX 2053, 15.8.86 BV Berlin. Information. *Zuführung von 9 Jugendlichen aus dem Bezirk Halle auf dem Berliner Alexanderplatz*, p. 349.

<sup>212</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, Abt. XX 2053, 15.8.86 BV Berlin. Information. *Zuführung von 9 Jugendlichen aus dem Bezirk Halle auf dem Berliner Alexanderplatz*, p. 349.

<sup>213</sup> BStU, MfS HA XX 900, Teil 1 / BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, Abt. XX 2053, 15.8.86 BV Berlin. Information. *Zuführung von 9 Jugendlichen aus dem Bezirk Halle auf dem Berliner Alexanderplatz*, p. 349.

all-black clothing that appeared on the city's central square with its ideology-infused architecture and military parade function, was a blockage in the system of representation, even when participants and the department in Leipzig pointed out that black was fashionable. The political-ideological context thus ruled over an alternative reading.

And yet, not every gathering was perceived as disturbance, as other cases reveal. In November 1986, the regional MfS department<sup>214</sup> in Luckenwalde documented a group meeting in an abandoned church (ruin) in the city which the local police had discovered during a routine patrol round. The group is explicitly called Grufti, while it is stated that the police had observed that the adolescents drank beer and listened to music with lit candles. According to the report<sup>215</sup>, the information about their scene had been given by the participants themselves 'Sie bezeichnen sich als "Grufti", Die jugendliche Gruppierung hält sich in alten Kirchen auf. Die Idee soll aus westlichen Massenmedien stammen. In der BRD soll es solche Gruppen geben, und mit deren Ideologie identifizieren sie sich'. Like New Romantic, Gruftis were hence said to represent an ideology and that it was Western. Yet because the police<sup>216</sup> ambivalently concluded that no 'Klickenbildung mit einer bestimmten ideologischen Zielrichtung' took place in their area of responsibility, the case was closed.

While the labels New Romantic and New Wave seem to have been abandoned, it appears that Grufti(s) became a locally, translocally, nationally and transnationally used umbrella term for teenagers who dressed in black and listen to certain bands. According to a report<sup>217</sup> from Leipzig, the 'neue Erscheinungsform' had been known since the beginning of 1987. In a 'special issue' information booklet from the *Ministerium des Innern* with investigation results conducted by the *Kriminalpolizei*<sup>218</sup> in 1988, it is noted that 'Gruftis/Gouls werden seit 1986 in der Mehrzahl der Bezirke mit einer geringen Anzahl von Anhängern in loser Verbindung ohne harten Kern festgestellt'. We may assume that there existed different groups, (sub)scenes and genres which were related to Gothic subculture like Gouls (which only appears in a few reports) (New) Wave and New Romantic or which were

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<sup>214</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Potsdam, AKG 1312, Luckenwalde 11.11.1986, Information zu einer jugendlichen Gruppierung namens ‚Grufti‘, p. 211 / MfS HA IC 14164, BV Potsdam / KD Luckenwalde. 12.11.86. Ergänzende Erfassungsangaben ZPDB [...] Zur Information Jugendliche Gruppierung ‚Grufti‘, p. 211.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> BStU, MfS, HA IC 14164, Abschrift. K/I Brandenburg. 21.11.1986 [an] Leiter Kriminalpolizei. Information, p. 194.

<sup>217</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX 6014, BV Leipzig, KD Leipzig-Stadt, 26.11.1987. Übersicht über Erscheinungsformen negativ-dekadenter Jugendlicher innerhalb der DDR, p. 13.

<sup>218</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6162, MDI Informationen. Sonderheft 1/1988. Kriminalpolizei, p. 18.

simply considered as *Depeche Mode* or *The Cure* fans, but that they were often labelled as Gruftis because they had similar styles, as the different files from different departments illustrate. This complicated the search for ideological meaning and political intent but made the labelling of individuals and groups easier as it was simply decided that they were Gruftis.

The MfS and police files I have consulted reveal that one department focused especially on describing every style detail of the subculture which was now consequently labelled as Gruftis by most departments and by the SED. As part of the *Sammelsuchauftrag*, the national mapping of Gruftis, the department in Leipzig<sup>219</sup> noted in 1987 that ‘die neue entstandene Gruppierung ‘Gruftys’ [äußerlich] wie folgt zu erkennen ist: Schwarze Kleidung, Haar nach oben, Kette mit Kreuz, Orden an der Brust, Weißer Gesichtsteint, Schwarz bemalte Augen’. According to the document<sup>220</sup>, 39 adolescents had been identified as Gruftis, because they ‘unterscheiden sich [...] von den übrigen Jugendlichen durch: Wilde tupierte Haare welche meist schwarz eingefärbt sind, Geschminktes Gesicht (weiß) und extrem rote Lippen (weibl. wie auch männl. Personen), Schwarze sehr weite Sachen, wie Mäntel, Hosen Jacke’. What is most interesting about this description is that it is explicitly mentioned that no distinction between male and female Gruftis can be made stylistically, because the ‘wilde / hoch tupierte Haare, weiß geschminktes Gesicht, schwarz angemalte/umrandete Augen; schwarze sehr weit wirkende Bekleidung’<sup>221</sup> and similar descriptions of the spectacular Grufti appearance apply to both sexes and that they are, as such, gender-neutral.

Despite the blueprint from Leipzig regarding Grufti appearance, depictions of Gruftis differ in files from different MfS departments. Some reports show that the fact that Heavy Metal fans also dressed in black and wore crosses which confused some departments. For instance, in an inquiry<sup>222</sup> called *OV “Satan”*, it is noted that an individual in the area had been identified as a ‘Mitglied einer Gruppierung von “Gruftis” in Rathenow’, and that the

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<sup>219</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig KDfS Leipzig-Stadt 01760/01, BV für Staatssicherheit Leipzig, KD Leipzig-Land. 4.11.87. an KD Leipzig-Stadt. Operativinformation, p. 129; BVfS Leipzig KDfS Leipzig-Land 02316, BV Leipzig, KD Leipzig, Land. 27.10.87. Operativinformation, p. 5.

<sup>220</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig KDfS Leipzig-Stadt 01760/01, KD Leipzig-Stadt. Ref. XX/1 me. Leipzig, den 09.10.87. Betr. Erfassung in der VSH der KD Leipzig-Stadt, p. 122; BVfS Leipzig KDfS Leipzig-Stadt 01760/01, BV für Staatssicherheit Leipzig, Kreisdienststelle Leipzig-Stadt. 18.09.87, Jugendliche Gruppierungen, Strömungen und deren Eigenarten aus dem Bereich Leipzig-Grünau, p. 116.

<sup>221</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX 6014, BV Leipzig, KD Leipzig-Stadt, 26.11.1987. Übersicht über Erscheinungsformen negativ-dekadenter Jugendlicher innerhalb der DDR, p. 13.

<sup>222</sup> BStU, MfS, HA IC 14164, Abschrift. K/I Brandenburg. 21.11.1986 [an] Leiter Kriminalpolizei. Information, p. 196: „Aus Zw. Bericht OV ‚Hetzter‘ KD-Rathenow v. 8.1.87.

group met at cemeteries and ‘tragen generell schwarze Kleidungsstücke im Freizeitbereich’. While the responsible investigators assumed ‘eine geistige Verbindung zu ‘Heavy Metal’ [sic]’, a later report<sup>223</sup> from Bitterfeld/Halle (as *OV “Satan”* was a trans-local operation), signals confusion because it was concluded that the boy was ‘entsprechend der Art seiner Kleidung sowie seiner Ausdrucksweise Anhänger der Personenkategorie “Grufties” und der “Heavy-Metal-Bewegung”’. Instead of making a choice, it was simply decided by the department<sup>224</sup> that the boy belonged to both subcultures.

It was also assumed by the criminal police<sup>225</sup> that acts of vandalism at local churches (pentagrams, crosses and the word ‘Satan’ painted on walls in what is said to be blood) were attributed to a so-called *Clan Luzifer* which dressed in black, wore crosses upside down and texts like 666 and ‘Der Tod ist groß – D.T.i.g’ to express their love for Satan. The department in Bautzen<sup>226</sup> painted a different yet equally negative picture of Gruftis. Oddly, clothing and hairdo are described as ‘normal’ while it is stated in the report that Gruftis were not well educated, not socially integrated and not politically interested, violent, anti-social, criminal and ‘rowdyhaft’.

The files examined for this chapter demonstrate how and why MfS representatives struggled with the pluriform subculture which is today known as Gothic. The reports indicate that some departments were aware of the heterogeneity of what was labelled as Gruftis and that the label Gruftis solved the confusion rhetorically. For instance, department XX<sup>227</sup> in Berlin decided that ‘New Wave = Teilströmung der Gruftis’ and department VII (the department responsible for the *Ministerium des Innern* and police) in Dresden<sup>228</sup> wrote that ‘aus Kreisen der Punker gibt es als Gruftyrichtung noch sogenannte “Waver”’. As we have seen in the Introduction, Waver became the overarching label in for Gothic subculture in West Germany in 1986 used by and for participants who were often fans of *The Cure* and

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<sup>223</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle Abt. XX 1036, Abteilung IX. Halle, 28. März 1988. Stellungnahme zum OV ‚Satan‘ der Kreisdienststelle Bitterfeld, Reg.-Nr. VIII 536/88, p. 29.

<sup>224</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfs Leipzig, AKG 03744, BDVP Leipzig. Stellv. Des Leiters K und Leiter Dezernat I [1] Leipzig, 1.9.87, Informationsbericht, pp. 13 – 14.

<sup>225</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6162, MDI Informationen. Sonderheft 1/1988. Kriminalpolizei, p. 18.

<sup>226</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, KD Bautzen, 9343, Erscheinungsformen dekadenter Jugendlicher und Jungerwachsene.

<sup>227</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, 3149, Abt. XX/2. Berlin, 16. November 1989. Operative Information. Aktuelle Situation unter Gruftis der Hauptstadt, p. 105.

<sup>228</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, Abt. VII, 7484, BDVP Dresden, Kriminalpolizei, Dezernat I, Dresden, 09.12.1987. einschätzung der operativen Lage unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen im Bezirk Dresden, p. 142: Situation unter den Gruftys.



*Depeche Mode*, but it only appears in one other MfS files in the corpus of sources I have consulted because in most documents, fans are labelled as Gruftis, as will be further clarified in Chapter 4.

However, the files show that some local departments (or functionaries) recognised differences between different ‘Gruftyrichtungen’ and attempted to capture the specifics of what they defined as ‘Gruftyrichtungen’ and differences between the subscenes and genres which were labelled as such. A report<sup>229</sup> titled *Jugendliche Gruppierungen, Strömungen und deren Eigenarten aus dem Bereich Leipzig-Grünau* mentions a scene called *Codix* and characterises it as ‘schärfere Form der Gruftis, speziell auf Vampire gerichtet (wie sie leben und sich verhalten)’. What is particularly interesting about this report<sup>230</sup> is that it describes the *The Cure* as an underground band from London which was founded in 1976 and notes that ‘bei Auftritten tragen die Mitglieder dieser Band wild tupierte Haare und übelst geschminkte Gesichter’. The definition<sup>231</sup> of Gruftis is based on the music as it is written that ‘Cure Fans sind meistens Codix oder Gruftis’ and *The Cure* was thus considered a style and a ‘gruppenbindender Faktor’. However, the MfS in Leipzig<sup>232</sup> wrote about this that ‘viele Anhänger dieser Rock-Gruppen ähneln aufgrund schwarzer Modebekleidung den Gruftis, ohne jedoch den spirituellen Gedanken und Ritualen zu folgen’. A distinction was thus made between Grufti ideology and practice on the one hand and the black fashion style. Consequently, like Punk, Grufti was divided into a ‘weicher’ and ‘harter Kern’ by some departments<sup>233</sup> like espionage department XV in Frankfurt<sup>234</sup> that decided that the hard core was a ‘negative Gruppierung’.

The soft Grufti category, as described by the department in Leipzig<sup>235</sup>, consisted of teenagers who ‘gehen mit der Mode, bekleiden sich schwarz, tragen ungewöhnliche Frisuren, schmücken sich mit Kreuzen, Ketten und auffälligem Silberschmuck. Sie halten sich nur selten auf Friedhöfen auf und tragen selten weiße Mäuse bzw. Ratten bei sich’. According to this description, the focus was on Grufti fashion and not on Grufti practice. In

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<sup>229</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig KdFS Leipzig-Stadt 01760/01, BV für Staatssicherheit Leipzig, Kreisdienststelle Leipzig-Stadt. 07.10.87. *Jugendliche Gruppierungen, Strömungen und deren Eigenarten aus dem Bereich Leipzig-Grünau*, p. 118.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., pp. 18 – 19.

<sup>233</sup> BStU, MfS, BVf Leipzig, KdFS Leipzig-Stadt 01760/01, Abteilung XV. Frankfurt (O), 1.12.87. Information über negative Gruppierungen (‘Gruftis’, ‘Break-Dance-Gruppe’) in Leipzig, p. 135.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

a report from the criminal police<sup>236</sup> in Dresden, it is noted that Waver ‘werden als der überschwengliche, freudbetonte Teil der Gruftys bezeichnet, sie sind schwarz gekleidet, haben schwarzgefärbte Haare und behängen sich mit Jesuskreuzen und Rosenkränzen. In beiden Richtungen sind keine sichtbaren Zuwendungen zur Religion bekannt’. What is interesting is that the mood of the Waver is described positively, weil it is stated that religious symbols in the style of the Waver had no actual meaning. They were thus worthless as semiotic criteria to determine the ideology of a ‘Gruftyrichtung’, or rather, it was believed that a ‘Gruftyrichtung’ did not necessarily represent Grufti ideology, because it was considered a fashion had. The criminal police<sup>237</sup> wrote about this that Wave was one of the youth trends which were ‘gegenwärtig in das kulturelle Spektrum unserer Gesellschaft als vorübergehender Trend einzuordnen’, and thereby relativised its threat.

While we can identify differences in the definition and interpretation of Grufti scenes, the term ideology was debated too. Department XV<sup>238</sup> in Frankfurt used the term ‘Lebensphilosophie’ instead and wrote about this in a report from December 1987 about the scene(s) in Leipzig that the ‘Ideal dieser Gruppierung [...] wird von Tod bestimmt’. In the annual report of the *Ministerium des Innern* from January 1988, it is noted that Gruftis ‘glauben an ein Leben nach dem Tode’<sup>239</sup> while it is described how ‘Anhänger der Gruftis “ehren” Seelen von Toten auf Friedhöfen und ‘kommunizieren’ mit Satan oder Luzifer, indem Spiegel im Vollmondschein verwandt werden. In ihren rituellen Handlungen eingeschlossen ist das Legen auf Gräber und das Nächtigen an Grabstätten’. The description of the spiritual practice is very detailed, as it is noted that Gruftis ‘betreiben, mehr oder weniger ausgeprägt, spiritistische Rituale auf Friedhöfen, beten den Teufel bzw. den Erzengel Luzifer (Engelssturz) an und entzünden dabei Kerzen und Feuer’. ‘More or less’ suggests that the rituals were practiced not necessarily with the same intensity or seriousness. This is confirmed in a report<sup>240</sup> from Leipzig in which it is stated that it had been observed

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<sup>236</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, Abt. VII, 7484, BDVP Dresden, Kriminalpolizei, Dezernat I, Dresden, 09.12.1987. einschätzung der operativen Lage unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen im Bezirk Dresden, p. 142.

<sup>237</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6162, MDI Informationen. Sonderheft 1/1988. Kriminalpolizei, p. 18 /16.

<sup>238</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig KDfS Leipzig-Stadt 01760/01, Abteilung XV. Frankfurt (O), 1.12.87. Information über negative Gruppierungen (‘Gruftis’, ‘Break-Dance-Gruppe’) in Leipzig, p. 135.

<sup>239</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6162, MDI Informationen. Sonderheft 1/1988. Kriminalpolizei, p. 18.

<sup>240</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig KDfS Leipzig-Stadt 01760/01, Abteilung XV. Frankfurt (O), 1.12.87. Information über negative Gruppierungen (‘Gruftis’, ‘Break-Dance-Gruppe’) in Leipzig, p. 135; MfS HA XX 6014, BV Leipzig, KD Leipzig-Stadt, 26.11.1987. Übersicht über Erscheinungsformen negativ-dekadenter Jugendlicher innerhalb der DDR, p. 13.

that the scene ‘trifft sich aber regelmäßig, vor allem am Abend, auf Friedhöfen, wo Gespräche geführt, aber auch bestimmte (nicht näher bekannte) Zeremonien vorgenommen werden’. According to the statement, the actual content of the ceremonies was unknown and thus, the MfS needed to investigate.

It was, however, reported by the criminal police<sup>241</sup> that *Gruftis* were rarely involved in acts like vandalism at cemeteries and the perpetrators were never found in the *OV “Satan”* inquiry. In other cases like the group gathering in a church ruin in Luckenwalde, the police concluded<sup>242</sup> that ‘diese Zusammenkunft weder einen kirchlichen noch oppositionellen Charakter getragen hat und nur aus dem mangelnden Freizeitangebot und den bereits [...] angeführten Gründen entstanden ist’, that ‘unter den aufgeführten Jugendlichen soll sich kein aktiver Kirchengänger oder Angehöriger einer kirchlichen Sekte befinden’, and that the group behaved normally had left the church in a clean and tidy state, as it is written in the document.<sup>243</sup> The *Gruftis* were freed from criminal, or political-oppositional blame, and instead, local authority was blamed for a lack of official youth leisure offers.

Whereas the case was closed for the local police, MfS investigation was not, because young people who created their own leisure offers in remote, abandoned and unusual places were considered suspicious for the simple reason that the MfS lacked unequivocal knowledge. According to Rutkowski,<sup>244</sup> young people who preferred ‘private Treffen’ were not protected from state control. While *Gruftis* were observed when they gathered at cemeteries and information was provided by participants in some cases, it was reported by the MfS in Leipzig<sup>245</sup> that *Gruftis* ‘treffen sich gern in den Abendstunden auf Friedhöfen [...] auf denen sie dann Rock-Musik westlicher Gruppen wie z.B. die Ärzte und De-Cures [sic] hören’. Clearly not familiar with the bands as wrong spellings like ‘De Guere [sic]’ show, some departments estimated that such bands were to blame for spreading ‘negative Lebensauffassungen’ among the young fans, as it is stated in a report from Gera.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6162, MDI Informationen. Sonderheft 1/1988. Kriminalpolizei, p. 18 /16

<sup>242</sup> BStU, MfS, HA IC 14164, Abschrift. K/I Brandenburg. 21.11.1986 [an] Leiter Kriminalpolizei. Information, pp. 194, p. 195.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., p. 196.

<sup>244</sup> Rutkowski: *Das Charisma des Grabes*, p. 59.

<sup>245</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig KdFS Leipzig-Stadt 01760/01, KD Leipzig-Stadt. Ref. XX/1 me. Leipzig, den 09.10.87. Betr. Erfassung in der VSH der KD Leipzig-Stadt, p. 122.

<sup>246</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Gera, Abt. XX SA 0097, Übersicht zu Erscheinungsformen unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen [ohne Datum], p. 1, *Grufties*‘.

Despite the criminalising yet somewhat vague statement that ‘Nihilismus ist vorherrschend aber zum Großteil mit anarchistischen/terroristischen Auffassungen verbunden, the report<sup>247</sup> concludes that Gruftis had ‘keine klare politische Konzeption’. Hence, the ‘negative ablehnende Haltung gegenüber Staat/Gesellschaft’ was not considered political but existential by this department. While some MfS departments investigated the cause of the assumed negative attitude towards life among a part of the young East German generation, outcomes were different. The criminal police in Brandenburg rated the music as ‘eine “weiche” Musikrichtung’<sup>248</sup> and the *Ministerium des Innern*<sup>249</sup> confirmed in 1988 about the bands ‘diese Formationen keine negativ-dekadente Konzepte in Text und Musik vertreten’. Similarly, East German bands like *Eiswolf* who performed songs called ‘tot sein ist besser als leben’ were rated by HA IX/2 in Berlin<sup>250</sup> as not ‘strafrechtlich relevant’.

Whereas the files indicate that there were no grounds to criminalise and politicise Gruftis as a pluriform youth subculture, the *Ministerium des Innern*<sup>251</sup> warned about ‘die Möglichkeit der weiteren Ausprägung des irrationalistisch-pseudoreligiösen Verhaltens [sic] in Gruftigruppen’. It had thus been decided that although the political-ideological or religious meaning of Gruftis had not been determined, the term ‘irrationalistisch-pseudoreligiös’ pejoratively described the subculture as the expression of a unpredictable mood behind a highly symbolic façade.

## Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the shift which occurred in Anglo-American subculture theory during the late 1980s and 1990s, when ‘scholars moved from doing participant observation to observation of styles and the writing of grand theory’<sup>252</sup>, is partly visible to when close-reading MfS files on Punk, Post-Punk, New Romantic and Gruftis. While the MfS was most likely unaware of subculture studies in West Germany, the UK and USA, of the influential

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<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> BStU, MfS, HA IC 14164, Abschrift. K/I Brandenburg. 21.11.1986 [an] Leiter Kriminalpolizei. Information, p. 195.

<sup>249</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6162, MDI Informationen. Sonderheft 1/1988. Kriminalpolizei, pp. 18 – 19.

<sup>250</sup> BStU, MfS HA IX 9832, Hauptabteilung IX/2 Berlin, 16. Und 20. November 1987. Vorschlag zur Prüfung der Einleitung rechtlicher Maßnahmen gegen die Mitglieder der Gruppe ‚Eiswolf‘ / Rechtliche Stellungnahme, pp. 72, 80.

<sup>251</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6162, MDI Informationen. Sonderheft 1/1988. Kriminalpolizei, p. 18.

<sup>252</sup> Agnes Jasper, *The Mysts of the Gothic Underground. An Endo-Ethnographic Perspective on Gothic Subculture. Identity, Consumerism and the Gothic Aesthetic from The Inside Out* (Amsterdam: Universiteit Van Amsterdam, 2006), p. 33.

works of Stanley Cohen and Dick Hebdige, the files indicate that representatives of political, social or educational institutions and organs who studied subcultures for different reasons with the aim to determine their purpose, meaning or ideological form struggled with the variations, overlaps and contradictions they observed. The struggle was caused by the fact that youth and subcultural scenes did not stick to the rules; young people made up their own rules while they followed fashion fads without further thought, or when they attributed individual meanings to fashion styles and music genres which connected them to like-minded teenagers anywhere in the world. The generation conflict played a vital role in the gap between adults who studied and teenagers who practiced youth (sub)cultures.

The files describe the subcultural fragmentation and the loss of meaning and show how political subculture studies are complicated by this. While different MfS departments attempted to capture the subcultural style bricolage and make sense of new scenes, a grand theory was written under the name Grufti(s). Despite that many observations of Gruftis did not result in evidence of criminal activity and/or political intent, the subculture seemed far away from the possibility of becoming legitimate because the Grufti theory overruled observed differences and contradictions. Not the empirical evidence, but the theory criminalised Gruftis as a movement which transgressed the boundaries of the socially acceptable, moral and normal. Although this was not an 'Anti-Haltung' against social and political norms and rules that punk represented, it was considered an 'Anti-Haltung' against life in general. Grufti itself is a pejorative term because it focuses on an aspect related to the subculture which is associated with the societal disturbance of the Gruftis which, as the files indicate, consisted of a spectacular (life) style (shock aesthetics and death fascination). While it was determined that Gruftis were not explicitly political or not political at all, their assumed existential mood was politicised, and political definitions and interpretations of subculture and ideology varied and shifted within the MfS.

**CHAPTER 3**  
**POLITICS OF WORLD-WIDE WAVE**  
**BETWEEN MARGINAL IDENTITY AND FAN COLLECTIVITY**

**Introduction**

Long before the era of mobile phones, internet and social media, teenagers were already socialising on an international scale. Having one or two pen pals, preferably abroad, was a must-have in a teenager's life in the 1980s and 1990s. Writing letters allowed teenagers to freely express and exchange their subjective views on their daily lives, hobbies, interests and problems. Being in contact with other teenagers elsewhere broke boundaries and broadened horizons; materials from other 'subcultural worlds' could be obtained which otherwise would have remained unavailable and unknown. For a large part, youth (sub)culture is about gathering 'subcultural capital'<sup>1</sup>. This is why pen pal correspondence played a particularly important role for teenagers in the GDR. As Grufti, New Wave, and New Romantic scenes were transnational music-oriented scenes which require specific 'subcultural capital' and 'subcultural spaces'<sup>2</sup>, networking was vital, as we will see.

For East German teenagers who actively participated in a youth scene, having contacts in the West meant a chance to obtain specific objects of desire which were unavailable in the GDR. Correspondence was an efficient, and sometimes the only way of obtaining these objects. As Lange<sup>3</sup> writes in *Behind the Wall. Depeche Mode Fankultur in*

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<sup>1</sup> Sara Thornton, *Club Cultures. Music, Media, and Subcultural Capital* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1995), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Andy Bennett and Keith Kahn-Harris, 'Introduction', in *After Subculture. Critical Studies in Contemporary Youth Culture*, ed. by Andy Bennett and Keith Kahn-Harris (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmilland, 2004), pp. 1 – 18 (p. 6).

<sup>3</sup> Dennis Burmeister and Sascha Lange, *Behind The Wall. DEPECHE MODE-Fankultur In Der DDR* (Mainz: Ventil Verlag, 2018), pp. 79, 37

der DDR, the Berlin Wall did not stop youth (music) cultures from reaching the GDR, and pen pal friendships between teenagers were established on both sides of the border. East German teenagers sent requests for pen pals to West German youth pop culture magazines which were forbidden in the GDR, such as *BRAVO*, or a cousin from Cologne wrote to her same-aged cousin in Magdeburg. This way, Lange notes, young people obtained Western magazine articles and posters of their favourite bands.

In *DJ Westradio. Meine glückliche DDR-Jugend*, Lange<sup>4</sup> describes how his mother smuggled *BRAVO* into the GDR after she visited relatives in West Germany. Fans of *Depeche Mode* and *The Cure*, Lange remembers, decorated their teenager bedrooms with posters and images from *BRAVO* and traded with them at school. Posters were often photographed and copied, or drawn, because the demand was bigger than the supply. Possessing images of music idols was a matter of prestige. Lange, who describes himself as the ‘Depeche-Mode-Poster-King’ in the whole of Leipzig because he had more Depeche Mode posters on his bedroom walls than many Depeche Mode fans in the West, as he writes. In *Behind the Wall*, Lange<sup>5</sup> adds that former children’s rooms were turned into ‘Fanräume’, fan spaces. As such, young people who were fans of the bands collected and developed their own subcultural capital and spaces.

The first subchapter looks at the strategies East German teenagers used in pen pal correspondence to obtain objects of their desire, material fan capital for their private as well as shared fan spaces, and how the materials, subcultural capital and spaces relate to each other. Simultaneously, it will be analysed how, when and why youth (sub)culture is a one-way-system and when it is not, and how teenagers constructed subjective non-material subcultural capital and fan spaces in their writings, and if it can be determined whether these were based on real-life experience and/or their own imagination. Whereas fans depended on Western contacts and were recipients of material fan capital, they were also senders of their own, non-material DIY subcultural capital, as will be shown. Drawing on Bourdieu, Bonz<sup>6</sup> has noted that a ‘milieu of mutual taste’ enables actors to gain and experience subcultural capital usually as a form of resistance to the mainstream. In the GDR, there existed such a milieu consisting of fans of *Depeche Mode* and *The Cure*, who called themselves fans, (New) Wavers, New Romantics or Gruftis, and who participated in

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<sup>4</sup> Sascha Lange, *DJ Westradio. Meine Glückliche DDR-Jugend* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 2007), pp. 72, 73, 74, 77.

<sup>5</sup> Lange and Burmeister, *Behind The Wall*, p 36.

<sup>6</sup> Jochen Bonz, *Subjekte des Tracks. Ethnografie einer postmodernen / anderen Subkultur* (Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos, 2008), p.57.

(imagined) communities that created subcultural capital and space. The question is if, how, why and where certain milieus of mutual taste and interest differed or overlapped.

Youth groups, as we will see, are represented in the texts as ‘idiocultures’, to use Gary Alan Fine’s<sup>7</sup> notion for a ‘system of knowledge, beliefs, behaviors, and customs shared by members of an interacting group’. Several local ‘idiocultures’ taken together ‘are interlocked through networks of direct and indirect communication’ and form a trans-local and transnational subculture.<sup>8</sup> The different ‘idiocultures’ can differ from each other regarding subcultural capital and spaces, when, for example, some focus on experiences and moods, and others on activities and initiatives. In any case, there is sign of collective identity because the essential element of a subculture makes it different from other subcultures and creates insider-outsider divisions. A shared taste for black clothing, as Paul Hodkinson<sup>9</sup> has noted, proved to be a simple yet essential focal point of subcultural capital, material and space which connects different subjectivities, identities and meanings within an (imagined) global fan network.

Whereas teenager rooms were private fan spaces filled with material subcultural capital, there also existed public fan spaces. In principle, these public spaces could be anywhere; it could be in the streets, in a mall, a local café, a disco or a youth club. These spaces play a crucial role in the texts explored in this chapter. It will be asked if and how they are well-defined subcultural spaces or whether they are still work in progress, how they are described by the individuals in their subcultural self-representations, and how identities, ideologies, communities and meanings are constructed in the texts. The chapter asks if, how and when subjectivities related to subcultural capital and space vary, differ or overlap, and if Gothic-related scenes in the GDR offered, to quote Martin<sup>10</sup>, the choice of ‘a certain identity as a way of exteriorising their inner conflicts with society’. Which conflicts are expressed in the texts and how is identity constructed within the conflictual context; do the texts for instance construct a separate world and according self-understanding, or do the texts perhaps also indicate that, as Fulbrook<sup>11</sup> noted, it was possible to lead a perfectly ordinary life, even when Gothic-related subculture was not

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<sup>7</sup> Gary Alan Fine, ‘Small Groups and Culture Creation: The Idioculture of Little League Baseball Teams’, *American Sociological Review*, 44.5 (1979), 733-745 (p. 734).

<sup>8</sup> Fine, Gary Alan, and Kleinman, Sherryll, ‘Rethinking Subculture: An Interactionist Analysis’, *American Journal of Sociology*, 85.1 (1979). 1 – 20.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Hodkinson, *Goth: Identity, Style and Subculture* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2002).

<sup>10</sup> Sara Martin, ‘Gothic Scholars Don’t Wear Black. Gothic Studies and Gothic Subcultures’, *Gothic Studies*, 4.1 (2002), 28 – 43 (p. 40).

<sup>11</sup> Mary Fulbrook, *Ein ganz normales Leben. Alltag und Gesellschaft in der DDR*, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2008).



considered ordinary by many adults and outsiders? And in turn, it must be asked how the texts construct insider-outsider juxtapositions. Are there, for example, signs of self-marginalisation, othering, normalisation in the self-representations? How is individualism represented vs. collectivity? Are there steps towards a self-representation as participant in a subculture which can or should be socially acceptable, or do the texts represent the subculture as fundamentally isolated, or are the texts ambiguous about this? Do they exhibit a faith in the milieu and collective subcultural life?

The representations explored in this chapter are subject to their local contexts, as the texts were written by individuals who represent themselves as members of Gothic-related (imagined) communities in specific localities. Regardless of whether these existed, the argument this chapter makes is that youth (sub)culture is a social experience. In a system in which, as shown in Chapter 2, self-initiated and organised (youth) collectives were looked at with a suspicious eye, the question is if, how and when this conflict was overcome, according to the self-writings, or in other words, how the conflict between youth (sub)culture and the state is described, and which resistance and/or solution is offered. The texts this chapter analyses have in common that they represent a Gothic-related subculture as source of a hobby, passion, ideology or life philosophy, and ultimately of a new identity which, as we have seen in Chapter 1 and 2, was often problematic in the GDR. The texts show that the teenagers were self-consciously writing about something which mattered to them at the time, and that they used certain strategies to achieve their goals and share their self-made subcultural capital with peers in- and outside of the GDR. Material and non-material subcultural capital and spaces were, as the self-representations indicate, the focal points of individual and collective teenage lives at certain moments.

Whereas Chapter 1 explored the subjectivities of a real experienced existential conflict vs. a symbolic existential solution (symbolic death as escape from the doomed existence to a new (after-)life), this chapter explores the subjectivities of subcultural capital, material and space in relation to local social contexts (where individuals lived and spent their leisure time and practiced their hobbies) and collectives (where individuals formed interest and leisure groups with like-minded). To understand the state's struggle with the interpretation of the pluriform Gothic subculture, it needs to be asked if, how and why different elements of the subculture are represented differently, for instance as marginal, mysterious and embedded in secret activity, or as a normal popular culture which did not disturb or provoke, and which was local, translocal and transnational. The sources, subcultural micro-media which contain self-representations of Gothic (in the widest

sense) consulted to answer these questions, letters, statements and interviews, exemplify the heterogeneity of Gothic identity on the one hand, and the ambivalence of the conflict of Gothic in the GDR.

### I. Gothic Capital vs. Material: Teenage Sender and Recipient Strategies

Letters were the medium with which material and non-material subcultural capital could be shared transnationally. The MfS attempted to prevent materials from the West from entering the GDR, yet only a fraction of the correspondence between young people in East and West Germany was intercepted by the *Postkontrolle* department and ended up in the files as evidence, such as a letter from an East German Waver from March 1989. The anonymised author<sup>12</sup> writes: ‘Danke für Deinen Brief und für das Poster von *The Cure*. Leider habe ich gerade das Poster schon. Naja, macht aber nichts’. Band posters were objects of desire for fans of *Depeche Mode* and *The Cure* which were among the goods the *Postkontrolle* attempted to intercept because it was considered forbidden subcultural material. At the same time, teenage correspondence was also intercepted because of the content of the letters themselves, because the MfS expected that letters provided (insider) knowledge, clues or evidence regarding (forbidden) subcultural activities, participants and intents.

The letters contained in the files were considered evidence because they contain details about a subculture which, as we have seen in the previous chapter, was considered mysterious and suspicious. Three letters exemplify how two East German teenagers describe their membership in a local youth scene and global youth subculture, and that obtaining subcultural materials via a Western pen friend was not the only aim. Two letters dated April 1987 from a girl in Leipzig were addressed to her pen pal in the West German city Marburg who was acquainted with the girl’s grandmother. The letters were intercepted and filed as *Operatives Ausgangsmaterial* in a later MfS inquiry called *Hinweis “Grufti”, 28.4.88, Kontakte sog. “New Wave”* which aimed to uncover contacts between East and West Germany in the context of New Wave. On 5 April 1987, the girl<sup>13</sup> from Leipzig wrote to her pen pal that she was very thankful for her kind letter, but she was more thankful about the anticipation of receiving specific subcultural material:

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<sup>12</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfs Leipzig, KDfs Leipzig-Land 02316, BV Leipzig, KD Leipzig, Land; *Hinweis “Grufti”, 28.4.88, Kontakte sog. “New Wave”* pp. 9 – 10.

<sup>13</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfs Leipzig, KDfs Leipzig-Land 02315; *OAM “Grufti”/ Leipzig 21.4.87*, p. 4.

Du kannst Dir einfach nicht vorstellen, wie wahnsinnig ich mich gefreut habe, daß Du die 2 Bücher besorgen willst!!! Aber bitte packe sie irgendwie ein, daß sich P. nicht unbedingt anguckt, wenn sie die Bücher uns mitbringt. Wenn es möglich ist, also wenn Du die Bücher schon haben solltest, kannst Du sie ja auch meiner Oma mitgeben, sie kommt Ostern zu Euch!

Primarily interested in specific objects of desire, as the letter signifies, the East German girl depended on her pen pal's help because they were probably forbidden books in the GDR which could not be obtained from the local bookshop. While the girl emphasised in her letter<sup>14</sup> that the materials she ordered were of great value and urgency to her; 'ich brauche sie wirklich dringend', the transaction clearly depended on a specific interest, secrecy and mutual trust, as the adults were not supposed to be involved.

Two key themes and two according interests can be identified in the letter. The first regards the material subcultural capital and the second the non-material subcultural capital. What we can identify in the girl's writing is the construction of subcultural identity, community and meaning, while the self-representation is based on mystification, as the second part of the letter demonstrates. In her letter<sup>15</sup>, the girl shares a piece of news, specific subcultural capital, with her West German friend which related to the Western context as well as to her own local context: 'Zur Zeit existiert bei uns ja gar keine Sekte dieser Art. Am 1. Mai also zur Walpurgisnacht wird erst eine Sekte gegründet und bis dahin muß ich mir dann noch sehr genau überlegen, ob ich da auch eintreffe'. At the end of the 1980s, West German tabloids like *BILD* reported about the rise of youth sects in Germany and often, Gothic-related scenes and participants were considered members of such sects. This resulted in the stigmatisation and moral panics towards Gothic subculture which has been addressed in the Introduction and Chapter 1.

According to the girl, a sect was to be founded in her own locality during Walpurgis Night. For the MfS reader, the letter proved the suspicion of 'geplante Sektenbildung' as it is formulated in the case file and provided insider knowledge regarding the intent to create an equivalent of the Western sects in the GDR. The self-representation rests on the impression that the girl was an insider and possessed valuable secret information regarding a meaningful, pioneering future event. There is no mention of subculture or scene in the

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<sup>14</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfs Leipzig, KDfs Leipzig-Land 02315; OAM "Gruft"/ Leipzig 21.4.87, *Operative Auskunft der Abteilung XII – Streng geheim*. 30.4.8., *Sammel-Suchauftrag zur Überprüfung von DDR-Bürgern*, p. 15.

<sup>15</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfs Leipzig, KDfs Leipzig-Land 02315; OAM "Gruft"/ Leipzig 21.4.87, p. 4.

letter, other than the term ‘Sekte’, and we do not know why the letter was filed under the category New Wave. We also do not know if the girl considered herself a (New) Waver, yet it is a fact ‘Sektenbildung’ was often associated with Gothic subculture, and this letter exemplifies the subjectivity of subcultural capital and space in a local and transnational context. What is interesting about the letter<sup>16</sup> is that girl mystifies the subcultural capital of her own locality by suggesting that participation in the event was serious business and a rational decision to make. The promise she made to her pen pal; ‘Nach Walpurgis werde ich Dir dann genaueres über diesen Glauben und seine Gründlehren [sic] schreiben!!’ demonstrates that they did not share the same subcultural capital. We do not know whether the pen pal was a participant in a youth scene, but the impression given in the letter is that the East German girl had the expertise. What is ambivalent is that the letter suggests that the sect was a Western phenomenon, while the insider knowledge about the faith and teachings of a new secret community in the GDR was not. These terms add to sense of seriousness and authenticity of the subcultural initiative and constructs an insider-outsider juxtaposition.

We have seen in Chapter 2 why the ‘Sektenbildung’ described in the girl’s letter needed to be a secret occasion, because it would be rated as an illegal gathering, while celebrating Walpurgis Night<sup>17</sup> was also forbidden in the GDR. The description<sup>18</sup> of the locality adds a further dimension to the announced event: ‘Es ist eine Gruft (Familiengrabstätte [...]), Säрге stehen aber nicht mehr drin! Aber [...]schriften und so was sind noch zu sehen. Man kommt da auch [...] durch so ein kleines Loch rein. Diese Gruft befindet sich im Wald ca. 3 km von uns entfernt. Das ist blöd, daß man da immer so weit laufen muß’. The description of the location constructs a subcultural space which had symbolic value as a historical, natural and remote location. The emphasis on the fact that the tomb was empty could mean that the girl wanted to make it quite clear to her pen pal that the group were not interested in actual graves; a cliché that existed about Gothic scenes. Adding to the sense of mystery, the girl concludes her letter<sup>19</sup> by stating that she would have liked to show and explain everything better to her pen pal which suggests that she did not want to give away all the details, and that to really understand the ‘Glauben’, one had

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<sup>16</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig, KDfs Leipzig-Land 02315; *OAM “Gruft”/ Leipzig 21.4.87*, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/themen/reportage/walpurgisnacht-im-harz-wenn-hexen-und-teufel-kurtaxe-zahlen/9833000.html> [accessed on 21 October 2018]; ‘In der DDR, sagt Balcerowski, war das Fest verboten. Was, wenn sich aus der unkontrollierten Masse etwas Politisches entwickelt? Außerdem sollte man am 1. Mai ausgeschlafen demonstrieren zum Tag der Arbeit, Teilnahme verpflichtend.’

<sup>18</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig, KDfs Leipzig-Land 02315; *OAM “Gruft”/ Leipzig 21.4.87*, p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

to experience it. As her pen pal was not able to join, the East German girl promised to write to her again after the event and had clearly decided to participate in the event.

While specific material subcultural capital was not available in the GDR, non-material subcultural capital was, as suggested, not restricted by borders or rules. The letter is thus ambivalent because the subcultural identity and meaning constructed in the letter are both dependent on and independent from the import of Western subcultural capital.

Three weeks after her first letter to her pen pal in West Germany, on 27 April 1987, the girl<sup>20</sup> from Leipzig wrote to her again in response to a letter she had apparently received back, and the letter was intercepted again to serve as evidence of ‘Sektenbildung’. This time, the girl had clearly obtained subcultural goods: ‘Ich möchte mich zuerst einmal sehr für die Kassetten bedanken! Darüber habe ich mich wirklich riesig gefreut. Besonders habe ich mich auch gefreut, dass Depeche Mode mit drauf war. Das war ja auch meine Lieblingsgruppe’. We now know that the West German girl was also a *Depeche Mode* fan, and they might have shared the same taste for a dark outfit, but that they attributed different meanings to it. Cassette tapes with forbidden music were obviously of high value for fans, because although by that time, *Depeche Mode* was officially allowed in the GDR, only a fraction of the band’s music was available. The girl appears to have been a *Depeche Mode* fan in a past because she writes ‘war’, but she nevertheless was pleased with the cassettes.

Apparently having sparked the curiosity of her West German pen friend, the girl’s self-consciousness regarding the ‘Glauben’, the key topic of the letter, is stronger in her second letter<sup>21</sup>:

So, und jetzt noch etwas zu dem Glauben, mit dem ich mich beschäftige. Bestimmt hast Du doch schon bei Euch in irgendwelchen Zeitungen von solchen Jugendsekten gehört, die schwarze Messen durchführen, Tiere opfern und so. Ganz so extrem ist es bei uns zwar nicht, wir machen am 1. Mai (bzw. vom 30.4.-1.5. von 24:00-1:00) die Walpurgisnacht. Das ist ein Fest der Geisterbeschwörungen. In dieser Nacht wird eine neue Sekte gegründet. Die Mitglieder sprechen Formeln (man sitzt in einem magischen Kreis) und dann geht man den Bund mit Satan ein. Das Symbol für Satan ist ein Pentagramm.

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<sup>20</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfs Leipzig, KDfs Leipzig-Land 02315; OAM “Gruft”/ Leipzig 21.4.87, *Operative Auskunft der Abteilung XII – Streng geheim*. 30.4.87. *Sammel-Suchauftrag zur Überprüfung von DDR-Bürgern*, p. 14.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

The emphasis is, again, on the difference between the Western sects and black masses and the East German event which is described as a traditional Pagan feast during which a less extreme East German Satanic sect will be founded. While the 'Glauben' is relativised, the girl ambivalently represents herself as a serious follower and describes the contents of the event as serious spiritual practice and experience. The identity constructed in this letter is that of a subcultural authority connected to specific local subcultural capital and space.

The girl represents herself as an insider-expert, as someone who knew something which most others did not know and were not supposed to know. The author's words suggest that not even her West German pen pal, who, had access to media information about 'Jugendsekten' in West Germany, was informed. And hence, the East German girl was both the receiver of material subcultural capital (books) and sender of subcultural knowledge regarding a both traditional (Walpurgis Night) and new (Satanic youth sect) local subcultural event. In the girl's letter we can thus identify a 'method of creating internal hierarchies', to use Patrick J. Williams's<sup>22</sup> term, and according insider and outsider identities, communities and meanings, which are 'valued, traded, and expressed in specific situations'.

The letter is a perfect example of a subjectivity of subculture in which the letter, by mystifying as well as sharing insider knowledge and membership, constructs 'personal and social layers of subcultural identity', to quote Williams<sup>23</sup>. The personal layer regards the girl's newby position in the subculture, while the meaningful event of Walpurgis Night adds a social dimension that is, however, of subcultural value and not considered a mainstream celebration. In her self-representation, the girl raises her status and differentiates herself from others through an 'insider/outsider distinction' in which subcultural capital is both present and absent, to use the ideas of Sara Thornton and Williams.<sup>24</sup> While the absence of material is merely a practical hurdle, the presence of capital, in this case, a 'Glauben' and traditional celebration, are clearly not restricted by boundaries.

What should be pointed out is that the politics of subcultural representation in the girl's letter<sup>25</sup> are based on the emphasis of the seriousness, exclusivism/inclusivism, secrecy and authenticity of her own, local subcultural identity, community, capital and

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<sup>22</sup> Patrick J. Williams, 'Youth-Subcultural Studies: Sociological Traditions and Core Concepts,' *Sociology Compass*, 1.2 (2007), 572 – 593 (p. 587)

<sup>23</sup> Williams, 'Youth-Subcultural Studies', p. 587.

<sup>24</sup> e.g. Thornton, *Club Cultures*; Williams, 'Youth-Subcultural Studies', p. 587.

<sup>25</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfs Leipzig, KDfs Leipzig-Land 02315; OAM "Grufi"/Leipzig 21.4.87, *Operative Auskunft der Abteilung XII – Streng geheim*. 30.4.87. *Sammel-Suchauftrag zur Überprüfung von DDR-Bürgern*, p. 15.

space within the broader social context. The girl wrote: ‘Nur wer einen wirklichen Glauben hat, wird aufgenommen’ and pointed out that there were rules and methods of control attached to membership (‘das wird auch getestet’). Membership, in this depiction, was not merely based on mutual interest and trust, but on subcultural authority that guarded the norms, rules and boundaries of this specific subcultural capital. The letter’s contents, the language used, signal that the girl and her pen pal did not necessarily share the same interest, as she wrote: ‘Das ist nämlich kein sinnloser Kinderkram, wie Du bestimmt denken wirst!! Eigentlich müßtest Du das ja denken, denn wie ich das hier so schreibe!’ Emphasising the seriousness of the ‘Glauben’ more strongly, the girl seems to have expected that her pen friend might not understand or would ridicule her, and that she had to defend her subculture.

The letter is ambivalent in that the pen pal is included in part of the subcultural insider knowledge and hence informed about the secret (inner) circle, while she is also excluded from it, as the girl continued<sup>26</sup>: ‘Aber außer dem kann und darf ich das nicht noch ausführlicher erklären. Eigentlich dürfte ich überhaupt niemanden [sic] etwas darüber sagen oder schreiben. (Aber ich glaube ja, das [sic] Du den Brief niemanden [sic] zeigst. Am besten Du zerreißt den oder so, das [sic] ihn nicht jemand aus Deiner Familie in die Hände kriegt.)’. This quote suggests that the girl was either afraid or aware of the negative social (adult) response to that what mattered to her, the subculture she describes in her letter, or that she wanted to further mystify it and add to the sense of gravity. As she concluded her letter<sup>27</sup> with another rhetorical strategy which emphasises her insider knowledge, the subcultural capital itself (the ‘Glauben’), as well as the insider-outsider division: ‘Aber auch wenn ich Dir das alles erklären dürfte, könnte ich das gar nicht, denn darüber könnte man 100 Seiten schreiben, denn das ist so ein umfassendes Gebiet’.

The girl knew something her pen pal did and could not and others should not know, according to her own words. The letter<sup>28</sup> indicates that she had not received the books and while the girl repeated her request, she referred to the knowledge gap: ‘Aber wenn es Dich interessiert, dann wird es doch bei Euch sicher irgendwelche Bücher darüber geben.’<sup>29</sup> This suggests that the interest was not mutual, but that the girl’s clever strategy was to trigger

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<sup>26</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfs Leipzig, KDfs Leipzig-Land 02315; OAM “Gruft”/Leipzig 21.4.87, *Operative Auskunft der Abteilung XII – Streng geheim*. 30.4.87. *Sammel-Suchauftrag zur Überprüfung von DDR-Bürgern*, p. 15.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

her pen pal's own curiosity about the topic, because it would increase her chance of obtaining the objects of desire.

The second letter seems more distanced, afraid of consequences and/or keener to increase the sense of mystification and sensation about her own hobby or passion. As the absender response is not included in the MfS case file, we only have own subjectivity, one side of the story which tells us something about how a girl from Leipzig communicated something which mattered to her at that time and place. Whereas she was keen on obtaining certain objects, it appears that this was not the main aim, as this example has shown in which ways 'acquisition of subcultural knowledge is located "in the heads" of people'<sup>30</sup>, while it is put into words for others to read.

While the subcultural capital might have initially been inspired by images and texts from Western (micro-)media, and word of mouth, the texts construct identities with which young people identified and connected to others. Through micro-levels of communication, teenagers discussed their fandom as well as their curiosity for new (subcultural) experiences. In doing so, they not necessarily (only) exchanged knowledge and requested goods but also constructed their own realities using their experience and imagination. Whether the sect was founded or not is irrelevant for this analysis because what matters is that it was written by an individual who wanted to be a member, believer, contributor and insider within their own interpretation of a subculture. The letter holds a vital clue about the politics of representation in teenage self-writings in the context of transnational subcultures, namely an answer to the question how texts construct 'personal identity [...] to identify themselves as unique subculturalists, separate even from fellow participants'<sup>31</sup>, and how they thematise 'forbidden contents', to use Stanley Cohen's<sup>32</sup> depiction, and discuss the subcultural capital and spaces that 'carry secret meanings'.

Other self-writings show that subcultural capital can also comprise a very different form of subcultural knowledge, identity, community and meaning, namely when it consists of experiences with and responses to subcultural realities in daily life. In the example we will look at now, we can identify a very different subcultural subjectivity from the example given above. Whereas we may consider the girl's letter an example of spectacular subcultural capital because it consists of taboo contents and subversive meanings, the following letter can be considered an example of unspectacular subcultural capital relating

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<sup>30</sup> e.g. Ingold and Kurttala, 2000.

<sup>31</sup> Williams, 'Youth-Subcultural Studies', p. 586 – 587.

<sup>32</sup> Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1972), p. 163.



to participants in Gothic scenes who, as Hodkinson<sup>33</sup> writes focused on the ‘everyday practices that surround them’ and ‘elements of ordinariness to apparently spectacular identities and lifestyles’. For participants in Gothic-related scenes in the GDR, subcultural space in the public sphere posed an everyday challenge. In an intercepted letter<sup>34</sup> dated 1988 from Leipzig, a male *The Cure* fan thanks his pen pal for a *The Cure* poster and describes his subjective experience with subcultural identity, collective and space in the public sphere:

Gestern war bei uns in Leipzig ganz schon was los. An unserem Treffpunkt (Grufft’s und Punk’s) in der Passage waren wieder mal die Bullen da, die haben uns erst rausgeschmißen. Da sind wir erstmal in die Milchbar gegangen. Dann wir natürlich wieder in die Passage gegangen. Und wer dann kam das kannst Du dir ja denken, die Bullen. Die haben dann mit Geldstrafen angedroht. Dann kam noch die Feuerwehr, weils angeblich brennen sollte, da wurden wir nochmal rausgejagt. Das war gestern katastrophal! Das wars für heute. Tschüß.

The letter focuses on the negative experience of scene life in the public sphere. In contrast to the private fan space, the city center is depicted as an ‘Erfahrungsraum’, to use Peter Sloterdijk’s<sup>35</sup> notion, in which the experience is rooted in conflict which we may call a ‘Stör-Erfahrung’, to use Michaela Holdenried’s<sup>36</sup> term, because the teenagers were not free to go wherever they liked. This was a daily experience to which the boy and his peers had become used, as the letter indicates, but clearly this particular day was experienced especially negatively. At the same time, the boy emphasises in his letter that the group he was part of did not give up so quickly, and that they knew that their subcultural identity (appearance) was the reason why they kept being sent away and threatened with fines. From their point of view, the subcultural space they attempted to win was not a hidden or less frequented place as it was for some other Gothic-related scenes, but the local passage or Milchar, places which were considered normal, unspectacular teenage ‘Treffpunkte’. There is no sense of self-mystification, self-marginalisation and insiderism vs. outsiderism, nor any reference to the subculture as a spectacular social, cultural and individual

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<sup>33</sup> Hodkinson, Paul, ‘Beyond spectacular specifics in the study of youth (sub)cultures’, *Journal of Youth Studies*, 15.5 (2012), 557 – 572 (p. 568).

<sup>34</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfs Leipzig, KDfs Leipzig-Land 02316, BV Leipzig, KD Leipzig, Land; “Hinweis Gruffti”, 28.4.88, *Kontakte sog. “New Wave”*, p. 9 – 10.

<sup>35</sup> Michaela Holdenried, *Autobiographie* (Ditzingen: Reclam Verlag, 2000), p. 224 [citing Sloterdijk].

<sup>36</sup> Holdenried, *Autobiographie*, p. 32.

phenomenon. These adolescents were not (self-proclaimed) members of a secret circle, yet the negative response in their local social context turned them into public marginals and criminals.

Although the boy merely shares a simple, negative experience related to scene life in his local environment, describing the chronology of the teenagers' attempt to collectively visit specific places, the letter constructs a subcultural victim and us against them (authority) identity. For the East German subculturalist, telling his West German friend about the impossibility for him and his friends to live their teenage lives normally was clearly important because it is disturbed by local authority. The letter does not tell us much about how it affected him emotionally, other than that the 'Stör-Erfahrung' was common practice and that his West German friend was aware of his East German pen pals daily struggles ('das kannst du dir ja denken') which suggests that he shared them regularly as a form of daily update from the Punk and Gruft scene in a city in the GDR. The subcultural capital he shared with his pen pal was thus based on a negative representation of local scene gathering.

In this self-representation of subculture, it does not represent a (taboo) belief but is a teenage leisure collective which conflicts with authority. However, there was also a positive experience which the boy shared in his letter<sup>37</sup>: 'Am 26.3 gehe ich auch zu einer Fete (Grufti-, und Waverfete)'. Whereas the passage and Milchbar could not be won as subcultural space, and were a risky public space for the group, the fact that a party is mentioned shows that subcultural space existed. Crucially, the subcultural identity and capital constructed in the letter is not an individual identity, because the letter describes the daily struggle from a 'Wir' perspective. In this letter, 'subculture is a collective experience, not an individual act', to quote Jenks<sup>38</sup>. The boy does not represent himself as an authority or expert, like the girl in the first letter, but simply as one member of the local community.

## **II. Politics of Youth Representation: The Negotiation of (Sub)cultural Space**

Fan scenes and spaces formed because of the shared love for the music. Referring to Will Straw, Bennett and Kahn-Harris<sup>39</sup> write that the notion 'scene' refers to a 'located subcultural space' in which scenes 'actualise a particular state of relations between [...]

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<sup>37</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfs Leipzig, KDfs Leipzig-Land 02316, BV Leipzig, KD Leipzig, Land; "Hinweis Grufti", 28.4.88, Kontakte sog. "New Wave", p. 9 – 10.

<sup>38</sup> Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of the Social*, p. 85.

<sup>39</sup> Straw cited in Bennett and Kahn-Harris, 2004, pp. 13-14, p. 379.

social groups, as these coalesce around specific coalitions of musical style'. The physical subcultural space was very important for scenes because it meant that groups and participants from different localities could get together. Fandom, which evolved around the music and the 'Ausdruck des Zugehoerigkeitsgefuehls zur Band' by collectively wearing black clothes, as Anja,<sup>40</sup> from Zwickau, a *Depeche Mode* fanclub founder remembers, was a form of imagined community and 'hyper-real' space<sup>41</sup>, but fans also needed 'physical locations for communal dances or "parties" [...] as it presents a means of developing and reinforcing their shared virtual reality, as well as cultivating kinship with their community', as Greener and Hollands<sup>42</sup> note. As will see in this subchapter, both physical and 'virtual' (as in, imagined and existing through correspondence) 'spaces were particularly important [...] as it was from here that global connections [...] were able to be formed and maintained'.<sup>43</sup> This section looks at the strategies used in teenagers' writings to win a specific local subcultural space for their specific translocal subcultural milieu and capital.

Lipp<sup>44</sup> stresses that Punks had no chance to meet at FDJ youth clubs and similar official state-run leisure spaces and that they hence needed to create 'Freiräume'. This was different New Wave and New Romantic scenes, although frequenting public spaces remained problematic for youth groups. Organising scene gatherings was problematic in the GDR, because the MfS and police kept an eye on them and intervened, but as we have seen in the previous subchapter, not all scenes were willing to meet in hidden locations. For those who intended to participant in secret rituals, a deserted tomb in a forest was a perfect location, but for those who wanted to be seen in public wearing Gothic clothes, because they wanted to showcase 'the performed self', to use Ervin Goffmann's<sup>45</sup> term, and because that is what scenes are about, namely 'some kind of loose sense of theatricality of social situations as in "making a scene"'. The preferred place to do this was the local (youth)club or disco where fan cliques were built, as Lange<sup>46</sup> writes. Lange, who studied and interviewed (former) *Depeche Mode* fans, notes that every weekend evolved around the questions: 'Where are we going to? Where do they play Depeche Mode?'<sup>47</sup> Although

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<sup>40</sup> Burmeister and Lange, *Behind the Wall*, p. 96.

<sup>41</sup> e.g. Baudrillard, 1988, p. 182

<sup>42</sup> Tracey Greener and Robert Hollands, 'Beyond Subculture and Post-subculture? The Case of Virtual Psytrance', *Journal of Youth Studies*, 9.4 (2006), 393 – 418 (p. 405).

<sup>43</sup> Greener and Robert Hollands, 'Beyond Subculture and Post-subculture?', p. 414.

<sup>44</sup> Florian Lipp, 'Punk- und New-Wave-Bands im letzten Jahrzehnt der DDR im kultur- und sicherheitspolitischen Kontext', *Totalitarianism and Democracy*, 12.2 (2015), 225 – 248 (p. 231).

<sup>45</sup> Goffmann cited in Bennett and Kahn-Harris, 'Introduction', p. 13.

<sup>46</sup> Burmeister and Lange, *Behind The Wall*, p. 155.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

there existed several places where fans could meet, keeping subcultural space remained a challenge which required not anarchic resistance but diplomatic self-representation.

New Wavers and New Romantics who did not want to step out of society or mainstream culture but keep their subcultural capital, identity, community and space within the norms, boundaries and rules had to perform clever politics of representation, as the next example illustrates. In April 1988, participants in a local fan community in Werdau (in the Zwickau area) decided to write a letter to Eberhard Aurich, the first secretary of the *Zentralrat der FDJ* in which they formulated a specific demand regarding subcultural space: ‘Sehr geehrter Herr Aurich! Seit ca. sechs Jahren besuchen wir, Jugendliche, die sich nach jetzigen mehreren Modetrends richten, z.B. New Waves [sic] und New Romantics, die Jugendtanzveranstaltung im Tanzcasino Werdau.’<sup>48</sup> By representing themselves as ‘Jugendliche’ who followed fashion trends, the anonymous authors of the letter who call themselves ‘die Jugendlichen vom Tanzcasino Werdau’ rhetorically claims the location as their long-term leisure space; as a specific local space to which they belong.

The reason why they wrote to Aurich is explained in the next part of the letter<sup>49</sup>: ‘Diese Jugendtanzveranstaltung fand bisher sonntags in der Zeit von 16.00 Uhr bis 21.30 Uhr statt. Da die Zugverbindung nach und von Werau [sic] aus sehr günstig ist in dieser Zeit, entwickelte sich die Tanzveranstaltung sonntags zum Treffpunkt für ungefähr 300 Jugendliche, die sich für aktuelle Popmusik (die jetzt immer mehr im Jugendradio DT 64 gespielt wird) interessieren’. The *Tanzcasino* was the ‘Treffpunkt’ for a large group of adolescents who shared a music taste. The music and fandom, and thus the key element of the subcultural capital of the scenes, are normalised and legitimised in the letter, as it is emphasised that the state’s youth radio station was interested in the music too. While the scenes were not fully accepted yet, as we will see, the authors point out that their music was.

The crucial point made in the letter<sup>50</sup> is that the *Tanzcasino* was not a local but translocal subcultural space: ‘Die Jugendlichen, die diese Veranstaltung besuchen, kommen zum großen Teil aus anderen Städten, vorwiegend aus dem Bezirk, aber auch aus Leipzig, Jena und Gera’. The venue was thus of great importance for individuals and groups in other localities too which indicates that it offered a unique leisure opportunity for teenagers to which they were practically and emotionally bound. The regular ‘Tanzveranstaltung’ drew adolescents from other localities to this national ‘Treffpunkt’ and

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<sup>48</sup> BStU, MfS, BV, KMSt, KD ZW, 240, *Abschrift der Abschrift. Zwickau, den 20.04.1988*, p. 111.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

was thus a space which not only hosted but also created a translocal fan community. While the first strategy consists of self-legitimising by contextualising the *Tanzcasino* as an established center for contemporary youth pop culture, represented here by representatives of the New Wave and New Romantic fan scenes, the second strategy consists of self-legitimising by characterising the *Tanzcasino*'s leisure offer as not in conflict with the dominant society and culture. In the letter, New Wave and New Romantic are thus not represented as a deviant, subversive or non-conform subculture in terms of the basis of their own identity and community, while the suggestion that the *Tanzcasino* was their only option can be considered a form of identity construction which focuses on self-marginalisation and victimhood. While the 'Jugendliche' represented themselves as belonging to the *Tanzcasino*, this venue and event apparently formed an exception.

Both the fan scenes and dance event are depicted as socially, politically and culturally legitimate. The 'Jugendtanzveranstaltung' was not illegal and nothing unusual or spectacular. By writing to Aurich, the authors represented themselves as representatives of the fan community who aimed to achieve the opposite of a 'Jugendsekte'. The letter exemplifies a self-representational strategy which rhetorically de-marginalises that which was often marginalised, as we have seen in Chapter 2, a pluriform subcultural phenomenon which is, in contrast, described in the letter not as subculture in the way in which subculture was generally perceived by the state. With this letter, the scene representatives actively 're-describe' their youth (sub)culture in relation to a legitimate cultural space. In the second part of the letter, the authors<sup>51</sup> emphasise the reason why this specific FDJ-run club was so important to them: 'Diese Veranstaltung ist für uns zu einer Tradition geworden und ist gleichzeitig die einzige Möglichkeit, uns in dieser Anzahl zu treffen'. While performing rhetorical self-victimisation and self-defence in emphasizing that they could not make use of other leisure offers, the term 'Tradition' strengthens the argument that the teenagers belonged to the club as they were long-term visitors of the standard Sunday programme of an FDJ-controlled cultural space. In doing so, they not only emphasised that it was such a fundamental part of their (scene) lives, but also used a self-legitimising strategy by suggesting that they had never caused any trouble during this long time.

The letter is based on these two arguments; the trans-local legitimate subculture which is represented as a wide-spread popular youth culture, and a seeming national deficiency in the youth leisure offer which meant that participants travelled to the

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<sup>51</sup> BStU, MfS, BV, KMS, KD ZW, 240, *Abschrift der Abschrift. Zwickau, den 20.04.1988*, p. 111.

*Tanzcasino* from other locations. The demand appears in the last part of the letter<sup>52</sup>; the tradition was about to be disturbed by an organisational alteration: ‘Vergangenen Sonntag gab uns der Diskjockey bekannt, daß die Jugendtanzveranstaltung am Sonntag, dem 24.04.88 zum letzten Mal stattfindet. Die Begründung war, daß es eine Anweisung des Leiters des Tanzcasinos wäre. Die Jugendtanzveranstaltung würde künftig mittwochs in der Zeit von 16.00 Uhr bis 21.30 Uhr stattfinden’. The response from the visitors shows that this change distressed them: ‘Für uns war diese Maßnahme überraschend, und wir können diese nicht besuchen, da viele Jugendliche Schichtarbeiter und andere noch Schüler sind’.

The change affected them directly. The sense of victimhood is emphasised by using the key rhetorical element of their self-representation: these teenagers were normal citizens, disciplined workers and pupils with fixed life, work and leisure schedules. The authors used a strategy of moral pressure by suggesting that when their group was no longer able to attend, the event would be empty because they represented the largest visitor group. By representing themselves as a collective of conformed citizens who contributed to socialist society and culture, the authors seem to argue that the state did not enough for them, as the repetitive argument ‘Eine Ausweichmöglichkeit in eine andere Diskothek besteht für uns nicht, da man uns dort auf Grund unserer Anzahl nicht hereinlassen würde’ confirms. In this argument, it was a national and not local social problem that pupils and young workers, represented here as part of not a subcultural minority, but a youth cultural majority who rationally negotiated about their (sub)cultural space and capital. By writing a letter to the authority of the state youth organisation and presenting themselves as the reasonable, legitimate yet victimised youth party, the ‘Jugendliche’ hoped to receive political support for their (sub)cultural cause.

That this cause not only mattered to them, but that the authors wanted their argument to be a strong is visible in the last part of the letter. Their rhetorical strategy comprised another argument with which they reinforced their positive self-representation. The teenagers appear to have wanted to make it clear that they could not be fooled by the arguments provided by the local authority, and that adults were victims of the change too:

Aus Gesprächen mit dem Personal weiß ich, daß diese Maßnahme angeblich aus Umsatzgründen vom Leiter des Tanzcasinos getroffen wurde. Diese Festlegung wurde von ihm ohne genügende Absprache mit dem Personal getroffen. Das

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<sup>52</sup> BStU, MfS, BV, KMS, KD ZW, 240, *Abschrift der Abschrift. Zwickau, den 20.04.1988*, p. 111.

Personal ist darüber ebenfalls empört, da es dadurch in seiner Freizeit eingeschränkt wird, weil sonntags für die Jugendtanzveranstaltung eine Nachtveranstaltung ab 18 Jahre von 20.00 Uhr bis 3.00 Uhr durchgeführt werden soll. Andere Gründe, außer die angeblichen Umsatzmöglichkeiten, sind uns nicht bekannt.<sup>53</sup>

In this part of the letter, the voice has oddly shifted to an 'Ich' instead of a 'Wir'. The 'Ich' argues as the informed, solidary subject who discusses specific details of the dispute. The staff at the club, it is argued, were just as clueless and disadvantaged by the seemingly irrational decision from a higher authority. Rhetorically, the injured party in the dispute expanded the youth scenes, and because it included *FDJ* (club) officials, its legitimate status was emphasised again. It also suggests that the author(s) had done their research, and were not impressed by the result, as the emotional negotiational and self-apologising tone of the first part of the letter<sup>54</sup> is replaced by a rationalised questioning of the impact of the change. The phrase 'Von seiten des Personals gibt es gegen uns keine Einwände, da es noch keine nennenswerten Konflikte gab, die die Ordnung und Sicherheit gefährdet hätten' confirms the positive self-representation of well-behaved music fans, while it could mean that the author(s) believed that they were unfairly, for reasons not mentioned here yet touched upon in Chapter 2, *persona non grata* at the club. What is very interesting about this part of the letter is that it mimics official state rhetoric with which scenes and participants were criminalised in state documents.

The letter from 'Jugendliche' concludes with a clearly formulated demand for support and official legitimisation of their subcultural capital. Here, the authors again use the rhetorical strategy of moral pressure to appeal to the sense of responsibility of the highest *FDJ* authority:

Wir sind dem Rat der Stadt Werdau und der Leitung des Tanzcasinos dankbar, daß wir uns bis jetzt zum dortigen Jugendtanz treffen durften. Deshalb möchten wir Sie bitten, sich unseres Problems anzunehmen, da es für uns aus eigenen Kräften nicht lösbar ist. Zugefügt eine Liste der von dieser Maßnahme betroffene Jugendlichen, die den hier erörterten Sachverhalt ebenfalls vertreten. Hochachtungsvoll die Jugendlichen vom Tanzcasino Werdau.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> BStU, MfS, BV, KMSt, KD ZW, 240, *Abschrift der Abschrift. Zwickau, den 20.04.1988*, p. 111.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 111 – 112.

While 'Ich' has changed to 'Wir' again, the politics of representation we can identify in this last part of the letter comprises a humble and grateful self-representation on the one hand, and a self-conscious, victimised self-representation ('Betroffene') on the other hand. 'Jugendliche' were not able to solve this conflict themselves, yet were willing to communicate, cooperate and negotiate. Hoping to receive Aurich's sympathy, the authors use the term 'hochachtungsvoll' to emphasise their social status as citizens who follow the rules and respect authority. Their fandom and leisure practice did thus not clash with state policies but is represented as a positive contribution. The mentioned list of names confirms that these adolescents had nothing to hide, and their argument hence puts rhetorical pressure on the reader because the negotiators expect the same cooperation and transparency from local and national authority responsible for the well-being of youth.

In the letter, we can identify a parallel with an analysis of East German letters to television programmes which express critique and demands. Fulbrook argues as follows:

citizens of the GDR came increasingly to know what rhetoric to use, and what appeals to make to official ideals, in order to achieve maximum effect; in short, they learnt how to deploy a particular form of discourse in pursuit of their ends. This may not have been a question of genuine internalisation of 'official-speak', but rather one of (metaphorical) bilingualism, or a capacity to play the system in a manner appropriate to achieving certain aims. [...] The most successful [letter] would begin by establishing the letter writer's own credentials as a worthy and committed member of socialist society, sharing in a broad consensus about wider ideals and goals. [...] thus, the citizen, having first located him- or herself as a fully committed member of GDR society, was in effect threatening to withdraw some or indeed all of that commitment.<sup>56</sup>

The different letters show that teenagers who participated in subcultures in the GDR often represent themselves as 'marginalized Objects' who were not let into public spaces like the 'privileged Subjects' to quote Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urla.<sup>57</sup> Yet the 'Jugendlichen vom Tanzcasino' indeed followed 'the rules of the Socialist game', participating in

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<sup>56</sup> Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State, East German Society from Hitler to Honecker*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2005, p. 283.

<sup>57</sup> Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urla (eds.), *Deviant Bodies. Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 4.



‘microstructures [...] while at the same time pursuing their own individual ends’.<sup>58</sup> Writing offered an opportunity to young East Germans to describe themselves as privileged subcultural members for whom the rules regarding subcultural capital and spaces were limiting, or to redescribe themselves as ‘privileged Subjects’ in society with a right to live their subculture. The letters analysed in this subchapter illustrate that subculture was represented in two conflicting ways; as ‘the tendency to contravene, or transgress [which] is on occasion exercised so that the motivation of the conduct can no longer be resolved or integrated within the known dominant system of value-orientations’, as Jenks<sup>59</sup> writes about subcultures, and as ‘cultural insubordination’ to the ‘parent culture’, in William Osgerby’s words<sup>60</sup>. But Gothic-related scenes like New Wave and New Romantic could also be represented as legitimate subcultures or not as subculture in the conflictual sense, because in the end, participants were always participants in East German society.

### III. ‘Depeche Mode Fans Aller Länder Vereinigt Euch’: The Fan Network

The writings analysed in the previous subchapter construct subcultural identity, community and non-material subcultural capital while they refer to actual hurdles in the obtaining of material subcultural capital and subcultural space. They are subjective definitions, interpretations and expressions of what the subculture meant symbolically and practically to the individual writer of the text, and in which ways it mattered in their social contexts. A key element in the texts is the subcultural authority, a gate-keeping function, over subcultural capital and space. Fandom, as we have seen in the previous subchapter and will be further explored in this subchapter, created physical and non-physical spaces. The crucial argument of this subchapter is that the same rhetoric was used in the self-representation of subculture regarding the communication, regulation and organisation of subcultural capital, community, identity and space.

In 1985, radio station *DT64* played *Depeche Mode* for the first time during a new show called *Electronics* which focused on different electronic music genres. It featured the *Depeche Mode* song of the week, because the DJ acknowledged that ‘es bezüglich Depeche Mode ein unglaublich großes Fanpotenzial unter den Hörern gab’, as Lange<sup>61</sup> writes. Lange

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<sup>58</sup> Mary Fulbrook, *The People’s State. East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 292.

<sup>59</sup> Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of the Social*, p.89.

<sup>60</sup> William Osgerby, ‘Subcultures, Popular Music and Social Change: Theories, Issues and Debates’, *The Subcultures Network* (ed.), *Subcultures, Popular Music and Social Change* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), p. 10.

<sup>61</sup> Burmeister and Lange, *Behind the Wall*, pp. 69, 70 – 71.

notes<sup>62</sup> that the band gained many more fans in the GDR after *Depeche Mode*'s fifth studio album *Black Celebration* was released in March 1986 by state-owned record company *Amiga*. While *BRAVO* delivered *Depeche Mode* posters, radio and some discos and clubs in the GDR delivered the music, but for some fans, Lange states, 'Zugehörigkeit zu einer Jugendkultur, [...] Anerkennung in einer Clique und die Bewunderung des eigenen Outfits durch andere im öffentlichen Raum' was much more important than that. According to Lange<sup>63</sup>, the long wait for new *Depeche Mode* releases in the GDR meant that 'man sich länger und intensiver mit der wenigen vorhandenen Musik beschäftigte und dadurch tiefer in den Kosmos einer Band, eines Albums eintauchte'. The sixth album *Music for The Masses* released in September 1987 finally sparked a real *Depeche Mode* fan hype in the GDR. The difference between *The Cure* and *Depeche Mode* fans, according to Lange<sup>64</sup>, was that the *Depeche Mode* fan community was much bigger and more organised. The *Depeche Mode* 'Sonderkonzert' in East Berlin during their *Tour for The Masses* on 7 March 1988 was held as a 'Geburtstagskonzert der FDJ'. Lange<sup>65</sup> writes that the concert gave the fan community an enormous boost, as the *Depeche Mode* fan clubs, of which there existed many in the GDR between 1988 and 1990 and which formed a 'DDR-Fanclub-Netzwerk'. They, Lange<sup>66</sup> adds, not only communicated with each other, but also sent letters to the band in London and felt that they had been acknowledged as part of the worldwide fan network.<sup>67</sup>

Like pen pal correspondence, as we have seen, fan networking was a crucial aspect of fandom for practical reasons, but also because fan club owners seemed sincerely interested in expanding the network beyond the GDR's borders. In the GDR, local fan groups grew into trans-local fan network which turned the country into a national fan space. Lange explains why:

viele dieser Depeche Mode-Fancliquen stellten mit der Zeit fest, dass es notwendig war, sich zu vernetzen, um an die gesuchten Musikaufnahmen zu kommen – und vor allem, um Partys zu veranstalten. Oder wenigstens zu wissen, wo eine stattfand. Da schon kaum jemand auf ein Konzert kam und in den Discos die obligatorische Depeche Mode-Songrunde viel zu schnell zu Ende war, brauchte es Partys, auf

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<sup>62</sup> Burmeister and Lange, *Behind The Wall*, p. 89.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* p. 90.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 119 – 120.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

denen abendfuellend Depeche Mode gespielt wurde. [...] Aus vielen Fancliquen wurden so mit der Zeit Fanclubs.<sup>68</sup>

Teenagers met at clubs and found that they were a majority, like at the *Tanzcasino* in Werdau, because everyone who lived close enough would gather at clubs where the favourite music of the majority was played at these public spaces.<sup>69</sup> The foundation of a fan club was a way of organising visitors from different localities. But it was not only a practical matter, it also had a high symbolic value: ‘Mit Gründung eines Fanclubs wollte man die Ernsthaftigkeit seiner Liebe zur Band demonstrieren und eine geradezu elitäre Nische zwischen all den andern Jugendgruppen und -kulturen bilden. Viele nahmen der Sache wirklich sehr, sehr Ernst und gingen mit großem Enthusiasmus an die Arbeit’<sup>70</sup>. As we will see, this was indeed the case, while the non-material subcultural capital created in fan club writings alternated between spectacular and non-spectacular physical and non-physical fans and spaces.

*Depeche Mode* fan scenes and clubs can be seen as idiocultures because the ‘members of an interacting group’ indeed shared ‘a system of knowledge, beliefs, behaviors and customs’, and were part of ‘a larger set of idiocultures that are interlocked through networks of direct and indirect communication’<sup>71</sup>. They were also that which Gary Alan Fine and Sherryl Kleinman<sup>72</sup> have described as ‘trans-local subcultures’ which function as ‘networks of local idiocultural groups that are interlocked through the distribution of music, traveling groups [...], and conventions and festivals’. The fan clubs consisted of ‘subcultural entrepreneurs’, to use Jasper’s<sup>73</sup> term, who were ‘actively involved in producing the subculture’ in the GDR. The physical youth club on the other hand offers a space in which, to use Bonz’s<sup>74</sup> notion, ‘Subkulturpositionen’ could be taken, with which ‘alternative forms of collective life’, to quote Jenks<sup>75</sup>, could be put into practice in order to ‘create new bonds and relationships in society and between different societies’.

The fan club was a practical and symbolic strategy to obtain the youth (sub)cultural capital of desire, while it also created (new) youth (sub)cultural capital; it constructed fan

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<sup>68</sup> Burmeister and Lange, *Behind the Wall*, p. 160.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>71</sup> Fine, and Kleinman, ‘Rethinking Subculture’.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Agnes Jasper, *The Mysts of the Gothic Underground. An Endo-Ethnographic Perspective on Gothic Subculture. Identity, Consumerism and the Gothic Aesthetic From The Inside Out* (Amsterdam: Universiteit Van Amsterdam, 2006).

<sup>74</sup> Bonz, *Subjekte des Tracks*, p. 151.

<sup>75</sup> Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of the Social*, p. 135.

identity, ideology and community. For collective fandom, the fan club was the ultimate tool with which fan scenes could exist and expand within and beyond the GDR, as we will see. In creating fan club rules, values, manifestos, letters and fanzines, an identifiable fan scene emerged which did not just exist on paper. The next example perfectly demonstrates how. What is crucial to note here is that the fan club self-representation is ambivalent. Fan ideology and imagined fandom or fan space are similar to the representation of a ‘secret society or ‘Glauben’ and they used strategies of authority, insiderism, authenticity and self-empowerment. The representation of fan activity in the public, physical space, on the other hand deploys a strategy of self-legitimation and de-marginalisation. It could be seen as a response to victimhood and marginalisation, and a way of overcoming the practical and symbolic hurdles for East German fans in the receipt and transmission of youth (sub)cultural capital.

Similar to pen pal correspondence, *Depeche Mode* fan clubs wrote to fan clubs in West Germany with the aim of obtaining material subcultural capital and to send non-material subcultural capital, that is, to inform West German fans about the existence of East German fans. These letters were sometimes intercepted by the MfS and considered hostile because of the East-West connection. A fan club in Weißenfels in Saxony-Anhalt called *Black Wings* had written a letter to a club in Düsseldorf. The letter<sup>76</sup>, starts with a somewhat apologetic, humble introduction: ‘Es schreibt Dir ein Depeche Mode Fan-Club aus der DDR. Wir hoffen das Dich das nicht weiter stört’, exemplifies how an East German fan club presented itself to the non-East German reader. The purpose was simple: ‘Wir schreiben Dir aus dem Grund, daß wir auch Kontakt im Ausland suchen’. The expression ‘wir auch’ suggests that fan clubs in the West sought contacts abroad, for instance by advertising in *BRAVO*. Perhaps the owners of *Black Wings* assumed that the West German club had not expected to receive East German responses.

Nevertheless, the owners wanted to make it quite clear that they were not a new club and hence not a mere copycat: ‘Unser Fan-Club besteht aus 20 Mitgliedern, im Alter zwischen 16 – 22 Jahren. Uns gibt es seit ca. 2 Jahren’. The real purpose of the letter becomes clear after this introduction: ‘Du kannst Dir vielleicht vorstellen wie schwer es ist bei uns an neustes Material heranzukommen. Obwohl wir die LP’S, Singles, Maxi-Singles spätestens 2 – 3 Wochen nach der Veröffentlichung in der Bundesrepublik, erhalten. Aber an schriftliches Material von Zeitschriften u.a. ist nur sehr schwer heranzukommen.

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<sup>76</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle, KD Weißenfels 459, Original des Briefes Depeche-Mode-Fanclub “Black Wings” nach Düsseldorf, p. 10.

Vielleicht könntet Ihr uns mal etwas zukommen lassen'. The letter<sup>77</sup> perfectly exemplifies that obtaining material was a main aim of fan correspondence, especially magazines. As noted, music was available (albeit with a small delay) in the GDR, as by 1988, *Depeche Mode* was officially accepted, and some albums were released under *AMIGA* licence.

However, the communication was, again, not a one-way-system. The East German fan club owners stated proudly that 'bei uns im Land gibt es ungefähr 20 Fan-Clubs,' to point out that *Depeche Mode* fandom was no less thriving and dedicated in East Germany, despite the practical material hurdles of being a *Depeche Mode* fan in the GDR. The letter suggests that the author is writing to a West German counterpart on behalf of all East German fans. This can be seen as a way of pointing out that the East German fan network was well-organised, authentic and committed. The author<sup>78</sup> clearly expected that it was not yet known in the West that this fan community existed, and they were obviously looking for transnational contacts to make a change: 'Du siehst auch hier erfreut sich Depeche Mode großer Beliebtheit. Wir hoffen doch das Du uns antwortest, bitte möglichst schnell. Viele Grüße, Depeche Mode FC "Black Wings" aus Weißenfels. Tschüß'.

The fan club owner/founder and member had a certain responsibility towards the collective and the shared interest. This representation of the fan club fits into the FDJ's<sup>79</sup> statement to youth from 1983 that 'this [...] is the way to give life a higher meaning, to become active for personal happiness and the happiness of everyone'. As a symbolic or imagined space, the fan club brought different people together who shared a love for, in this case, *Depeche Mode*. Like the 'Jugendsekte', the fan club is based on inclusiveness/exclusiveness, secrecy and authority. Added to this, however, is a form of youth (sub)cultural politics, the 'Fanclubarbeit' which meant that actual knowledge, members and activities had to be managed. On the one side, the fan club is secret too, because information is insider-/member-only. Teenagers, *Depeche Mode* fans, could only join when they met certain expectations and fulfilled specific requirements. As Lange writes<sup>80</sup>, 'neue Mitglieder mussten eine Art Wissenstest ueber Depeche Mode als Aufnahmeprüfung absolvieren, damit nur echte Fans hinzukamen'. Like the secret club, the *Depeche Mode* fan club also belonged to a transnational youth culture. But as will be

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<sup>77</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle, KD Weißenfels 459, *Original des Briefes Depeche-Mode-Fanclub "Black Wings" nach Düsseldorf*, p. 10.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Gallinat, Anselma, 'A ritual middle ground? Personhood, ideology and resistance in East Germany', *Social Anthropology*, 13.3 (2005), 291-305 (p. 291) [Quote from the *Zentraler Ausschuß* (East Berlin: Verlag Neues Leben, 1983), p. 260].

<sup>80</sup> Burmeister and Lange, *Behind the Wall*, p. 160.

shown, the East German versions were based on subjective teenage views in which the local meets the 'global'.

The *Depeche Mode* fan club offered a strategy for East German teenagers to articulate their interests, desires and problems within an organisational structure, as the club offered them a status of authority and semi-professionalism. The club was, of course, not just secret, it also held a public, visible function towards other clubs and fans elsewhere. The outwards image of the club was hence important, but it was to be controlled efficiently. As the founder<sup>81</sup> of a fan club called *Everlasting Memory Initiation "for the Masses"* (Annaberg) remembers: 'Der Hauptbestandteil des Fanlebens war ja eigentlich, überhaupt an Musik zu kommen, den? du konntest ja nichts kaufen. [...] wir wollten eine Party machen, das war [...] so eine Antriebsfeder. Es war wichtig, eine Party zu machen oder zu wissen wo eine ist, wo wirklich nur Depeche Mode kommt und nichts anders'. Hence, for this fan club, the focus was on the music and the 'Fanclubarbeit' was practical to ensure leisure activity which fully responded to the fan's interests. The fan club also had its own fanzine.<sup>82</sup>

For a fan club called *The Great Fans* (Zwickau), the 'Fanclubarbeit' was not only a way of achieving this goal, but also a strategy with which to give 'dem Ganzen auch irgendwie einen "offiziellen" Rahmen'. The reason for this, the founder<sup>83</sup> remembers, was not only practical, but also symbolic: 'Bis dahin waren wir einfach nur eine kleine Gruppe von eng befreundeten Depeche Mode-Fans. Mit einem Fanclub war manifestiert, dass wir es auch wirklich Ernst meinen'. Lange writes that the club leader of a youth club called *Vaterland* enabled the fan club to organise a 'Fanparty' there, because he had noticed how big the *Depeche Mode* fan community in the GDR had grown since the mid-1980s. And indeed, a fan party called *People Are People* which was held on 9 June 1989 drew a large audience: 'Aus der ganzen DDR reisten dafuer Fanclubs an'.<sup>84</sup> In Karl-Marx Stadt, a fan club existed called *Nju Moud* which had 220 members of which some were from abroad.<sup>85</sup> A fan club in Dresden was called *New Life*. The founders<sup>86</sup> remember that they wanted to meet like-minded people, listen to music intensively, communicate with other fans and fan clubs and go to parties. Similarly, the fan club *Black People*, also from Dresden, was preoccupied with parties.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Burmeister and Lange, *Behind the Wall*, p. 169.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.

The next part of this subchapter focuses on the fan club *Everlasting Memory Initiation* as this fan club from a relatively small town in Saxony perfectly exemplifies how the owners/founders performed subcultural politics to represent the club as serious, disciplined and semi-professional. The fan club was founded in 1989 and appears in the MfS files in the form of a document.<sup>88</sup> This so-called ‘Statut’ contains a set of self-representational elements and club rules. The purpose of the fan club is explained: ‘Um Veranstaltungen durchführen zu können, ist ein Beitrag nach folgendem Grundsatz bis zum 15. des Monates abzurechnen: Gruppe 1 (Schüler), 2 M/Monat; Gruppe 2 (Lehrlinge): 3 M/Monat; Gruppe 3 (Vollverdiener) 5M/Monat.’<sup>89</sup> The statute<sup>90</sup> represents the club founders/owners as transnational networkers: ‘Wir sind bestrebt mit allen Depeche-Mode-Fans zusammenzuarbeiten. Unser Motto lautet: *Depeche-Mode-Fans – Aller Länder vereinigt euch*’. What is particularly interesting here is that the motto mimics the famous Marxist slogan. Although we do not know whether the *Depeche Mode* fans meant this as a humorous or cynical reference, the statute gives the impression that the club founders were very serious about their self-proclaimed aim to bond with *Depeche Mode* fans anywhere in the world and represents the fan community as a global fan space which, however, does not let outsiders in. The statute constructs a fan ideology with rules for subcultural membership which entails, to quote Dunja Brill<sup>91</sup>, a ‘discriminating between social groups and measuring cultural worth, which is based on drawing distinctions between “us” and “them”’. The distinction is not only based on real fandom as requirement for membership but also on ten phrases (like there were also ten socialist commandments) which have a remarkably strict, formal tone, and state exactly what club members were allowed and not allowed to do. The first phrase<sup>92</sup> captures the club’s self-understanding: ‘Wir sind eine Gruppe von Depeche Mode – Fans, die sich zusammengetan haben, um sich gegenseitig zu helfen und ihre Erfahrungen auszutauschen’. The self-representation is collective and emphasises solidarity and the exchange of non-material subcultural capital (‘Erfahrungen’. The statement indicates that the founders hoped to obtain mutual support for their mutual

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<sup>88</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, KD Zwickau 240, 1. Band “*Bearbeitung von jugendlichen Gruppierungen im operativen Material “Grufti” 1984 – 1989, KD Annaberg, 11.8.89. Eine geplante Veranstaltung des “Depeche-Mode-Fan-Clubs” Annaberg am 23.08.1989 im Jugendclub “Ernst Hübler”*”, p. 6.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Dunja Brill, *Goth Culture. Gender, Sexuality and Style* (Oxford: Berg, 2008), p. 27.

<sup>92</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, KD Zwickau 240, 1. Band “*Bearbeitung von jugendlichen Gruppierungen im operativen Material “Grufti” 1984 – 1989, KD Annaberg, 11.8.89. Eine geplante Veranstaltung des “Depeche-Mode-Fan-Clubs” Annaberg am 23.08.1989 im Jugendclub “Ernst Hübler”*”, p. 8.

interest. It might be that they thought this would help the marginalised scene(s) and fans, but it could also simply be that, like any type of social organisation, and especially the organisation of events, depended on collectivity.

The second phrase<sup>93</sup> formulates the club rule for membership: ‘Jeder, der sich mit der Musik von Depeche Mode identifiziert und mindestens das Alter von 15 Jahren erreicht hat, kann Mitglied werden’. This statement signifies that the focus of the community was on the music, and that, for the founders, being a *Depeche Mode* fan meant ‘identifying’ with their music, which is a stronger term than, for instance, ‘liking’ or ‘enjoying’ the music. Identification with the fan community is based on a certain expectation of fandom. Hence also making a distinction between ‘real’ fans and others, membership was hence granted to those who the club founders found to be real fans, but it is not noted how this proclaimed authenticity was to be tested.

The third, practical rule<sup>94</sup>, ‘Um Veranstaltungen durchführen zu können ist ein Beitrag [...] abzurechnen,’ signals that club membership comprised financial commitment which enabled collective scene activity. The fourth rule, ‘Jeder, der unser Mitglied wird, hat sich dem Statut und den anderen Mitgliedern anzugliedern, auf Verstöße kann sofortiger Ausschluß erfolgen’, points out in a formal tone that the club rules were serious and to be followed strictly by members, which emphasises that joining the club meant commitment. This likely had much to do with the need for secrecy which depended on the members, and which is formulated concretely in the fifth rule that states ‘unsere Arbeit bleibt vor der Öffentlichkeit verschlossen’, and that ‘die Informationen erfolgen mündlich von Mitglied zu Mitglied oder schriftlich in verschlossenen Briefen’. Hence, members had to stick to certain strategies to guarantee secrecy.

The sixth rule, ‘Wir wollen uns alle mindestens einmal im Monat treffen’, suggests that active, regular, face-to-face scene life was desired. The seventh rule mentions the uniform of the collective: ‘Als Zeichen der Zugehörigkeit ist bei gemeinsamen Treffen oder Veranstaltungen das Tragen von schwarzer Kleidung angebracht’. The formal tone of the phrase again indicates that the club founders wanted to be taken seriously, as the normative term ‘angebracht’ suggests that subcultural membership needed to be visible and that this dresscode was obligatory because it expressed ‘Zugehörigkeit’ or collective identity which was clearly considered of high importance. Interestingly, however, this

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<sup>93</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, KD Zwickau 240, 1. Band “*Bearbeitung von jugendlichen Gruppierungen im operativen Material “Grufiti” 1984 – 1989, KD Annaberg, 11.8.89. Eine geplante Veranstaltung des “Depeche-Mode-Fan-Clubs” Annaberg am 23.08.1989 im Jugendclub “Ernst Hübler”*”, p. 8.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.



contradicts the secrecy as a large group dressed in black drew public attention. On the other hand, as fan meetings and events were member-only, it could be that the aim was to meet in a space which was private enough for this not to be an issue, although the photos in Lange's *Behind the Wall* illustrate that the black dress was not put on or worn inside the club only.

The eighth phrase repeats the fan club's motto *Depeche Mode Fans aller Länder vereinigt Euch*,<sup>95</sup> which suggests that a world-wide *Depeche Mode* fan network started with local, small-scale 'idiocultures' like a fan club in a relatively small town in the GDR. The idea of a 'global' fan community and of active cooperation is an elementary part of the fan ideology which symbolically places the local 'idioculture' in the wider (sub)cultural network. Symbolically, the Annaberg fan club transgressed the boundaries of the GDR, by, ironically, borrowing the Marxist motto and referring to the communist idea of 'Völkerfreundschaft'. Indeed, the fans were part of the transnational youth pop culture, and in spirit connected to others wherever they were located. The network was, however, not just symbolic but also real. The self-representation of the Annaberg fan club as a micro-network in the macro-network is based on the emphasis that fan membership means binding member commitment, by stating in the ninth rule that 'Eintritts- sowie Austrittserklärungen sowie Entschuldigungen bei Veranstaltungen sind schriftlich abzugeben. Urlaubstermine sind ebenfalls schriftlich mitzuteilen um die Fanclubarbeit besser koordinieren zu können'. This is similar to the tenth rule: 'Die ausgegebenen Clubkarten sind bei sich zu führen'<sup>96</sup>. Both phrases indicate that being a fan and a member was not enough; in order to actively participate in collective fan life, one was expected to pay one's fees in time, attend regular meetings, and follow practical-formal rules and norms, such as strictly confidential communication and obligatory uniform. The fan club founders represented the club as a semi-professional and disciplined youth organisation which did not take any chances and strived for real results by organising and controlling fandom.

The Annaberg fan club put its ambition into practice, which is probably why the Mfs was interested in finding out more about a planned event by the Annaberg fan club which was to take place on 23 August 1989 in youth club.<sup>97</sup> The event, a highlight in East

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<sup>95</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, KD Zwickau 240, 1. Band "Bearbeitung von jugendlichen Gruppierungen im operativen Material "Grufti" 1984 – 1989, KD Annaberg, 11.8.89. Eine geplante Veranstaltung des "Depeche-Mode-Fan-Clubs" Annaberg am 23.08.1989 im Jugendclub "Ernst Hübler", p. 8.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

German *Depeche Mode* fandom, is also described in Lange's book. According to Lange, the local *FDJ* functionary helped the teenagers to rent a space. Ronny Laudel's recollection of the event indicates that secrecy was not the aim, but in contrast: 'Über die fest installierten Lautsprecher am Markt haben wir Depeche Mode laufen lassen [...]. Wir wollten ja geballt auftreten und wahrgenommen werden [...] also die ganze schwarze Masse ist durch Annaberg. Das wollten wir unbedingt haben, dass alle uns sehen'<sup>98</sup>. According to Laudel, the event was a huge success and made the fan club known among the whole East German fan scene. Obviously, the rule in the statute that 'unsere Arbeit bleibt vor der Öffentlichkeit verschlossen'<sup>99</sup>, was broken here, and instead the fan club exposed itself to the local public. It also made its intentions quite clear to local *FDJ*, but eventually, police and MfS functionaries were aware of the event and involved too. It thus seems that the fan club represented a space with confidential subcultural capital which was closed to teenagers who were considered not fan and not committed enough, whereas the members who considered themselves real fans wanted the world to know about it. Partly because of this, the party became the target of the MfS, as will be shown in Chapter 4.

Similar to the new wavers and new romantics in Werdau, the Annaberg fan club founders communicated with the *FDJ* (this will be further explained in Chapter 4) with the aim of using physical youth (sub)cultural space for collective leisure activity. Material subcultural capital, as we have seen, such as posters, music tapes or records and locations were hard to obtain, but non-material subcultural capital, fan ideology, consisting of meanings and emotions attached to music and fan friendships, were in the minds of the teenagers, they were constantly (re-)created and communicated. Teenagers shared a love for the music, shared specific values and norms regarding what *Depeche Mode* fandom meant to them. Whereas the fan ideology was considered members-only, identity and community were deliberately made visible to the public. They were indeed, as the Annaberg example shows, making a scene.

Founding a fan club expressed faith in collective life and commitment to the fan community on a practical level (financial support, club cards, black 'uniform'), and on an affective and moral level (promise of secrecy, sticking to the rules, genuinely sharing the 'ideology'). Those who wrote the rules decided what a 'real' fan felt and looked like, what was wrong and right fan and member behaviour, they decided who was granted

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<sup>98</sup> Burmeister and Lange, *Behind the Wall*, p. 170.

<sup>99</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, KD Zwickau 240, 1. Band 'Bearbeitung von jugendlichen Gruppierungen im operativen Material ,Grufti' 1984 – 1989, KD Annaberg, 11.8.89. Eine geplante Veranstaltung des ,Depeche-Mode-Fan-Clubs' Annaberg am 23.08.1989 im Jugendclub ,Ernst Hübler', p. 8.

‘Zugehörigkeit’. In pre-internet times, the idea of a worldwide *Depeche Mode* network may have seemed utopian, but on local levels, fan clubs organised meetings which were in spirit part of the worldwide milieu of mutual interest, the band and music, while real efforts were made to communicate with fans abroad. When they were not allowed into youth clubs, they formed their own clubs and events which only comprised the subcultural capital of their desire. While Hodkinson<sup>100</sup> describes subculture as a ‘grassroots cultural challenge to hegemony through the [...] development of subversive meanings and the winning of space’, fan clubs can be considered such grassroots which won space by representing themselves not as a marginal and subversive, but as a disciplined idiocultural collective.

#### **IV. ‘Schwarze Bürger’: Goth Citizenship Between Stereotype & Self-Definition**

In April 1989, West German newspaper *Der Tagesspiegel* published an item about Gruftis in the GDR which states that the subculture had arrived in the ostbloc several years later than the West and that the trend had died there, while Gruftis were convicted in the GDR for committing vandalism at cemeteries.<sup>101</sup> Such negative media representations of Gruftis made that other adolescents who dressed in black did not want to be associated with Gruftis. Lange<sup>102</sup> writes about this:

Wir separierten uns aber gleichzeitig entschieden von den duster-traurigen “Gruftis”, die noch schwärzer angezogen und geschminkt waren und noch deprimierter schauten als wir. In einer Disco sagte mal ein 14jähriger zu mir: “Ich bin Grufti, und deshalb lache ich nie.” Das fand ich lächerlich. [...] Ausserdem erschienen uns nächtliche Besuche von Friedhöfen und das Zelebrieren okkultur Rituale nicht attraktiv. Das war uns zu krass. Und mit dem Satanskult, den einige Gruftis als Ersatzreligion für sich annahmen, hatte ich aufgrund meiner christlichen Sozialisation sowieso entschiedene Probleme.

Lange’s quote exemplifies the problematic social status of the Gothic-related scene labelled as Grufti(s), as already discussed in the Introduction and in Chapter 2. This section analyses

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<sup>100</sup> Hodkinson, ‘Beyond spectacular specifics’, p. 561.

<sup>101</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 476, *Der Tagesspiegel*, 11.04.89, [copy of a newspaper article obtained from the Mfs archive].

<sup>102</sup> Lange, *DJ Westradio*, p. 90.

texts which offers insights into the perspectives of participants in Gothic subculture on this topic, and how they construct identity, community and subcultural capital. As we will see, victimhood is a key aspect in the self-understanding of those who, at the time, considered themselves part of this marginalised subcultural subscene and explores how they discuss the spectacularity of the Gothic styles in relation to their social identity and context.

The only known interviews with Gruftis appeared in a DEFA film titled *Unsere Kinder* which was recorded in December 1988 and released in 1989. The interviews exemplify how a few teenagers from East Berlin viewed themselves and the subculture they felt part of, and which subjectivities they express regarding subcultural capital and space in the context of dominant society and politics. Filmmaker Roland Steiner decided to make a documentary about skinhead culture in the GDR to investigate the problem because he felt it was not dealt with properly by the authorities and the public. According to the DEFA website<sup>103</sup>, the film shows young people who belong to the ‘Randgruppe’ in the GDR. Yet with his film, Steiner aimed to spark a societal debate about the so-called ‘Randgruppe’. Although he had not planned to interview Gruftis, he decided that all youth cultural phenomena in the GDR were somehow intertwined because they all reflected a societal crisis. *Unsere Kinder* begins with a voice-over statement<sup>104</sup> from Steiner which states that the topic of Skinhead subculture was a taboo but that it was only one of the ‘Möglichkeiten der Abrenzung’. In Steiner’s view, youth subcultures were divided into three social categories: ‘Täter, Opfer and Vermittler’. What they had in common, according to Steiner<sup>105</sup>, was that they were not marginal youth but (our) children who sought their own ways and ideals, and that he would let them speak openly for the first time so that the audience could form their own moral opinion: ‘Dieser Film ist ein Plädoyer fürs Zuhören, das Verstehen wollen. Das offene Sprechen, bevor es zu spat ist’<sup>106</sup>.

The first scene of the film shows a group of two girls and two boys sitting at a graveyard site with lit candles who, as Steiner comments<sup>107</sup>, were not necessarily called Gruftis by themselves but they were called Gruftis by others (‘man nennt sie Gruftis’), while he remarks that he preferred using their real names rather than the stigmatising label. Steiner<sup>108</sup> perceived the subculturalists as East German citizens first and foremost, but before they get to speak in the film, the filmmaker offers a philosophical-existential

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<sup>103</sup> <http://www.defa-stiftung.de/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabID=412&FilmID=Q6UJ9A005978> [accessed on 8 August 2018].

<sup>104</sup> *Unsere Kinder*, dir. by Roland Steiner (DEFA Film, East Berlin 1989), 01:00.

<sup>105</sup> *Unsere Kinder*, 01:08 – 01:25.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 09:46.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 01:58.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.* 02:01 – 02:25.

interpretation of the societal meaning of the subculture by stating that they ‘überwinden sie Friedhofsmauern und die Grenze zu ihrer Umwelt und sich selbst’ and asking ‘Warum finden sie keinen Platz im Diesseits?’ With this introduction, Steiner defines the subculture which he does not want to refer to as Gruftis as not belonging to the here and now.

During one of the interview scenes, the group walks towards the camera with the wind in their wide black robes and the sunset at the horizon of Alexanderplatz. Steiner’s team chose this symbolic setting to present the subjects in the space which, in Steiner’s<sup>109</sup> voice-over represented ‘der Ort den für sie Öffentlichkeit bedeutet’. This remark is somewhat odd because the public sphere would be ‘Öffentlichkeit’ for anybody, but Steiner adds that these were simply normal teenagers who experimented with the possibilities and limits of their existence. Because they did so, and because their appearance was associated with the socially stigmatised Grufti identity, they stood out in public negatively. An unexpected yet perhaps also somewhat expected disturbance during the scene at Alexanderplatz provided filmic proof that the public sphere was indeed a problematic space for groups who dressed in black. When a police officer demanded to not only control the DEFA crew’s filming permit but also the identities of the group, Steiner<sup>110</sup> replied in an irritated voice: ‘Das sind keine schwarzen Bürger, das sind DDR-Bürger’.

In the interview scene that takes places in a private space, a living room, one of the girls<sup>111</sup> mundanely explains about the Gothic appearance: ‘Manche rennen stinknormal rum [...] und uns gefällt es eben wie wir so rumrennen’. In her depiction, the Gothic style was not normal and thus a self-conscious taste-based choice to be different. One of the boys explains during the Alexanderplatz scene that his choice to dress in Gothic style was motivated by a conflict at school. He did not feel he fit in and decided to adopt an identity which expresses rebellion. Furthermore, the boy notes that he hopes to make an impact by making people stop and wonder why he dressed like that, so that they would become attentive to societal problems. In response, the other boy states that looking crazy and different from other ‘Normalbürger’ was just good fun. The answers regarding the meaning of the Gothic appearance are thus ambivalent, as some represent, to quote Martin<sup>112</sup>, ‘youths who choose a certain identity as a way of exteriorising their inner conflicts with society in an essentially non-aggressive way’, while others seem less motivated by conflict and instead describe the self-experiment as an enjoyable experience.

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<sup>109</sup> *Unsere Kinder*, 00:27:52.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 00:27:29 - 00:30:42.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 05:08

<sup>112</sup> Martin, ‘Gothic Scholars Don’t Wear Black’, p. 40.

Despite this ambivalence in motivation and experience, there is no doubt that the representation of Gothic identity was problematic in the social context, not only as direct conflict in the public sphere but also because of the spreading rumours and moral panics. Steiner wanted to know whether the boys thought that their appearance had an impact on society and which responses they received when for instance travelling on public transport. One of the interviewees replies in the film that he was often called a ‘Grabschänder’, but that he nevertheless hoped people would re-think their judgement once they got home, while the other contradicts this negative experience by stating that curious people frequently approached him to ask him about the meaning of his style. Interpretations thus not only differed among insiders and marginalisation was not always only performed by outsiders.

Steiner was, however, primarily interested in what he calls the ‘Negativerlebnis’ and states in the film that negative experiences like humiliations, mistrust and control were daily and especially problematic during the adolescent life phase. He asked the opinions of his interviewees regarding the rumours about adolescents dressed in black (‘Wie kommen den die Leute darauf zu sagen ihr seid Sargschläfer oder Friedhofgänger?’). The girl<sup>113</sup> responded that people will always spread rumours about others, especially when, as one of the boys<sup>114</sup> states: ‘keiner wusste im Prinzip was wir nun genau darstellen’. Here, the social stigmatisation of adolescents dressed in black is explained as the result of a lack of common knowledge about the subculture. The term ‘darstellen’ indicates that for the boy, the Gothic style was only meaningful for people who considered themselves members, participants or insiders.

At the same time, however, the boy contests any subcultural participation or belongingness, as he responds<sup>115</sup> to Steiner’s question about accusations regarding the desecrating of tombs that ‘solche Aktionen gibt es und solche Aktionen habe ich auch schon mitgemacht, aber das finde ich stoßt schon wieder an Friedhofsschändung, weil dann stört man ja im Prinzip die Ruhe der Toten’. This did not mean that the boy had stopped going to the cemetery, as he added,<sup>116</sup> ‘Ja, ich gehe auf dem Friedhof’, and explains why: ‘Ich gehe in der Nacht, weil es ist für mich der einzige Ort wo ich meine Ruhe finde, wo ich alleine bin und auch über mich nachdenken kann. Und das ist im Prinzip der einzige Platz wo man wirklich in sich gehen kann’.<sup>117</sup> For the boy, the ‘Friedhof’ represents the

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<sup>113</sup> *Unsere Kinder*, 06:12.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 06:43 – 07.23.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 06:41.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 06:43 – 07.23.

subjectivity of this subcultural space, namely his desire to isolate and reflect on himself, a personal aim he felt he could not achieve elsewhere. This self-representation<sup>118</sup> constructs a spiritual-intellectual, marginal social identity and subcultural capital which, in this subculturalist view, is disconnected from society and even from other participants.

For this boy,<sup>119</sup> collectivity was clearly not what mattered about his choice to adopt a Gothic identity: ‘von großen Fetten halte ich im Prinzip nichts, also so auf dem Friedhof mit Sekt trinken und dann Riesenaktionen mit Recordern und so’. This example shows that different meanings and purposes were attributed to the subcultural space ‘Friedhof’ and that the subcultural capital therefore also differed among those who considered themselves subcultural insiders, while outsiders interpreted an individual’s or group’s preference for this subcultural space as marginal, unnormal, deviant and (Satanic, morbid). In comparison, when a youth theatre project<sup>120</sup> in the GDR thematised the topic of societal hostility against Grafts in April 1989, it was noted during the following discussion round that discrimination was daily practice and that people were refused at restaurants and clubs ‘wegen ihrer schwarzen Kleidung’. According to the author of the manuscript for the play which is contained in a HA XX file about ‘jugendliche Randgruppen’, it was unmistakable that ‘die offensichtliche Diskriminierung die Jugendlichen berührt,’ because they did not understand ‘Warum werden sie gerade von allen angegriffen?’<sup>121</sup> Steiner<sup>122</sup> also wanted to know why, and asked his interviewees how they felt about the stigmatisation of this specific subcultural style, capital and space which somehow appealed to them for personal reasons, or in other words, this subcultural identity, and received an emotional response:

Ich ärgere mich einfach drüber. Ich finde es einfach irgendwie unmöglich, dass man so drauf reagiert, man kennt die Leute überhaupt nicht, und vom rein Äußerlichen zu schließen, dass...total abwertend dann irgendwie, das sind irgendwelche Idioten und die machen irgendwelchen Dreck und so, die kennen dich überhaupt nicht, wissen überhaupt nichts über mich im Grunde genommen, außer was sie in den Akten lesen, wenn ich irgendwo stehe, oder außer ein Foto was sie von mir gesehen haben vielleicht, oder was sie wissen, dass ich vielleicht mal auf einem Friedhof war und vor ‘ner Gruft rumgesessen habe, aber, das ist dann auch das einzige was

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<sup>118</sup> *Unsere Kinder*, 06:41

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 06:43 – 07.23

<sup>120</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 7807, Abt. XX, Berlin, den 19.4.1989, *Thema- Rundtischgespräch zu “Jugendliche Randgruppen”*, *Rundtischgespräch 12.4.89*, pp. 19, 24.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28 – 29.

<sup>122</sup> *Unsere Kinder*.

sie wissen, sich nie mit dem Menschen beschäftigen, und dann von vorneherein schon sagen, das ist doch sowieso der Allerletzte hier, das ist der Abschaum, sieht euch den an, der sieht doch ganz schlimm aus und die rennen auf Friedhöfe und machen einen Mist, statt was denn wirklich passiert wenn die Leute zusammen sind.

The boy<sup>123</sup> represents a subcultural victim identity and vents his frustration about the lack of knowledge among outsiders and the consequential stigmatisation, he directly refers to the MfS and police, as the term ‘Akten’ signals. At the same time, this seemed to be his biggest concern as he notes that had nothing against the state, but that the social stigma created conflict between him and his fellow citizens, because the boy believed that they were not interested in finding out more and getting to know the actual person behind the Gothic façade. Rutkowski writes about this: ‘besonders hatte die Szene mit der intoleranten Bevölkerung zu kämpfen, weil diese in den andersartigen “Ostgoten” eine Bedrohung sah’<sup>124</sup>.

For the emotional male interviewee<sup>125</sup>, subcultural participation was a ‘Negativerlebnis’ in itself on the level of freedom of choice. He explains: ‘Wir kommen in keinem Jugendclub mehr rein. Es reicht zu, wenn die unseren Namen lesen und schon stehen die bei uns vor der Tür mit einem Streifenwagen und warten drauf und wissen wann ich von Arbeit komme und wissen wann ich zur Arbeit gehe, und das kontrollieren die, und es ist reine Schikane’. Despite this regular ‘Negativerlebnis’, the boy states<sup>126</sup> ‘ich habe hier nichts gegen den Staat oder was weiß ich, aber [...] ich will meine menschliche Freiheit haben, und meine Grundrechte die mir eigentlich, wie sie sagen, von diesem Staat zugrunde gelegt werden, die sie mir eigentlich in einer Verfassung einräumen’. The interviewee<sup>127</sup> thus felt not free, as he states that ‘diese totale Überwachung nunmal das zur Folge hat, dass wir im... wir können das nicht total veräußern... wir können zwar alles sagen, aber es kommt immer drauf an, wer das nun in die Finger kriegt, und wie man sowas auslegt’. Apparently, the boy<sup>128</sup> felt that the response to subjective expression depended fully on subjective interpretations, and remarks that he also had a positive experience when a police officer responsible for ‘Jugendfragen’ showed an interest in his life style. Yet his desire to be a fully socially respected citizen (‘ich will hier als Mensch respektiert werden’)

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<sup>123</sup> *Unsere Kinder* 03:05

<sup>124</sup> Roman Rutkowski, *Das Charisma des Grabes. Stereotyp und Vorurteile in Bezug auf Jugendliche Subkulturen am Beispiel der Schwarzen Szene* (Norderstedt: Books on Demand Verlag, 2004), p. 59.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 4:45.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> Terry and Urla, *Deviant Bodies*, p. 4.



was not met. He felt the victim of political repression against his subcultural identity, while ‘menschliche Freiheit’ for him, and for other young people, as we have seen, meant the freedom to interpret, create and experience subcultural identities, life styles and spaces in cultural, social and political contexts openly and fearlessly (‘dafür habe ich keine Angst’).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter links to and contrasts Chapter 1 in that it has explored the ways in which ways participants in Punk and Gothic scenes represent their existence in relation to society and ideology as a space with no future for the individual and no future for humanity, and which resistance and (non-)solutions are offered in depictions of the existential conflict. This chapter has explored subcultural micro-media to offer a contrasting view on other studies of the pluriform Gothic subculture which focus on the otherness, difference, subversiveness or deviance of (Gothic) subculture and has shown that active participants in Grufti, New Romantic, and New Wave scenes in the GDR self-consciously organised themselves and aimed to achieve their goals, and that one of these goals consisted of social acceptance. This Chapter has investigated how participants in Gothic-related scenes represent themselves in relation to social ties that are represented as real and has demonstrated that texts contain strategies with which subcultural capital, spaces, materials and identities both tie to the subculture and to society. Individuals strived for membership in subcultures as well as for membership and social acceptance in society at the same time.

While the subculture is represented as a separate world which, to quote Chris Jenks<sup>129</sup>, ‘signifies difference and change’ regarding given social circumstances, rules and norms, it is emphasised by the teenagers in their (self-)writings that subcultural capital, material, space, identity (membership), community and meaning could, but did not have to be conflicted with society or politics. The teenagers did so by performing politics or representation. As has been shown, this depended on situations, conflicts and confrontations. Whereas Chapter 1 has shown how subcultural texts offer a symbolic existential strategy for individual escape from the ‘real’, threatening world by creating a new symbolic identity and new ‘other-worldly’ space, this chapter looks at strategies (partly imagined and partly actual), with which teenagers could obtain objects and spaces of youth (sub)cultural value for themselves and the (imagined) subcultural community. This chapter has shown that the writings contain five interrelated strategies in varying self-

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<sup>129</sup> Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of the Social*, p. 145.

representations, and how they obtained or attempted to obtain the symbolic and actual things with which imagined and real existing subcultural life, from individual and collective teenage perspectives, could be substantialised, mobilised and globalised.

This chapter has explored the five strategies in writings through which teenagers could obtain objects and spaces of youth (sub)cultural value for themselves and the (imagined) community. At the same time, the writings construct identity and community which were partly imagined and partly lived out in real, collective scene life. Teenagers seemingly have very clear ideas of what they want or need, and of the ways to get it. Teenagers in East Germany had to apply specific strategies to obtain the youth cultural materials and spaces they desired, as these were usually not available via regular channels, and either hard to obtain or maintain. For East German teenagers, hence, the challenge was often greater than for teenagers in the West. But as the self-representations show, teenagers seemed to be used to it being a 'normal' part of subcultural life in the GDR, and a problem which could be solved. For this, they applied certain strategies, for instance, by founding a 'secret society' or a fan club in which subcultural capital was members-only and restricted to closed spaces, or, in contrast by exhibiting subcultural capital in public spaces and demonstrate the subcultural faith in collective life.

An important conclusion from the analysis is that while the texts construct subcultural capital, meaning, identity and community and talk about the limits of (fan) scene life in the GDR, they demonstrate that transnational youth (sub)culture and subcultural capital are not a one-way system. Whereas most objects and pieces of information of youth cultural value had to be imported via illegal channels or indirect sources, teenagers contributed to the subcultural capital in different, local ways. They were inspired by an international youth culture in the first place, which was not rooted in East Germany, but 'far away' in the UK and USA, whereas at the same time, they created their own local subcultural capital, space, identity, community and meaning. The East German contribution is depicted in the self-representations as no less important as that of anywhere else, by pointing out that young people shared the same interests and tastes as their Western peers, whereas at the same time, there was also a crucial difference. Although teenagers verbalise this difference, it seems that what essentially bothered teenagers most of all was the struggle to live their culture on a daily basis with objects and spaces. But this chapter has also shown that this struggle was sometimes also used to construct a special social status, that the local marginalisation was perceived to be a sign of authenticity.

The collective Gothic-related scenes are depicted in some texts as secretive and isolated, while in others, teenagers aimed to achieve the opposite of concealment and self-marginalisation. Many (trans-)local scenes did not want to hide away in remote spaces, or participate in a secret society, but wanted to be part of everyday, officially organised, social teenage life in the public sphere. Teenagers who participated in scenes not only interacted privately or internally with peers, but also communicated with those in positions of authority. Others, however, took matters into their own hands, and decided to organise the scene by themselves, as will also be shown in Chapter 4. Teenagers used letters and interviews to create their own representational strategies of moral and social equality, or superiority even, by representing a professional, elitist form of youth cultural organization (secret or fan club), a serious spiritual life style (secret club, individual cemetery visits, writing philosophical lyrics), or a disciplined, exemplary form of social behavior and intent (youth club visitors, 'Marxist' fan club rules). The marginal subculturalist marginalises others who are not allowed into the realm of a particular subcultural capital. This self-isolation of and marginalising of others is another key finding of this chapter: one of the key social counter-strategies is a self-representation as positive instead of negative (compared to punk). In doing so, Gothic is de-marginalised and de-isolated not on an intellectual, but on a social level.

As pointed out, the pluriform Gothic subculture with its different scenes is not always represented as such by participants, primarily because *The Cure* and *Depeche Mode* became pop cultural music mainstream. Teenage fans dressed in black because their idols did. They were fans of the music who dressed in black to express their belongingness. As will be shown in Chapter 4, MfS investigations into the Wer dau scene offers a very different perspective on the reasons why scene members were considered 'deviant'. In this chapter, it has been shown how teenagers themselves articulated ambivalent self-understandings in constructions of identities of scene participants, ideologies and communities which alternated between 'deviance' and 'normality', while they sought excitement, entertainment and compromise for themselves and scenes. It is very interesting that some local subculturalists interacted with authorities in conflicts by representing themselves as a legitimate party with a rightful demand in a social dispute. Teenagers not only attempted to obtain objects of desire, but also demanded rights which served the purpose of collective subcultural life. Some teenagers knew how to play by the rules of the 'Socialist game', some were frustrated by them. Some made their own rules of the 'subcultural game' by creating 'illegal' channels through which they could obtain materials

for 'Fanräume', and via strategies of mystification with which they could create (symbolical) 'Freiräume'. Others attempted to win or keep these youth (sub)cultural spaces by representing the scene as a transparent, organised and disciplined social collective. Or simply by being there and pointing out that they did not stand 'outside' of society, but that they were key participants. As subcultural capital was, alongside posters, tapes and clothes, located 'in the heads' of people',<sup>130</sup> as the different writings have shown, it could be spectacular or non-spectacular, or both at the same time, depending on what it meant in the individual view, desire and experience.

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<sup>130</sup> e. g. Ingold and Kurttila 2000.

## CHAPTER 4

### FROM OBSCURE IDEOLOGY TO SCENE AUTONOMY A PEACEFUL SUBCULTURAL (R)EVOLUTION?

#### Introduction

As shown in Chapter 2, in 1984, MfS department XX/2<sup>1</sup> opened the so-called *OV Romantiker* inquiry into a group of adolescents in Quedlinburg who were accused of ‘operativ relevante Verhaltensweisen’ before the investigation had begun. This accusation was merely based on department XX’s<sup>2</sup> categorisation of the group of adolescents as ‘Anhänger der westlichen Rockwelle New Wafe [sic]’. Three years later, the case was not closed because the group was reported to have expanded from seven to sixty participants. According to the report<sup>3</sup>, fans of New Wave were ‘Vertreter der faschistischen Ideologie’, but as their ‘profaschistische [...] Reden’<sup>4</sup> are not specified in the report, one may wonder whether a discussion about the latest *Depeche Mode* song fell into this pejorative political category.

Theory often did not match observed realities, as also illustrated in Chapter 2. When observers reported that ‘auf Friedhöfen in Karl-Marx-Stadt durchgeführten spiritistischen Handlungen (Rituale) [...] verliefen ohne nennenswerte Störungen’<sup>5</sup>, one might wonder why this was reported in the first place. Lewis explains this standard MfS procedure:

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<sup>1</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle, Abt. XX, 1036, OV ‚Romantiker‘ / IM-Basis: nicht ausreichend, KD Quedlinburg, p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> BStU, MfS HA XX 900, Teil 1, Abteilung XX/2, KD Quedlinburg, 8.9.1987 Information zu Lösungsmittelmißbrauch durch Jugendliche und Jungerwachsene, p. 314.

<sup>3</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle, Abt. XX, 1036, OV ‚Romantiker‘ / IM-Basis : nicht ausreichend, KD Quedlinburg, p. 92; BStU, MfS, BV Magdeburg, Abt. XX 2797, XX / 2 Arbeitsakte ‚Gruftys‘, Mai 1988, p. 3 ‚Betr.: ‚Konzentration von ‚Gruftys‘‘ 04.05.1988; ‚Betr.: ‚Konzentration Jugendlicher (sogenannter ‚Gruftys‘) im Verantwortungsbereich Tangerhütte, p. 4 – 5.

<sup>4</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, KD Zwickau 240, 1. Band ‚Bearbeitung von jugendlichen Gruppierungen im operativen Material ‚Grufti‘‘ 1984 – 1989, KD Werdau. 7.4.87. betr. Negative Gruppierung von Jugendlichen p. 142.

<sup>5</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, Abt. XX 2053, Jugendliche Gruppierung ‚Gruftis‘ im Bezirk Karl-Marx-Stadt, Feststellungen zur ‚Grufti‘-Bewegung in der Stadt Karl-Marx-Stadt, 1988, p. 18.

The informers were instructed to make reports as ‘objektiv, unverfälscht, konkret und vollständig’ as possible about all counterrevolutionary or hostile-negative opinions, utterances, conversations and meetings. They were ordered to collect all empirical evidence of potential criminal activity or criminal intent. This could be found in any utterance that could be construed by the observer to be hostile to the aims of the socialist state or counter to the constitution. Because the informers were often not aware of the precise nature of the crime of their subjects, this necessitated gathering any material, however trivial, recording any remark, however insignificant, since the usefulness of the evidence could only be ascertained once it had been assessed by one’s superiors. Their job was not so much to find the criminal but to find the crime and thus assist their officers in playing the infinitely more tricky game of pinning the crime on the criminal.<sup>6</sup>

After three years of extensive observation and analysis, state theory on the pluriform Gothic subculture had resulted in varying definitions, interpretations and judgements. While *Gruftis* became an umbrella term for adolescents who dressed in black, who gathered in churches or at abandoned locations and who listened to *The Cure* and *Depeche Mode*. Because the label *Grufti(s)* refers to the stereotypical interpretation of these different scenes and participants, they were often stigmatised and criminalised before actual evidence had been found. As we have seen in Chapters 2 and 3, outsider perceptions of young people who dressed Gothic and listened to Post-Punk and Gothic-related music were predominantly negative.

The subcultural self-representations we have seen in Chapter 3 indicate that it was often a lack of knowledge about the subculture(s) which resulted in negative assumptions, rumours and clichés. Not everyone who listened to certain bands and/or imitated the styles of their music idols defined themselves as a *Grufti*, New Waver or New Romantic, because Gothic sounds and styles were also fashionable. At the same time, the Gothic-related scenes seemed serious about their subcultural capital and space. The MfS, as we have seen in Chapter 2, struggled with determining the meaning, purpose or ideology of these scenes. While there was no lack of quantitative information, as the tiniest detail was reported and documented, MfS knowledge on the phenomena was as fragmented and ambiguous as the subculture itself.

We have seen in Chapter 2 that some MfS departments had acknowledged this and that the semiological reading strategies they applied resulted in conflictual views which differed

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<sup>6</sup> Alison Lewis, ‘Reading and Writing the Stasi File. On the Uses and Abuses of the File as (Auto)biography’, *German Life and Letters*, 56.4 (2003), 377 – 397 (391).

per department. As shown, some MfS departments like HA XX admitted that the political relevance of the New Romantics, New Wavers and Gruftis had not been determined. It was, however, assumed that every subculture represented an ideology and that there existed different ‘ideologische Richtungen’ within one subculture, which meant that a subculture could comprise a GDR-hostile hardcore scene as well as a ‘Moderichtung’, in the view of HA XX. The fact that Gothic styles and sounds were also trendy was known to some departments, yet other departments believed that at least part of the subculture had something to hide. This idea was triggered by the introvert, subjective and spiritual nature of the subculture on the one hand which did not seem to relate to politics, mainstream society and every day life, and the subculture’s various collective insider initiatives (fan clubs, fan events, scene gatherings) on the other hand, with which groups of adolescents expressed a sense of self-organisation, self-consciousness and self-determination. This raised suspicion.

The key point made in Chapter 2 is that there was no convincing evidence that the suspicion was justified, despite the many observations, infiltrations and analyses, and hence, HA XX began to doubt the relevance of the *Akte Gruftis*. In May 1988, HA XX<sup>7</sup> reported: ‘Hinsichtlich der Wirksamkeit der Gruftis ist die politisch-operative Lage gegenwärtig noch nicht eindeutig einzuschätzen’. At the same time, the difference between Gothic subcultures and other subcultures like Punk was clear. Departments<sup>8</sup> had to correct previous readings of Gothic styles as signs of ideological connections between Punk and Gothic scenes, such as, for instance, that Gruftis wore black and red as a sign of leftist-anarchic underground opposition. And yet, surveillance of Gothic scenes was maintained until November 1989. Despite the lack of criminalising and/or politicising evidence, those who were often simply labelled as Gruftis were still considered different, and thus, the search for the hidden meaning (or ideology) of the subculture continued.

We have seen in Chapter 3 that subcultural self-representations differ and conflict, and some scenes strived for societal and thus also for political acceptance while they performed their own politics of representation to achieve their goals. This resulted in interactions between scene participants and functionaries in the FDJ who were responsible for youth clubs and youth leisure offers. The SED blamed the FDJ, which it called the ‘Interessenvertreter der Jugend’, for failing to convert deviant youth into ‘normale Jugendliche’. At the same time, deficiencies

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<sup>7</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 5940, Cottbus, 30.5.1988. Berichterstattung über Entwicklungstendenzen unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen sowie die Wirksamkeit politisch-operativer Maßnahmen zur Zurückdrängung – Zeitraum 1.1.1988 bis 20.5.1988, p. 30.

<sup>8</sup> MfS BStU, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, 3149, Abt. XX/2. Berlin, 16. November 1989. Operative Information. Aktuelle Situation unter Gruftis der Hauptstadt, p. 105.

in youth control automatically pointed back at the SED. Youth problems were, as we will see in this Chapter, not necessarily problems *with* youth, but problems within the government's own youth policy and regulation.

A report from March 1989 from HA XX<sup>9</sup> painted a gloomy picture for the SED, because it is stated that despite that 83% of all adolescents in the GDR were members of the FDJ, they could not be reached by the 'gesellschaftliche Kräfte'. This, according to the report, 'dokumentiert sich in ihren Einstellungen und Haltungen eine grobe Mißachtung der Normen des gesellschaftlichen Zusammenlebens bis hin zu teilweise negativ-dekadenten und feindlichen Auffassungen'. Revealing a politically hostile attitude appeared to be problematic in the case of adolescents who were (supposed) Gruftis. For example, when the department<sup>10</sup> in Karl-Marx-Stadt asked an adolescent directly about his political view, he replied that 'er eine zeitlang den Gruftis zugehörte und jetzt den Avantgardisten. [...] Er erkennt den Sozialismus und auch den Kapitalismus an, und wie er behauptet, sei er nur gegen das Spießertum'. This adolescent, as stated, was politically neutral, or at the most pro-capitalist but crucially not anti-GDR. At the same time, this was interpreted as a case of defiance of norm.

And hence, while the 'folk devils', to use Cohen's<sup>11</sup> term, were not 'Staatsfeinde', they at least challenged conservative views. Whereas Punks and most other subcultures are considered deviant, the defiance of norms in Punk texts, styles, behaviours and practices was considered a threat to the GDR. In the definition of Gothic subculture, as Siegel<sup>12</sup> writes, as a 'means of resisting regime of sexual normalcy', the question is whether the regime in the GDR shifted its focus in the investigation into Gothic subculture. Did the MfS maintain its primary aim in the investigation of this distinctive yet heterogeneous cultural phenomenon, namely to uncover political-hostile intent? Or can we identify a shift in the conflict between youth and authority which evolved around conservative expectations of pre-adult life? Was subculture still perceived as a 'separate world'<sup>13</sup> which somehow stood outside of society or did the subculture represent a 'Jugend' which turned its back on the 'gesellschaftliche Kräfte'?

This Chapter focuses on the problematisation of forms of youth leisure behaviour and practice which are physical or bodily and/or psychological, spiritual or ideological. They were observed by MfS, police, FDJ and other societal actors and caused further suspicion as well as

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<sup>9</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 5941, Bezirksverwaltung Potsdam, 3.3. 1989 – maart 1989. Weitere Erkenntnisse zur Lage unter negativ-dekadenten jugendlichen Personenkreisen des Bezirkes Potsdam, p. 120.

<sup>10</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, KD Zwickau 240, 20.06.89, [male, 1967], p. 96.

<sup>11</sup> Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1972).

<sup>12</sup> Carol Siegel, *Goth's Dark Empire* (Combined Academic Publishers: Harrogate, North Yorkshire) p. 19.

<sup>13</sup> Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, p. 159.



moral panics. It will be shown how certain practices observed within adolescent leisure time are defined in the files as deviant, threatening and crucially, how specific youth problems were attributed to specific Gothic-related scenes and participants. The question is if, how a ‘Gothic problem’ is depicted in the files, or, constructed, and how this related to the lack of confirmed, concrete and coherent knowledge on the political relevance of the surveillance of the subculture on the one hand, and the unconfirmed, blurry and fragmented knowledge, the rumours, assumptions and stereotypes on the other hand. It will be explored which societal actors were involved and which interactions between subcultural actors and other actors took place.

The focus of the surveillance and the identification, labelling, stigmatisation and problematisation of young people as Gruftis was first of all on external appearance, on the body. It was expected that the Gothic body represented defiance, resistance and abnormalcy, and thus, that the physique represented a deviant mind. It will be examined how the ‘embodied deviance’ of the Gothic scene actors, ‘incite[d] suspicion, scrutiny, [...] and controversy’<sup>14</sup>, to use Terry and Urla’s words, on the one hand, and how, on the other hand, political and social views on the physical Goth bodies that were regarded as ‘deviant bodies’<sup>15</sup> in society, changed.

While the files from 1988 and 1989 indicate that the intensity and quantity of MfS surveillance of Gothic-related scenes did not decline, we can identify a shift in the reading and ultimately in the understanding of Gothic minds and bodies and finally in the subculture, its subcultural capital, space and ideology. While Gruftis were common knowledge by that time within the state and security system, the FDJ and other youth institutions and cultural organisations, as well as in society in general, there appeared to be an air of misunderstanding, ambiguity and confusion around the multi-scene subculture. Subcultural, state and other societal and cultural actors, as illustrated in the previous Chapters, were involved and intertwined in strategies and politics of (self-)representation.

We see an acculumation of details in the files from 1987, 1988 and 1989 and the question answered in this Chapter is whether the quantitative increase resulted in qualitative results, and what connections were made and conclusions were drawn on the brink of the fall of Berlin Wall, and how other political problems and societal developments affected the problematisation of subculture and the relating strategies, methods and policies. The remark from the MfS department<sup>16</sup> in Halle from 1988 that clues about the subculture were ‘sehr

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<sup>14</sup> Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urla (eds.), *Deviant Bodies. Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> Terry and Urla (eds.), *Deviant Bodies*, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle, VIII 1460/88, KD Halle, VPKA Halle – VP-Revier, Abschnitt 29. Halle 7.6.88, Auskunftsbericht über eine jugendliche Gruppierung ‚Punker‘ auf der Silberhöhe in dem Innenhof Str. d.

verschwommen und unkonkret' is exemplary for the MfS' knowledge about Gothic yet the question is if, when and how departments and functionaries attempted to solve this deficit in the supposed all-knowing and all-seeing system.

This Chapter links to Chapters 1, 2, and 3 by further examining the ambiguous representation of Gothic subculture and investigating how, why and when the political study of the subculture continued, and what the questions, answers, outcomes and consequences were. The question is if, how, when and why new findings about Gothic scenes in specific MfS and police investigations into youth leisure activities, behaviours and conflicts confirmed, tested or altered existing assumptions, views and interpretations. The aim of this Chapter is to demonstrate what happened during the two last years of MfS surveillance in the case of Gothic subculture, which other subcultures, subcultural actors and societal actors were involved and how Gothic subculture evolved (as depicted in the files). The key question is how 'members of the gothic subculture [who] actively attempted to reposition themselves both publicly and privately', to quote Griffiths<sup>17</sup>, teenagers who followed fashion and music trends and teenagers who demanded the right of individual freedom and societal acceptance, are represented in the files, and if distinctions were made within the different Gothic collectivities and subjectivities.

Was there still a Gothic subculture by the end of about five years of studying the different developments, trends, forms and shades of Punk and Gothic to find the 'subcultural ideology'<sup>18</sup>? How did the 'increasing tolerance, in public spaces and on the airwaves'<sup>19</sup> affect Gothic scenes? Considering Gothic is not depicted as 'radically anti-socialist proto-fascist ideologeme carefully developed by Western agents to subvert young socialists' as Punk was, the question is if and how Gothic scenes were affected by 'a conceptual promise', to quote Howes<sup>20</sup>, that 'diverged sharply from the Stasi' criminological theory of punk<sup>21</sup>. And, in turn, were 'mechanisms of social control'<sup>22</sup> challenged, questioned and affected by the rising popularity of that which is considered related to Gothic (sub)culture in the GDR? Was the fact

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Technik, Str.d. Aufbaues und Str.d. Aktivisten, VPKA Halle, Kriminalpolizei. 19.05.1988. Sachstandsbericht zur Konzentration jugendlicher Punks im Bereich Halle – Silberhöhe, Straße der Aktivisten, p. 72.

<sup>17</sup> Richard Griffiths, 'The Gothic Folk Devils Strike Back! Theorizing Folk Devil Reaction in the post-Columbine Era', *Journal of Youth Studies*, 13.3 (2010), 403 – 422 (416).

<sup>18</sup> Jochen Bonz, *Subjekte des Tracks. Ethnografie einer postmodernen / anderen Subkultur* (Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos, 2008), p. 58.

<sup>19</sup> Seth Howes, 'Subcultural Studies between the Blocs. Unexpected Cosmopolitanism and Stubborn Blind Spots in East German Theories of Punk', in *Beyond No Future. Cultures of German Punk* ed. by Mirko M. Hall, Seth Howes, and Cyrus M. Shahan (London/New York: Bloomsbury, 2018), pp. 71 – 88 (p. 85).

<sup>20</sup> Howes, 'Subcultural Studies between the Blocs', p. 85.

<sup>21</sup> Chris Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of The Social* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publishing, 2004), p. 87.

<sup>22</sup> Jenks, *Subculture. The Fragmentation of The Social*, p. 87.

that participants showed ‘keine Aggressivität’<sup>23</sup> and they were rated as not ‘staatsfeindlich’<sup>24</sup> eventually enough to give Gothic the benefit of the doubt? Was the comment in an MfS report about New Romantic that it was ‘gesellschaftsfähigere Form’ followed up, and if so how, why, in which ways and to which extent?

The chapter is divided into four subchapters; the first subchapter looks at how youth behaviour and practice observed during leisure time became a ‘Gothic problem’ according to some MfS functionaries. The second subchapter explores state responses to subcultural polarisation violence against deviant bodies. The third subchapter focuses on the dichotomy in state representations of Gruftis in public and private contexts, such as Gothic gatherings, and asks how deviant minds, from the state perspective, were studied and interpreted. The fourth subchapter explores state control over Gothic scene collectivity and answers the question of whether Gothic could become legitimate subculture in the GDR; if a process of socialisation, normalisation and integration of scene participants took place which contradicted the process of societal and politicisation, problematisation and stigmatisation of scene participants.

### **I. Deviant Adolescent Bodies in a ‘Rauschzustand’**

Teenagers who stood out ‘in der Öffentlichkeit durch ihre auffallende schwarze Bekleidung und auffallender Haarfrisur’ were easy to spot and labelled as Gruftis, but it was the ‘Sinn und Zweck dieser auffälligen Bekleidung’<sup>25</sup> that the MfS meant to reveal. Therefore, as Lewis<sup>26</sup> notes, ‘the secret police machinery, once in operation, required constant feeding, and the more it looked for dissidents, the more likely it was to find traces of them, or at least, the more determined it was to find them’. Because many observations, however, resulted in mundane conclusions such as ‘zu Vorkommnissen ist es während des Treffs vor der Gaststätte nicht gekommen’<sup>27</sup>, it was decided that surveillance needed to focus more on indoor and hidden

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<sup>23</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, KD Zwickau 240, 1. Band „Bearbeitung von jugendlichen Gruppierungen im operativen Material ‚Grufti‘“ 1984 – 1989, KD Werdau. 7.4.87. betr. Negative Gruppierung von Jugendlichen p. 142.

<sup>24</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle, VIII 1460/88, KD Halle, VPKA Halle – VP-Revier, Abschnitt 29. Halle 7.6.88, Auskunftsbericht über eine jugendliche Gruppierung ‚Punker‘ auf der Silberhöhe in dem Innenhof Str. d. Technik, Str.d. Aufbaues und Str.d. Aktivisten, p.57: ‘Über den Charakter der Jugendlichen Gruppierung ist nur soviel bekannt, daß sie damit nichts staatsfeindliches ausdrücken wollen. Sie wollen nur ihre Ruhe haben und nicht von jedem als Ungeziefer der Menschheit bezeichnet werden.’

<sup>25</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Magdeburg, Abt. XX 2797, XX / 2 Arbeitsakte ‚Gruftys‘, Mai 1988, p. 3 ‘Betr.: ‘Konzentration von ‘Gruftys’ 04.05.1988; „Betr.: ‚Konzentration Jugendlicher (sogenannter ‚Gruftys‘) im Verantwortungsbereich Tangerhütte, p. 4 – 5.

<sup>26</sup> Lewis, ‘Reading and Writing the Stasi File’, p. 392.

<sup>27</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle, VIII, 1460/88, KD Halle, KD Saalkreis. Halle, 7.4.88. Operative Info, 11.4.88 Ergänzung zur Info ‚Gruftis‘ Halle Silberhöhe, p. 41.

activities, and that more IMs or ‘Quellen’ were needed not to confirm or deny what scenes and members were expected to do and think, but to accurately describe what was heard and said when participants and groups felt undisturbed. In Dresden, department VII<sup>28</sup> for instance reported in December 1987 that groups dressed in black behaved differently during leisure time: ‘in Diskotheken beteiligen sie sich selten am Tanz, sondern sind in ihren eigenen Kreisen zusammen’. Group behaviour in discos is characterised in a report from Leipzig<sup>29</sup> as ‘ruhiges, fast exzentrisches Verhalten’. Such behaviour was considered suspicious not because it was spectacular or while it provoked or disturbed, but because it appeared to be the opposite.

The question is how such introverted ‘operativ relevante Verhaltensweisen’<sup>30</sup> of so-called ‘negative youth concentrations’<sup>31</sup> in Gothic dress were interpreted and dealt with. In September 1989, department XX/2 in Quedlinburg<sup>32</sup> reported as part of the *OV Romantiker* inquiry that a few adolescents in the city were sniffing chemicals (household products called *Nuth* and *Domal*) ‘um sich in einen Rauschzustand zu versetzen’. In June 1988, the department in Rostock<sup>33</sup> received information from the police about local youth that ‘sich unter diesen das “Schnüffeln” (in der Medizin vom engl. ‘sniffing’ bekannt) verbreitet’. The report from Rostock<sup>34</sup> describes the ‘Erscheinung des “sniffing”’ as ‘Veränderung des psychischen Befindens’, ‘aufpeitschende Wirkung mit nachfolgender Müdigkeit und Übelkeit; Benommenheit, Abwesenheit, Desinteresse; Geruch in der Atemluft’ which, as stated, compared to drunkenness when observed superficially. The conclusion in the report<sup>35</sup> that ‘im Rauschzustand sind keine konkreten Gespräche möglich’ suggests that an IM, police officer or FDJ functionary had approached the adolescents and had observed that ‘diese Jugendlichen saßen anschließend starr und teilnahmslos da, und nach ca. 30 Minuten schliefen sie ein’.

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<sup>28</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, Abt. VII, 7484, BDVP Dresden, Kriminalpolizei, Dezernat I, Dresden, 09.12.1987. einschätzung der operativen Lage unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen im Bezirk Dresden, p. 142

<sup>29</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfS Leipzig, KDFs Leipzig-Stadt 01760/01, BV für Staatssicherheit Leipzig, Kreisdienststelle Leipzig-Stadt. 18.09.87, Jugendliche Gruppierungen, Strömungen und deren Eigenarten aus dem Bereich Leipzig-Grünau, p. 116

<sup>30</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle, Abt. XX, 1036, OV ‚Romantiker‘ / IM-Basis: nicht ausreichend, KD Quedlinburg, p. 92.

<sup>31</sup> BStU, MfS BV Rostock KD Doberan 194, AKG. Rostock, 9. Juni 1988. Information des VPKA Rostock über Erscheinung des ‚sniffing‘, p. 25.

<sup>32</sup> BStU, MfS HA XX 900, Teil 1, Abteilung XX/2, KD Quedlinburg, 8.9.1987 Information zu Lösungsmittelmißbrauch durch Jugendliche und Jungerwachsene, p. 314.

<sup>33</sup> BStU, MfS BV Rostock KD Doberan 194, AKG. Rostock, 9. Juni 1988. Information des VPKA Rostock über Erscheinung des ‚sniffing‘, p. 25.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 25 – 26.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

How was such behaviour judged by the MfS? In Halle, sniffing did not take place indoors but outdoors, where it was reported by the local police<sup>36</sup> that ‘Jugendliche liegen dann auf der Freifläche mit einem Lappen über dem Gesicht und betrefeln sich mit Domal Fleckenwasser’. Local habitants informed the police that in their neighbourhood were teenagers who ‘liegen dann meist ca. eine Stunde wie leblos da’, were then ‘wachgeschlagen’ and staggering ‘wie betrunken durch die Gegend, um dann von neuem dieses zu wiederholen’.

‘Schnüffeln’ von Lösungsmitteln<sup>37</sup> or ‘Lösungsmittelmißbrauch’<sup>38</sup> appear as a new problem in the files which was associated with Gothic scenes like New Romantic and Gruftis. Lange<sup>39</sup> writes about this topic in his autobiographical book on his New Wave adolescence:

Gruftis waren außerdem viel zu destruktiv, vor allem gegenüber sich selbst. Man erzählte sich, dass sie Spee-Cola tranken, also Waschpulver und Cola gemischt. Das klang überhaupt nicht lecker. Und die ganz verzweifelten schnüffelten den berühmten DDR-Fleckentferner “Nuth”, den man für 50 Pfennige die Flasche in Drogerien bekam. Das Zeug haute so rein, dass man beim “Nuthen” nach wenigen Minuten Hubschrauber hörte [...] während die Dämpfe das Gehirn auffrassen. Da war ja die Realität noch besser zu ertragen.

Were Gruftis indeed self-destructive as Lange’s depiction implies, or did the label Gruftis become associated with the problem through rumours (‘man erzählte’)? A report<sup>40</sup> from Karl-Marx-Stadt from 1988 titled *Feststellungen zur “Grufti”-Bewegung*<sup>41</sup> notes that teenagers stated during an interrogation: ‘ich selbst habe solche Mittel mit anderen ausprobiert’, ‘Ich habe das “nuthen” nur einmal kurz probiert’<sup>42</sup>, and ‘für mich kommt so etwas nicht mehr in

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<sup>36</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle, VIII 1460/88, KD Halle, VPKA Halle – VP-Revier, Abschnitt 29. Halle 7.6.88, Auskunftsbericht über eine jugendliche Gruppierung ‚Punker‘ auf der Silberhöhe in dem Innenhof Str. d. Technik, Str.d. Aufbaues und Str.d. Aktivisten, p.56.

<sup>37</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle, Abt. XX, 1036, OV ‚Romantiker‘ / IM-Basis: nicht ausreichend, KD Quedlinburg, p. 92.

<sup>38</sup> BStU, MfS HA XX 900, Teil 1, Abteilung XX/2, KD Quedlinburg, 8.9.1987 Information zu Lösungsmittelmißbrauch durch Jugendliche und Jungerwachsene, p. 314.

<sup>39</sup> Sascha Lange, *DJ Westradio. Meine Glückliche DDR-Jugend* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 2007), p. 90.

<sup>40</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, Abt. XX 2053, Jugentliche Gruppierung ‚Gruftis‘ im Bezirk Karl-Marx-Stadt, Feststellungen zur ‚Grufti‘-Bewegung in der Stadt Karl-Marx-Stadt, Auszug aus dem Vernehmungsprotokoll. Female, 1970. [KMS 11.03.88], p. 40.

<sup>41</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, Abt. XX 2053, Jugentliche Gruppierung ‚Gruftis‘ im Bezirk Karl-Marx-Stadt, Feststellungen zur ‚Grufti‘-Bewegung in der Stadt Karl-Marx-Stadt, 1988, p. 18.

<sup>42</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, Abt. XX 2053, Jugentliche Gruppierung ‚Gruftis‘ im Bezirk Karl-Marx-Stadt, Feststellungen zur ‚Grufti‘-Bewegung in der Stadt Karl-Marx-Stadt, Auszug aus dem Vernehmungsprotokoll. Female, 1970. [KMS 11.03.88], p. 40.

Frage. Mir ist meine Gesundheit Lieber<sup>43</sup>. In these cases, the problem did not seem urgent, yet the answers imply that not any teenager was as sensible: ‘von der [...] weiß ich, daß sie eine Flasche “Nuth” zu Hause aufbewahrt und auch längere Zeit “genuthet” hat’.

MfS reports<sup>44</sup> on sniffing illustrate how the ‘Rauschzustand’ was linked to Gruftis. Because of the assumption that Gruftis were involved in spiritual practices, it was decided that ‘es gehört [...] zum Ritual, daß man sich vorher in einen Rauschzustand versetzt’ with the help of chemicals, medication and alcohol. According to the report<sup>45</sup> from Karl-Marx-Stadt, it had been revealed that the ‘Grufti Ritual’ and self-intoxication were intertwined, because ‘dieser Rauschzustand sei notwendig, um für die Stimmen aus dem Jenseits “empfänglicher” zu sein’. What is interesting here is the matter-of-fact tone in the explanation of a supernatural experience.

Whereas this theory was plausible in the neutral-rational rhetoric, self-intoxication was not observed at cemeteries but in discos and youth clubs. In an observation report<sup>46</sup> from Gera, it is written that Gruftis had been observed and that ‘das Auffällige am Verhalten dieser Jugendlichen war, daß sie im Verlaufe des Abends Medikamente zusammen mit Alkohol zu sich genommen haben’. Department XX<sup>47</sup> added to its *Arbeitsakte Gruftys* that ‘während einer Diskoveranstaltung im Jugendclub Hohe Düne fiel auf, daß einige Jugendliche häufig die Toilette aufsuchten’<sup>48</sup>. In the MfS report<sup>49</sup> about the *Tanzcasino* in Werdau, it is written that New Romantics in New Wavers who gathered there ‘kleiden sich dort in schwarze Kleidung und schminken das Gesicht’. Apparently, the club indeed functioned as a subcultural space, as we have seen in Chapter 3, where adolescents transformed their everyday (normal) appearances into deviant and spectacular bodies. The reason why the club was so important for the group was, we can conclude, that they felt free to be themselves, or put differently, free to become and act like others. For the MfS, this was the reason why they were considered a ‘negative

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<sup>43</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, Abt. XX 2053, Jugendliche Gruppierung ‚Gruftis‘ im Bezirk Karl-Marx-Stadt, Feststellungen zur ‚Grufti‘-Bewegung in der Stadt Karl-Marx-Stadt, Auszug aus dem Vernehmungsprotokoll. [KMS 28.03.88] [female, 1971, Lehrling Facharbeiter Schreibtechnik], p. 36.

<sup>44</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, Abt. XX 2053, Jugendliche Gruppierung ‚Gruftis‘ im Bezirk Karl-Marx-Stadt, Feststellungen zur ‚Grufti‘-Bewegung in der Stadt Karl-Marx-Stadt, Auszug aus dem Vernehmungsprotokoll. Female, 1970. [KMS 11.03.88], pp. 40, 43.

<sup>45</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, Abt. XX 2053, Jugendliche Gruppierung ‚Gruftis‘ im Bezirk Karl-Marx-Stadt, Feststellungen zur ‚Grufti‘-Bewegung in der Stadt Karl-Marx-Stadt, 1988, p. 22.

<sup>46</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Gera, AG XXII 442, Kreisdienststelle Gera, 9 Juni 1988. Information zu ‚Gruftis‘, p. 54.

<sup>47</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Magdeburg, Abt. XX 2797, XX / 2 Arbeitsakte ‚Gruftys‘, Mai 1988, p. 3 ‚Betr.: ‚Konzentration von ‚Gruftys‘ 04.05.1988; „Betr.: ‚Konzentration Jugendlicher (sogenannter ‚Gruftys‘) im Verantwortungsbereich Tangerhütte, pp. 4, 5.

<sup>48</sup> BStU, MfS BV Rostock KD Doberan 194, AKG. Rostock, 9. Juni 1988. Information des VPKA Rostock über Erscheinung des ‚sniffing‘, p. 27.

<sup>49</sup> BStU, MfS, BV, KMS KD ZW 240, p. 142. KD Werdau. 7.4.87. betr. Negative Gruppierung von Jugendlichen.

Gruppierung von Jugendlichen’, as the report shows. The question is whether their unconventional appearance was linked to the observation<sup>50</sup> that ‘während der Tanzveranstaltung berauschen sie sich in der Regel mit Faustan-Tabletten und Cola-Wodka’ and if and how such observations influenced the interpretation of introverted Gothic behaviours and practices.

In the report from Karl-Marx-Stadt<sup>51</sup>, sniffing is depicted as a Grufti problem. It is implied that ‘Nuthen’ was invented and performed within the local Grufti scene. In other localities, like Quedlinburg<sup>52</sup>, the phenomenon was considered a general youth problem, although it was noted that New Romantics in particular sniffed in both private and public spaces on a regular basis. Moreover, participants in the local scene were blamed for spreading their sniffing habit not only among local youth. It was reported that New Romantics from Quedlinburg had travelled elsewhere to visit a youth club where they met with ‘schnüffelnden Jugendlichen aus Halberstadt’. According to the report<sup>53</sup>, this had direct consequences: ‘Diese Bekanntschaft gab den Ausschlag, daß in der Folgezeit Jugendliche des VB aus dem Kreis ‘New Romantiker’ mit unterschiedlicher Intensität das “Schnüffeln” betreiben bzw. betrieben’.

The MfS functionaries in Quedlinburg<sup>54</sup> in September 1987 seemed reassured by the estimation that ‘die Erscheinung [bisher] in einem begrenzten Kreis von Jugendlichen bekannt [ist]’. However, as the popularity of New Romantic grew or at least, it was reported that groups which were considered New Romantics expanded, it was feared that ‘Lösungsmittelmißbrauch’ among adolescents would spread. In May 1988, the MfS in Quedlinburg<sup>55</sup> indeed reported that the ‘der Mißbrauch von Lösungsmitteln und Tabletten als Rauschmittel’ had spread because young people copied each other’s behaviour out of curiosity and that it had become a youth trend in the area. The department in Rostock<sup>56</sup> seemed concerned about the (long-term) effects for the adolescents themselves and noted that sniffing

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<sup>50</sup> BStU, MfS, BV, KMSSt KD ZW 240, p. 142. KD Werdau. 7.4.87. betr. Negative Gruppierung von Jugendlichen; Faustan is an antidepressant which was used by adolescents as well as adults; berliner-zeitung.de/kultur/ddr-rausch-blauer-wuerger-und-so-weiter-und-so-fort-10699490;welt.de/print-welt/article595284/Faustan-Tablette-Delikat-Praline-und-wachsender-Eigensinn.html;spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-41343377.html; trend.infopartisan.net/trd1010/t231010.html; forum-ddr-grenze.de/t3114f109-DDR-Mythos-quot-In-der-DDR-gab-es-kein-Problem-mit-Drogen-quot.html; ddr-wissen.de/wiki/ddr.pl?Medikamentenmissbrauch  
<http://www.ddr-wissen.de/wiki/ddr.pl?Medikamentenmissbrauch>

<sup>51</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, Abt. XX 2053, Jugendliche Gruppierung ‚Gruftis‘ im Bezirk Karl-Marx-Stadt, Feststellungen zur ‚Grufti‘-Bewegung in der Stadt Karl-Marx-Stadt, 1988, p. 22.

<sup>52</sup> BStU, MfS HA XX 900, Teil 1, Abteilung XX/2, KD Quedlinburg, 8.9.1987 Information zu Lösungsmittelmißbrauch durch Jugendliche und Jungerwachsene, p. 314.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle, Abt. XX,570, KD Quedlinburg, 25.5.88. Einschätzung der Wirksamkeit neg. Erscheinungen unter der Jugend des Verantwortungsbereiches, p. 74.

<sup>56</sup> BStU, MfS BV Rostock KD Doberan 194, AKG. Rostock, 9. Juni 1988. Information des VPKA Rostock über Erscheinung des ‚sniffing‘, p. 26.

was an ‘Einstiegsdroge’. But the investigators seemed just as worried that Gruftis were the cause of the spread: ‘Der Jugendliche [...] hat das “Schnüffeln” in einer Diskothek in Halle kennengelernt. Er ist Anhänger der ‘Grufty-Bewegung’ und hat es unter diesen Personen weiterverbreitet’. The report<sup>57</sup> from Gera states Gruftis supplied prescription medicines to other teenagers and that several Gruftis had been caught in the possession of *Faustan*. According to the report, a ‘Quelle’ had ‘in der letzten Zeit [...] wiederholt Jugendliche getroffen, die man zu den sogenannten “Gruftis” zählen kann’, and had told that these adolescents had approached the ‘Quelle’ ‘mit der Frage, ob sie solche Tabletten besorgen könnte’. In this case, hence, the reported interaction between the ‘Quelle’ and adolescents at a local youth club painted a fuzzy picture of the supply and demand of ‘Beruhigungstabletten’.

The case file<sup>58</sup> from Rostock shows that the functionaries there were more concerned about, as written, the knowledge that ‘längere und intensive Anwendung führt zur Abhängigkeit und zu schweren gesundheitlichen Schäden’. It was advised that local doctors were to be informed immediately and start treatment. For the department in Rostock, the measure in Halle that schools were to warn pupils about ‘die Gefährlichkeit und die Gesundheitsschädigende Wirkung des Fleckenwassers’ did not suffice. The report<sup>59</sup> indicates that functionaries in Rostock considered youth self-intoxication a political problem of national importance and not a local problem which had to be solved by local societal actors like teachers. The responsible functionaries<sup>60</sup> therefore called for a governmental response and advised radical changes, such as a ban on the sale of highly toxic household products to adolescents, a ban on certain substances for the production, and a stricter medication prescription policy. The FDJ was given high responsibility; the report<sup>61</sup> states that the FDJ district committees should inform all ‘Verantwortlichen von Jugendclubs’ about the problem. Preventive measures were given priority over hints towards Gothic causes, victims and perpetrators.

Crucially, the department in Rostock did not think that adolescents could be blamed, because the evidence had shown that self-intoxication took place not outside but inside of state-controlled youth institutions. The discovered drug issue revealed that control was flawed, and

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<sup>57</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Gera, AG XXII 442, Kreisdienststelle Gera, 9 Juni 1988. Information zu ‘Gruftis’, p. 54: ‘Bei den Medikamenten handelte es sich um Penicillin-Tabletten sowie Beruhigungstabletten’.

<sup>58</sup> BStU, MfS BV Rostock KD Doberan 194, AKG. Rostock, 9. Juni 1988. Information des VPKA Rostock über Erscheinung des ‘sniffing’, p. 26.

<sup>59</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle, VIII 1460/88, KD Halle, VPKA Halle – VP-Revier, Abschnitt 29. Halle 7.6.88, Auskunftsbericht über eine jugendliche Gruppierung ‘Punker’ auf der Silberhöhe in dem Innenhof Str. d. Technik, Str.d. Aufbaues und Str.d. Aktivisten, p.57.

<sup>60</sup> BStU, MfS BV Rostock KD Doberan 194, AKG. Rostock, 9. Juni 1988. Information des VPKA Rostock über Erscheinung des ‘sniffing’, p. 27.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.



that not national security but the health of young people was at stake. In Halle, a case of near suicide alarmed local police and residents about potentially fatal effects of sniffing and raised questions about the causes of self-destructive youth behaviour. The report<sup>62</sup> indicates that the responsible functionaries were torn because their task was to ban deviant youth behaviour from the public sphere. MfS surveillance had uncovered a problematic youth phenomenon which did not fit into its agenda, while youth groups still posed threat to societal norms and public order. Hence, the problematisation of youth and the problematisation of youth policy and control clashed. Yet this escalated case triggered the idea that youth protection had to be prioritised over youth repression. The department in Rostock thus decided that it was irrelevant whether drug-taking was related to subculture, and that the problem was of national relevance and urgency. Hence, some MfS functionaries felt responsible and took in a different role towards the targets of their political-criminal investigation.

Reports on youth drug-taking in which Gothic scenes are named are scarce. The practice does not appear in the definition or characterisation of Gothic scenes, and the available reports do not confirm that it was indeed a ‘Gothic problem’. Rather, it seems that investigators considered them two separate problems which overlapped in some isolated cases when it was assumed that the supposed anti-social behaviour and practice of Gothics was drug-related and vice versa. The ‘illusion of a “real” criminal or dissident in existence “out there”’<sup>63</sup>, like a Grufti supplying drugs to innocent peers, or Gruftis intoxicating themselves upon Satanic rituals was not supported by empirical evidence as clues were ‘sehr verschwommen und unkonkret’<sup>64</sup>. Moreover, the link was further contested by HA XX’s<sup>65</sup> report in February 1989 that ‘die direkte Übernahme okkultistischer Handlungen in Kopie ähnlich gelagerter Jugendgruppierungen in Westeuropa ist bisher wenig festgestellt’. Such a conclusion clashed with the supposed plausible connection between Grufti practice and behaviour and the youth drug problem.

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<sup>62</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle, VIII 1460/88, KD Halle, VPKA Halle – VP-Revier, Abschnitt 29. Halle 7.6.88, Auskunftsbericht über eine jugendliche Gruppierung ‚Punker‘ auf der Silberhöhe in dem Innenhof Str. d. Technik, Str.d. Aufbaues und Str.d. Aktivisten, p.57.

<sup>63</sup> Lewis, ‘Reading and Writing the Stasi File’, p. 392.

<sup>64</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle, VIII 1460/88, KD Halle, VPKA Halle – VP-Revier, Abschnitt 29. Halle 7.6.88, Auskunftsbericht über eine jugendliche Gruppierung ‚Punker‘ auf der Silberhöhe in dem Innenhof Str. d. Technik, Str.d. Aufbaues und Str.d. Aktivisten, VPKA Halle, Kriminalpolizei. 19.05.1988. Sachstandsbericht zur Konzentration jugendlicher Punks im Bereich Halle – Silberhöhe, Straße der Aktivisten, p. 72.

<sup>65</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, 4669, Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Berlin, Abteilung XX. Berlin, 6.2.89. Einschätzung Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftreten und Verhalten negativ-dekadenter Jugendlicher sowie ihrer Unterbindung und Zurückdrängung, p. 28; BStU, MfS, HA XX, 10687, Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Berlin, Abteilung XX. Berlin, 6.2.89. Einschätzung Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftreten und Verhalten negativ-dekadenter Jugendlicher sowie ihrer Unterbindung und Zurückdrängung, p. 28 – 29.

## II. Folk Devils and ‘Feindbilder’: Between Perpetrators and Victims

From the official state perspective, adolescents who were identified as Gruftis and/or performed self-intoxication represented the opposite of ‘Jugendliche mit normaler Entwicklung und Verhalten’<sup>66</sup>. Their embodied deviance was considered to express an inner conflict and potentially a conflict with the GDR. The correlation between the youth drug problem and Gruftis was, as shown, too fuzzy, because there was no concrete evidence and because HA XX had to acknowledge that the interpretation of Gruftis as Satanists did not hold up. Another problem of national scale which is described in a report from department XX in Halle<sup>67</sup> from February 1989 further relativised the negative understanding of Gruftis. It is noted that Skinheads were a ‘nicht zu unterschätzende Gefahr bei der Störung des sozialistischen Zusammenlebens der Bürger’ because were spreading a sense of insecurity and fear among the population. The police<sup>68</sup> in Potsdam reported that Skinheads were ‘äußerst aggressiv und teilweise brutal’, and the *Ministerium des Innern*<sup>69</sup> pointed out that they differed fundamentally from other subcultures in ‘Denken und Verhalten’. According to the report, Punks, Gruftis and other forms of ‘decadent’ and ‘jugendtypisches Verhalten’ were ‘Feindbilder’ of hardcore Skinheads (‘sie lehnen diese Jugendlichen ab’). The Mdi<sup>70</sup> rated Skinheads as the biggest political challenge, because participants only followed their own laws and rules.

The files indicate that the MfS’ approach to the Skinhead problem consisted of an amplified and ambiguous political problematisation of other subcultures. The Mdi<sup>71</sup> advised that ‘die Förderung der gesellschaftlichen Auseinandersetzung mit feindlichen, negativen und dekadenten Denk- und Verhaltensweisen ein politisches Erfordernis ist, dessen Erfüllung eines hohen politischen Wissens, Problemverständnisses und eines großen polizeilich-operativen Können bedarf’. The quote signifies that the ‘Denk- und Verhaltensweisen’ of *all* subcultures were considered problematic. The Mdi therefore ordered a ‘profunde Aufklärung über die Inhalte des Denkens und Verhaltens von Skinheads, Punks, Gruftis’. At the same time, we can identify a shift within the amplified problematisation of subculture which could be related to

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<sup>66</sup> BStU, MfS BV Rostock KD Doberan 194, AKG. Rostock, 9. Juni 1988. Information des VPKA Rostock über Erscheinung des ‚sniffing‘, p. 26.

<sup>67</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle, Abt. XX 1036, Abteilung XX, Halle, 19.2.88. weitere Zurückdrängung und Verhinderung von Gefährdungen der Sicherheit und Ordnung, die von kriminellen/rowdyhaften Jugendlichen ausgehen, p. 137.

<sup>68</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 5941, Bezirksverwaltung Potsdam, 3.3. 1989, Weitere Erkenntnisse zur Lage unter negativ-dekadenten jugendlichen Personenkreisen des Bezirkes Potsdam, p. 125.

<sup>69</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 10687, Sonderheft 1/1988 MDI Informationen, Kriminalpolizei, p. 36.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 25:

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

the drug problem. The MdI report points out that subcultures were not only perceived as a threat to the GDR, but to the adolescents themselves too, as it is written that ‘in solchen Wertvorstellungen enthaltene Gefahren für die jungen Menschen selbst und auch das gesellschaftliche Zusammenleben’ and that ‘das Leben dieser jungen Menschen vertan sein kann’. This suggests that part of East German youth was considered a lost cause and life.

The connection between Skinhead violence and adolescents labelled as Gruftis problematised the MfS’ approach to subcultures. When a 17-year-old was interrogated by the criminal police<sup>72</sup> in Berlin, he told the officer(s) that he had stopped visiting his favourite pubs, because there were ‘laufend Reibereien mit den Skinheads’, and because he had become the victim of repeated physical violence by Skinheads. According to the report<sup>73</sup>, the young man stated that, unlike himself, Skinheads had no respect for authority, which made it impossible for the police to deal with the problem effectively. Violence against Gruftis was reported to take place in private as well as public spaces. HA XX<sup>74</sup> reported that Skinheads in Berlin for example planned ‘in einer Wohnung, wo andere Jugendliche (Grufti’s) feierten, diese aufzuklatschen’. Such cases will probably often have been unnoticed and undocumented by the MfS, because it is likely that the MfS focused more on the party itself and the identities of the guests.

Although the MfS recognised the Skinhead problem, it appears that the ‘Unterbindung und Zurückdrängung’<sup>75</sup> of all youth scenes in Berlin was prioritised over dealing with Skinhead attacks. The attacks, as a report from department XX<sup>76</sup> from February 1989 illustrates, were merely judged as an obstacle in the surveillance of Gruftis, because ‘Feste Treffpunkte sind über einen längeren Zeitraum nicht feststellbar, da die Gruftis von den bevorzugten Gaststätten und Jugendclubs vor allem durch Skinheads verdrängt werden’. A particularly violent attack against Punks during a concert at the *Zionskirche* in Berlin in 1987 had shown that the SED was not willing to acknowledge the problem, as Hayton<sup>77</sup> has written, and that ‘the state’s response to the Zionskirche attack and the rising Skinhead threat was twofold’, because the

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<sup>72</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Bln, Abt. XX, 3111, TPA-Berlin Kriminalpolizei. Berlin, den 16.04.1986, Befragungsprotokoll des Jugendlichen [Junge, geboren 1969]. [NEW WAVE - 1986], p. 68.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>74</sup> 95 BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 5937, Berlin, den 6.1.1989, Information über Störungen der öffentlichen Ordnung und Sicherheit in Berlin, Hauptstadt der DDR, durch Straftaten von negativen Gruppierungen im Jahre 1988, p. 2.

<sup>75</sup> BStU, BV Berlin Abt. XX 4669, Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Berlin, Abteilung XX. Berlin, 6.2.89. Einschätzung Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftreten und Verhalten negativ-dekadenter Jugendlicher sowie ihrer Unterbindung und Zurückdrängung, p. 28.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Jeff Hayton, ‘Härte gegen Punk: Popular Music, Western Media, and State Response in the German Democratic Republic’, *German History*, 31.4 (2013), 523 – 549 (343 – 344).

West was, as always blamed for ‘any manifestation of ideologically-suspect activities’. At the same time, as Hayton notes and as will be further explored in this subchapter, the Skinhead problem forced the authorities ‘to integrate youth subcultures more fully into state structures and thereby depoliticize them’. The question is how and to which extent we can identify ‘a radical departure for state youth policy’ in this context.

Department XX<sup>78</sup> in Halle declared a year before department XX in Berlin that Skinheads and ‘Skinhead-like youth’ were the politically most relevant category among ‘negative-decadent youth’ and should be prioritised. In January 1989, HA XX<sup>79</sup> reported optimistically in its year review for 1988 that ‘viele Bürger mit Hinweisen und Informationen an die Schutz- und Sicherheitsorgane wirkten unterstützend in der politisch-operativen Arbeit [mit]’. But the statement in the same report that ‘der von der Gesellschaft entgegengesetzte Widerstand gegenüber den in Erscheinung tretenden Skinheads zu gering ist. [...] da z.T. Angst vorherrschend ist, aber auch oftmals Gleichgültigkeit’ contradicted the positive news.

The indifference of the public is confirmed in a police case file<sup>80</sup> which contains interviews with victims of Skinhead attacks in Berlin (‘5 Skinheads greifen in der U-Bahn Alex - Elsterwerdaer Platz “Gruftis” tötlich an und berauben sie. Täter inhaftiert’). The offence was categorised as ‘political Rowdytum’ and the attack and perpetrators were a target for the MfS. The report describes, from the perspectives of the victims, two males and two females, how the males were beaten, kicked, their clothing and jewellery was destroyed and their hair was pulled out by adolescents referred to as Skinheads, and how their Gothic appearance was ridiculised by them and they had been forced to remove their make-up. According to the victims, their appearance was the trigger for the violence, while fellow passengers had looked away.

Such a concrete case of ‘tätliches Vergehen gegen Gruftis’<sup>81</sup> placed the responsible police and MfS functionaries in a dichotomous position. When the MfS in Potsdam<sup>82</sup> started an inquiry into the local Skinhead scene, it was stated that the ‘Ablehnung Andersdenkender (vor allem “Punks”, “Grufties”) bis hin zum physischen Terror gegen diese Personen’ was a

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<sup>78</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle, Abt. XX 1036, Abteilung XX, Halle, 19.2.88. weitere Zurückdrängung und Verhinderung von Gefährdungen der Sicherheit und Ordnung, die von kriminellen/rowdyhaften Jugendlichen ausgehen, p. 137.

<sup>79</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 5937, Berlin, den 6.1.1989, Information über Störungen der öffentlichen Ordnung und Sicherheit in Berlin, Hauptstadt der DDR, durch Straftaten von negativen Gruppierungen im Jahre 1988, p. 1.

<sup>80</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Bln Abt. XX 3053, Volkspolizei Berlin Aktueller Stand der Bekämpfung des politischen Rowdytums (Skinheads). September 1988, p. 31.

<sup>81</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6074, BV potsdam, Abt. XX. 2. März 1989. Eröffnungsbericht zum operativen Vorgang ‚Bürste‘, p. 69.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

fundamental element of ‘skinheadtypischen Einstellungen’. From the perspective of the state, Skinheads, Punks and Gruftis were all ‘Andersdenkende’ in a pejorative sense and all under surveillance for this very reason. Attacks from one group of ‘Andersdenkende’ against another group of ‘Andersdenkende’ forced the responsible investigators to differentiate their singular approach to ‘Andersdenkende’ (subcultures, youth scenes) as well as their own ‘Feindbilder’ (‘Staatsfeinde’, ‘Aussteiger’, negative-decadent youth and so on). The question is whether functionaries did take in different positions towards the victims whose marginalised and stigmatised bodies and minds suddenly depended on responsibility and protection. What we can identify here is a differentiation process during which ‘Sicherheit’ got a different connotation in the context of subculture surveillance.

As shown in Chapter 2, all Gothic-related scenes were estimated to be non-violent, introverted and ‘soft’, yet this was still perceived as a suspicious form of otherness. Skinhead violence relativised as well as confirmed the embodied deviance of participants in Gothic scenes, because the Gothic body was a Skinhead ‘Feindbild’. They were first and above all young people who experienced physical and mental harassment from other adolescents who were said to belong to another, hostile subculture. The search, arrest and conviction of offenders was a matter for police and justice, while the MfS’ focused on tracking down the political enemies of the GDR. Reports about Skinhead violence against Gruftis indicate that inquiries not only concerned Skinheads but also aimed to reveal the hidden truth about Gruftis.

This is perfectly exemplified in the so-called *Fragebogen für Skinheads*<sup>83</sup>, a standard questionnaire which was used in interrogations with Skinheads. The *Fragebogen* comprises five answer options to every question: ‘a) Antwortverweigerung; b) schwafelnde Ausflüchte, um eine Meinungsäußerung zu vermeiden; c) spielt den “braven DDR-Bürger”, verkündet offizielle Standpunkte; d) fühlt sich von der Frage herausgefordert, tritt mit sichtbar eingelernten Formeln aggressiv auf; e) formuliert seinen Standpunkt aus Überzeugung’. The key question ‘Was regt Sie an Punks, Gruftis und ähnlichen Gruppen auf?’ demonstrates that HA XX was interested in the subcultural ‘Feindbild’ which the Skinheads shared with the SED. The questionnaire had a double advantage; it provided insights into the ‘Denken und Verhalten’ of Skinheads, while it added information about Gruftis from different perspectives with which the MfS could sharpen its own Gothic ‘Feindbild’.

The question in the *Fragebogen* ‘Wie sollte sich denn der Staat gegenüber solchen Bürgern verhalten?’ is also very interesting because it politicises the Skinhead ‘Feindbilder’,

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<sup>83</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 6162, MDI Informationen, Sonderheft 1/1988, Kriminalpolizei, p. 47, p. 50.

almost as if the MfS approved of them and offered the interviewee a sense of autonomy and solidarity towards their opinion about Gruftis. A Skinhead who filled in the form cooperated with the MfS, in a way, because it is stated in the report that they were against Gruftis and Punks ‘aus Überzeugung’. The answers had political weight and HA XX apparently perceived the Skinheads as a valuable, trustworthy source of politically motivated and relevant subcultural information.

However, in some localities, the situation was completely different. In Cottbus, for example, it was reported by department XX<sup>84</sup> in November 1988 that ‘im Gegensatz zu den normalen Verhaltensnormen der Skinheads, ein enger Kontakt zu anderen sogenannten “Moderrichtungen” feststellbar [ist],’ and that ‘Punks und Gruftis werden akzeptiert, besonders wenn diese Personen stabile Verbindungen nach Berlin besitzen’. The seemingly exceptional situation, it is argued in the report, had a specific cause: ‘Das Motiv dieser Verhaltensweisen wird in den genannten Kreisen damit begründet, daß die Anhängerzahl der einzelnen Richtungen in Cottbus zu gering ist und man gegenseitig keinen “Krieg” führen will’. Here, Gruftis were not victims as there appeared to be peace between the otherwise rivalling scenes.

We cannot identify any signs of ‘radical reshape’<sup>85</sup> or ‘complete reorientation of SED youth policy’<sup>86</sup> towards subcultures in the MfS files analysed so far. Skinheads, Gruftis and Punks were not, as Hayton<sup>87</sup> claims, ‘depoliticised’ or ‘neutralised’ in the language, methods and strategies of the MfS, because, as Mielke’s speech<sup>88</sup> from 1988 shows, the aim was clear:

Genossen, einige Bemerkungen zu aktuellen Tendenzen der politisch-operativen Lage unter jugendlichen Personenkreisen. Dabei handelt es sich besonders um solche – nach westlichen Verhaltensmustern auftretenden Kräfte – wie Punks, Schihands [sic], Hevi, Hevi me, Hevi Metels [sic] und deren Sympathisanten. Aber auch in jüngster Zeit in das operative Blickfeld geratene sogenannte Grufis [sic]. Erforderlich ist es, Gruppierungen, Zusammenschlüsse bzw. Konzentrationen negativ-dekadenter Jugendlicher in Abstimmung und in Zusammenarbeit mit der Deutschen Volkspolizei noch stärker inoffiziell zu durchdringen. Das Ziel muss darin bestehen, bereits bestehende zu zersetzen und dauerhaft aufzulösen.

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<sup>84</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 5940, Abt. XX, Cottbus, 29.11.1988 Berichterstattung Monat November 1988, p. 45.

<sup>85</sup> Hayton, ‘Härte gegen Punk’, p. 342.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 346.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 345.

<sup>88</sup> <https://www.mdr.de/zeitreise/grufties-100.html>; <https://www.mdr.de/damals/archiv/artikel193946.html> [accessed on 20 May 2019]

At the same time, local departments observed how the ‘Denk und Verhaltensweisen’ of subcultures varied, or in other words, with varying subcultural practices, behaviours, structures, dynamics and interactions. While there were plenty of signs ‘that the Stasi was no longer effectively combating negativ-dekadente Jugendliche’, as Hayton argues<sup>89</sup>, because of local differences and contradictions, and because youth scenes could not be banned so simply as Mielke had hoped.

The SED’s ‘Feindbilder’ were both destabilised and stabilised by local and translocal subcultural contradictions and conflicts, it seems. In Berlin, HA XX<sup>90</sup> reported that the situation was about to escalate, and that serious confrontations between the different youth scenes were to be expected at Alexanderplatz, such as ‘eine große Prügelei zwischen Punks und Grufties auf der einen Seite und BFC-Fans und Skinheads auf der anderen Seite’<sup>91</sup>. Here, it is suggested that Grufties were not necessarily always non-violent, and that the state could not control subcultural conflicts. The question is whether such ‘pressure from below was forcing change at the top’<sup>92</sup>, or whether the top could simply not keep up with all that was happening and changing within the real existing (sub)cultural landscape.

HA XX<sup>93</sup> rated the cause of the polarising subcultural landscape in July 1989 as a political cause as it estimated that rivalry was real because subcultural ideologies differed fundamentally. This realisation resulted in a shift in the perception of the young generation, as report from department AKG<sup>94</sup> in Leipzig demonstrates, in which it is stated that ‘die Jugend ist keine homogene Personengruppe’. This is a crucial statement which, from the MfS’ perspective, was not so much the depoliticisation but rather a repoliticisation of youth. ‘Problemgruppen’ are not neutralised but nationalised and integrated into the heterogeneous youth population (‘Arbeiterjugend, Landjugend, Schuljugend, Studenten [...] aus verschiedenen sozialen Schichten’). What is most striking about this report is that it is noted that ‘in der Jugend spiegelt sich die zukünftige soziale Struktur der Gesellschaft wieder’ and that ‘Problemgruppen’ were an East German and not Western or capitalist problem. Moreover, different departments reported that young people were victims of, and not to blame for ‘primäre

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<sup>89</sup> Hayton, ‘Härte gegen Punk’, p. 345.

<sup>90</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle, Abt. XX 1036, Abt. XX. Halle 22.3.89. bericht zu geplanten Aktivitäten negativ-dekadenter Jugendlicher/Jungerwachsener am 20.4.1989 in Halle, p. 58.

<sup>91</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 5937, Berlin, den 6.1.1989. information über Störungen der öffentlichen Ordnung und Sicherheit in Berlin, Hauptstadt der DDR, durch Straftaten von negativen Gruppierungen im Jahre 1988, p. 26.

<sup>92</sup> Hayton, ‘Härte gegen Punk’, p. 342.

<sup>93</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 5941, Arbeitsgruppe XXII, Neubrandenburg, 12.07.1989. einschätzung über Verbindungen neonazistischer Kräfte aus der BRD und Berlin (West) in den Bezirk Neubrandenburg, p. 57

<sup>94</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfs Leipzig, AKG 01009, Aktuelle Angriffe der PiD gegen die Jugend (Thesen), p. 1.

psychischen Fehlentwicklungen (Triebstörungen), Minderwertigkeitsgefühlen, Kontaktstörungen, Pubertätsstörungen<sup>95</sup>, and that these psychological issues were caused by a ‘gestörtes Elternhaus’,<sup>96</sup> or ‘Doppelzüngigkeit, Inkonsequenz, Heuchelei [...]. Mangelnde Einflußnahme [...], z.B. durch Zurückweichen vor Auseinandersetzungen in Schulen, [...] Vertuschen von Vorkommnissen, Bagatellisieren von Widersprüchen’<sup>97</sup>. To blame were, according to some MfS functionaries, ‘staatliche und gesellschaftliche Erziehungsträger’.

It seems that HA XX’s<sup>98</sup> pessimist conclusion from January 1989 that the ‘gesellschaftliche Einflußnahme zur Zurückdrängung negativ-dekadenter Erscheinungsformen’ was insufficient and ineffective is rooted in the realisation that it was a battle which the MfS and police could not win alone. Department XX<sup>99</sup> in Berlin complained that punishment of Skinheads was becoming less consequent, and that ‘Handlungen der Schutz- und Sicherheitsorgane gegen Skinheads und Sympathisanten stoßen stärker als bisher auf Widerspruch selbst durch Jugendklub- und Gaststättenleiter’. The reason for this, according to the report<sup>100</sup>, was twofold, as it is written that ‘Skinheads werden als Modeerscheinung toleriert’ and that ‘viele Bürger sind ebenfalls gegen Ausländer, Punks und Gruftis eingestellt’. Political and societal ‘Feindbilder’ or political societal tolerance as well as intolerance were thus working against the MfS and the police.

Crucially, other youth institutions who became involved expressed critique towards state youth policy. The *Zentralinstitut für Jugendforschung* (hereafter ZIJ) rated the Skinhead problem as the direct result of the politicisation of Gruftis. During a ‘Rundtischgespräch’<sup>101</sup> zu “Jugendlichen Randgruppen” in Berlin on 19 April 1989, sociologists noted that it was not imperialist influence but the criminalisation of youth scenes which caused a ‘Zunahme aggressiver Verhaltensmuster bei Jugendliche’. The Skinhead problem, it was argued, was convenient for the authorities, which was proven by, as stated<sup>102</sup> ‘die lange Duldung der

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<sup>95</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfs Leipzig, AKG 01009, Aktuelle Angriffe der PiD gegen die Jugend (Thesen), p. 1.

<sup>96</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Halle, VIII 1460/88, KD Halle, VPKA Halle, Kriminalspolizei. 19.05.1988. Sachstandsbericht zur Konzentration jugendlicher Punks im Bereich Halle – Silberhöhe, Straße der Aktivisten, p. 73.

<sup>97</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfs Leipzig, AKG 01009, Aktuelle Angriffe der PiD gegen die Jugend (Thesen), p. 4 – 5.

<sup>98</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 5937, Berlin, den 6.1.1989, Information über Störungen der öffentlichen Ordnung und Sicherheit in Berlin, Hauptstadt der DDR, durch Straftaten von negativen Gruppierungen im Jahre 1988, p. 1.

<sup>99</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, 4669, Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Berlin, Abteilung XX. Berlin, 31.1.89. Einschätzung Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftreten und Verhalten negativ-dekadenter Jugendlicher sowie ihrer Unterbindung und Zurückdrängung, p. 12.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., pp. 35, 12.

<sup>101</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 7807, Abt. XX, Berlin, den 19.4.1989 Thema- Rundtischgespräch zu ‘Jugendliche Randgruppen’. Rundtischgespräch 12.4.89, MB V Klinikum-Buch, p. 17.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 18.



Gruppen durch die Sicherheitsorgane, nach dem Motto: “Die halten die anderen Gruppen in Schach”. Hayton’s<sup>103</sup> assumption ‘that the regime at least tacitly supported the Skinheads, although there is no evidence to be found in the Ministry for State Security archives to support these occasional claims’ was thus shared by representatives of the ZIJ. According to the document<sup>104</sup>, witnesses had stated that interference of ‘Sicherheitsorgane’ did not impress Skinheads while the ‘Sicherheitsorgane’ themselves looked away. And yet, the sociologists nuanced this accusation by adding that ‘Ausschreitungen von Skin vor dem Jugendclub Rotkamp (H’hausen) gegenüber Grufts’ had shown that ‘die Sicherheitsorgane haben Angst vor den Skin, wagen sich wegen zu befürchtender Übergriffe an die Gruppen nicht “ran”’.

Regardless of the Skinhead problem, a crucial statement in the document<sup>105</sup> from the ZIJ regards the criticism against the political ‘Feindbilder’ and the defence of Gruftis: ‘Durch die Sicherheitsorgane wurde eine Kriminalisierung der Grufts und Panks [sic] vorgenommen, obwohl die Grufts völlig gutwillig und harmlos sind’. According to the ZIJ representatives, Gruftis were innocent adolescents who participated in a harmless subculture and had become victims of unfair and unnuanced state policies which, according to the document, consisted of physical harassment (‘demütigende Behandlung durch Körpervisitation’). The reason why Gothic bodies were denied basic human rights by the ‘Sicherheitsorgane’ according to ZIJ, was precisely because these adolescents did not pose a threat; ‘an die trauen sie sich ran’.

The Skinhead problem and ongoing criminalisation of youth (sub)cultures did indeed ‘carve out space for dialogue in the GDR’<sup>106</sup> but, as also shown in Chapter 3, it seems that the SED and MfS were hardly or not involved in that researchers, filmmakers and scene members participated in the discourse. The file analysed above does not include MfS commentary on the ZIJ meeting. Instead, HA XX<sup>107</sup> justified its surveillance of Gruftis with the argument that a *The Cure* party, for instance, could provoke ‘eine Auseinandersetzung zwischen Skins und Grufties seitens der Skins’. The question is whether the presence of ‘Sicherheitsorgane’ served the protection of Gruftis, or whether they were meant to prove HA XX’s<sup>108</sup> conclusion that ‘im Wesentlichen treten [Gruftis] nicht operativ in Erscheinung’ wrong.

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<sup>103</sup> Hayton, ‘Härte gegen Punk’, p. 341.

<sup>104</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 7807, Abt. XX, Berlin, den 19.4.1989 Thema- Rundtischgespräch zu ‘Jugendliche Randgruppen’, p. 18.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Hayton, ‘Härte gegen Punk’, p. 339.

<sup>107</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, 7807, HA XX Bericht über ein Gespräch [...] hinsichtlich geplante Aktivitäten von Skinheads am 20.4.89 in Potsdam, p. 32.

<sup>108</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 5937, Information zu aktuellen Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negativ-dekadenter Jugendlicher sowie Ergebnisse und Wirksamkeit der politisch-operativen Arbeit zu ihrer Unterbindung und Zurückdrängung. 10. April 1989, p. 41.

### III. Spectacular Secret Society? The Limits of Subcultural Surveillance

In February 1989, department XX<sup>109</sup> concluded that ‘eine wesentliche Beeinträchtigung der öffentlichen Sicherheit und Ordnung ist bisher von den Anhängern der Gruftis in der Hauptstadt nicht ausgegangen’, and that ‘Zusammenschlüsse von Gruftis mit festen Strukturen wurden bisher nicht festgestellt’. HA XX<sup>110</sup> began to doubt the label Gruftis, it seems, because it reported that the ‘150 Anhänger in the Hauptstadt’ could not be confirmed. The ‘high fluctuation’ in scene membership, as argued, complicated the gathering of quantitative data. What was said with certainty is that participants shared a ‘gepflegtes Aussehen’ and a taste for ‘schwarze mystische Musik, wie sie für die Gruppen “The Cure” aus Großbritannien oder “The Sisters of Mercy” aus der BRD typisch ist’. While HA XX<sup>111</sup> did not describe the Gruftis in Berlin in a pejorative way, the conclusion after four years of investigation into Gothic scenes that ‘exakte Aussagen über Zahl ihrer Anhänger sowie Aktivitäten und Wirksamkeit liegen gegenwärtig noch nicht vor’ was, considering the efforts, disappointing.

In Dresden, department VII<sup>112</sup>, responsible for the criminal police and a file which is titled *Politischer Untergrund, Jugend, Gruppierungen*, similarly reported that ‘die gesellschaftliche Rolle der sogenannten Gruftis ist noch weitgehend unaufgeklärt’. While attributing Gruftis with a ‘societal role’ and rating them as an ‘ideologische Strömung’<sup>113</sup> it seems that the term ideology was used analogously to ‘Denken und Verhalten’ and not per se as referring to a political ideology. This is further confirmed by the fact that Gruftis were also

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<sup>109</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, 4669, Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Berlin, Abteilung XX. Berlin, 6.2.89. Einschätzung Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftreten und Verhalten negativ-dekadenter Jugendlicher sowie ihrer Unterbindung und Zurückdrängung, p. 28; BStU, MfS, HA XX, 10687, Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Berlin, Abteilung XX. Berlin, 6.2.89. Einschätzung Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftreten und Verhalten negativ-dekadenter Jugendlicher sowie ihrer Unterbindung und Zurückdrängung, pp. 28 – 29.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 28

<sup>111</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 5940, Cottbus, 30.5.1988. Berichterstattung über Entwicklungstendenzen unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen sowie die Wirksamkeit politisch-operativer Maßnahmen zur Zurückdrängung – Zeitraum 1.1.1988 bis 20.5.1988, p. 30

<sup>112</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, Abt. VII, 7484, Abtl. Leitakte – politischer Untergrund, Jugend, ÜE, Gruppierungen, BDVP Dresden. Kriminalpolizei. Dezernat I. Dresden, den 2.9.1988. Lageeinschätzung Jugend, Tendenzen, Ergebnisse und Erfordernisse bei der Zersetzung und Zurückdrängung von negativ-dekadenten Gruppierungen Jugendlicher und Jungerwachsener, p. 114.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 111.

categorised as a ‘Moderichtung’<sup>114</sup> in 1988. While the department<sup>115</sup> acknowledged that youth ‘ideologies’ were not homogeneous and not static, the one concrete visible criterion with which adolescents were labelled as Gruftis had lost its quantitative research value for the observers: ‘Die gegenwärtig in der Jugend vorherrschende Modefarbe schwarz läßt ein nur ungenaues Bild der tatsächlichen Zahl der Gruftianhänger zu’. The department<sup>116</sup> ordered that the focus should shift from quantitative to qualitative data and provided a plan of action with the ‘Ziel der umfassenden Aufklärung der Gruftis im Kreisgebiet’. IMs were given high responsibility in the ‘Aufklärung der Ursachen, Motive und des Sozialverhaltens der Gruftis’ while it was advised to keep an eye on the state border and check Gruftis who travelled to Berlin.

The FDJ was also given ‘konkret[e] Verantwortung bei der Unterstützung der Gewährleistung der staatlichen Sicherheit’ in the ‘umfassende Aufklärung der Gruftis’.<sup>117</sup> This task was problematic because the FDJ’s main task was to win young people for socialism and offer them ‘meaningful leisure activity’<sup>118</sup>. Some youth club leaders, as shown in Chapters 2 and 3, and as will be further explored in the next subchapter, decided to ‘achieve state goals with the [...] carrot’, as Hayton<sup>119</sup> writes, by offering Gothic music fans support. While this ‘co-optation’, as Hayton notes, ‘could help de-politicize youth subcultures’, department VII was clearly unwilling to let things go independently from political interference and control.

Department VII, as the report shows, was convinced that Gruftis had a hidden agenda and that no news did not mean good news with this particular subculture. It is stated in the report from September 1988<sup>120</sup> that ‘aufgrund der bisher nur geringen gesellschaftlichen Wirksamkeit, der sich oft nur im stillen vollziehenden Rituale dieser Personen sowie der heimlichen nächtlichen Zusammenkünfte ist das Erkennen von aktiven Gruftis kompliziert’.

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<sup>114</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 5940, Cottbus, 30.5.1988. Berichterstattung über Entwicklungstendenzen unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen sowie die Wirksamkeit politisch-operativer Maßnahmen zur Zurückdrängung – Zeitraum 1.1.1988 bis 20.5.1988, p. 30: ‘Es liegen Informationen darüber vor, daß es im Bereich der Bezirksstadt Anhänger dieser Moderichtung gibt, auch ein Vorkommnis auf einem Friedhof in Peitz ist bekannt.’

<sup>115</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, Abt. VII, 7484, Abtl. Leitakte – politischer Untergrund, Jugend, ÜE, Gruppierungen, BDVP Dresden. Kriminalpolizei. Dezernat I. Dresden, den 2.9.1988. Lageeinschätzung Jugend, Tendenzen, Ergebnisse und Erfordernisse bei der Zersetzung und Zurückdrängung von negativ-dekadenten Gruppierungen Jugendlicher und Jungerwachsener, p. 114.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 115.

<sup>117</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfs Leipzig, AKG 01009, Aktuelle Angriffe der PiD gegen die Jugend (Thesen), p. 13 – 14: ‘Zusammenarbeit mit verantwortlichen Offizieren des MfS und Blockleitungen ist gesichert (alles gemeinsam lösen).’

<sup>118</sup> Hayton, ‘Härte gegen Punk’, p. 345.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 345.

<sup>120</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, Abt. VII, 7484, Abtl. Leitakte – politischer Untergrund, Jugend, ÜE, Gruppierungen, BDVP Dresden. Kriminalpolizei. Dezernat I. Dresden, den 2.9.1988. Lageeinschätzung Jugend, Tendenzen, Ergebnisse und Erfordernisse bei der Zersetzung und Zurückdrängung von negativ-dekadenten Gruppierungen Jugendlicher und Jungerwachsener, p. 114.

Department VII<sup>121</sup> ordered the ‘Bearbeitung einer in sich abgeschlossenen Gruftgruppe mit dem Ziel der Auflösung bis Ende 1988’ because it assumed ‘daß die Anhängerschaft der Griftis [sic] wesentlich größer ist’<sup>122</sup> and the hidden problem was therefore much bigger too.

According to the report, politically relevant activities took place secretly and coded, which made the subculture fundamentally different from all other youth scenes. Gruftis, department VII suggested, self-consciously mystified and isolated their subcultural life from society. Apparently their external appearance or their music tastes, as shown, were not the issue, as these were gradually becoming socially and politically tolerated, or had at least lost their shock effect. The problem was that the investigators were clueless about what was going on in the minds of these teenagers. And hence, the lack of knowledge created an image of Grufti life as a secret youth society that thrived in darkness and was therefore able to expand beyond the knowledge and control of the political, (sub)cultural and societal actors. In February 1989, HA XX<sup>123</sup> decided that the reason why hostile activity was not uncovered yet was thus that it ‘findet vermutlich in nichtöffentlichen, privat gehaltenen Kreisen stat’. The term ‘vermutlich’ does, however, signify some doubt. HA XX<sup>124</sup> decided that the ‘IM-Basis’ urgently needed to be expanded and specialised for the Gruftis and that ‘Quellen’ would finally reveal the truth.

In contrast, reports on so-called ‘Einsätze gegen Gruftis’<sup>125</sup> from 1989 demonstrate that the MfS and police in Berlin proceeded their investigation into Gothic scenes with a case by case focus instead of a focus on revealing the coherent ideological meaning of a non-coherent subculture. Once a large ‘Ansammlung Jugendlicher in schwarzer Kleidung’<sup>126</sup> was spotted, and it was observed that they were heading for an unknown destination, they were followed. It

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<sup>121</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, Abt. VII, 7484, Abtl. Leitakte – politischer Untergrund, Jugend, ÜE, Gruppierungen, BDVP Dresden. Kriminalpolizei. Dezernat I. Dresden, den 2.9.1988. Lageeinschätzung Jugend, Tendenzen, Ergebnisse und Erfordernisse bei der Zersetzung und Zurückdrängung von negativ-dekadenten Gruppierungen Jugendlicher und Jungerwachsener, Anlage 1 Ausstellung der operativen Materialien und Hinweise zur Entscheidungsfindung in den Komm. I der Kreise, p. 117.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>123</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, 4669, Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Berlin, Abteilung XX. Berlin, 6.2.89. Einschätzung Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftreten und Verhalten negativ-dekadenter Jugendlicher sowie ihrer Unterbindung und Zurückdrängung, p. 28; BStU, MfS, HA XX, 10687, Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Berlin, Abteilung XX. Berlin, 6.2.89. Einschätzung Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftreten und Verhalten negativ-dekadenter Jugendlicher sowie ihrer Unterbindung und Zurückdrängung, p. 28 – 29.

<sup>124</sup> MfS, HA XX, AKG 5937, Information zu aktuellen Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negativ-dekadenter Jugendlicher sowie Ergebnisse und Wirksamkeit der politisch-operativen Arbeit zu ihrer Unterbindung und Zurückdrängung. 10. April 1989, p. 41.

<sup>125</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX Nr. 3109, 26.03.88 Störung des sozialistischen Zusammenlebens gem. [paragraph] 4 Punkt 1 Absatz 6 der OWVO, p. 149.

<sup>126</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX Nr. 3109, 1100 Berlin – Pankow, den 26.03.88 Betr: Ansammlung Jugendlicher in schwarzer Kleidung, p. 150.

may be that ‘eine Konzentration äußerlich auffälliger jugendlicher Personen’<sup>127</sup> did not automatically cause moral or political panics anymore because it most reports<sup>128</sup> seemed to confirm that there was no need, for instance, when it was observed that during a ‘private Feier von Gruftis [...] soll im wesentlichen Musik der Gruppe “The Cure” gehört worden sein und man habe sich nach Einschätzung der Quelle über keine politisch-relevanten Themen als auch Vorhaben unterhalten’. This specific case was closed when responsible actors felt that the situation was under control and there was, essentially, nothing to report.

Similarly, when the police<sup>129</sup> observed ‘eine größere Menschengruppe (ca. 25 Personen) [...], die alle Schwarz bekleidet waren’, it was noted that ‘es könnte sich dabei um die sogenannten ‘Gruftis’ gehandelt haben’. While the MfS departments XX and VIII were informed<sup>130</sup> that the group expanded to eighty participants and that ‘einige Gruppenmitglieder unterhielten sich dabei über das demonstrative Auftreten der “Grufti’s” in dem sie sagten: “Sieht das stark aus, so eine lange Schlange und alle in Schwarz”’, investigators were alerted to the fact that the colour black stood for collective self-representation for the participants, rather than symbolising a political position. The report closes with the trivial conclusion that the group had been on their way to a party where nothing worth reporting was observed.

Another similar case titled *Sofortmeldung, Betr. Überprüfung einer Ansammlung jugendlicher bzw. Jungerwachsener*<sup>131</sup> from May 1989 indicates that a large group of adolescents in black dress in the city was reported as a matter of routine, while the actual information that the adolescents ‘verhielten sich ruhig und fielen insbesondere durch ihr gepflegtes Äußeres und überwiegend schwarze Kleidung auf’ did not offer any valuable clues for department VII. According to department VII<sup>132</sup>, the focus on external appearance and public behaviour was problematic, because ‘diese Jugendlichen werden oftmals aufgrund ihres äußeren Erscheinungsbildes nur belächelt, ohne daß man den ideologischen Inhalt dieser Strömung einer kritischen Wertung unterzieht’. Interestingly, hence, the department that

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<sup>127</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin Abt. XX, Nr. 3109, Kreisdienststelle Marzahn, Abteilung XX, Berlin, 12.04.1988. Information, p. 122.

<sup>128</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin Abt. XX Nr. 3109, Abteilung XX/2. Berlin, 10. Mai 1989. Operative Information „Aktivitäten von Grufti-Anhängern anlässlich des 30. Geburtstages von Robert Smith (Sänger der englischen Rockband ‚The Cure‘“, p. 18.

<sup>129</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, Nr. 3109, Abt. VIII Berlin, 18.04.1988, Information, p. 144.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, Nr. 3109, Volkspolizei Inspektion Berlin Prenzlauer Berg, ZKS. Berlin 09.05.89. Jugendliche Gruppierung, pp. 25 – 26.

<sup>132</sup> 171 BStU, MfS, BV Dresden, Abt. VII, 7484, Abtl. Leitakte – politischer Untergrund, Jugend, ÜE, Gruppierungen, BDVP Dresden. Kriminalpolizei. Dezernat I. Dresden, den 2.9.1988. Lageeinschätzung Jugend, Tendenzen, Ergebnisse und Erfordernisse bei der Zersetzung und Zurückdrängung von negativ-dekadenten Gruppierungen Jugendlicher und Jungerwachsener, p. 115.

focused on the uncovering of ‘politischer Untergrund’ suggested that the spectacular style in combination with nonspectacular behaviour was misleading and blinded observers to its hidden symbolic meaning.

Crucially, group observations forced a nuancing of the label *Gruftis* and the (fuzzy) definition of *Grufti* ideology. Police functionaries who followed a group for instance reported that they were not dealing with *Gruftis* but with ‘Anhänger der Rockgruppe “Depeche Mode”’ who belonged to a fan club and were on their way to a *Depeche Mode party*.<sup>133</sup> While it was reported that the fans were ‘überwiegend schwarz gekleidet’, they were described as ‘Jugendliche[...] Personen unterschiedlichster Art’ and thus, the observers looked beyond the black fan uniform. The statement that the fans hardly knew each other and that most of them did not know the destination, as written in the police report<sup>134</sup>, contradicted the idea that the fans were organised. At the same time, it is noted that the members-only fan event was not officially registered and thus illegal. This sufficed for department XX to order the ‘ständige Beobachtung der Ansammlung’<sup>135</sup>. But the observation resulted in the trivial conclusion that it was ‘ohne Vorkommnisse’. The superintendent<sup>136</sup> at one of the district offices in Berlin concluded ‘nach persönlicher Inaugenscheinnahme der Ansammlung’ that ‘es sich bei diesen nicht um gewaltorientierte Jugendliche handelt’, while the responsible police officer<sup>137</sup> confirmed that ‘die Personen verhielten sich ruhig, es gingen keinerlei Störungen von ihnen aus’. The responsible actors had fulfilled their task and a positive picture was convenient for all involved parties.

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid.; 180 BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, Nr. 3109, PdVP Berlin, odh. Betr. Information über auftretende Gruppe Jugendlicher, p. 24.

<sup>134</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, Nr. 3109, Volkspolizei Inspektion Berlin Prenzlauer Berg, ZKS. Berlin 09.05.89. Jugendliche Gruppierung, pp. 25 – 26.

<sup>135</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, Nr. 3109, KD Weißensee, Berlin, 09.05.89. Meldung 2 – OHD Verlaufsfilmm 09/05 ‘Ansammlung von Jugendlichen’, p. 19; BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, Nr. 3109, Sofortmeldung, Betr. Überprüfung einer Ansammlung jugendlicher bzw. Jungerwachsener. 9.5.89, p. 23

<sup>136</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, Nr. 3109, KD Weißensee, Berlin, 09.05.89. Meldung 2 – OHD Verlaufsfilmm 09/05 ‘Ansammlung von Jugendlichen’, p. 20.

<sup>137</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, Nr. 3109, PdVP Berlin, odh. Betr. Information über auftretende Gruppe Jugendlicher, p. 24.

#### IV. Towards Subcultural Legitimation: Integrating Independent Youth

While Grufftis were at no point concretely referred to as opposition or ‘Staatsfeinde’ by HA XX<sup>138</sup> and they were rated as ‘politisch desinteressiert’<sup>139</sup>, it was said that they ‘verstoßen aber [...] gegen die Normen der Gesellschaft’ from the perspective of the SED, because young people were supposed to fit into the societal norm. The term ‘aber’ refers to the fact that the only ‘crime’ this form of non-conformism could be convicted for was for being different and standing out in the mass. As Farin<sup>140</sup> accurately formulates it, the ‘schwarze Ästhetik [...] wirkt inmitten der bunten Warenwelt wie ein störender Schmutzleck; sie widersprechen allein durch ihre Präsenz den gängigen Jugend-, Schönheits- und Körperbildern. Sie wirken alt(ertümlich), konfrontieren uns *passers-by* [italics in original] mit der Vergänglichkeit des Lebens und unterlaufen damit subversiv – nicht aggressiv – die Verdrängungssehnsüchte der Gesellschaft’.

Adolescents choose a life style which did not seem to clash with socialist values and political rules, as the files demonstrate, but with moral expectations of pre-adult life. Wurschi<sup>141</sup> writes that the ‘Wunsch nach individueller Entfaltung als Angriff auf das politische System fehlgedeutet wurde’. Yet the self-representation of Gothic collectivity illustration in Chapters 1, 2 and 3 and the previous subchapter points out that while self-determination was indeed problematic, a collective celebration of a higher meaning of life which stylistically and thematically focused on the ‘Endlichkeit des [...] Daseins’<sup>142</sup>, caused at least irritation with those who felt threatened by Dark Romantic existential questions, topics and aesthetics.

We might argue that the conflict between Gothic and the state was a generational, emancipational, as well as an aesthetic conflict. Gothic music and fashion created collective subcultural space and capital with which individuals could create, express, organise, disconnect, connect, experiment, negotiate and compromise. Their focus on fan collectivity and youth autonomy frustrated a government which aimed to control every aspect of adolescent life including their future.

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<sup>138</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG 5937, Information zu aktuellen Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftretens und Verhaltens negativ-dekadenter Jugendlicher sowie Ergebnisse und Wirksamkeit der politisch-operativen Arbeit zu ihrer Unterbindung und Zurückdrängung. 10. April 1989, p. 41.

<sup>139</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfs Leipzig, AKG 01009, Aktuelle Angriffe der PiD gegen die Jugend (Thesen), p. 9.

<sup>140</sup> Klaus Farin, *Die Gothics. Interviews. Fotografien* (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen Verlag, 2001), p. 164.

<sup>141</sup> Peter Wurschi, *Rennsteigbeat. Jugendliche Subkulturen Im Thüringer Raum 1952 – 1989* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2007), p. 235, p. 6; Farin: *Die Gothics*, p. 89.

<sup>142</sup> Wurschi, *Rennsteigbeat*, p. 236.

By the end of 1988, *Depeche Mode* fans formed a separate subcultural category. According to a report from department XX<sup>143</sup> in Berlin from 26 October about fan club *For Ever*, the members only called themselves *Demos* when they were among each other. The department distinguished between *Demos* and *Gruftis* because it discovered an incompatibility between the two that was not external and therefore not visible: ‘Äußerlich sind die Mitglieder des Fanklubs und Anhänger von Depeche Mode durch vorwiegend getragene schwarze Kleidung und Grufti-ähnliches Erscheinungsbild zu erkennen, obwohl sich die aktiven Mitglieder des Fanklubs von durch Gruftis ausgeübten Kulturveranstaltungen u.ä. distanzieren’. Nevertheless, the appearance was still considered ‘Grufti-like’ which shows that *Grufti* was, like Gothic is today, the overarching notion for Gothic styles and aesthetics. Whereas the *Demos* distanced themselves from *Grufti* practices, as stated, it is noted that interaction was not ruled out by their different views: ‘Einzelne Mitglieder des Fanklubs sollen sich zu den Gruftis bekennen und werden trotzdem akzeptiert’.

In Annaberg, a small town in Saxony, the home of the *Demos* was the local youth club (as also shown in Chapter 3). Initially, HA XX<sup>144</sup> seemed convinced that the local ‘Schutz- und Sicherheitsorgane’ could guarantee that the ‘inoffizielle Absicherung ist gewährleistet’. However, about one and a half years later, in July 1988, the functionaries at the MfS district office in Annaberg seemed less assured. The reason for this, according to their report<sup>145</sup> from 11 July, was that a ‘Quelle’ had attended a ‘Treffen von Depache [sic] Mode Fan [sic] der DDR’ in Zwickau’ where 250 fans had been present. According to the ‘Quelle’, the ‘Treffen’ had inspired fans in Annaberg to organise their own fan gathering. It is noted in the report that fan club members had approached the first secretary of the FDJ district committee and asked for approval. The fan club received the support they had hoped for.

Crucially, all involved parties and particularly the MfS seemed to benefit from the cooperation because transparency was guaranteed as long as the FDJ monitored the organisation (‘Abstimmung zu allen Aktivitäten’<sup>146</sup>) and determined the contents of the party; ‘zur Veranstaltung selbst wird ausschließlich [...] die Musikrichtung “Depeche Mode” gespielt’<sup>147</sup>). And yet, the report shows that the MfS still obtained information from ‘Quellen’

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<sup>143</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin Abt. XX Nr. 3109, Abteilung XX/2 Berlin 26. Oktober 1989, Operative Information „Depeche-Mode-Fanklub ‚For Ever‘“, p. 2.

<sup>144</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG, 5938, Berichterstattung 2.2.1988. Darstellung der Entwicklung unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen, p. 79.

<sup>145</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, KD Annaberg 126, Kreisdienststelle Annaberg, 11.07.1989, Information, p. 2.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> 206 BStU, MfS BV Karl-Marx-Stadt KD Annaberg 126, KD Annaberg, 8.8.89. Information, p. 36; BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, KD Zwickau 240, 1. Band ‘Bearbeitung von jugendlichen Gruppierungen im



and that the FDJ secretary was not fully trusted. Every tiny detail, from the number of invitees and their exact arrival times to the logistical organisation before and after event is mentioned in the report<sup>148</sup>. One aspect of the event received particular attention, namely the information from a 'Quelle' that two films were to be shown during the 'Treffen'. According to the 'Quelle', the first film was made by the adolescents themselves to show 'wo der Depeche Mode Fan Klub Annaberg zu Haus ist' while the second film was made by the youth club leader in Zwickau and featured their local fan club.

The film, which was described as consisting of images of fans and of the two towns, contained, as stated in the report<sup>149</sup> 'keinerlei negative Aspekte' and the 'Informationszeitung' for the 'Treffen' also contained 'keine politischen Aspekte'. However, the 'Treffen' did reveal, as noted in the report<sup>150</sup>, that there existed 'überörtlichen Kontakten/Verbindungen, Zusammenschlüssen Jugendlicher innerhalb des Kreises Annaberg sowie der DDR'. This proved to be a key piece of evidence against the club as well as the basis of a system-internal conflict, as we will see later. The MfS functionaries admitted that they had 'wenig operative Erkenntnisse' but stated that the semi-professional fan club in Zwickau had offered a model for the 'Arbeitsweise anderer Fan Klubs' and had influenced the way in which the 'Fan Klub Arbeit' in Annaberg was organised by the adolescents.

To MfS' attempt to gain full control over the fan club in Annaberg as well as in Zwickau exhibits a sense of paranoia. The MfS functionaries in Zwickau were summoned to inform their colleagues in Annaberg as soon as they had 'Hinweisen zu Aktivitäten u. Veränderungen'. Although the 'Treffen' in Zwickau was reported<sup>151</sup> to have been 'ohne Vorkommisse u. Störungen', the MfS in Annaberg was clearly not reassured. It was decided that ein 'klares Bild' of the 'Ablauf der Veranstaltung' was needed. In doing so, the local MfS department<sup>152</sup> not only needed to gain full control over the event but over the fan club and its cooperation

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operativen Material 'Grufiti' 1984 – 1989, KD Annaberg, 11.8.89. Eine geplante Veranstaltung des 'Depeche-Mode-Fan-Clubs' Annaberg am 23.08.1989 im Jugendclub 'Ernst Hübler', p. 6.

<sup>148</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, KD Annaberg 126, KD Annaberg, 14.07.89. Aktennotiz über ein Telefonat mit dem Ref.-Leiter [...] der KD Zwickau am 14.07.89 zum Depeche-Mode-Fan-Treffen in Zwickau, p. 3; BStU, MfS BV Karl-Marx-Stadt KD Annaberg 126, KD Annaberg, 8.8.89. Information, p. 36; BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, KD Zwickau 240, 1. Band 'Bearbeitung von jugendlichen Gruppierungen im operativen Material 'Grufiti' 1984 – 1989, KD Annaberg, 11.8.89. Eine geplante Veranstaltung des 'Depeche-Mode-Fan-Clubs' Annaberg am 23.08.1989 im Jugendclub 'Ernst Hübler', p. 6.

<sup>149</sup> BStU, MfS BV Karl-Marx-Stadt KD Annaberg 126, Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Karl-Marx-Stadt, KD Annaberg. Leiter, 24.8.1989. An: Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit AKG, Karl-Marx-Stadt. Information zu überörtlichen Kontakten/Verbindungen, Zusammenschlüssen Jugendlicher innerhalb des Kreises Annaberg sowie der DDR, p. 50.

<sup>150</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, KD Annaberg 126, KD Annaberg, 14.07.89. Aktennotiz über ein Telefonat mit dem Ref.-Leiter [...] der KD Zwickau am 14.07.89 zum Depeche-Mode-Fan-Treffen in Zwickau, p. 3.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> BStU, MfS BV Karl-Marx-Stadt KD Annaberg 126, KD Annaberg, 8.8.89. Protokoll, p. 34.

with the FDJ as well and demanded that ‘eindeutig zu klären sei wer der Träger der Veranstaltung ist und wer der Organisator’. The department<sup>153</sup> ordered that the fan club leaders provided in a list with all the invited other fan clubs, a list of all members and a declaration that all activities were first coordinated with the local FDJ. It is further noted in the report that the members would have to agree with a ‘Gespräch zur Tätigkeit des Fan Klubs (in vertrauensvoller Art)’ in which practical issues would have to be discussed such as the question ‘ob Beiträge gezahlt werden und denn eindeutig erleutern [sic], daß dies nich geht und Einwirken, daß dies abgestellt wird’. Furthermore, it was decided that participants from other localities would not be allowed to spend the night in Annaberg after the event.<sup>154</sup>

A key demand mentioned in the report<sup>155</sup> is, however, that ‘der Jugendklub selbst ist für alle anderen Jugendlichen an diesem Tag nicht zugänglich’, because it indicates that the ‘Absicherung der Veranstaltung’<sup>156</sup>, the MfS’ highest priority, meant that everyone present and everything happening behind closed doors was known. An ‘Ordnungsgruppe’ would be present to guarantee that the ‘Jugendschutzbestimmungen’<sup>157</sup> were fulfilled while an IM-candidate (‘IM-Vorlauf’) would provide insider information. The report perfectly illustrates the lengths the local MfS went in its obsession with control.

A group which was considered politically irrelevant and not a threat to local law and order was considered problematic (‘Problematik des Depache [sic] Mode Fan Clubs’<sup>158</sup>). The question is why. It is possible that the reason was a piece of information<sup>159</sup> about the Zwickau event that ‘dieses Treffen war im Vorfeld nicht bekannt, sondern erst im Nachgang als ca. 100 DEMO-Fans, schwarzgekleidet, mit Zug o. Bus anreisen’. The surprise appearance of the Demos indicated that they were not always under control and not always willing to be controlled. Yet despite the fact that some events were clearly held without official permission,

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<sup>153</sup> BStU, MfS BV Karl-Marx-Stadt KD Annaberg 126, KD Annaberg, 8.8.89. Protokoll, p. 35.

<sup>154</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt KD Annaberg 126, KD Annaberg. Aktenvermerk. Annaberg 14.7.89, p. 15.

<sup>155</sup> BStU, MfS BV Karl-Marx-Stadt KD Annaberg 126, KD Annaberg, 8.8.89. Information, p. 36; BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, KD Zwickau 240, 1. Band ‘Bearbeitung von jugendlichen Gruppierungen im operativen Material ‚Grufti‘ 1984 – 1989, KD Annaberg, 11.8.89. Eine geplante Veranstaltung des ‚Depeche-Mode-Fan-Clubs‘ Annaberg am 23.08.1989 im Jugendclub ‚Ernst Hübler‘, p. 6.

<sup>156</sup> BStU, MfS BV Karl-Marx-Stadt KD Annaberg 126, KD Annaberg, 8.8.89. Protokoll, p. 35.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.; 222 BStU, MfS BV Karl-Marx-Stadt KD Annaberg 126, Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Karl-Marx-Stadt, KD Annaberg. Leiter, 24.8.1989. An: Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit AKG, Karl-Marx-Stadt. Information zu überörtlichen Kontakten/Verbindungen, Zusammenschlüssen Jugendlicher innerhalb des Kreises Annaberg sowie der DDR, p. 50.

<sup>159</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, KD Annaberg 126, KD Annaberg, 14.07.89. Aktennotiz über ein Telefonat mit dem Ref.-Leiter [...] der KD Zwickau am 14.07.89 zum Depeche-Mode-Fan-Treffen in Zwickau, p. 3.

the events themselves could not be politicised and participants could not be criminalised because they were described positively by the IM and the FDJ representatives.<sup>160</sup>

Crucially, the information about the fan clubs from Annaberg and Zwickau not only both relativised and causes mistrust between authorities and adolescents who participated in a youth scene, but also between different representatives of different parts of the state apparatus. What clearly bothered the MfS functionaries<sup>161</sup> in Annaberg was the support from the first FDJ secretary, as he was asked ‘warum er den Jugendlichen des Depeche Mode Fan Klubs Unterstützung gewährt’. The secretary, as the document<sup>162</sup> shows, knew the rules of the game and performed the same politics of representation that we have seen in Chapter 3, namely by responding that ‘es sich bei den Jugendlichen des DEMO-Klub um aktive FDJ-ler handelt, die sich bisher bei der Nutzung des E.Thälmann-Treff diszipliniert verhielten und bei Aufgaben zur Unterstützungen von Aufgaben der FDJ-KL stets bereit waren zu helfen, und dies auch unter Beweis stellten’.

In the representation of the FDJ secretary<sup>163</sup>, Demos were ‘normale Jugendliche’ and disciplined, law-obeying East German citizens who were not involved in any ‘strafrechtlich-relevanten Fakten und Problemen mit der DVP’. Crucially, the secretary<sup>164</sup> not only argued on behalf of the adolescents, but also on behalf of the SED and MfS, as he stated that ‘ihm die Organisation von derartigen Veranstaltungen unter Regie der FDJ Lieber [wäre], als wenn dies anders geschieht. Entsprechend der Orientierung der FDJ-BL, Interessen u. Neigungen Jugendlichen besser ausnutzen zu können sowie dies positiv für die Jugendarbeit zu nutzen sehe er keine neg. Aspekte an einem solchen Treffen’. And indeed, it was reported that there had been no problems with adolescents during the ‘Treffen’, that the event had been as agreed (‘zur Veranstaltung selbst wurde nur Depach-Mode-Musik [sic] gespielt und durch die Jugendlichen fast ausschließlich getanzt’<sup>165</sup>) and that there had been no attacks.

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<sup>160</sup> BStU, MfS BV Karl-Marx-Stadt KD Annaberg 126, KD Annaberg, 8.8.89. Information, p. 37.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>162</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt KD Annaberg 126, KD Annaberg. Aktenvermerk. Annaberg 14.7.89, p. 14.

<sup>163</sup> BStU, MfS BV Karl-Marx-Stadt KD Annaberg 126, Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Karl-Marx-Stadt, KD Annaberg. Leiter, 24.8.1989. An: Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit AKG, Karl-Marx-Stadt. Information zu überörtlichen Kontakten/Verbindungen, Zusammenschlüssen Jugendlicher innerhalb des Kreises Annaberg sowie der DDR, p. 50.

<sup>164</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt KD Annaberg 126, KD Annaberg. Aktenvermerk. Annaberg 14.7.89, p. 14 - 15.

<sup>165</sup> BStU, MfS BV Karl-Marx-Stadt KD Annaberg 126, Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Karl-Marx-Stadt, KD Annaberg. Leiter, 24.8.1989. An: Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit AKG, Karl-Marx-Stadt. Information zu überörtlichen Kontakten/Verbindungen, Zusammenschlüssen Jugendlicher innerhalb des Kreises Annaberg sowie der DDR, p. 51.

Considering that it was feared that young people who dressed in black lived secret double lives, the FDJ secretary's<sup>166</sup> suggestion to the local MfS to involve the adolescents and integrate their fan club into the local FDJ youth club and 'dadurch eine unkontrollierte Gruppenbildung zu verhindern' resonated. In what seems to be a gradual acceptance that the youth fan movement could not be stopped, the least the MfS could do was to make sure that their leisure time did not take place 'in nichtöffentlichen, privat gehaltenen Kreisen'<sup>167</sup>.

Indeed, as Hayton<sup>168</sup> stresses, 'in an attempt to integrate previously isolated youths much more firmly into state structures', some 'Freiraum' and 'Eigensinn' was given to this youth scene. Lipp<sup>169</sup> writes about this that different FDJ functionaries had, in turn, different motivations and interests, like personal sympathy or to make their own work more interesting, or 'höhere Besucherzahlen für Jugendklubs'<sup>170</sup>. Demos were considered willing to cooperate with the FDJ when it served their goals and interests. As noted in the report<sup>171</sup> from Annaberg, the state could benefit from young people like Demos who bisher im [Jugendklub] diszipliniert in Erscheinung traten'and who, although they embodied stylistic deviance, exhibited organisational and social values and skills. In all cases, the SED's main aim, 'Erziehung und Überzeugung' would not have to be compromised.

In an attempt to take away all suspicion from the local MfS functionaries, the FDJ secretary<sup>172</sup> used a second argument, namely that the fan club was a 'zeitweilige Erscheinung' which would be gone by September. However, the inquiry *OM Grufti* and the investigation<sup>173</sup> of the 'Treffen' in Annaberg revealed that there existed more than twenty *Depeche Mode* fan clubs in the GDR. As the MfS knew was aware about their translocal networking practices, it was determined in Annaberg<sup>174</sup> that the main purpose and intent of the clubs and their gatherings was 'die weitere Festigung der Kontakte unter den Fan Klubs sowie der Austausch

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<sup>166</sup> BStU, MfS BV Karl-Marx-Stadt KD Annaberg 126, KD Annaberg, 8.8.89. Protokoll, p. 34.

<sup>167</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, 4669, Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Berlin, Abteilung XX. Berlin, 6.2.89. Einschätzung Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftreten und Verhalten negativ-dekadenter Jugendlicher sowie ihrer Unterbindung und Zurückdrängung, p. 28; BStU, MfS, HA XX, 10687, Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Berlin, Abteilung XX. Berlin, 6.2.89. Einschätzung Erscheinungsformen gesellschaftswidrigen Auftreten und Verhalten negativ-dekadenter Jugendlicher sowie ihrer Unterbindung und Zurückdrängung, pp. 28 – 29.

<sup>168</sup> Hayton, Härte gegen Punk, p. 348.

<sup>169</sup> Florian Lipp, 'Punk- und New-Wave-Bands im letzten Jahrzehnt der DDR im kultur- und sicherheitspolitischen Kontext', *Totalitarianism and Democracy*, 12.2 (2015), 225 –248 (246).

<sup>170</sup> Lipp, 'Punk- und New-Wave-Bands im letzten Jahrzehnt der DDR', p. 246.

<sup>171</sup> BStU, MfS BV Karl-Marx-Stadt KD Annaberg 126, KD Annaberg, 8.8.89. Protokoll, p. 34.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> BStU, MfS BV Karl-Marx-Stadt KD Annaberg 126, KD Annaberg, 8.8.89. Information, p. 36.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

[sic] von Erfahrungen in der Fan Klub Arbeit' and similarly, in Zwickau<sup>175</sup>, that the national, political threat of the Demos consisted of 'die weitere Festigung der Kontakte unter den Jugendlichen der Richtung Depeche-Mode sowie den Austausch von Erfahrungen in der Fan-Clubarbeit'. This perhaps explains why the motto of the fan club in Annaberg, as shown in Chapter 3, 'Depeche Mode Fans Aller Länder Vereinigt Euch', was not interpreted positively or ironically by the MfS as a mimicking of the Marxist motto, but as incriminating evidence that the fans imagined and worked towards a worldwide network and that they, in a sense, performed a symbolic collective 'Republikflucht' on the level of their global fandom.

This view was confirmed by the find of the 'Everlasting memory initiation "for the masses" Statut'<sup>176</sup> which, as shown in Chapter 3, contained club rules, norms and values. The 'Statut' represented the club as a closed member-only organisation and triggered the MfS' suspicion in the same way as the supposed secret activities of the Gruftis. The statute was perceived as a written piece of evidence that the adolescents had something to hide, and it was decided by the involved MfS departments<sup>177</sup> that it 'im Gegensatz zur FDJ-Arbeit steht und eigenständige Organisationsformen anstrebt, die entsprechend der Bildung von Organisationen und Vereinigungen nicht gerechtfertigt ist'. The statement indicates that Demo fan clubs could be convicted and that it was not so much the 'ideology' of *Depeche Mode* fandom what worried the investigators, considering that Amiga released *Depeche Mode's Greatest Hits* in 1987 and that *DT 64* and various (youth) clubs played the music. Was the suspicion against Demos triggered by the fact that fan clubs exhibited successful youth emancipation, and represented a new generation which understood itself as autonomous and boundless community which was connected globally through their shared music taste?

The MfS in Annaberg decided that the success of the 'Treffen' had reinforced the club's self-understanding as 'eigenständige Organisationsform'. Perhaps this categorisation politically and rhetorically turned the Demos into a bigger threat than the 'nicht organisierte Gruppe von Jugendlichen/Jungerwachsenen der sog. "Grufties"'<sup>178</sup>. The MfS departments in Zwickau and Karl-Marx-Stadt ordered the FDJ to prevent such forms of youth organisation for the sake of 'Ordnung und Sicherheit'<sup>179</sup>, but the department in Annaberg stated that it was very

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<sup>175</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, KD Zwickau 240, 1. Band 'Bearbeitung von jugendlichen Gruppierungen im operativen Material 'Grufti' 1984 – 1989, KD Annaberg, 11.8.89. Eine geplante Veranstaltung des 'Depeche-Mode-Fan-Clubs' Annaberg am 23.08.1989 im Jugendclub 'Ernst Hübler', p. 6.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> BStU, MfS, BVfs Leipzig, KDfs Leipzig-Land 02316, VPKA, Komm. I Leipzig. 16.11.87. Information, p. 7.

<sup>179</sup> 254 BStU, MfS, BV Karl-Marx-Stadt, KD Zwickau 240, 1. Band 'Bearbeitung von jugendlichen Gruppierungen im operativen Material 'Grufti' 1984 – 1989, KD Annaberg, 11.8.89. Eine geplante Veranstaltung des 'Depeche-Mode-Fan-Clubs' Annaberg am 23.08.1989 im Jugendclub 'Ernst Hübler', p. 7.

unlikely that the trend could be stopped. Fans not only cultivated translocal but also transnational contacts with fans and fan clubs in the West by responding to adverts in West German music journals and by, for example, writing to a fan club in London.<sup>180</sup> Spontaneous and illegal meetings and parties, as Mühlberg and Stock<sup>181</sup> write, took place everywhere and all the time.

There were several reasons for this. Indeed, as Cooke and Hubble<sup>182</sup> write, first ‘influence was not total’ and secondly, ‘the importance of integrating all youths into socialist society’, in Hayton’s words<sup>183</sup>, resulted in the legitimisation of the music that united ‘Depeche Mode Fans aller Länder’. The fan club was perceived as an ‘eigenständige Organisationsform’ and de-politicised on a national scale, but it was least neutralised and legitimised in some localities as ‘offizielle zugelassene’ clubs.<sup>184</sup> This included regular ‘Treffen’ like celebrations of the birthdays of band members with approval of the local FDJ and MfS to prevent ‘unkontrollierte Gruppenbildung’<sup>185</sup>. Thirdly, HA XX<sup>186</sup> concluded in 1988 ‘daß sich unter diesen Jugendlichen keine Übersiedlungersuchende befinden. Ebenfalls liegen keine Hinweise auf ein feindliches Wirksamwerden dieser Jugendlichen vor’. The MfS had no incriminating evidence against Gruftis, Waver or Demos in the context of the actual political crisis of the time, the ‘Ausreisebewegung’ and the dramatic increase in ‘Ausreiseanträge’ from citizens who wanted to leave the GDR, of which twenty thousand left the GDR via the CSSR during one weekend in November 1989.

In October and November 1989, when the MfS reported about ‘öffentlichkeitswirksame Provokationen’ with which the mass demonstrations at, for example Alexanderplatz, with hundreds of thousands of participants, were meant, ‘Quellen’<sup>187</sup> reported that Demo fan club

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<sup>180</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, 3149, Abt. XX/2. Berlin, 16. November 1989. Operative Information. Aktuelle Situation unter Gruftis der Hauptstadt, p. 105.

<sup>181</sup> Philipp Mühlberg and Manfred Stock, *Die Szene Von Innen. Skinheads, Grufties, HeavyMetals, Punks* (Berlin: Christopher Links Verlag, 1990), pp. 90 – 91; Roman Rutkowski, *Das Charisma des Grabes. Stereotyp und Vorurteile in Bezug auf Jugendliche Subkulturen Am Beispiel der Schwarzen Szene* (Norderstedt: Books onDemand Verlag, 2004), p. 60.

<sup>182</sup> Paul Cooke and Nicholas Hubble, ‘Die volkseigene opposition? The Stasi and Alternative Culture in the GDR’, *German Politics*, 6.2 (1997), 117 – 138 (130).

<sup>183</sup> Hayton, ‘Härte gegen Punk’, p. 347.

<sup>184</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin Abt. XX Nr. 3109, Abteilung XX/2 Berlin 26. Oktober 1989, Operative Information „Depeche-Mode-Fanklub ‚For Ever‘“, Verteiler: Leiter XX und IM-Akte, XX/2 Akte Prause, KD Prenzlauer Berg, KD Friedrichshain, xx/2 Akte Jugendklubs, p. 2.

<sup>185</sup> BStU, MfS BV Karl-Marx-Stadt KD Annaberg 126, KD Annaberg, 8.8.89. Protokoll, p. 34. 254

<sup>186</sup> BStU, MfS, HA XX, AKG, 5938, Berichterstattung 2.2.1988. Darstellung der Entwicklung unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen, p. 79.

<sup>187</sup> MfS BStU, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, 3149, Abt. XX/2. Berlin, 16. November 1989. Operative Information. Aktuelle Situation unter Gruftis der Hauptstadt, p. 105; BStU, MfS, BV Berlin Abt. XX Nr. 3109, Abteilung XX/2 Berlin 26. Oktober 1989, Operative Information „Depeche-Mode-Fanklub ‚For Ever‘“, Verteiler: Leiter XX und IM-Akte, XX/2 Akte Prause, KD Prenzlauer Berg, KD Friedrichshain, xx/2 Akte Jugendklubs, p. 2.

*For Ever* had turned youth club *Wabe* into its club home and that eighty percent of the visitors who were dancing to Gothic and New Wave music at the *Live Club* in East Berlin were Gruftis. As Mühlberg and Stock<sup>188</sup> also confirm, the club had grown ‘zum stärksten Konzentrationspunkt von Gruftis auf dem Territorium der Hauptstadt, bedingt durch das einschlägige Angebot’, as department XX<sup>189</sup> reported on 16 November 1989, only a week after the fall of the Berlin Wall, in its report titled *Aktuelle Situation unter Gruftis der Hauptstadt*.

Apparently, the *Akte Jugendklubs*<sup>190</sup> was still in operation in October and November 1989, but the observations of subculturalists inside clubs was good news, as they were considered under control. What we may identify here is, as Sigrid Rogteutscher writes, that ‘the state [...] accepted partial withdrawal of its population into privacy’<sup>191</sup> including such Gothic-related scene events which sat somewhere inbetween public and private. This positive interpretation of the subculture turned one of the initial main causes of political and societal suspicion against the partially legitimised subculture, the lack of knowledge, or perhaps, lack of understanding or appreciation, upside down. Gothic non-conformism and taboo were considered less of a threat to society when it was not in the ‘Öffentlichkeit’ but behind closed doors<sup>192</sup> even youth club doors. While keeping an eye and reporting routinely about it, the subculture’s introvertedness and insider-outsider distinction appeared to be a blessing, because there was no ‘Öffentlichkeitswirksamkeit’ or public provocation or disturbance. One may therefore ask how convinced many MfS and youth functionaries still were during the last decade of the GDR of the effectiveness of secret state security strategies with regards to the ‘Erziehung und Überziehung’ of the young generation.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Mühlberg and Stock, *Die Szene Von Innen*, pp. 55 – 91.

<sup>189</sup> MfS BStU, BV Berlin, Abt. XX, 3149, Abt. XX/2. Berlin, 16. November 1989. Operative Information. *Aktuelle Situation unter Gruftis der Hauptstadt*, p. 105; BStU, MfS, BV Berlin Abt. XX Nr. 3109, Abteilung XX/2, Berlin, 15. Oktober 1989. Operative Information zum Jugendklub ‚Liveklub‘, p. 3.

<sup>190</sup> BStU, MfS, BV Berlin Abt. XX Nr. 3109, Abteilung XX/2 Berlin 26. Oktober 1989, Operative Information ‚Depeche-Mode-Fanklub ‚For Ever‘‘, p. 2.

<sup>191</sup> Sigrid Rogteutscher, ‘Competing Narratives and the Social Construction of Reality. The GDR in Transition’, *German Politics*, 9.1 (2000), 61 – 82 (68).

<sup>192</sup> e.g. Häder, ‘Zeugnisse von Eigen-Sinn’, p. 82.

<sup>193</sup> e.g. Häder, ‘Zeugnisse von Eigen-Sinn’, p. 68.

## Conclusion

The first part of this chapter has investigated how the MfS depicted adolescent self-intoxication as a part of Gothic-related scene leisure practice and behaviour. The discovery forced responsible investigators to take responsibility for so-called 'kriminell-gefährdete Jugend' and to rate them as adolescents who were endangered by a lack of control in youth clubs. Secondly, it has been demonstrated that another key topic of investigation, Skinhead violence against Gruftis, forced investigators to also shift between protector of society ('Staatssicherheit') and protector of youth ('Jugendschutz'). As has been shown in the second part of the chapter, Gruftis were perceived as deviant bodies by the SED, as well as well by fellow citizens. The reports regarding the physical attacks against Gruftis and the conflict between Skinheads and Gruftis indicate that the Gruftis were no longer the perpetrators in police and MfS investigations, but that they were victims. Moreover, they were victims because of their difference or otherness, their 'Gothic bodies'.

The understanding of 'normale Jugendliche' shifted, because of the realisation that those perceived as different or deviant because of their external appearance were not those displaying deviant behaviour that harmed others. This appears to have brought the MfS in an inner conflict regarding the change of the 'Grufti' status as 'social threat', and regarding its own role. It was recognised that Skinheads were a social problem and the biggest challenge for the state, while other actors, sociologists from the ZIJ and film makers such as Roland Steiner (as show in Chapter 3), addressed the social problem and questioned the criminalisation of Gruftis. However, it seems that the authorities merely observed the conflict, but were unable to solve the problem. As such, some Punks and Gothics developed their own strategies of self-defence with which they re-confirmed the role of perpetrators.

In the third part of this chapter, it has been shown that the Stasi perceived the Grufti problem as unsolved, as it was stated that the societal role and ideology of the Gruftis were still unclear. While some departments were clearly uneasy with this conclusion, other departments emphasised that the situation was under control. Constant observation of movements and the use of 'Quellen' who reported on scene-internal activities, workings and plans guaranteed that every detail was registered, and any change was detected. The revealing of the *Depeche Mode* fan club network amplified the MfS' obsession with control as the fan club was rated as an autonomous form of organisation.

This chapter has confirmed themes addressed in Chapters 2 and 3 regarding the self-understanding of Gruftis as difference or otherness. This difference was, as demonstrated in



the chapters, both made transparent and kept hidden by groups and individuals, enjoyed but also experienced and suffered as a form of social stigmatisation and marginalisation.

On the other hand, the understanding (both from MfS and subcultural perspectives) of Gothic-related scenes as organised and dedicated translocal collectives forced the MfS and police into the role of mere observer. The observer role seemed enough for most departments which did not detect ‘operativ-relevante Verhaltensweisen’ or ‘Vorkommnisse’ when observing group gatherings, confirming the ‘no new is goods news’ principle, as they could not report a Grufit back to headquarters. In those (closed) cases, *Depeche Mode* fans were not deviant but normal teenagers enjoying their different music and fashion among each other. Their insider (self-)representation as part of the (imagined)global’ *Depeche Mode* fan community, however, resulted in partial legitimisation, as the fans appeared more concerned and busier with their own internal cause than with anything else and fans inside clubs were not considered a threat to the public. Before the legitimatisation of the subculture could proceed, however, the Berlin Wall fell and the last reports on New Wavers and Gruftis in the capital ended up in the files with the rest of the large amount political studies and interpretations of the (r)evolution of a subculture which survived the turn of the Century.

## CONCLUSION

In the GDR, Gothic had a significant impact on state politics while its own politics echo in the largest Gothic festival in the world. The thesis has offered a chronological analysis of the development of Gothic; it has traced the evolution of East German Post-Punk, New Wave, and Gothic culture between 1983 and 1989 in and from different subcultural and political perspectives. It has been shown that East German Gothic was a multi-scene and multiform cultural movement which emerged shortly after the ‘shock effect’ of Punk, and to which different individuals contributed in different ways. The thesis has explored the politics of (sub)cultural identity as defined in subcultural micro-media and subcultural style and as embedded in the context of the socialist-communist metanarrative and all its representational, symbolic, and actual confirmations and exceptions to the rule.

While the state investigated and repressed subcultures for its own interests, subcultural, or Gothic, politics aimed to fulfil the interests and goals of participants in New Wave and Gothic scenes in the GDR. Sometimes Gothic politics and interests clashed with state interests yet sometimes they coincided. While the MfS gathered a huge amount of data on Gothic (in the widest sense), consisting of many spectacular and non-spectacular details, no (theoretical) consensus was reached about the ‘meaning’ of Gothic, or Gothic ideology. Instead, state representations of Gothic are both regressive and progressive, shifting between uncertain attempts to repress Gothic culture, and equally uncertain attempts to integrate at least parts of Gothic into the socialist youth culture. State organs responsible for the handling of subculture (certain departments within the MfS and police) did not follow the same strategies, as opinions on and manifestations of ‘subculture’ differed per locality, department, and scene.

### Empirical Findings

#### **The Language of Punk, Post-Punk, and Gothic in the GDR: identity, ideology, community and subcultural politics**

The two chapters which focus on subcultural self-representation, Chapters 1 and 3, have explored ‘texts’ which I consider Punk, Post-Punk, and Gothic either because of the source (Punk or Gothic band) or the dominant themes, debates, moods in the texts (No Future, ‘Endzeit’). The texts represent the views, emotions, and moods of participants in youth or subculture. The empirical texts indicate that when young East Germans discovered *The Cure*, *Depeche Mode*, and other Gothic bands, they self-consciously called themselves New Wavers and New Romantics like their predecessors in the UK and adopted the dark aesthetic, style and

dress codes. East German fans of the global Gothic music and fashion (sub)culture self-consciously created their own, pioneering DIY Gothic culture. Chapter one shows the beginnings of this process. As a Gothic pre-phase, a look into Punk (self-)representation has served as a stepping stone for an understanding of the Post-Punk transition in the GDR, the beginning of ‘die anderen Bands’ and indeed, of an ‘other culture’.

In Chapter 1, an analysis of the end phase of Punk and Punk’s focus on ‘the end’ as represented in Punk texts has been given to show the ambivalence of Punk identity and collectivity, and the mix of veiled political criticism and unveiled criticism regarding conformism. The shift to a nihilist Post-Punk discharged of all concrete political reference and instead thematises ‘the end’ literally. The high times of Punk ended in 1983 and a new subcultural generation took over. Yet instead of dominating the GDR’s subcultural space, this generation, influenced by the transnational ‘Endzeitgeist’ looked beyond national, ideological, and existential boundaries. Texts thematise global environmental issues the crisis of human existence. Gothics seemed primarily interested in music and spiritualism as a new language through which they created a world of their own in their texts.

In Chapter 3, this is expanded with the Gothic emphasis on community; efforts made by young Gothics in East Germany to communicate with others, to found fan clubs and to organise Gothic meetings. In doing so, the young Gothics represented themselves as East German Gothic community which ignored borders and rules, and as the scene expanded and its self-consciousness grew, sought an open dialogue, even with local authorities. The empirical examples show that these Gothics performed their own form of subcultural politics by which they organised and mobilised local Gothic scenes which became increasingly national (and later transnational). What this shows is that the local context created local Gothic contents and accompanying Gothic language, but that this did not interfere with the universality of Gothic, but instead added a new dimension. The East German Gothic scene represented itself as East German, but it was emphasised that they were East German fans of a global language: that of Gothic music.

Fanhood is represented in the sources as a form of commitment and dedication to the greater cause, and hence, it is linked to a sense of exclusivity with which Gothics isolated themselves from mainstream society, while their self-consciousness did not make them feel isolated, but instead, in the heart of universal existential questions and answers. Both the subcultural Chapters have shown how Gothics in the GDR managed to reach their goals, and when they were confronted with obstacles such as closed club doors, this served to emphasise their sense of belonging to a big Gothic family. The many small-scale acts and meetings

resulted in the biggest Gothic festival in the world, the *Wave-Gotik-Treffen* which has been held in Leipzig since 1992. It is because of local subcultural ‘Gothic politics’ in East Germany that the global Gothic scene found a home on East German territory after German unification. Punk, Post-Punk, New Wave and Gothic in political language: categorical confusion, conflicting policies and matching interests

Chapters 2 and 4 have explored how Gothic is represented in official state documentation and how Gothic influenced and changed political strategy and policy. As the analysis of the empirical sources has shown, this change is visible in the use of language. Chapter two shows that (early) Gothic challenged existing terms and categories, that it raised questions regarding the interpretation of subculture which had never been raised before, which created (theoretical) political confusion. Furthermore, the Chapter has demonstrated that significant effort was made by state organs responsible for the documenting of subculture to find answers about the meaning of Gothic.

Between 1982 and 1983, Punk was declared as the number one enemy of the state. In the official, ideological-political narrative, the subculture was defined both as anti-capitalist and anti-social(ist) anarchy and categorised as political threat. The political response, as such, was a zero-tolerance approach with strategies which aimed to ban Punk and ‘Punk ideology’ from socialist society. The existence of East German Punk was officially denied or marginalised and criminalised. By 1985, the scene appears fragmented as an effect of the infiltration, surveillance and repression by threats, arrests and imprisonment. Consequently, the (remaining) scene(s) went further ‘underground’ and partly seem to radicalise, confirming their (anti-)political, anarchic status. This state consensus regarding Punk subculture, and its according categorising, politicising and criminalising methods was the starting point for the interpretation and handling of the (new) ‘post’-Punk, early Gothic subculture. This first phase is discussed in the first subchapter (1982 – 1985).

By 1984, the (assumed) coherence of Punk subculture evaporated as subculture evolved further and fragmented into post- and neo-Punk scenes as well as new crossover pop and subculture forms. The sources suggest that the ‘state security’ organs acknowledged this development and attempted to keep up with the rapid subculture trends, shifts and overlaps. The basic state theory regarding (Punk) subculture was outdated. This resulted into the formation of different, new and updated subcultural categories, characterisations and definitions. Two of those regarded the first Gothic scenes which were labelled as New Romantic and New Wave. The Punk category and blueprint did not match one to one to these scenes. Hence, their presence forced a (theoretical) division into political and non-political

subculture, as well as varying levels of (political) threat. Investigations resulted in conflicting conclusions and stirred up the repressive approach towards subculture. Results of 'Gothic inquiries' indicated that subculture could move beyond or in-between the ideological-political narrative and according criminalisation and politicisation categories which, hence, required revision. But the question was what came first the ideologise Gothic or Gothic ideology. This second phase is discussed in the second subchapter (1984 – 1987).

By 1987, the notions New Wave and New Romantic largely disappear from the files. Instead, the documents from different MfS and police departments suggest that attempts were made to define Gothic subculture as a coherent scene next to the shrunk but surviving underground Punk scene, and to reach a consensus regarding Gothic subculture and Gothic ideology and its (hidden) political agenda and (level of) threat. The pejorative label *Gruftis* was introduced (most likely not an East German invention as the term was also used in West German media) and used as an overlapping term for all Gothic groups, scenes and participants. It referred to rumours, clichés and stereotypes which were (re-)produced as Gothics were observed in the streets of the republic, at specific 'Gothic' locations and meetings, as well as in everyday public spaces such as in schools and companies. Observations of Gothics were interpreted as a sign of a developing sense of internal scene coherence and solidarity, similar to Punk. Further in-depth inquiries amplified the state's seemingly contradictory understanding of Gothic subculture, leaving more questions than answers regarding its (political) intent.

The third phase which is discussed in the third subchapter (1986 – 1988) suggests a general sense that an uncanny smoke curtain was hiding the 'true meaning' of Gothic subculture. This explains the intensification of 'Gothic research' with the aim to gather detailed, accurate and up-to-date (insider) information, and find evidence of criminal and/or political behaviour. Gothic was just not given the benefit of the doubt, although some parts of Gothic were already conquering legitimate space in the GDR as a modern youth collective. In the end, the enormous amount of new detail which was gathered about Gothic aimed at getting answers yet instead created further questions. No 'grand theory' had been developed for Gothic culture, and theories which had been developed largely remained nothing but theory. Many state functionaries, investigators, and members of young and older generations could not make sense of what Gothic was. Today, the confusion is still present in media representations of Gothic. And in turn, participants themselves also do not seem to reach a consensus. Further research into local Punk, Post-Punk, Gothic, and New Wave cases will perhaps only raise more questions than answers, but they will also help exploring the richness of this marginalised culture which, since many decades, thematises the eternal question of the meaning of life.

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## **Film**

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