

## CHAPTER TWO

# CAMPAIGNING AGAINST WEST GERMANY: EAST GERMAN TELEVISION COVERAGE OF THE EICHMANN TRIAL\*

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In the German Democratic Republic (GDR), television was a competitive enterprise right from the start. Its rival resided on the other, Western side of the Iron Curtain, in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Both television services raced to be the first to transmit programming, competing for viewers and quarrelling fiercely over ideological positions. This keen competition resulted both from political tensions between the GDR and the FRG, as well as from the cross-border transmission of television signals that allowed viewers in both states to watch the other side's programming.

To be sure, the relationship between East and West German television changed significantly over time, as did the modality of their competition. Woo-Seung Lee and Claudia Dittmar both argue that it developed from a fierce rivalry to a peaceful coexistence.<sup>1</sup> After initial attempts to obstruct television signals from the West, the GDR condoned, and eventually even openly admitted the fact that its citizens watched Western television.<sup>2</sup> What is more, East and West German television even started to exchange

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<sup>1</sup> Woo-Seung Lee, *Das Fernsehen im geteilten Deutschland (1952-1989). Ideologische Konkurrenz und programmliche Kooperation* (Potsdam: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 2003); Claudia Dittmar, *Feindliches Fernsehen. Das DDR-Fernsehen und seine Strategien im Umgang mit dem westdeutschen Fernsehen* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Lee, *Fernsehen*, 41.

programming from the late 1960s onwards.<sup>3</sup> In general, the improving political relations between the GDR and FRG from the late 1960s on<sup>4</sup> clearly affected East Germany's policy towards television,<sup>5</sup> as Claudia Dittmar elaborates in great detail in her book about the GDR's handling of West German television.<sup>6</sup>

Historical research on television programmes in the GDR suggests that East and West German television were engaged in a 'contrastive dialogue'.<sup>7</sup> Not only did they exchange programmes, East German television also adopted concepts, genres, and productions of its West German counterpart.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, television shows in both states also implicitly or explicitly referred to broadcasts from the other state. A number of programmes, like the West German *DIE ROTE OPTIK* (1958-

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas Heimann, "Television in Zeiten des Kalten Krieges. Zum Programmaustausch des DDR-Fernsehens in den sechziger Jahren," in *Massenmedien im Kalten Krieg. Akteure, Bilder, Resonanzen*, ed. Thomas Lindenberger (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau, 2006), 235–261; Thomas Beutelschmidt, Richard Oehmig and Yulia Yurtaeva, "Grenzüberschreitungen. Internationaler Programmtransfer als transkulturelle Kommunikation zwischen West- und Osteuropa am Beispiel des DDR-Fernsehens." *Rundfunk und Geschichte* 39, 3/4 (2013): 73-82; Christian Heinrich-Franke and Regina Immel, "Making Holes in the Iron Curtain? The Television Programme Exchange across the Iron Curtain in the 1960s and 1970s," in *Airy Curtains in the European Ether. Broadcasting and the Cold War*, eds. Alexander Badenoch, Andreas Fickers and Christian Heinrich-Franke (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2013), 177-213; Heather Gumbert, "Exploring Transnational Media Exchange in the 1960s," *VIEW Journal of European Television History and Culture* 3.5 (2014): 50-59.

<sup>4</sup> By signing the 'Treaty concerning the basis of relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic' in 1972, both German states recognised each other's sovereignty.

<sup>5</sup> Claudia Dittmar, "GDR Television in Competition with West German Programming," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television (IAMHIST)* 24 (2004): 331.

<sup>6</sup> Dittmar, *Feindliches Fernsehen*.

<sup>7</sup> Rüdiger Steinmetz and Reinhold Viehoff, "Unterhaltende Genres im Programm des Fernsehens der DDR," *SPIEL* 20, 1 (2001): 14; Rüdiger Steinmetz and Reinhold Viehoff, *Deutsches Fernsehen Ost. Eine Programmgeschichte des DDR-Fernsehens* (Berlin: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 2008), 16; Claudia Dittmar, *Feindliches Fernsehen. Das DDR-Fernsehen und seine Strategien im Umgang mit dem westdeutschen Fernsehen* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2010), 34.

<sup>8</sup> Sascha Trültzsch and Reinhold Viehoff, "Undercover. How the East German Political System Presented Itself in Television Series," in *Popular Television in Authoritarian Europe*, ed. Peter Goddard (Manchester; New York: Manchester Univ. Press, 2013), 141-158.

1961) and ZDF-MAGAZIN (1969-1988) and the East German DER SCHWARZE KANAL (1960-1989),<sup>9</sup> even dealt exclusively with the media output from beyond the Iron Curtain. Commenting on the other side's broadcasts and contrasting their ideologies and politics by spelling out their own view of the world, this 'ping-pong' can be understood as a form of "mediated interaction" between East and West Germany.<sup>10</sup> In a time when both states claimed to be the only legitimate representative of the German people and political relations deteriorated in the wake of the Cold War, disputes about political systems and bloc alignment were carried out predominantly in the media.

Focusing on the television coverage of the Eichmann trial, this chapter traces one such example of a mediated interaction. After the war Adolf Eichmann, the man in charge of the logistics of the mass deportations and the Holocaust, had escaped to Argentina where he lived under a false name. In 1960, Mossad, Israel's intelligence agency, tracked him down, kidnapped him and brought him to Israel where he was put on trial.<sup>11</sup> East and West German media reported extensively on the proceedings in Jerusalem thereby using the opportunity to criticise how the other German state was dealing with its Nazi past. Several East and West German television programmes participated in this dispute by commenting on the other broadcaster's trial coverage.

The chapter focuses on East German television reports about the Eichmann trial that contributed to a media campaign against the FRG. Through this campaign the GDR tried to influence West German policy, which in turn caused West Germany to react – in the media. The following study describes how East German television commented upon the West German television coverage of the Eichmann trial. On the one hand, it shows that East German programmes assumed that their viewers watched West German television and, on the other hand, that their reports were

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<sup>9</sup> A translation of all titles is provided at the end of this chapter.

<sup>10</sup> Alexander Badenoch, Andreas Fickers and Christian Heinrich-Franke, "Airy Curtains in the European Ether: Introduction," in *Airy Curtains in the European Ether. Broadcasting and the Cold War*, eds. Alexander Badenoch, Andreas Fickers and Christian Heinrich-Franke (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2013), 13. This model of interactive communication contrasts linear models of communication that focus on the social impact of mass media and emphasise their propaganda effect when applied to discuss media in the context of the Cold War. See *ibid.*, 14.

<sup>11</sup> For more about Eichmann before his kidnapping see Bettina Stangneth, *Eichmann Before Jerusalem: The Unexamined Life of a Mass Murderer* (New York: Knopf, 2014). In her book, Stangneth addresses the question of who in the FRG knew about Eichmann's whereabouts.

monitored by the FRG. Television was thus considered as a tool to communicate and interact with the FRG.

The trial of Adolf Eichmann took place at a time when the tensions between East and West Germany were at their peak. The proceedings began on April 11, 1961, a few months before the Berlin Wall was built, and dealt with a conflict-laden issue – the Nazi past – that had already caused a number of disputes between the two Germanies. Furthermore, Eichmann was tried in Israel, a state to which the FRG paid compensation for Nazi crimes and to which the GDR took up a hostile attitude.<sup>12</sup> The Eichmann trial thus provided plenty of opportunities for ideological controversies to play out between East and West Germany.

To understand the GDR's depiction of the Eichmann trial it is necessary to bear in mind the broader Cold War context. In that conflict of political systems, the FRG considered the GDR an undemocratic and illegitimate state; the FRG's constitution even claimed to represent the whole of Germany, including the GDR. Eventually, in 1955, the FRG proclaimed the Hallstein Doctrine, stating it would not maintain diplomatic relations with any country that recognised the GDR. Striving for international recognition beyond the Eastern bloc, the GDR therefore, on the one hand, allied with Arab countries,<sup>13</sup> and on the other, sought to discredit the FRG.<sup>14</sup> In the second half of the 1950s it started, for instance, to warn the world about West Germany's 'renazification' and argued that former Nazis were gaining power again, in order to enhance its own reputation and establish the GDR as an anti-Fascist state.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Jeffrey Herf, "'At War with Israel'. East Germany's Key Role in Soviet Policy in the Middle East," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 16.3 (2014): 129–163.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Michael Lemke, *Einheit oder Sozialismus? Die Deutschlandpolitik der SED 1949-1961* (Köln, Weimar: Böhlau, 2001), 435.

<sup>15</sup> Lemke, *Einheit*, 435-438; Marc von Miquel, *Ahnden oder amnestieren? Westdeutsche Justiz und Vergangenheitspolitik in den sechziger Jahren* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2004), 27-38. Despite its efforts to be acknowledged outside the Eastern Bloc as a legitimate German state the diplomatic recognition of the GDR by Arab countries did not occur until 1969. However, in 1965, Walter Ulbricht, the First Secretary of the SED Central Committee, was treated as a state guest when he visited Cairo. The subsequent announcement of the FRG to offer formal diplomatic recognition to Israel resulted in a cessation of diplomatic relations between the FRG and a number of Arab countries, which eventually led to the recognition of the GDR in 1969. See Jeffrey Herf, "Politics and Memory in West and East Germany since 1961 and in Unified Germany since 1990," in *After Eichmann: Collective Memory and the Holocaust since 1961*, ed. David Cesarani (London, New York: Routledge, 2005), 48.

Despite their political and ideological differences, both Germanies perpetuated the idea of a unified Germany.<sup>16</sup> This ‘rhetoric of unity’ not only informed the two states’ politics, it also shaped the set-up of their television infrastructure. Claiming to broadcast for all Germans, both sides built a technical infrastructure that allowed them to transmit their programmes across the inner-German border in the 1950s.<sup>17</sup> This infrastructure laid the technical foundations for the above-mentioned mediated interaction. Some programmes explicitly addressed viewers across the border and provoked a response, while other programmes commented on broadcasts from the other side that viewers on their own side might have watched. Keeping track of the other side’s activities was of great importance for both states. Measures included monitoring television programming, which after the late 1950s was duly and thoroughly recorded.<sup>18</sup> Although the relationship between East and West German television changed over the course of time, the reciprocal attention to each other never ceased.

The present chapter will first describe how the television infrastructure in both Germanies was set up competitively, aiming to reach viewers on both sides. Before zooming in on the East German television coverage of the Eichmann trial, it will then explain how the GDR instrumentalised the Nazi past by launching ideological campaigns against the FRG. And finally, based on archival records and television broadcasts, it will discuss a number of East German programmes on the trial and relate that coverage to West German programmes of the time.

## Broadcasting across the Border

Re-introducing television in Germany was a political matter and, as Heather Gumbert argues, the “German airwaves became a new and unprecedented battleground” of the Cold War.<sup>19</sup> Both German states raced

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<sup>16</sup> Lemke discusses in detail how the GDR’s claim for a unified Germany changed over time. Lemke, *Einheit*.

<sup>17</sup> Heather Gumbert, *Envisioning Socialism. Television and the Cold War in the German Democratic Republic* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2014), 24.

<sup>18</sup> After reunification these recordings were exchanged and now complement the respective archives.

<sup>19</sup> Gumbert, *Envisioning Socialism*, 21. Television had already existed in Germany from the mid-1930s, broadcasting the 1936 Olympic Games to public viewing facilities (*Fernsehtuben*), for example. During the war, television was used to entertain war casualties in military hospitals. See William Uricchio, “Fernsehen als Geschichte: Die Darstellung des deutschen Fernsehens zwischen 1935 und 1944,”

to be the first to broadcast television. This competition not only resulted from their post-war efforts to demonstrate the (technological) achievements of their political system, but it also had to do with the limited availability of television frequencies.<sup>20</sup>

The GDR started constructing a television centre in Berlin-Adlershof in June 1950.<sup>21</sup> In the same year, the West German broadcasting station NWDR (Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk) was already testing its television technology, first transmitting still images and later experimental programmes.<sup>22</sup> In the GDR, the test phase started in December 1951 and a year later, on December 21, 1952, television was officially introduced with regular public broadcasts.<sup>23</sup> In television historiography, this hasty start to the GDR's broadcasting, which coincided with Stalin's 73rd birthday, is attributed to the GDR's ambition to get one-up on the FRG and its launch of NWDR's regular television service that was scheduled to start at Christmas in 1952. Only four days after the GDR had gained its victory, then, the NWDR's *Deutsches Fernsehen* officially started. The tentative character of the GDR's television service, however, meant it was considered as test programming until the experimental phase was declared to be over in 1956.

The effort to be first to transmit regular television programming was not only driven by reasons of prestige. During a 1951 industry fair in Berlin, the Hamburg-based NWDR presented its television achievements with daily test programmes and audaciously continued its transmissions from Berlin even after the fair had ended. In 1952, the European Broadcasting Conference in Stockholm allocated frequencies for television broadcasting to all European countries. Since only a small number of channels were granted to both Germanies, the GDR wanted to prevent its frequency from being 'hijacked' by the FRG. The general director of the GDR's broadcasting service urged his staff to quickly establish a television service, "otherwise our frequency goes down the drain".<sup>24</sup> Without regular

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in *Die Anfänge des Deutschen Fernsehens: Kritische Annäherungen an die Entwicklung bis 1945*, ed. William Uricchio (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1991); Klaus Winkler, *Fernsehen unterm Hakenkreuz: Organisation, Programm, Personal* (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau, 1996); Knut Hickethier with Peter Hoff, *Geschichte des deutschen Fernsehens* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1998).

<sup>20</sup> James Schwoch, *Global TV. New Media and the Cold War, 1946-69* (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2009); Gumbert, *Envisioning Socialism*.

<sup>21</sup> Gumbert, *Envisioning Socialism*, 23.

<sup>22</sup> Knut Hickethier and Peter Hoff, *Geschichte*, 73ff.

<sup>23</sup> Dittmar, *Feindliches Fernsehen*, 61ff; Hickethier and Hoff, *Geschichte*, 100ff.

<sup>24</sup> Müncheberg quoted in Dittmar, *Feindliches Fernsehen*, 65.

television broadcasts, went the reasoning, other countries would occupy the GDR's frequency: "We have to be on the air every day for a few hours, at a fixed time of the day, to fill the frequency that was allocated to us at the international radio conference".<sup>25</sup> Due to international broadcasting regulations and the GDR's fear of being robbed of its frequencies, East German television thus started hastily.

In the following years, the relationship between East and West German television became more complex and intertwined. Both the *Deutscher Fernsehfunk* (DFF), as the GDR's regular television broadcasting service was called from 1956 onwards, and the West German *Deutsches Fernsehen* aimed to reach the other side's viewers by transmitting programmes across the national border. In order to be able to do so they both had to build strong television transmitters.<sup>26</sup> According to a technical director of West German television, the demand to reach as far as possible into the 'Soviet-occupied zone' was "one of the decisive aspects of planning television transmitters".<sup>27</sup> In East Germany in turn, the governing Socialist Unity Party (SED) issued instructions to the DFF that they reach the West German population.<sup>28</sup> This demand was met with the construction of powerful transmitters that, according to the West German magazine *Der Spiegel*, "penetrated deeply into the territory of the FRG".<sup>29</sup>

While East and West German television thus first competed on technical grounds over airwaves and the strength of their transmitters, content soon became a concern as well. West German television frequently scheduled programmes about the GDR, knowing that viewers in the East would watch them.<sup>30</sup> Political programmes like MITTELDEUTSCHES

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<sup>25</sup> Wolfgang Kleinert quoted in Dittmar, *Feindliches Fernsehen*, 65.

<sup>26</sup> Gumbert, *Envisioning Socialism*, 24-26.

<sup>27</sup> Hans Rindfleisch quoted in Andreas Fickers, *'Politique de la grandeur' versus 'Made in Germany'. Politische Kulturgeschichte der Technik am Beispiel der PAL-SECAM-Kontroverse* (München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2007), 168.

<sup>28</sup> Dittmar, *Feindliches Fernsehen*, 81.

<sup>29</sup> Anonymous, "Programm aus dem Osten," *Der Spiegel* (September 4, 1957): 48.

<sup>30</sup> In the 1950s, the DFF considered its competition with West German television as an incentive to produce better programmes. Cf. Dittmar, *Feindliches Fernsehen*, 140-180. After the Berlin Wall was built (1961) GDR citizens were asked to stop watching West German television and the Party Youth started to climb rooftops to turn antennae to the East. Growing anger stopped this campaign and there was never a law that prohibited watching West German television: Hanno Hochmuth, "Feindbild und Leitbild: Westfernsehen in der DDR," in *Vom Gegner lernen: Feindschaften und Kulturtransfers im Europa des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Martin Aust and Daniel Schönplflug (Frankfurt/M., New York: Campus, 2007), 278-279.

TAGEBUCH (1956-1965)<sup>31</sup> and DIE ROTE OPTIK (1958-1961) informed their West German viewers about life, politics, and the general situation in the other part of Germany, and at the same time provided East German viewers with alternative opinions, arguments, and views that challenged the GDR's official media output. Moreover, during the construction of the Berlin Wall, West German television added reruns of its evening programming to its regular schedule, only broadcasting them the next morning – when Eastern television did not broadcast – through the transmitters targeting the GDR.<sup>32</sup> The East German DFF, in contrast, started broadcasting TELESTUDIO WEST (1957-1965) in 1957, a show covering life in socialist countries, reporting on achievements in the GDR, and commenting on West German politics. The show's opening greeting, "Dear television friends in the Federal Republic", left no doubt that it was aimed at West German viewers.<sup>33</sup> It was strategically scheduled on Saturdays in the late afternoon – a time when, according to *Der Spiegel*, West German television "usually is filled with programmes for children or documentary films about rodents"<sup>34</sup>. With what was identified by the West as a "television offensive",<sup>35</sup> the DFF offered alternative programming for adults in the FRG, thereby emphasizing its claim to broadcast for the whole of Germany.

Television was thus one of the battlegrounds of the Cold War. In Germany, the ideological conflict between East and West included a competition for television viewers and involved technology as well as programming. In the postwar era, the (West German) Adenauer government and the GDR's governing Socialist Unity Party both still stated they aspired to the country's eventual reunification and acted for the good of Germany as a whole. In that respect it was concordant with these political aims that both states offered a television service for all German viewers (and improved the technological means to do so).

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<sup>31</sup> For more about this programme see Matthias Steinle, *Vom Feindbild zum Fremdbild: Die gegenseitige Darstellung von BRD und DDR im Dokumentarfilm* (Konstanz: UVK, 2003), 158-162.

<sup>32</sup> Hickethier and Hoff, *Geschichte*, 135.

<sup>33</sup> Anonymous, "Die politische Kaffeestunde," *Der Spiegel*, (January 29, 1958): 43.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Gumbert, *Envisioning Socialism*, 34.



## Instrumentalising the National Socialist Past

In 1961, the tensions between East and West Germany were at their zenith. The trial against Eichmann took place against the backdrop of a number of crises between the FRG and the GDR that resulted in closing the inner German border between East and West Berlin and the construction of the Berlin Wall on August 13 – one day before the hearings in Jerusalem ended. One major issue of the conflict was the FRG's integration into the Western alliance, its membership of NATO, and the establishment of the West German army in 1955. In the GDR this rearmament was met with great concern. Referring to the FRG's practice of denazification, the GDR leadership portrayed the other German state as a continuation of the National Socialist (NS) regime and argued that former Nazis were in power again. They warned that putting weapons in the hands of these West Germans would pose a serious danger to the world. When Adolf Eichmann was captured in May 1960, the trial was thought to possibly provide the means to substantiate these accusations against the FRG and uncover the National Socialist background of high-ranking West Germans.

The practices of denazification differed significantly in East and West Germany.<sup>36</sup> After the war, all occupying forces investigated the Germans about their participation in the Nazi Party (NSDAP). In all four occupation zones, Nazis were legally prosecuted and punished based on their involvement during the Third Reich. After the foundation of the two states, however, both the prosecution of former Nazis as well as the possibility of their amnesty and integration took different directions. Konrad Adenauer, chancellor of the newly founded FRG, advocated the integration of so-called 'followers' (who supported Nazi crimes indirectly) and pleaded for the early release of detainees convicted by allied military courts; not least because their know-how was needed to build a democratic state with a functioning administration.<sup>37</sup> This meant that individuals with National Socialist backgrounds returned to public offices in the FRG's state institutions, judiciary and commercial sectors. Following their careers

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<sup>36</sup> For a detailed description see Ulrich Brochhagen, *Nach Nürnberg: Vergangenheitsbewältigung und Westintegration in der Ära Adenauer* (Hamburg: Junius, 1994) and Annette Weinke, *Die Verfolgung von NS-Tätern im geteilten Deutschland: Vergangenheitsbewältigungen 1949-1969 oder: Eine deutsch-deutsche Beziehungsgeschichte im Kalten Krieg* (Paderborn, München, Wien, Zürich: Schöningh, 2002).

<sup>37</sup> Although critically observed by the High Commission, the Western allies did not intervene; see Brochhagen, *Nach Nürnberg*.

during the Third Reich, they continued to work as judges, police officers or civil servants, some becoming mayor or eventually holding other political offices.<sup>38</sup>

In the GDR, by contrast, denazification led to a complete replacement of the former ruling elite and a reorganisation of society. According to the communist definition, fascism was understood to be an outgrowth of capitalism. In addition to sentencing Nazi party leaders and officials, landowners and aristocrats were therefore deprived of their property (and their right to vote) in order to prevent fascism from ever happening again. 'Nominal' NSDAP members, who had joined the party out of pragmatic reasons, were exempt from punishment, however. This strategy ensured the grateful loyalty of people who had been 'minor' Nazis. Though some integration of Nazis also took place in East Germany, the GDR prevented continuity on the level of influential positions by replacing the former elite with politically uncompromised individuals.

In the late 1950s, the GDR started to denounce what they called the 'renazification' of the FRG. Capitalising on the Nazi pasts of several West German politicians and judges, the Agitation Committee of the GDR's *Politbüro* launched campaigns against them. While these accusations were not pure inventions – National Socialist attitudes did indeed still exist in the FRG – the concerted campaigns were also part of a strategy to divert attention away from the GDR's domestic problems and its social and economic crisis.<sup>39</sup> The campaigns were coordinated by the *Ausschuß für Deutsche Einheit* (Committee for German Unity), which coordinated the research into 'suspect' West Germans, organised press conferences, and ensured that television covered the stories on its news bulletins, discussion shows, and political programmes. It published booklets and pamphlets that listed the names of hundreds of so-called '*Blutrichter*' (West German

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<sup>38</sup> In the early 1950s, the number of NS trials decreased significantly until in 1958 the *Central Office of the State Justice Administrations* was founded to investigate National Socialist crimes.

<sup>39</sup> Supply shortfalls and a shortage of raw materials in the late 1950s, and the collectivisation of agriculture in 1960 had all worsened living conditions in the GDR, which made many leave the country for West Germany. Since this depopulation resulted in a shortage of manpower and posed a serious threat to the functioning of the state, the SED started an 'ideological offensive' to prevent GDR citizens from migrating to the FRG. Warnings about West Germany's renazification were supposed to discourage people from leaving and at the same time strengthen the GDR's anti-fascist legitimation. See Michael Lemke, "Kampagnen gegen Bonn: Die Systemkrise der DDR und die West-Propaganda der SED 1960-1963," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 41, 2 (1993): 153-174.

judges and lawyers who had imposed death penalties during the Third Reich) and documented the careers of politicians like Theodor Oberländer and Hans Maria Globke.

Information about the National Socialist past of these individuals came from Eastern European archives that held administrative documents and personnel records of different NS organisations.<sup>40</sup> By looking through these archives and asking Eastern allies to search for records of West Germans with positions of influence, the GDR's *Ministerium für Staatssicherheit* (Ministry of State Security, MfS) got hold of archival documents that revealed a number of people's NS affiliation and ideological involvement.<sup>41</sup> These records became centerpieces of the campaigns to warn the world about the present danger that the FRG was supposed to pose. The documents were showcased at press conferences, officially handed over to representatives of other countries, and published in facsimile form, adding extra authority to the accusations.

After uncovering over one thousand West German judges who had served during the Third Reich<sup>42</sup> and accusing Oberländer, Adenauer's *Minister für Vertriebene, Flüchtlinge und Kriegsgeschädigte* (Minister for Displaced Persons, Refugees, and Victims of War), of participating in the Lviv pogroms,<sup>43</sup> the GDR zeroed in on Hans Globke, director of Adenauer's Chancellery. During the Third Reich, Globke was a high-ranking civil servant at the *Reichsinnenministerium* (Ministry of the Interior) and (co-) author of bills and regulations concerning the legal status of Jews. He wrote the official legal commentary to the *Reichsbürgergesetz* (Reich Citizenship Law) that was part of the Nuremberg Laws and defined who was classified as Jewish. He also composed the regulation that all German Jews had to be identifiable by a Jewish name, including the order that if they did not have one, they had to adopt the middle name Sara or Israel (*Namensänderungsgesetz*). After the war, Globke exculpated himself by stating that he was not the sole author, that his legal comment prevented the Jews from worse fates, and that he had backed the

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<sup>40</sup> Annette Weinke, "Der Kampf um die Akten. Zur Kooperation zwischen MfS und osteuropäischen Sicherheitsorganen bei der Vorbereitung antifaschistischer Kampagnen," *Deutschland Archiv* 32, 4 (1999): 564-577.

<sup>41</sup> For more about the collection and acquisition of files, see Henry Leide, *NS-Verbrecher und Staatssicherheit. Die geheime Vergangenheitspolitik der DDR* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), chapter II; Weinke, "Kampf um die Akten," 566.

<sup>42</sup> Miquel, *Ahnden*, 30.

<sup>43</sup> Wulf Kansteiner, *In Pursuit of German Memory. History, Television, and Politics After Auschwitz* (Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 2006), 222-224.

Catholic resistance.<sup>44</sup> Although his position at the *Reichsinnenministerium* and involvement in the anti-Semitic laws was not a secret, he still became chief of West Germany's Chancellery. The fact that Adenauer supported Globke despite his problematic background gave the GDR even more reason to discredit the FRG as a continuation of the Nazi regime.

The GDR considered the Eichmann trial first and foremost as yet another possibility to discredit the West German government. The Agitation Committee sought to demonstrate that Eichmann had accomplices with high positions in the FRG who had helped him stay hidden until his capture. According to the GDR's line of argument, Eichmann served as scapegoat to distract from the fact that some culprits who were morally and politically guilty of mass murder still belonged to the FRG's elite. Shortly after Eichmann's capture, Albert Norden, head of the *Politbüro's* Agitation Committee, first asked the Ministry for State Security (MfS) to search for incriminating records that would confirm this theory.<sup>45</sup> A few weeks later, after the GDR had decided to target Globke, Norden urged the MfS to find a document that would prove that Eichmann and Globke collaborated, indicating that the SED leadership had agreed to have the MfS “provide or rather fabricate certain material”.<sup>46</sup>

With its campaign against Globke, the GDR strove not only to demonstrate his responsibility for parts of the Nuremberg Laws, but also to prove that Eichmann acted under orders that were linked to Globke's legislation. Incriminating evidence to that end was published in booklets and featured in the documentary film *AKTION J*. The GDR even offered its documents to the prosecution in Jerusalem. Since the GDR had no diplomatic relations with Israel, Friedrich Karl Kaul, a lawyer who had earlier inquired into the possibility of being admitted to the Eichmann trial as an accessory prosecutor (this request was denied by Israel's Minister of Justice), paid a personal visit to Jerusalem during the third week of the trial. There he presented to the international press new documents about Globke, the press conference was followed by a screening of *AKTION J*. In his own account of the event, Kaul legitimates the press conference by referring to the prosecution's reluctance to illuminate Globke's role during

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<sup>44</sup> Jürgen Bevers, *Der Mann hinter Adenauer. Hans Globkes Aufstieg vom NS-Juristen zur grauen Eminenz der Bonner Republik* (Berlin: Links, 2009), 69; Erik Lommatzsch, *Hans Globke (1898-1973). Beamter im Dritten Reich und Staatssekretär Adenauers* (Frankfurt/M.: Campus, 2009), 108; Anonymous, “Globke und die Juden,” *Der Spiegel* (May 10, 1961): 22.

<sup>45</sup> Annette Roszkopf, *Friedrich Karl Kaul. Anwalt im geteilten Deutschland, 1906-1981* (Berlin: Berlin Verlag, 2002), 195.

<sup>46</sup> Zur Besprechung [no date], BArch: DY 30/IV 2/2.028/362.

the Third Reich, stating that therefore “this had to be done outside the courtroom” instead.<sup>47</sup> However, although the invited journalists reported briefly on Kaul’s press conference, it did not affect the general image of the FRG significantly.

For the GDR, the Eichmann trial presented an opportunity to tie in its campaigns by linking Eichmann to Globke. Furthermore, due to the enormous media attention, the trial provided an international platform for the GDR’s accusations against Globke and the FRG. This would also inform the GDR’s television coverage of the trial.

### **East German Television Coverage of the Eichmann Trial**

The trial coverage on East German television was aligned with the campaign launched by the Agitation Committee. News programmes, political magazines, and round-table discussions followed the Committee's argumentation when they addressed the Eichmann trial. The daily news programme *AKTUELLE KAMERA*, for example, involved the campaign against Globke by using every opportunity to refer to him in its reports from Jerusalem, as becomes clear in the following examples: the current affairs programme calls Eichmann's lawyer Servatius “Globke's friend” (22.04.1961) and the defendant “Globke's accomplice” (13.06.1961); it describes the account of a witness as disproving Globke's apology (17.05.1961); or simply reports that Globke was *not* mentioned during a session (26.06.1961). Furthermore, *AKTUELLE KAMERA* addresses the handover of new documents about Globke (27.04.1961), covers Kaul's visit to Jerusalem in detail (27.04.1961 and 02.-04.05.1961), and reports about swastika graffiti (22.04.1961) and parades of *Schützenvereine* (country clubs of sport shooters) in the FRG (17.05.1961). By participating in the campaign against Globke, *AKTUELLE KAMERA* thus fell in line with the Agitation Committee. The news broadcasts used simple rhetorical tricks to bring Globke to the fore and complemented the items about the Eichmann trial with reports that confirmed the FRG's renazification. Due to this policy the testimonies of Holocaust survivors that characterised the trial<sup>48</sup> and shaped the coverage in many other countries<sup>49</sup> were mentioned only rarely. Focusing on Globke and the FRG,

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<sup>47</sup> Friedrich Karl Kaul, *Der Fall Eichmann* (Berlin: Das Neue Berlin, 1964), 214.

<sup>48</sup> Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 56ff.

<sup>49</sup> Jeffrey Shandler, *While America Watches. Televising the Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 83ff.

AKTUELLE KAMERA instead confined its interest in the Eichmann trial to cues that allowed the programme to refer to Globke.

In addition to accusing Globke on the news, East German television produced a documentary film about him that was broadcast on April 20, 1961, a week or so after the Eichmann trial opened. The Agitation Committee commissioned Walter Heynowski, who had previously made a documentary about Theodor Oberländer's National Socialist background, to make the film. The idea was to add "something visual" to the Globke campaign.<sup>50</sup> Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann argues that the resulting film, the aforementioned AKTION J, combines two objectives: using accusatory rhetoric, on the one hand, it adheres to the argumentation of the campaign, while, on the other hand, it also imparts knowledge about the Holocaust and illustrates the experiences of Jews.<sup>51</sup> Ebbrecht-Hartmann analyses how the film achieves this dual aim, showing that AKTION J explains abstract anti-Semitic regulations by visualising the tangible and horrendous effects they had on individuals.<sup>52</sup> These traces of Jewish life, however, did remain subject to the film's main goal – to portray Globke as a Nazi perpetrator.

Globke was also a topic in the weekly round-table discussion TREFFPUNKT BERLIN that aired on April 12, one day after the trial opened. At the beginning of the programme, host Karl-Eduard von Schnitzler can hardly hide his excitement about Yuri Gagarin's space flight of the very same day and he praises this achievement of the Soviet Union before he introduces the five discussants.<sup>53</sup> During the one-hour show, Schnitzler and his guests discuss questions related to the Eichmann trial, such as the jurisdiction of the court in Jerusalem, Eichmann's escape to Argentina, and the FRG's "shamelessness" in paying Israel reparations (described as hush

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<sup>50</sup> In a concept for the film, Heynowski addresses the problem that hardly any films or photographs and only incomplete records exist about Globke, which could make the documentary "un-filmic". Therefore he suggests combining these records with comparative images and films to put them into context. See Heynowski quoted in Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann, "Anklage und Archiv: Archivmaterial und seine Anordnung in Walter Heynowskis 'Aktion J - Ein Film der Beweise' (1961), in *Reflexionen des beschädigten Lebens? Nachkriegskino in Deutschland zwischen 1945 und 1960*, ed. Bastian Blachut, Imme Klages and Sebastian Kuhn (München: Text und Kritik, 2015), 139.

<sup>51</sup> Ebbrecht-Hartmann, "Anklage und Archiv," 146.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>53</sup> The guests were Rabbi Martin Riesenburger, legal correspondent Rudolf Hirsch, the above-mentioned lawyer Friedrich Karl Kaul, and Jochen Herrmann (deputy chief editor of the *Berliner Zeitung*), and Paula Acker, both members of the Politbüro's *Westkommission*.

money) for the persecution and murder of Jews.<sup>54</sup> Calling Eichmann the “hangman's assistant” (Henkersknecht), the discussants refer to Globke as the “engineer of the scaffold” (Konstrukteur des Schafotts) and several times mention a booklet that documents Globke's crimes, emphasising that its publication was prohibited in the FRG. In a similar way to AKTUELLE KAMERA, the Eichmann trial thus gave TREFFPUNKT BERLIN an opportunity to talk about Globke.

One important reference point of the conversation is a televised speech Adenauer gave the day before the trial started, in which he had expressed his hope that the trial would unearth the “complete truth” (“wir wünschen, daß in diesem Prozeß die volle Wahrheit ans Licht kommt [...]”).<sup>55</sup> The TREFFPUNKT BERLIN guests never tire of pointing out that the “complete truth” is already well known in the GDR – meaning that everybody in the GDR already knows that Nazi criminals are living unchallenged in West Germany, that corporations that profited from slave labour or were involved in the Holocaust are still intact and flourishing, and that individuals with a National Socialist background occupy high and powerful positions in the FRG.

TREFFPUNKT BERLIN provided its viewers with arguments that were in accordance with the SED's official position on the Eichmann trial. At the same time, however, the talk show guests refer several times to West German television programmes as a matter of course. What is more, they converse about certain programmes assuming everybody else has watched them as well. The way they bristle at Adenauer's statements, for example, presupposes knowledge of the West German broadcast of April 10. They talk indignantly about his speech but never summarise or explain its topics, leaving TREFFPUNKT BERLIN viewers who had not watched West German television (or read comments in SED-affiliated newspapers) to guess at what Adenauer had said about the trial.

The discussants furthermore allude to AUF DEN SPUREN DES HENKERS, a documentary about Eichmann by the NDR that was broadcast the night before TREFFPUNKT BERLIN. One talk-show guest mentions in passing that “a film on West German television” had demonstrated how big companies had first exploited the labour force of concentration camp prisoners before letting them die of hunger later. Talk-show host Schnitzler derisively adds

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<sup>54</sup> In contrast to the FRG's financial restitution, the GDR emphasised that it made 'true' amends by eliminating the preconditions of fascism (which the FRG did not) and also claimed that that was what legitimately entitled the GDR to speak for the whole of Germany.

<sup>55</sup> Peter Krause, *Der Eichmann-Prozess in der Deutschen Presse* (Frankfurt/M.: Campus, 2002), 109.

that West German television has finally recognised the connection between Globke and Eichmann. Apparently it was not easy for the TREFFPUNKT discussants to keep up their general attack of West German television, since AUF DEN SPUREN DES HENKERS took a very critical stance on how the FRG dealt with the Nazi past. As in the case of Adenauer's television address, not only did the TREFFPUNKT guests themselves watch the programme in question, they in fact assumed that everybody else had as well. Five days later, however, DER SCHWARZE KANAL made up for this assumption.

### Der Schwarze Kanal

DER SCHWARZE KANAL (1960-1989), a weekly programme by Karl-Eduard von Schnitzler that was notorious for its political agitation against the FRG, addressed the Eichmann trial several times – or rather it addressed the trial's coverage on West German television. The organising principle of the programme was the presentation and discussion of recent excerpts from West German television. Schnitzler's sardonic and condemnatory (live) commentary framing these excerpts was meant to expose the mendacity of West German television and refute its arguments.<sup>56</sup> It is striking that many of his comments were informed by the assumption that West German journalists acted as mouthpieces for the FRG government that supposedly kept them under direct control.<sup>57</sup>

To produce DER SCHWARZE KANAL, a department of the *Staatliches Komitee für Rundfunk* (State Committee for Broadcasting) monitored West German programming, and recorded and transcribed relevant shows.<sup>58</sup> Based on these transcripts, Schnitzler selected a number of fragments that he presented in DER SCHWARZE KANAL. The East German programme thus completely relied on West German television. Due to the presentation of clips the programme did not presuppose that its viewers had necessarily watched the West German programmes on which Schnitzler commented –

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<sup>56</sup> Marc Levasier, “‘Der Schwarze Kanal’. Entstehung und Entwicklung einer journalistischen Kontersendung des DDR-Fernsehens,” in *Journalisten und Journalismus in der DDR. Berufsorganisation – Westkorrespondenten – ‘Der Schwarze Kanal’*, ed. Jürgen Wilke (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau, 2007), 239.

<sup>57</sup> Jochen Staadt, Tobias Voigt and Stefan Wolle, *Operation Fernsehen. Die Stasi und die Medien in Ost und West* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 26.

<sup>58</sup> The same technique was used for the West German DIE ROTE OPTIK, which commented on East German television. The production of these shows required a cost-efficient means of recording television. Only after the video tape recorder was introduced in 1956 did such technology become available.



in contrast to the above-mentioned discussion on TREFFPUNKT BERLIN. DER SCHWARZE KANAL did, however, target East German viewers who watched West German television, but by serving as a guideline, it gave an ‘instruction manual’ of West German programmes<sup>59</sup> and helped to uncover their ‘real’ ideology and meaning.

Like other East German programmes, DER SCHWARZE KANAL used the Eichmann trial as an opportunity to criticise the way the FRG was dealing with its National Socialist past and to excoriate its backing of former Nazis. Schnitzler suspects, for example, that if Eichmann had been on trial in the FRG, the court would not have convicted him, given the Nazi background of many judges (13.06.1960), and he criticises West German television for not mentioning that other perpetrators live in the FRG unchallenged (10.04.1961 and 18.12.1961).

In DER SCHWARZE KANAL of June 13, 1960, three weeks after Israel’s Prime Minister Ben-Gurion had announced the capture of Adolf Eichmann, Schnitzler used excerpts of the West German DER INTERNATIONALE FRÜHSCHOPPEN (an adaption of MEET THE PRESS) to make his point.<sup>60</sup> After a number of other items (about the anti-American riots in Japan that made President Eisenhower cancel his visit to Tokyo, the West’s economic extortion of Cuba, nuclear weapons in the FRG, and an explosion on an American air-force base), he segues into discussing West German reactions to the capture of Adolf Eichmann. At first he criticises the fact that the West German media ignore Eichmann’s crimes and exclusively focus on legal issues concerning Israel’s violation of international law.<sup>61</sup> The roundtable discussion in DER INTERNATIONALE FRÜHSCHOPPEN from June 12, 1960 made a good case for Schnitzler’s accusation. Judging from the excerpts that Schnitzler presented a day later in DER SCHWARZE KANAL, “six journalists from five countries” (the

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<sup>59</sup> Hochmuth, “Feindbild,” 289.

<sup>60</sup> On DER INTERNATIONALE FRÜHSCHOPPEN international journalists discussed political events of the week every Sunday morning. For more about this programme see Nina Verheyen, *Diskussionslust: Eine Kulturgeschichte des ‘besseren Arguments’ in Westdeutschland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 154-206. In 1962 the GDR discovered that FRÜHSCHOPPEN host Werner Höfer had been a member of the NSADP and had written propaganda articles during the war. However, he was only removed from the programme in 1987, after a critical article was published in the West German *Der Spiegel* (14 December 1987).

<sup>61</sup> Israel’s intelligence had violated Argentina’s sovereignty by kidnapping Eichmann, which resulted in protests at the Security Council of the United Nations. Given the illegality of the kidnapping, West German media discussed the jurisdiction of Israel. See Krause, *Eichmann-Prozess*, 146-166.

FRÜHSCHOPPEN's subtitle) conversed about questions of jurisdiction while seated at a curved table in an unadorned television studio. Although the West German media actually gave voice to a variety of opinions,<sup>62</sup> Schnitzler particularly selected excerpts from the FRÜHSCHOPPEN in which journalists oppose a trial in Israel or question the court's objectivity.

After a short excerpt from DER INTERNATIONALE FRÜHSCHOPPEN in which two journalists speculate what the world might think about their reluctance to hold the trial in Israel, Schnitzler first mocks them for being naive and then claims that the show's host, Werner Höfer, is under control of the Federal Press Office (Bundespresseamt), which is under control of the Chancellery, which is under Globke's control. By confusing the Federal Press Office that provides government information to the public and was indeed headed by Globke with the *Bundespressekonferenz*, i.e. the West German association of journalists that organises press conferences with representatives of the government and parliament, he misleadingly alleges that West German journalists were dependent on Globke. He implies that their reluctance comes as no surprise, since they do not want Eichmann to "blow the whistle" on other people (in other words: Globke).

With his commentary on the next FRÜHSCHOPPEN fragments, Schnitzler maliciously puts words in the journalists' mouths. In one excerpt, for instance, Höfer assures his guests that despite his critical view of the lawsuit he has no doubts about the fairness of an Israeli court. This is followed by a West German journalist's remark that otherwise "they" could have just killed Eichmann (supposedly he means Mossad), a reasoning Höfer agrees with. Schnitzler misinterprets Höfer's affirmation as agreeing that he too wished Eichmann were dead so he would stay silent. In another excerpt, an American journalist advocates an international tribunal because – given Eichmann's crimes against the Jewish people – he believes it would be difficult to find an unbiased judge in Israel, or rather to convince the public that Israeli judges can be impartial. Schnitzler, however, first distorts this argument as anti-Semitic and then bristles at the alleged assumption that an American judge would be less biased than a Pole, Russian, Frenchman, German, or a Jew.

Schnitzler's final excerpt presents him with an opportunity to scandalise his viewers by noting that judges who had doled out death penalties during the Third Reich were still administering justice in the FRG. When a West German journalist claims that the Eichmann case should be removed from the "grip of Israel's justice" and taken over by a

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<sup>62</sup> Some argued that the Adenauer government should demand Eichmann's extradition, others that he should be tried by an international tribunal. See *ibid.*

(West-)German court, Schnitzler rhetorically wonders about possible judges. He then ‘suggests’ two men (Kanter and Hucklenbroich) who during the Third Reich had both imposed the death penalty several times and who continued their career in the FRG unchallenged – as did more than a thousand other judges. According to Schnitzler, these two would certainly be able to provide proof that Eichmann was not aware of the criminal liability for his actions and ultimately find him not guilty. He concludes the programme by insinuating that West German politicians and journalists want to put Eichmann on trial in the FRG to prevent him from turning against his former party colleagues.

A day before the Eichmann trial started in Jerusalem, DER SCHWARZE KANAL takes up this line of argument. The programme aired on April 10, 1961 opens with an excerpt from the very same FRÜHSCHOPPEN in which Höfer argues for Eichmann’s extradition to put him on trial in the FRG. Looking back on the West German round-table discussion, Schnitzler comments that Höfer’s wishful thinking did not come true and he gloats over Eichmann’s accomplices’ fear of being exposed. Though Schnitzler claims that Eichmann had noted during his interrogation that he would be able to give the names of 200 of his collaborators, he concludes that it should come as no surprise that Eichmann’s lawyer Servatius advised him against disclosing these names, since Servatius is under Globke’s control.

While a year earlier Schnitzler had criticised West German media for ignoring Eichmann’s crimes, he now complains about their exclusive focus on Eichmann. In the April 10 episode of DER SCHWARZE KANAL he attacks West German journalists for presenting Eichmann as the only culprit, accusing them of wanting to distract from other people’s guilt. Subsequently Schnitzler names a number of West German politicians, diplomats, military figures and businessmen who also were instrumental in the “Final Solution”. Schnitzler also acknowledges the existence of critical journalists in the FRG, however. Referring to a dispute on DER INTERNATIONALE FRÜHSCHOPPEN a day earlier, he suggests that Höfer and one of his guests condemned any questioning of West Germany’s handling of its Nazi past as being damaging to the FRG, and said that they consistently chided their colleagues and cut down any critical questions. In view of Höfer’s reaction, Schnitzler cynically advises West German journalists to leave Globke and others out of their stories, otherwise they will “get in hot water” or “get their fingers burnt”.

Despite supposedly backing up critical journalists in the FRG, Schnitzler just a week later tears into a fairly critical West German documentary. On April 17, DER SCHWARZE KANAL focuses solely on AUF DEN SPUREN DES HENKERS, a programme already mentioned on East

German television in Schnitzler's TREFFPUNKT BERLIN (12.04.1961). As we saw earlier, the guests of the round-table discussion appreciate two points that the West German documentary raises: the fact that it addresses how big companies exploited the labour force of concentration camp prisoners and that it also – as Schnitzler is quick to point out – briefly alludes to Globke. But five days later, in DER SCHWARZE KANAL, Schnitzler's opinion about AUF DEN SPUREN DES HENKERS has changed significantly. Now he presents the documentary, which examines not only Eichmann's life and career but also West German society's tendency to erase the Nazi past, as though it actually played down the Germans' guilt and responsibility for the mass murders. In his critique, Schnitzler purports that AUF DEN SPUREN DES HENKERS presents Eichmann as Austrian, not German, and argues that the documentary affirms statements that it in fact criticises. This misrepresentation results from a wily selection of documentary excerpts. By using fragments out of context and omitting statements that do not fit his accusation, Schnitzler presents the excerpts in a way that supports his claims.

This deliberate misrepresentation, as well as his feeble complaint that the documentary does not name certain contexts and accomplices of Eichmann, reveal how much DER SCHWARZE KANAL depended on 'suitable' West German programmes for its criticism. Its critical stance on West Germany's handling of its Nazi past, which to some extent corresponded with the GDR's concerns, made AUF DEN SPUREN DES HENKERS a poor target for Schnitzler. The programme he had singled out for comment obviously did not reproduce the position of the FRG government. This made it difficult for him to apply his usual critique of West German journalism and television as being Adenauer's mouthpiece and forced him to resort to a biased selection of excerpts that would allow him to make up accusations that had nothing to do with the actual documentary.

On May 15, 1961, the Eichmann trial again was the sole subject of the DER SCHWARZE KANAL. This time Schnitzler argues that the guests of the INTERNATIONALE FRÜHSCHOPPEN detracted from the fact that Globke was forced to admit his involvement in the Nuremberg Laws due to pressure from East Germany before "taking refuge" in Portugal.<sup>63</sup> Excerpts from an interview with Globke on the West German political programme DIE ROTE OPTIK (broadcast on April 28, 1961) are meant to remind the viewers of this 'success'. When Schnitzler introduces the clip, he notes that although Globke initially denied any involvement in the persecution of Jews, he has

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<sup>63</sup> At the beginning of the trial Globke was on vacation in Portugal.

now made a confession on West German television, his word choice insinuating a judicial action (or show trial).<sup>64</sup> Although the clip in question seems to be a continuous fragment, it is in fact elaborately edited.<sup>65</sup> It shows Globke admitting that he temporarily participated in formulating the regulations of the *Reichsbürgergesetz*, that he authored the *Namensänderungsgesetz*, that – as AKTION J already stated – the addition of Jewish names was indeed reported to the Gestapo, and that a stamp in the passports of non-Jewish [sic] Germans regulated their entry to Switzerland.<sup>66</sup>

Schnitzler claims that Globke admitted his guilt on television and blames West German journalists for distracting from this confession. In his view, DER INTERNATIONALE FRÜHSCHOPPEN of May 14, 1961, does this by diluting and universalising anti-Semitism. After a short clip in which one of the FRÜHSCHOPPEN guests states that anti-Semitism did not just exist in Germany, Schnitzler lectures at length on the nature of anti-Semitism as an instrument of class struggle. According to him the ruling class has always (already in feudal times) used anti-Semitism to construct an enemy and divert the people from their real (i.e. class) enemy. After pointing to a number of current anti-Semitic incidents to remind his viewers that anti-Semitism is still alive in the FRG, Schnitzler gets to his main point, stating that since anti-Semitism is no longer acceptable, anti-communism has taken its place. The anti-Semites of the Third Reich are today's anti-communists, he claims, and "today's anti-Semitism is anti-communism". Phrases like "anti-communist pogroms" and "would-be-exterminators of communists" are meant to underpin this equation.

Following this explanation, Schnitzler comments on excerpts from DER INTERNATIONALE FRÜHSCHOPPEN to illustrate how West German journalists retort "worldwide accusations" by blaming the East. In one fragment, radio journalist Klaus Bölling remarks that the GDR is shirking

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<sup>64</sup> East German newspapers attributed this partial confession to the broadcast of AKTION J on East German television; see for example "Globke zu Teilgeständnis gezwungen." *Neues Deutschland* 29 April 1961: 2. "Teilgeständnis Globkes." *Berliner Zeitung* 29 April 1961: 2. Similarly, filmmaker Heynowski considered Globke's interview a reaction to his documentary; see Steinle, *Feindbild*, 157.

<sup>65</sup> A shortened transcript of the interview was published in *Der Spiegel* 10 May 1961: 22.

<sup>66</sup> The passports of Jewish German citizens were stamped with the letter J, indicating that a visa was required to cross the border into a country that they used to be able to enter without a visa. In the original interview Globke explains that when he first heard about the plan to mark the passports of Jews he had suggested stamping the passports of non-Jewish Germans instead.

its own responsibility for the Nazi past and in another Höfer gets angry about the GDR's double standards given that iniquities also occurred in the Eastern Bloc. Schnitzler responds to each excerpt to 'rectify' these statements: in contrast to the FRG, the GDR *has* assumed its historical responsibility by extirpating fascism, he replies to Bölling, and he rebukes Höfer with a reference to the XX. Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,<sup>67</sup> ignoring the violent suppression of uprisings in the East to which Höfer alluded.

Höfer's infuriation over the GDR's stance on the reparation agreement between Israel and West Germany provides Schnitzler with a segue to legitimate in detail East Germany's refusal to pay Israel compensation. First he argues that Israel did not exist when the crimes happened, and then he accuses Israel of behaving aggressively in the Arab region, immediately clarifying that his disapproval of Israel has nothing to do with its Jewish inhabitants but with the fact that it is an imperialist state. However, by pointing out that it was not only Jews who were bloodily persecuted, and that persecuted non-Jewish Poles, Russians, Hungarians, Frenchmen, and Germans did not receive any reparations from the FRG, Schnitzler does seem to adhere to the anti-Semitic stereotype of the money-grubbing Jew. In closing, he suspects that the FRG uses the reparations to buy off its war criminals, i.e. to ensure Israel does not mention their names during the Eichmann trial. Ridiculing the idea of paying reparations, he concludes that the only way to compensate for these crimes is by punishing and disempowering the perpetrators – as the GDR has done.

Getting back to his argument that West German journalists counter evidence of their fellow citizens' guilt by accusing the East, Schnitzler uses excerpts in which the FRÜHSCHOPPEN guests discuss the role of Poland. In an edited clip it seems as if Bölling tells a Polish colleague that in Poland in particular no one has the right to point their finger at West Germany. A bit later Schnitzler clarifies this statement by presenting fragments in which Bölling and Höfer refer to the limited Polish support for the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Filled with indignation, Schnitzler expresses his shame that a German would direct such criticism at Poland, implicitly turning this topic into a taboo. He then shows his support for the Polish journalist on DER INTERNATIONALE FRÜHSCHOPPEN who seems to be cornered by the West German attacks, again making a case for the legal prosecution of former Nazis in Poland and the GDR. After all, he

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<sup>67</sup> At the congress of the Communist Party in 1956 Khrushchev denounced Stalin's crimes.

concludes, it is due to the GDR that the FRG's efforts to conceal murderers like Oberländer and Globke have failed.

## West German Responses

Leaving aside the misrepresentation of West German television programmes by selecting short excerpts and showing skillfully edited clips, there is something to be said for Schnitzler's claim that the GDR attracted attention to how West Germany dealt with its Nazi past. The FRG first ignored the East German campaigns against its citizens, but when British politicians picked up the GDR's accusations, the FRG government started to react, possibly fearing for its reputation amongst its Western allies.<sup>68</sup> In connection with reports about trials against former members of the NSDAP, West German media in 1958 began to report about the Nazi past of a number of judges.<sup>69</sup> 1959 saw the release of Wolfgang Staudte's (fictional) film *ROSEN FÜR DEN STAATSANWALT*, in which a respectable prosecutor is uncovered as a Nazi judge, and that same year students organised the widely discussed travelling exhibition *Ungesühnte Nazijustiz* (Unpunished Crimes of the Nazi Juridical System). The East German *Blutrichter* campaigns were then indeed met with a response in the FRG.

West German television programmes also addressed the accusations. Against the backdrop of the Eichmann trial, *DIE ROTE OPTIK*, a West German counterpart of sorts to *DER SCHWARZE KANAL*,<sup>70</sup> repeatedly discussed the Hans Globke case. On December 19, 1960, host Thilo Koch was very outspoken about the director of Adenauer's Chancellery.<sup>71</sup> After asserting his hope that the Eichmann trial will provide more information about the culprits of the atrocities, he dismisses an East German television programme (without mentioning its title) that pretended to already know the outcome of the trial. Arguing that he believes many of the GDR's accusations against West German politicians are false and invented, he makes a personal statement: When selecting its personnel, Koch states, Adenauer's Christian Democratic Party made big mistakes by ignoring

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<sup>68</sup> Miquel, *Ahnden*, 32ff.

<sup>69</sup> Miquel, *Ahnden*, 39.

<sup>70</sup> The organising principle of the programme was similar to *DER SCHWARZE KANAL*, though Schnitzler argues that while he aimed to collide the political systems in *DER SCHWARZE KANAL*, the *OPTIK*'s host Thilo Koch strove for objectivity. See Schnitzler in Levasier, "Schwarze Kanal," 238.

<sup>71</sup> The programme was not broadcast live but pre-recorded on 28 November 1960; see Staatsarchiv Hamburg, 621-1/144 Bestand NRD, Nr. 177.

what these people did during the Third Reich. From what is known so far, Koch says, Globke was indeed partly responsible for the anti-Semitic legislation of the NS state, but it can also be proven that he did help many German Jews. After this statement Koch explicates his frankness by praising the democratic right to free speech.<sup>72</sup>

On April 28, 1961, DIE ROTE OPTIK also illustrates that West German television journalists took some of the GDR claims seriously. Unsettled about the GDR's reports on anti-FRG demonstrations in Israel, the producers of DIE ROTE OPTIK ask their Jerusalem-based colleagues about the truth of these reports.<sup>73</sup> In response, the correspondents asked people in Israel about the trial and about their opinions on the FRG and the GDR's assertions. These interviews are part of the programme and follow host Peter Schultze's comments on the GDR's instrumentalisation of the trial and on the anti-Zionist attitude of the Eastern bloc. Afterwards, Schultze summarises the main accusations that AKTION J made against Globke, to which DIE ROTE OPTIK reacts by showing documents that exculpate the accused. Additionally, Schultze also interviews Globke. Talking with him about a number of accusations, Schultze states that he wants to facilitate the viewers "to form their opinion objectively". After the interview (which, as mentioned above, DER SCHWARZE KANAL edited for its own ends), Schultze concludes DIE ROTE OPTIK by mentioning Globke's willingness to answer his questions and by stating that "the communists will not outdo us in our search for the truth".

## Conclusion

The coverage of the Eichmann trial illustrates the 'mediated interaction' between East and West German television. In a time when their (non-)relation was shaped by denying each other's legitimacy and informed by the Hallstein Doctrine, disputes between East and West Germany were carried out in the mass media. Both the GDR and the FRG not only monitored the broadcasts of the other side but also responded to them in their own television programmes. Furthermore, the trial coverage points to the contestation over the National Socialist past that was part of the ideological rivalry between both Germanies. Their increasing conflicts that are strongly related to the political tensions of the Cold War

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<sup>72</sup> In a letter to Koch that was sent one day after the broadcast, Globke's personal assistant politely points out that Globke did not contribute to the Nuremberg Laws; see Staatsarchiv Hamburg, 621-1/144 Bestand NRD, Nr. 177.

<sup>73</sup> See Staatsarchiv Hamburg, 621-1/144 Bestand NRD, Nr. 177.



eventually led to the construction of the Berlin Wall and must be understood as a backdrop against which the Eichmann trial (and its media coverage) took place.

In 1961, television was still a young medium. Although its different social and political functions in East and West Germany were still emerging, in the context of the Eichmann trial they became already clearly apparent. In the FRG, young journalists tested Western television's editorial independence by asking critical questions, voicing their opinion and criticising the government.<sup>74</sup> By emphasising television's function as an open forum for discussion they attested to the right of free speech and freedom of the press, which was at that time a prevalent anticommunist argument.<sup>75</sup> Television in the GDR, in contrast, was always in line with the government due to the party affiliation of journalists and various control mechanisms. The campaigns against the FRG demonstrate that the Agitation Committee played an active part in programming. Not only was the documentary *AKTION J* commissioned by and produced in consultation with the Committee. It also prepared a list with suggestions for further programmes and arranged press conferences on which the news reported. Furthermore, the television programmes about the Eichmann trial demonstrate the GDR's efforts to act on the fact that its citizens watched West German television. By countering statements that were made on West German television, East German television provided its viewers with guidelines on how to 'read' them correctly.

Although the GDR succeeded in getting West German television to respond to its campaigns, the ultimate extent of their success, so overconfidently proclaimed by Schnitzler, is questionable. According to Michael Lemke, most people in both German states rejected the campaigns or did not believe the assertions in the first place.<sup>76</sup> What is more, by making up false accusations, fabricating documents, and misrepresenting facts, the GDR undermined the credibility of those West Germans (including critical journalists) who did criticise the FRG's handling of the past.

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<sup>74</sup> For more about the emergence of critical journalism in the FRG see Christina von Hodenberg, *Konsens und Krise: Eine Geschichte der westdeutschen Medienöffentlichkeit 1945-1973* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006).

<sup>75</sup> For more about the ties between (television) journalism and anti-communism in the context of the US see Bernhard (2003).

<sup>76</sup> Lemke, "Kampagnen," 174.

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### ***Translation of titles***

AKTION J (Action J)

AKTUELLE KAMERA (Current Camera)

AUF DEN SPUREN DES HENKERS (Tracing the Hangman)

DER INTERNATIONALE FRÜHSCHOPPEN (The International Morning Pint)

DER SCHWARZE KANAL (The Black Channel)

DIE ROTE OPTIK (Red Lenses)

MITTELDEUTSCHES TAGEBUCH (Central German Diary)

ROSEN FÜR DEN STAATSANWALT (Roses for the Prosecutor)

TELESTUDIO WEST (Tele-Studio West)

TREFFPUNKT BERLIN (Meeting Point Berlin)

ZDF-MAGAZIN (ZDF Magazine)