

OCTOBER 26, 1954: BUILDING IDEOLOGY ON BOTH
SIDES OF THE IRON CURTAIN

by

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October 26, 1954 was a day for constructing ideology. This thesis explores the building – successful and not – of ideology on that day in both the United States and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in the form of music and news. In 1954, the GDR government and composers allied with the socialist cause began a new cultural campaign using musical events and the socialist-realist aesthetic to establish authority over the East German population. By promoting their own socialist aesthetic and combining it with German cultural traditions, they created a hybrid culture that co-opted patriotic prestige from German cultural icons while also promoting a revolutionary, anti-capitalist consciousness. Simultaneously, Eisenhower’s administration used newspaper articles to disseminate ideological rhetoric. These articles placed the American individual in an economic war where their loyalty to capitalism was necessary for their very survival. Ultimately, this thesis suggests that an audience’s pre-established ideology and its associated level of receptivity to new ideological considerations are critical to the success or failure of state ideological construction.

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Introduction: Building Ideology on Both Sides of the Iron Curtain

“But we Yooks, as you know,
when we breakfast or sup,
spread our bread,’ Grandpa said,
with the butter side up.
That’s the right, honest way!”

-Dr. Seuss, *The Butter Battle Book*

In the introduction to *Becoming East German*, Andrew Port compares the longevity and stability of East Germany, which collapsed, to that of the Western nations, of which most remain in a similar socio-economic system to this day. He poses several questions when he reaches this point: Why did the West, with its adherence more or less to free market capitalism, experience greater internal support and outlive the socialist, more or less non-market system of the German Democratic Republic? “Why were the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the other states in the Soviet bloc unable to win the ‘hearts and minds’ of the masses? And why was the capitalist West able to do so? Was it because of the intrinsic appeal of democracy and ‘basic freedoms’?”¹ He poses three possible solutions to this dilemma. The first suggests that the Western system was more adept at providing material necessities and luxuries, especially to the groups and people that helped shape public opinion the most. People, especially those with power, would be much more likely to support a system that consistently put food on their table and provided for their other wants and needs. The second theory is that a socialist project run by the Soviet Union simply was not going to succeed at that point in history. Nazi propaganda, spread for over a decade before the creation of the GDR, made the German population wary of a “Russian” system

¹ Andrew Port, *Becoming East German* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 22-23.

“imposed from without.”² The final theory, which will become the focus this thesis, offers that the “West simply conveyed a more effective message.”³

I will explore the message on both sides of the Iron Curtain by comparing two cultural documents: East German music and U.S. news articles. Initially, music and news articles may seem incomparable. After all, these two media are different in form. However, by abstracting these two media beyond the specific formal characteristics, one can form comparisons. Both are ultimately cultural documents that attempt to disseminate information – whether that is expression or “news” – to their audience. This information, as will be seen, was laden with ideological suggestions during the Cold War. As such, both of these media will be explored as capsules and transmitters of state ideology. Thus, instead of comparing the forms’ effectiveness or specific characteristics, this thesis will focus on what techniques and methods these media used to engage with their audiences.

This thesis will look at what media and messages - collectively ideology – these states employed domestically. The ideology of East Germany will be explored through the program text and music of *Musikfest des VDK*, a music festival held in Leipzig. The ideology in United States will be illuminated via an examination of a newspaper reprinting of Eisenhower’s speech to the National Security Industrial Association.

That day, chosen based off of the day of *Musikfest* – the initial inspiration for this project – happens to be October 26, 1954. The day was not particularly special, which seems apt for a study of the creation of ideology. I hope to show that ideology

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

can be built in the most mundane fashions as well as extravagant ways, that it pervades all forms of communication and expression. I hope this thesis will suggest that ideology comes to infiltrate the simplest, benign-looking situations, whether that is clear in the text of the ideological object itself or becomes apparent in the interpretations of the viewer. On one hand, East Germany attempted to forge a syncretic musical identity and convince workers that the revolutionary music signaled a revolutionary new state. On the other hand, the Eisenhower administration attempted to simultaneously allay people's economic fears and stoke patriotic passion in the mentality that a free market driven by individual private interests was the best possible system with coordinated news articles and rhetoric. Ultimately, a comparison of these two examples of ideological construction will reveal trends in the “game” of socio-political confidence as well as the strong relationship between information, experience, and ideological construction.

Rationale and Theory

The importance of exploring the messages of the Cold War can be explained by a comparison to financial panics. A bank run, perhaps the most common financial panic, is a situation in which depositors all wish to withdraw their funds located at a specific bank because of a sudden decline in confidence in that institution. However, the issue is that a bank almost never holds 100% reserves. So once the first wave of depositors has reclaimed their money, the bank is often unable to pay out the rest of its depositors. Simply put, a bank requires the confidence of their depositors in order to exist. Without their confidence, the bank has no funds with which to do business and its function as a bank ceases. Of course, in the case of sudden confidence drops, there are ways that

banks and states can avoid financial panic and the collapse of the bank. A simple, but largely ineffective solution is for the bank to freeze withdrawals. The bank holds all of its depositors' funds so as to not collapse, but it often suffers from large reputational issues as a result. Another method is for states or other banks to prop up the institution that is experiencing a run. These relief institutions give funds to the bank so that it can satisfy enough depositors to the point where the run dies out. That is, news spreads that the bank in fact is able to meet all withdrawal demands, and depositors' panic is quelled.⁴

A bank run is not entirely different from a crisis of confidence in a state and its system. If confidence is maintained, then the state and its system will likely continue to exist. Overall, people will go about their days following their established habits. However, if paranoia or dissent is suddenly injected into a community, then a crisis can occur. Instead of money being removed from a bank until it no longer has any, people will either leave a society or dissent until its state identity or system resembles something new. Put simply, people will want change because they no longer accept the status quo. When this crisis surfaces, it is then up to the state to react. And just like a bank, a state that does not wish to collapse can choose, amongst other solutions, to freeze withdrawal or to quell the panic with calculated defensive measures that simply stop the issue before it snowballs out of control. Of course, in the case of societies, funds are human beings and their associated labor. Thus, freezing withdrawal is rather like border control measures so often employed by Soviet bloc states where citizens

⁴ See Walter Bagehot, *Lombard Street: A Description of the Money Market* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892).

would be barred from emigrating. Calculated preventative measures would be reassurances from those in power that their society is in fact on the right path, and that issues simply do not exist or are easily fixed.

To return to Port's original question, perhaps the West employed better measures to establish societal confidence and to fight off insurrection. It could be the Western message was able to penetrate further and to convince more of its citizenry of its legitimacy, gaining their confidence and faith that the Western system would fulfill its promises. In other words, the Western message kept domestic affairs running more effectively than that of the Soviet Union.

In any case, both sides of the Iron Curtain needed to expend and expand resources so as to spread and maintain their message. This process required state institutions to become loudspeakers for these state messages. Domestically, the ultimate hope would be to please enough of the population to have a cooperative society. In short, states and their respective supporters were hoping to build habits that would ideally lead to more supporters or at least a population that was not actively battling the state or its system.

Therefore, Port's conception of "message" may be illuminated by comparing it with Louis Althusser's conception of ideology. Althusser sees society as a place where "individuals in question 'go', and that it is ideology which makes them 'go'."⁵ With the help of state institutions, ideology runs individuals and is reproduced by their actions taken on a daily basis. In this outlook, are two main points: Ideology is individuals' imaginary relationship with their real conditions of existence; and ideology has material

⁵ Louis Althusser, *On the Reproduction of Capitalism* (Brooklyn: Verso Books, 2014), 180.

existence in the physical actions that humans take.⁶ In other words, a person, believing in certain ideas, will act in accordance with those ideas and inscribe those ideas within the acts of their material practice.⁷ Thus, it can be said that ideology makes a pleased or placated individual “go” in the sense that they reflect their support of or resignation to that ideology in their behavior and habits. Althusser explains that these ideologies are formed with the help of distinct institutions. Two types of institutions help maintain state ideology. State ideological apparatuses (government propaganda programs, cultural unions, etc.) build textual arguments while state repressive apparatuses (military, police, etc.) enforce the ideology or repress active detractors. Thus, ideology also includes the material reality and practices of these institutions. Therefore, the full definition of ideology is that which exists in a “material ideological apparatus, prescribing material practices regulated by a material ritual, which practices exist in the material acts of a subject acting in all good conscience in accordance with his belief.”⁸ As Althusser notes, the entire system of ideology proposed here leads to concrete individuals becoming “believers” or at least concrete subjects of ideology.⁹ As their lives are subjected to the actions that are defined by their ideological standpoint, they form habits that define their experience and interpretation of events. Under this definition, a person attending a concert or someone reading their morning newspaper can be seen as a subject of the didactic information present in such a medium. Through coercion or not, these individuals chose to participate in these cultural activities. And

⁶ Ibid., 181-184.

⁷ Ibid., 185.

⁸ Ibid., 187.

⁹ Ibid., 185.

individuals during the Cold War chose how to behave based on their own ideology, an ideology that was likely intertwined with state messages and material rituals. By using this definition, this thesis will necessary focus on material rituals, the institutions that support them, and their “subjects.” An exploration of the ideologies during the Cold War will be an examination of the “messages” at that time.

How did states attempt to convince their domestic populations that indeed they were already on the side where the grass was greener? That is, the grass already under their feet was the greenest and that experimentation with the "other side" was, at best, foolhardy because their state already had the best knowledge and at worst, treasonous. Hoping to avoid coercion – which both states arguably employed at different points anyway – they needed, to use Port's word, a message to convince their populations that a shared advantage could be found in the future of each respective system; they needed an ideology that would make things "go," to use Althusser's thinking. Music and news articles became transmitters of that ideology in the Cold War.

Chapter I: The East Side

“And must there not be some art which will effect conversion in the easiest and quickest manner; not implanting the faculty of sight, for that exists already, but has been turned in the wrong, and is looking away from the truth?”

Yes, he said, such an art may be presumed.”

-Socrates speaking to Glaucon, Plato's *Republic*

Plinko, Semiotics, and Socialism

Plinko, the forerunner to pinball, seemingly has little to do with socialist-realist music. In the game, the contestant takes her tokens and one by one places them in the Plinko board, a large, upright board with only one entry point where pegs redirect the token's path of descent. Eventually, the token reaches the bottom of the board where nine outcomes are possible. Each outcome is associated with a prize. Of course, once the token is let go, it cannot be interfered with, therefore, there is seemingly no strategy involved. In no way is the game random, though. With single-entry Plinko boards (not the eight-entry type seen on *The Price is Right*), the probability of the token landing in each outcome follows a bell curve.¹⁰ That is, an outcome's likelihood decreases the farther it is from the center. However, what if contestants were given planks of wood that they could place in the board before dropping their token, effectively negating pegs that might otherwise redirect the token in the wrong direction? The older probability would be subverted. With even small alterations to the board, entire outcomes could be removed. And if contestants could make major alterations, they would then be able to funnel the token towards their desired result. If their planks were long enough, contestants could guide the token with 100% accuracy. In effect, by controlling the

¹⁰ Plinko is often used in elementary schools to explain probability. See *Plinko, Probability, and Pascal*, Haws, 1995.

intermediary steps between the drop and the final outcome, the contestants could effectively engineer the results.

While the American philosopher and scientist Charles Sanders Peirce likely never knew of Plinko, the similarities between his theory of semiotics and the game are illuminating. The process of semiotics (interpretations of signs) can be thought of as the explanation of how signs are interpreted by a group of people whose Plinko boards, so to speak, already have alterations. Peirce first wrote about semiotics, the study of signs and symbols, in 1867. In his early work, Peirce established many categories of signs, which can be reduced to icon, index, and symbol. An icon represents the real object by similarity. For example, a drawing of a tree signifies a tree purely through a simple resemblance. An index can occur via factual or concurrent experiential associations. An index is what explains the “Honey, they are playing our song!” phenomenon. For example, a song may become an index of particular emotions or associated with a loved one because one felt those emotions or shared a moment with that person while the song was playing. Finally, a symbol represents a learned, denotational association. Interpretations and behavior associated with traffic signs, for example, represent simple symbolic associations because we have agreed as a society about what they mean. Peirce’s unfinished writings on semiotics established a relational triangle, or trichotomy, that could help explain the interpretation of any sign or symbol. That is, there is a three step process to the interpretation of every sign. First, there must be an interpreter, a person present who will be the one to connect a sign to an object. Second, the interpreter needs to recognize the sign as a sign. Without this, no signifying will occur. This connection is heavily dependent on the interpreter’s past experiences or lack

thereof with that sign. Third, the interpreter must connect the sign to a real or abstract object. Finally, the interpreter interprets the sign. The interpretation is key as it can bring on emotions, memories (“Honey, they are playing our song!”), or even physical action (braking one’s car).

Thus, the game of Plinko occurs with every sign that people run into. Traffic signs, language, visual art, and music all use signs, which can be thought of as Plinko tokens. Past experiences with these signs (iconic, indexical, or symbolic) can be thought of as alterations that guide the token to a specific range of results or to a single one. In other words, these signs and symbols enter our brains and are funneled to a certain result because of years of learned behavior, indexical associations, or iconic similarities. And because of our shared social experiences (living in the same nation, having similar educations, etc.) general interpretational trends begin to appear. Therefore, even though outcomes will not follow the bell curve, output trends (the “norm”) will often appear or can be assumed. When a driver sees a stop sign, she stops or at least recognizes that the sign suggests she should bring her car to a halt. Does this mean that everybody recognizes stop signs and follows the symbolic action associated with it? Certainly not, but the majority of people recognize the symbol. In other words, they are familiar with the ideology and its associated material rituals, even if they do not follow it at all times or ever. When it comes to music, interpretational trends are established to musical icons, indices, and symbols. As Loren Kajikawa demonstrates in *Sounding Race in Rap Songs*, the rap group Public Enemy established connections between their sonic

characteristics and a new brand of political militancy by taking advantage of samples from pre-existing records.¹¹

As musicologist Thomas Turino has stated about Peirce's theory, every musical sound, performance, dance movement, or contextual feature is a sign.¹² And as Germany became East and West Germany through political forces as opposed to national, cultural, or linguistic movements, composers in the socialist state began to form a new system of cultural signs and to alter older ones to guide the Plinko tokens to a new ideology. The new signs would have to infiltrate spaces occupied by established signs. The older signs, with all of the symbolic, indexical, and iconic baggage coming from the era of the Third Reich, would need to be redirected or removed. East German composers and cultural officials wanted to use events like *Musikfest* to reconstruct citizens' musical sign associations by redirecting and ultimately funneling their interpretations of all icons, indices, and symbols towards socialist definitions of society and culture.

Social Rupture and Cultural Engagement in the GDR

On June 17, 1953, workers filled the streets of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) violently protesting against the *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschland* (SED) government following several months of unpopular labor laws and fomenting anger. The protesters took over government buildings and even got into firefights with East

¹¹ See Loren Kajikawa, *Sounding Race in Rap Songs* (Oakland: UC Press, 2015).

¹² Thomas Turino, "Peircean Thought As Core Theory For A Phenomenological Ethnomusicology," *Ethnomusicology* 58, No. 2 (2015): 188.

German police and Soviet soldiers.¹³ Certain protesters carried national banners and sang “the old German fascist hymn” as they rambled the streets.¹⁴ The SED police infrastructure did not have the resources to quell the furor. As the country slipped into chaos, Soviet tanks bolstered the SED. Martial law was declared.¹⁵ The Russian reinforcements effectively quashed the uprising, but only after the SED government had made huge concessions concerning the new labor laws.¹⁶ A tenuous return to order followed in the subsequent days. The GDR politicians, who had been completely taken by surprise and were still bewildered, returned to their offices and began devising how to fix the country.

The uprising scared the ruling party, who had almost lost power after a few days of protest. With the knowledge that the protests were made up of people from the entire length of the political spectrum, it seems that the government had either done its job too well or not at all. The anti-fascist campaigns of the 1940s had not sufficiently removed Nazi elements from the country. And those protesters that were not fascists were revolutionaries that had used their skills to almost cause a popular revolution against the “revolutionary” government itself.

Amidst the deep irony of the situation, the SED party set about coming up with a plan that would restore order. The threat of tanks kept people from organizing in public, but politicians had to reorder the nation in a way so as to avoid similar violent uprisings

¹³ Vasilli Sokolovski et al, “On the Events of 17-19 June 1953 in Berlin and the GDR” in *Uprising in East Germany, 1953* ed. Christian F Ostermann (Budapest: Central European Press, 2001), 261.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 271.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ In Althusser’s thinking, because the security forces reestablished centralized control, ideology was maintained here by repressive state apparatuses.

in the future. It appears that at this point GDR officials fully examined the recommendations and warnings that Soviet authorities had been sending them in the lead up to the protests. Just fifteen days before the uprising, Soviet advisors had sent a document titled “On Measures to Improve the Health of the Political Situation in the GDR.”¹⁷ Russian advisors claimed the very first measure was to improve the material situation of the country. The GDR had been experiencing a major emigration crisis where people of all classes and sectors were leaving the country for the West because of, the Soviets claimed, a lack of necessities.¹⁸ Out of a population of roughly 18 million, an unprecedented 120,000 had left in the first six months of 1953.¹⁹ The country was suffering as a result, or at least Soviet advisors felt it was and they ordered the GDR government to fix the situation. To help solve this issue, the advisors recommended that the SED end forced collectivization and the war on private enterprise.²⁰ Similarly, despite the detriment to heavy industry, they suggested that the SED revise its Five-Year Plan so as to loosen political and judicial controls.²¹ They even denounced the GDR Chairman Walter Ulbricht’s “cold exercise of power.”²² They also suggested a removal of unpopular and incompetent leaders of the party and state.²³ They would be replaced by young comrades who would have a greater connection to the working classes, laboring peasants, and intelligentsia. In the future, measures taken

¹⁷ “On Measures to Improve the Health of the Political Situation in the GDR,” in *Uprising in East Germany, 1953* ed. Christian F. Ostermann (Budapest: Central European Press, 2001), 133.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 135.

²¹ Christian F. Ostermann, *Uprising in East Germany, 1953* (Budapest: Central European Press, 2001), 18.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ “On the Events of 17-19 June 1953,” 282.

by the SED government needed to be “understood by the people and [met] with support from the population itself.”²⁴ The government should also elevate its puppet organizations’ presence in the “social life of the GDR”.²⁵ In contemporary terms, the Soviet advisors saw the need for a public relations campaign. It was clear to them that the SED “displayed complete ignorance of the masses, lack of connection with the classes, an inability to speak to the people.”²⁶ The SED party needed to connect with the working class to avoid another popular revolution.

The hopes of improving relations with the working class also caused cultural and social readjustments in the following years, including changes in state policy on music. The GDR government was to reduce its persecution of religious remnants in the country so as to limit the animosity created between a deeply entrenched Protestant community and the SED party.²⁷ While the SED government moved away from certain sectors, they moved to become more active in others by organizing more cultural events, but while also relinquishing much control that had caused earlier frustration. Cultural officials declared that artists had “complete freedom.”²⁸ Leaders in the various musical organizations echoed the call for more artistic autonomy while also reaffirming their commitment to socialist-realism. What was new was that they felt cultural officials should use persuasion or constructive criticism instead of force to convince artists of the primacy of socialist-realism and to support them even if they were not amenable.²⁹ In

²⁴ “On Measures to Improve the Health of the Political Situation in the GDR,” 135.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Pravda* Correspondent P. Naumov to Dimitrii Shepilov, “Report on the Events in Berlin on 16 and 17 June 1953,” in *Uprising in East Germany, 1953*, ed. Christian F. Ostermann (Budapest: Central European Press, 2001), 207.

²⁷ “On Measures to Improve the Health of the Political Situation in the GDR,” 136.

²⁸ David G. Tompkins, *Composing the Party Line* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2013), 62.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

certain cases, it seems the population took advantage of the new cultural opportunities. The 1955-56 East German opera season included 5,948 performances which were attended by over 4 million visitors while the 1952-53 season had 800 fewer performances and 18% fewer visitors.³⁰

By no means, however, was the SED's interest in how culture could serve the socialist revolution and alter the lives of its constituents new. One of the first post-war ideological decrees came in 1951 when the SED declared their campaign against formalism, the aesthetic ideology the party felt helped the spread of non-socialist ideas. In its place, the government promoted socialist-realism, an aesthetic originally developed in Soviet Russia.³¹ While the socialist-realist aesthetic is difficult to define, Ernst Hermann Meyer, the top musicologist in the GDR, defined it as any work that was "formed through personal experience, personality, and individual ideas, thoughts and feelings, and with content that is meant for working people."³² Cultural debates during 1950-52 had established this definition.³³ Ernst Hermann Meyer claimed that formalism's focus on form and method led its works to lack "cherished feelings" and any "recognizable melody."³⁴ Socialist-realism, on the other hand, was "not engaged in abstract experimentation, but [provided] strength for people to solve today's problems."³⁵ Socialist-realism would also be "national in form."³⁶ However, cultural

³⁰ Heinz Alfred Brockhaus and Konrad Niemann, *Musikgeschichte der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik Sammelbände 5* (Berlin: Verlag Neue Musik, 1979), 81.

³¹ Esther von Richthofen, *Bringing Culture to the Masses* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 31.

³² Tompkins, *Composing the Party Line*, 21.

³³ Brockhaus and Niemann, *Musikgeschichte der DDR*, 66-7.

³⁴ Peggy Klemke, *Taktgeber oder Tabuisierte – Komponisten in der DDR* (Berlin: Tectum Verlag, 2007), 60.

³⁵ Tompkins, *Composing the Party Line*, 21.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

officials and composers alike warned composers to not focus on form too much. A preoccupation with form would lead to a designation of “formalism,” a label popularly applied during the period to anything remotely Western or American.³⁷

Structural changes led to centralized oversight of the cultural realm before 1953. For instance, the *Vereine* system, whereby all social and cultural clubs were required to register with a factory, institution or mass organization, helped to centralize cultural pursuits and weed out dissent.³⁸ Thus, the SED government had institutionalized control and to a certain extent dealt with dissidents. So while there was a definite thaw in 1953, the cultural sector posed less of a threat to the SED government than it had just five years prior, perhaps making it easier for officials to justify a “hands-off” approach.

Out of the pre-1953 period but destined to play a major role in 1954 came the *Verband Deutscher Komponisten und Musikwissenschaftler* (VDK), the central composer’s union of the GDR. Founded in April 1951, the organization’s main pursuits were promoting the careers of its members, uniting the East German people, and the building of socialism in the GDR, even if it meant using ideologically asynchronous rhetoric and groups.³⁹ The founding members were some of the most popular socialist-realist composers and musical thinkers of the entire nation, notably the composers Ottmar Gerster, Rudolf Wagner-Régeny and the musicologist Ernst Hermann Meyer.⁴⁰ A large poster behind the delegates at the founding congress of the VDK declared “a

³⁷ Certain American composers embraced “formalism” as a symbol of their individuality and creative genius, a tactic which distinguished their work from Communist music. See Richard Pells, *Modernist America : Art, Music, Movies, and the Globalization of American Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

³⁸ Richthofe, *Bringing Culture to the Masses*, 31.

³⁹ Brockhaus and Niemann, *Musikgeschichte der DDR*, 73.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 73-4

volk is nothing without an honest, great art, the art is nothing without the *volk*.”⁴¹ The use of *volk* could very well have appealed to all sectors of East German society. Nationalists and centrists would have recognized the sign from the Nazi era, while socialists could have understood it as a reference to the revolutionary proletariat. Thus, it seems that from the beginning these GDR composers were interested in co-opting Nazi signs and placing them in a new socialist context.

The necessary cultural infrastructure and ideologies existed and the post-1953 government had extra impetus to disseminate and promote party doctrine throughout the country, particularly to the restless working class. The question within the government was: What was the best way for the government and its centralized organizations to support this effort within the musical community? Part of the answer was to continue music festivals that promoted new socialist-realist pieces and could serve as an avenue of entertainment, cultural stimulation, and possibly indoctrination. The promotion of music festivals would also help establish the socialist-realist genre and subsequently push other less desirable genres from the spotlight. It seems the regime was seeking to establish cultural domination.

The *Musikfest des VDK* in 1954 was planned as an event that could both display the new aesthetic to the public and also allow the elite musicians to ingratiate themselves with workers. The festival was to be held in Leipzig on October 26 and 27 as part of a new “cultural offensive” in the fall of 1954 that, while not a return to the hardline years of the early GDR, was meant to show support for the government’s

⁴¹ Ibid., 73.

cultural objectives.⁴² It was clear that the festival was meant to be a new kind of musical event: socialist-realism and all its potential for creating a new, unified socialist state would be the central focus and theme. Leading up to the festival, many composers and musicologists, including Meyer came out in support of the government's firm position on socialist-realism as the pinnacle of artistic expression.⁴³ The stage was set for a festival that could, according to GDR politicians and VDK members, change the very consciousness of the country.

Officials in Berlin attempted to heavily control the selection process for the event, including planning and executing of the festival's lineup, so as to ensure that only the best socialist-realist pieces would make it into the program.⁴⁴ These SED-linked musicologists and composers offered advice on each genre that was to be represented at the festival. Perhaps upon recommendation from Soviet advisors, they sought pieces that were ideologically congruous with state views on musical production.⁴⁵ The central doctrine suggested that pieces should be nationalist in form and socialist in content, be accessible for all audiences, and create an atmosphere of optimism. By establishing a hardline in the musical sector, the officials hoped that this tactic would send a message to the entire population of GDR composers: write socialist-realist music or never have your pieces performed in grand public events.⁴⁶

Whether by incompetence or by deliberate rebellion, the Leipzig branch of the VDK flouted some of these recommendations. The VDK leadership made noticeable

⁴² Tompkins, *Composing the Party Line*, 62.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁴⁴ Tompkins, *Composing the Party Line*, 180.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

changes to the Berlin committee's guidelines.⁴⁷ While ultimately using the state's recommended rhetoric, it seems that the VDK chose what pieces they wished.⁴⁸ In arguments that would arise after the event, the Berlin committee criticized the Leipzig selections as too experimental.⁴⁹ However, it is important to consider why the VDK would disregard state advice, or at least appear to.

The Leipzig VDK genuinely embraced the chance to solidify cultural connections between socialism and German heritage. While perhaps unknowingly, it seems they attempted to accomplish what Soviet advisors had suggested just over a year prior: reconnect with the German people. The *Musikfest* would be a music festival, but, more importantly, also be a machine for uniting the German people. The cogs in this machine would be socialist-realist works that combined national and socialist elements.

Despite the socialist-realist criticism of formalism, composers still focused on selecting specific forms to showcase at *Musikfest* because of their patriotic potential. In mid-September, members of the VDK's Leipzig branch wrote internal memos to one another about what genres were the best to show at the festival and why. The Leipzig officials decided upon a list of the three most important genres:

1. The large symphonic form – especially the opera
2. the mass-song
3. the dance music⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ SAPMO B-Archiv, DY-30, IV 2/9.06/281, 27. [1.) *Die große sinfonische Form – besonders das der Oper* 2.) *das Massenlied* 3.) *die Tanzmusik*]

According to the internal memos, composers chose these forms as they “undoubtedly” represented national forms.⁵¹ The Leipzig branch saw these genres as tools to be used in their “national task” of creating a united Germany.⁵² These forms were to be particularly helpful at finding a solution to the “issue of national intonation in German music.”⁵³ In other words, the Leipzig branch suggested that by finding the quintessential Germanic sound and forms, they could bring about a unified socialist Germany. It was their mission to combine the “success of the Soviet Union and the *volk*’s democracy” and national forms into socialist-realist musical pieces.⁵⁴ In effect, the musical uniting of these two concepts would help create unity on a real-world political scale. The potential unity would be tested at *Musikfest* the following month. With each piece, each audience member would interpret the signs that they recognized. A Plinko game would take place with each audience member and where the token landed depended on their personal and shared social experiences with music. In the end, the majority of these outcomes would need to be positive for the audience to react well and for *Musikfest* to be a success.

Steps Taken to Guide the Plinko Token at *Musikfest* and How They Failed

On October 26, 1954, *Musikfest* opened with an evening program consisting of four handpicked socialist-realist pieces:

Rudolf Wagner-Régeny – Opera Suite from “Persian Episode”

Helmut Riethmüller – Divertimento for piano and horns

Günter Raphael – Sinfonia breve

⁵¹ Ibid. [zweifellos]

⁵² Ibid. [nationale Aufgabe]

⁵³ Ibid. [der Frage der nationalen Intonation in der deutschen Musik]

⁵⁴ Ibid. [der Erfolge der Sowjetunion und der Volksdemokratien]

Ottmar Gerster – Sinfonie No. 2 (Thüringische)⁵⁵

The names included some of the heavy-hitters of the GDR socialist-realist camp.

Ottmar Gerster and Rudolf Wagner-Régeny would have been known by locals and music enthusiasts. With these choices, it is not immediately apparent how they fit into the VDK's efforts to find a national musical voice. To remedy this situation, the program, explained symbolic associations for most of the music present at *Musikfest*. In this case, all of the definitions were to be patriotic and revolutionary.

Therefore, the VDK had to bill the pieces and the event as the culmination of Germanic and socialist culture. The mayor of Leipzig and Ottmar Gerster, the VDK chairman, provided forewords in the *Musikfest* program that partially fulfilled these efforts. With memories of the 1953 protests still fresh, the forewords emphasized the event's potential for building stronger, more transparent connections with the GDR people. It certainly seems that Gerster had the prior unrest in his mind as he wrote his foreword. He mentioned how he hoped the event would mirror Bach who, despite living in "a time of deep national humiliation and splintering," composed highly spirited works.⁵⁶ This statement about a nationally treasured composer overcoming the difficulties of his time to create masterpieces would likely have drawn comparisons in the audience's mind to the GDR's socialist-realist composers and the recent social upheaval. Gerster also wrote that the *Musikfest* stage would allow East German composers to "speak in openness and receptiveness over the many questions and problems of our musical creations."⁵⁷ Gerster hoped that the music "of the realization of

⁵⁵ "Kongress und Musikfest: 1954," ZA 37473, Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, 16.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 2. [einer Zeit tiefer nationaler Erniedrigung und Zersplitterung]

⁵⁷ Ibid. [In Offenheit und Aufgeschlossenheit] [Fragen und Probleme unseres musikalischen Schaffens aussprechen]

our communal aim” would speak a “language understood by all.”⁵⁸ He went on to say that the *Musikfest* works would “speak to millions of Germans in [the] east and west.”⁵⁹ In other words, no longer would only the elite and bourgeois enjoy classical music; workers would understand the music as well.

Hans Uhlich, the mayor of Leipzig, echoed Gerster’s sentiments. He claimed the festival would “widen and consolidate cultural relationships” as well as serve the “*volk*’s friendship.”⁶⁰ Thus, in the program itself the Soviet advisors’ 1953 directives appear to have been at least attempted, if not fulfilled. The aims of *Musikfest* was first and foremost dialogue with the workers. Thus, the program attempted to claim the event itself was a symbol of cultural triumph and goodwill between artists and citizens.

Gerster’s foreword also discussed the VDK’s search for a national intonation. The VDK chairman seemed to see music as a cultural bastion that could reinvigorate national and socialist loyalties. That is, with all of the communal fragmentation, the people of Germany should return to their cultural stronghold of music so as to fight off internal and external enemies. As he wrote, music would “break down the concern-fulfilling forces of destruction and alienation in our fatherland.”⁶¹ Therefore, while so many political forces had joined together to divide Germany and now turned their focus to dividing East Germany, Germans could always count on their “indivisible German culture” to hold the nation and its people together.⁶² He hoped that this “sonic

⁵⁸ Ibid. [*allen verständliche Sprache sprechen*]

⁵⁹ Ibid. [*zu Millionen Deutschen in Ost und West sprechen*]

⁶⁰ Ibid., 1. [*die kulturellen Beziehungen zu anderen Völkern zu erweitern und zu festigen*] [*Völkerfreundschaft*]

⁶¹ Ibid., 2. [*erfüllenden Kräfte der Zerstörung und Überfremdung in unserem Vaterlande*]

⁶² Ibid. [*unteilbaren deutschen Kultur*]

recognition” would allow the Germans to “make out of our homeland undivided care-states.”⁶³ In other words, the German people’s reintroduction to the quintessential Germanic sonic characteristics would not only unite them under one state, but also create care-states, a synonym for socialism. The statement implied a deeper, more pointed claim: what the audience was about to hear was the nation in sonic form. The pieces were to be symbols of the nation. Clearly, the program attempted to alter the Plinko board so as to effect the audience’s interpretational outcomes.⁶⁴

The attempts to teach new symbolic associations became more obvious with rhetoric about specific pieces. Because of the socialist-realist focus on content instead of form and the VDK’s national music project, the *Musikfest* program offered explanations for how these pieces’ contents were meant to be supporting the socialist movement and patriotic German unity. The program noted Wagner-Régeny’s work as a scathing review of capitalism. The operatic suite was made from parts of the opera “Persian Episode,” a collaboration between Wagner-Régeny and the poet Bertolt Brecht. The program’s explanation focused on Brecht’s text, which was not performed at *Musikfest* itself, but was perhaps required for audiences to understand the political implications of the now-textless work. The program called the original opera’s text “a sharp satire of the setting capitalist society.”⁶⁵ Then, in terms not dissimilar from that of the Nazi period, the program explained how the text reflected the music.⁶⁶ The piece

⁶³ Ibid. [*klingenden Bekenntnisse*] [*aus unserer Heimat eine ungeteilte Pflegestätte ... zu machen*]

⁶⁴ The Third Reich’s treatment of music likely played a large role in the nationalism seen here. See Erik Levi, *Music in the Third Reich* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1994).

⁶⁵ Ibid., 17. [*scharfe Satire auf die untergehende kapitalistische Gesellschaft*]

⁶⁶ See Michael Kater, *Different Drummers: jazz in the culture of Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

had “jazz elements throughout” that embodied “frivolities” and “love for purchasable goods.”⁶⁷ However, the program noted that the artificial “merriness” and capitalist characteristics of the piece were meant to be ironic and “reproachful.”⁶⁸ One was meant to apply these symbolic definitions despite the absence of the text, the element which would normally create the association.

The program offered the sections’ titles to further highlight the message of the piece. The work’s sections include the “Battle of Two Predators.”⁶⁹ The program noted that the “predators” were in fact businessmen and gentlemen at a social gathering.⁷⁰ The section featured a “brutal stomping dance” that suggested the “violence and meanness of the ‘predators’.”⁷¹ The suite also included the “Music of the Great Sharks.” This section was described in similar terms. It was described as “brutal” and “jazzy,” with uncomfortable motives that contrasted against a “viciously agitated” melody.⁷² Seemingly, the program left few musical signs up to the audience’s interpretation and indicated pieces were meant to be hyper-programmatic.

The program also featured an explanation of Gerster’s *Sinfonie*, however, the explanation now came from the composer himself. In a less than subtle way, Gerster tied his music to both Germany’s cultural past and socialism. Gerster billed his symphony as one that displayed his love of homeland. He claimed his aim was to capture the life and land of Thuringia in his work, not an ideal. He saw the region as a

⁶⁷ Ibid. [mit Jazz-Elementen durchsetzte] [Frivolität] [die Liebe eine käufliche Ware]

⁶⁸ Ibid. [Lustigkeit] [anklagend]

⁶⁹ Ibid. [Kampf zweier Raubtiere]

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid. [der brutal stampfende Tanz] [die Gewalttätigkeit und Gemeinheit der einander bekämpfenden Raubtiere]

⁷² Ibid. [brutaler, jazzhafter] [heftig bewegten]

“land pulsing with life, the liveliest presence and the greatest, specifically for a typical German past.”⁷³ He then mentioned various cultural signs from the region, including Luther, Bach, and Goethe and how these cultural figures, while dead, still “campaign, struggle, and work for the progress of the people in Thuringia today.”⁷⁴ Thus, Germany’s cultural past had been and remained a friend of the people. Also, because of their support of the people, Gerster implied that these cultural signs no longer should only be thought of as great Germans, they were also great socialists. While still holding all of their national, cultural, and social clout, Bach and Luther had become comrade Bach and comrade Luther. Clearly, efforts were put into controlling the symbolic effect of these musical works.

The use of strong, pre-established national signs also suggests the primacy of nationalism during the period. Patriotic Germans seemed to have been the main protestors in 1953, so nationalism remained a potent force that could be an enemy or become an ally. With the appeal to so many national signs, it appears that composers and *Musikfest* organizers were attempting the latter. The composer’s union was prepared to meet East Germans at their impenetrable cultural stronghold, to befriend the defenders with beautiful music, and to eventually use its power for their own campaigns.

Despite all of this extra-musical rhetoric, the festival appears to have fallen upon deaf ears. Luckily, because of the state’s interest in controlling the cultural sector, they sent informants to watch the concert’s proceedings and to report on its reception. Their

⁷³ Ibid., 20. [*ein Land pulsenden Lebens, lebendigster Gegenwart und größter, speziell für Deutschland typischer Vergangenheit*]

⁷⁴ Ibid. [*Kämpfen, Ringen und Schaffen um den Fortschritt der Menschen in Thüringen heute*]

reports provide specific glimpses into the atmosphere. For example, an audience member told a government informant that a large portion of the audience left halfway through the performance.⁷⁵ Similarly, two female workers from Leipzig enjoyed Gerster's composition, but called the other works "Dreadful! Horrible!"⁷⁶ The criticism of the three other works appears to have been constant. Attendees claimed that "there was no heart or soul" in the non-Gerster compositions.⁷⁷ One went so far as to claim that Raphael's work sounded as if there were "children pounding on a piano."⁷⁸ As such, "[the musical works] will never appeal to workers, never!"⁷⁹

What about these pieces garnered such criticism? By performing a textless version, the program's signifying definition of Wagner-Régeny's operatic suite could not as clearly defined and transmitted. In the original form, text would have helped convey the meaning and significance of the work. As such, the transmission of its political message was greatly hindered. While lacking part of its original semiotic potential, the work was not completely bereft of dynamism. The operatic suite, true to the rhetoric in the program, was rather spastic. Not only was the work spliced together from disparate parts of a much larger work, but the melodies, tempos, and sonic atmospheres clashed in a way that negates any type of perceptible form.⁸⁰ The compositional technique helped build energy, but to no end in particular. At best, a crowd member would have been excited by the piece, but still would not recognize the

⁷⁵ Tompkins, *Composing the Party Line*, 178.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ P.O. S. "Suite aus der Oper 'Persische Episode' (1940-50)." Youtube video, 00:36. Posted November 2014. <https://youtu.be/pmYKLMPF10o>.

piece as a sign, the first step in Peirce's trichotomy. At worst, it could have seemed like an overwhelming display of pointless bravado, therefore becoming indexically connected to negative feelings. The work was meant to criticize capitalism, but how was a worker to iconically or indexically interpret a deliberately sarcastic operatic suite as signifying the violent ridiculousness of capitalism and the greatness of socialism? The program assured them of this, but their emotions and memories told them that this work was not enjoyable. Therefore, the failure to communicate the opera's original message was based on a failure of performance, where the sign was lost in transmission and habitual responses prevailed.

Raphael's work suffered from similar issues. *Sinfonia breve* demanded attention. Raphael's composition used many Stravinskian elements, which may have disturbed listeners. For example, a driving, archaic rhythm pervaded the work from the first measure.⁸¹ The pervasive rhythm shunted the melody and harmonic structure from the spotlight. Even if the melody were dominant, its own disunity could have been harsh to the ear. It consisted of large leaps and short motives that differed greatly from the melody found in Gerster's composition.⁸² Thus, the sonic character came off as stilted, as if the entire work was leaning forward. As with Wagner-Régeny's work, energy was well established, but this was at the expense of formal recognition and the potential for being a relaxing work. Perhaps the composition's insistence for an engaged audience was its downfall.

⁸¹ Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra. "Sinfonia breve, Op. 67: I. Allegro con brio." Youtube video, 00:10. Posted February 2015. <https://youtu.be/UwnDaV8-mzg?list=PLI8ePWFRhizDA8XztkrVEWfpoN9DHUEc>.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 00:35.

It seems the revolution's soundtrack was too revolutionary. The criticized pieces were more focused on rhythm, complex harmonic structure, and subversion of typical formal characteristics. In short, while still being recognized as classical, these works were meant to defy expectations and force the audience to listen, tactics which failed to garner support. In other words, the majority of the audience's Plinko boards had predetermined funnels which led to negative reactions for these sonic characteristics. The apparent failure can be explained by the other two semiotic categories: icon and index. It seems that the three criticized works did not appeal to the audience because they did not create enough of an indexical-emotional connection. As stated, they lacked "heart."⁸³ This would never do for workers. The audience's pre-established, personal iconic and indexical associations with the specific forms and sonic characteristics found at *Musikfest* were too engrained and too negative to persuade them to enjoy the concert. The established alterations in the audience's personal Plinko boards were too sturdy to be subverted by the idyllic rhetoric found in the program so they simply guided the token to whatever outcome was likely based on their past experiences and semiotic associations. Unfortunately for the concert organizers, these were overwhelmingly negative.

On the other hand, Gerster's work – a tonally-simple, mild-mannered symphony – found favor with parts of the crowd. It seems with this accessibility he corralled enough positive sign associations for audience members to accept his work. Many of the audience members would have been familiar with the genre of symphony. However, unlike the other works, Gerster did not try to subvert the audience's expectations. In

⁸³ Tompkins, *Composing the Party Line*, 178.

fact, arguably the work would have felt quite “natural.” The main theme was long, flowing and placed over a similarly non-imposing orchestral background.⁸⁴ The basic tonal language of the Western tradition was ever present in *Sinfonie 2*, while it was not with the other works. Simple, hummable melodies existed over smooth, idiomatic harmonic structures and explained Gerster’s assertion that his work was a tone-painting of the German countryside.⁸⁵ Similarly, model socialist-realist pieces were supposed to be nationalist in form. Gerster’s work took the symphonic form, the favorite of Beethoven and thus the most important Germanic form, and made no major alterations.⁸⁶ Therefore, the acceptable “revolutionary” soundtrack ended up sounding much like national music of earlier periods while the pieces that did sound “experimental” were disliked. Perhaps they did not establish enough sign associations or established too many negative ones. Ultimately, it seems Gerster’s work established a visceral connection with the audience – what they had been looking for all along from the classical community - while the other composers had composed progressive, cerebral pieces. These designations display a pre-established cultural system – a Plinko board geared towards certain works - that appeared to be combatting most of the pieces that were performed at *Musikfest*.

In any case, the association of these pieces to socialism was in no way inherent. March-like passages, satirical jazz riffs, and powerful melodies can only say so much on their own. Instead of the pieces building a connection to socialism themselves, the

⁸⁴ WatchBlueSkies. “Gerster – Symphony No 2 (1952) 1/3.” Youtube video, 00:20. <https://youtu.be/1UK6x1QMCLs?list=PLI8ePWFRhizDA8XztkrVEWfpoN9DHUEc>.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 3:00.

⁸⁶ See Curtis, *Music Makes the Nation*, 2008.

Musikfest program was the main instigator of symbolic interpretation. It showed that the government was entering into the hallowed ground of German culture to force-feed interpretations to the audience. In effect, the program's rhetoric was meant to be the funnel in the Plinko board, guiding the tokens to the desired outcome. In this case, the desired result would have been the audience's understanding that the pieces were meant for them and that they represented the magnificent pinnacle of German socialist-realist culture. That learned association ideally would have connected admiration with socialism. However, even if the audience read the program, it seems that most Plinko tokens landed in the undesired outcome. Ultimately, the program's suggested symbolic interpretations did not matter because the works, which seemed to not build enough favor with iconic and indexical signs, were not enjoyed. The systems of interpretation that audience members brought with them into the hall confounded composers' efforts to introduce new signs and redefine old ones.

Why would socialist music (or music in general, for that matter) have such signifying potential? Music is largely interpretational, unlike other sign systems. For example, language is regulated by symbolic associations. In fact, onomatopoeia exists so we can refer to words that break this general rule. Thus, while a signifying process such as language has much potential, it often lacks facets of other non-symbolic languages. Music represents a landscape full of abstract signs that can be redefined. Because of its reliance on mainly iconic and indexical associations, music tends to cause different reactions than other languages. Turino states that these sign systems have "greater potential" for generating emotion-based responses and postponing or

eschewing symbolic thinking.⁸⁷ Therefore, the rewiring of musical-emotional signs is more promising and may experience less rational criticism than the redefining of language. At this point, the quote from *Republic* seems much less distant. In the words of Glaucon, such an art of conversion can be presumed, but with an added caveat: it cannot merely rely on strong rhetoric. An art of conversion must make people feel converted, not just think that they are.

⁸⁷ Turino, "Peircean Thought," 201.

Chapter II: The West Side

“Success depends on traditional prejudices, objective connections between nations, and the changing level of popular irritability. No matter how skilful [sic] the propagandist may be in organizing his staff, selecting suggestions, and exploiting instruments of transmission, his manipulative skill will go for nought [sic] if there is no favorable juxtaposition of social forces to aid him.”

-Harold Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War*

Trouble in Paradise

In September 1953, Arthur Burns, a top economic advisor to the White House, alerted President Eisenhower that the United States’ economy was entering a recession. The stock market experienced a sharp decline in activity, businesses failed at an abnormal rate, and the average workweek shortened.⁸⁸ However, despite all of the bad signs, Burns was “not alarmed.”⁸⁹ He saw this as a decline caused by the end of the Korean War, and as something that should not trouble the administration.⁹⁰ By 1954, however, the situation looked much worse. Industrial production and GNP declined. Unemployment had ballooned from 1.3 million to 3.7 million.⁹¹ Eisenhower directed Burns to “prepare for worse conditions than anticipated.”⁹² The administration began to look into public works projects that could get people back to work and revitalize the American economy.⁹³ Loose monetary policy was eventually employed to increase credit and lower interest rates.⁹⁴ By September 1954, things were looking up. Industrial outputs and housing projects rose.⁹⁵ It seemed that the financial problem had been

⁸⁸ William M. McClenahan Jr. and William H. Becker, *Eisenhower and the Cold War Economy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 43.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*, 44.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 46.

solved. In the *Economic Report of the President, 1955* the report happily declared that “wise and early action can stave off serious difficulties later,” but also included that monetary policy can be powerful instrument only if “the confidence of consumers and businessmen in the future remains high.”⁹⁶ Despite the feeling of success and the lessons present in the report, the economy would suffer two more recessions under the Eisenhower administration.

Why was the American economy able to fix a recession and celebrate it within a year only to fall into another one a few years later? This phenomenon can be viewed alongside the concurrent issues faced by the GDR. Both societies were experiencing social rupture that needed to see a state-sponsored response to reestablish social unity. Of course, the issues in the GDR were disgruntled workers protesting in the streets. In the United States, citizens were simply not economically active. Instead of an even keel, the system was suffering from grand shocks of confidence and anxiety. It was easy to lose confidence, but it was also easy to gain it back. How could it be so easy to gain it back?

It seems that the government was directly responsible for the confidence gains. As outlined in the 1955 report, they were completely aware that confidence needed to remain high for a stable economy. But just a study of monetary policy obfuscates other possible factors at play in the American financial woes of the 1950s. Confidence did not rebound simply because of economic policy. And, by moving into an exploration of propaganda and ideology, it seems regaining social confidence was something that the American government had the theory and the ability to do.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 47.

The administration had to thank their political predecessors for that. Similar to the groundwork laid in the GDR for socialist cultural events, the U.S. government had established propaganda institutions that could disseminate information in effective manners. In fact, Americans had been studying propaganda and the government had been employing their methods since World War I. As noted by Kenneth Osgood in *Total Cold War*, “total war had fueled a propaganda revolution.”⁹⁷ Of all of these post-World War I studies, Harold Lasswell’s *Propaganda Technique in the World War* from 1927 was a seminal work. While he wrote of the importance of demoralizing enemies, domestic propaganda was even more important. As Osgood notes within Lasswell’s work, psychological warfare against the enemy was important, but “maintaining the morale of one’s own soldiers, citizens, and allies was indispensable.”⁹⁸

Propaganda scholars and politicians continued to champion propaganda as the most important form of persuasion leading to the formation of the first government propaganda institutions. FDR led the propaganda charge. In the lead up to World War II, he created both the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (CIAA), which was meant to halt Nazi campaigns in Latin American and the Office of War Information during his presidency, which was the distributor of “factually based yet appropriately slanted news.”⁹⁹ In 1942, General Eisenhower formed his own military propaganda organization called the Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB).¹⁰⁰ Once the war had been won, these World War II organizations spawned new institutions with

⁹⁷ Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower’s Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2006), 26.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 30.

newly established policies and techniques. Truman formed his own propaganda arms which had clear goals for fighting the new Cold War. The national security of the United States would not be based on weapons but “industrial infrastructure, raw materials, and skilled labor.”¹⁰¹ Propaganda would then be employed to speak of these triumphs. That is, the American economy would lead the country to victory and its successes would be disseminated throughout the world. However, the Communists began making gains across the globe, causing American politicians to reconsider their propaganda techniques. In 1950, this policy was revamped in light of the Chinese Revolution and the Soviet’s construction of an atomic bomb.¹⁰² The new plan came from Paul Nitze, the newly appointed head of the Policy Planning staff. Military build-up would now be a shield for the deployment of nonmilitary resources, namely propaganda. The new policy culminated in the paper NSC-68, which portrayed the Cold War as a “‘total’ struggle demanding sacrifices and contributions from all Americans and further advocated intense campaigns of public persuasion at home ‘to strengthen the moral fiber of the people.’”¹⁰³

Under Eisenhower, who was already experienced with propaganda from his military years, psychological warfare remained a “key element” of government activity, and he put greater emphasis on domestic propaganda.¹⁰⁴ After his election, it seems that Eisenhower quickly took to updating the policies of NSC-68. In 1953 he ordered a taskforce known as the Jackson Committee to investigate the failures of Truman’s

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 35.

¹⁰² Ibid., 41.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 42-43.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 45.

propaganda policies.¹⁰⁵ The committee argued that propaganda institutions needed to be seen as important as economic success as opposed to simply trumpeters of that success. Propaganda needed to be freed so as to be more active and to infiltrate new sectors of communication. According to their report, propaganda was not separate from diplomatic, economic, and military measures but was an ingredient of them.¹⁰⁶ Psychological warfare would now be part and parcel of every government measure in what the Jackson Committee called a “war of words.”¹⁰⁷ Ultimately, the taskforce claimed, a psychological aspect must be found and exploited in “every diplomatic, economic, or military policy and action.”¹⁰⁸

As a result of the Jackson Committee, Eisenhower expanded old propaganda institutions and formed new domestic ones, while honing in their message and efficiency. These government organizations pumped propagandistic materials into domestic and foreign populations. For example, the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) released many pamphlets filled with facts about American society.¹⁰⁹ While these works attempted to convince foreign populations that the United States was not experiencing class warfare, others focused on convincing the domestic population that they were important and lived in the best country under the best system. Domestic propaganda campaigns like the 1956 People’s Capitalism exhibition told Americans that they were part of a “steady march of progress.”¹¹⁰ Key American philosophy was also highlighted.

¹⁰⁵ Shawn J. Parry-Giles, *The Rhetorical Presidency, Propaganda, and the Cold War, 1945-1955* (Westport: Praeger Publishing, 2002), 134.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 135.

¹⁰⁷ Parry-Giles, *The Rhetorical Presidency*, 135.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 256.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 272.

The exhibit in Washington D.C. explained that the state only existed to serve the individual. Similarly, economic prosperity “grew logically from the limited, democratic government of the United States.”¹¹¹

But even before 1956, the means of propaganda dissemination expanded and became more precise. News media was seen as the prime avenue for propaganda dissemination because of its perceived objectivity and reach. The era from 1945-1955 saw the largest newspaper consumption in American history. During this period, each household was consuming 1.2 newspapers per day on average during the week.¹¹² Sunday editions were consumed at a rate of 1.03 per household.¹¹³ To put these numbers in perspective, they are around triple the rate found in 2010.¹¹⁴ The news media could also offer legitimacy to the government’s messages. By placing their rhetoric amongst other articles, their propaganda would become “objective, factual” news, leading to less suspicion on the part of the reader.¹¹⁵ A situation in which the Eisenhower administration and its propaganda wings could harness this system of communication would be ideal. But support within the journalist community for domestic propaganda had been largely elusive. Eisenhower’s 1953 Operation Candor – which was eventually folded in the Atoms for Peace campaign - hoped to change this. The operation sought to mobilize domestic support so as to ultimately expand the U.S. national defense system. Domestic support, which was suffering because of the

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States:1965* (Washington D.C.: Superintendent of Documents, 1965), 524.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ “Sixty Years of Daily Newspaper Circulation Trends,” Communications Management Inc. 2011.

¹¹⁵ Parry Giles, *The Rhetorical Presidency*, 137.

economic recession, would be garnered by domestic news agencies, whom first needed to be won over or scared into compliance. The government would attempt to convince the U.S. news media “that an age of peril existed so that journalists would help ‘indoctrinate’ the American public.”¹¹⁶ Eventually, the domestic press, radio, television, newsreels, and top media executives would be exploited so as to provide a “multiplying effort” for Eisenhower’s efforts during the period.¹¹⁷ Once sympathetic to government policy, news outlets would attempt to convince the American population that they were living “‘not in an instant of peril but in an age of peril.’”¹¹⁸ Therefore, this message could be spread efficiently, entering the home of a grand majority of Americans each day in the seemingly objective form of a newspaper.

While the full extent to which Operation Candor was implemented is unknown, its underlying philosophy arguably played a role in efforts to relieve the recession. As the logic went, every economic policy move had a psychological aspect which should be highlighted in domestic populations so as to convince the population of their peril and loyalty required to defeat that peril. An article released during the period which included presidential rhetoric about the economy would be part and parcel of an organized propaganda campaign, especially if it included certain Cold War signifying trends.

While the music of *Musikfest* was accompanied by an explanatory text that was meant to guide listeners to a specific interpretation of the pieces, U.S. propaganda institutions released material that informed the public of the grander meaning of their

¹¹⁶ Parry-Giles, *The Rhetorical Presidency*, 163.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

loyalty to the American political and economic system. In effect, these texts were attempting to establish a state-sponsored ideology that would inform citizens about the importance of their daily economic and cultural activities. These texts had their own values to signify. The American texts were “characterized by social mobility, spiritual vitality, rugged individualism, equality of opportunity, the rule of law, and widespread belief in the virtues of capitalism and democracy.”¹¹⁹ Because of the contemporary events and ideologies, these concepts took on new iconic and indexical associations, establishing themselves as entirely antithetical to Communism. Ultimately, these stories of progress reveal the self-perception of the U.S.’s privileged class during the Cold War. The common American, helped along but not dominated by the government, was the focus of these texts. The United States was a place where freedom and equality reigned, two terms seldom if ever applied by Westerners to the Soviet Union.

While these themes were constantly present in international propaganda campaigns, they also were part of domestic news articles, which very well could not have been part of an orchestrated propaganda campaign. Of course, this phenomenon displays the power of ideological coercion: “subjective” ideology became the “objective” of a society. Their inclusion in these news articles seemed natural. As Osgood states, U.S. propaganda officials “generally believed they were telling the truth about the United States.”¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 255.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

Reprinting Eisenhower's Address

One such article released on October 26, 1954 exemplifies this Cold War logic. Arguably, Osgood's statement could very likely also be made about the editors of the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, and Chicago Daily Tribune who all chose to place Eisenhower's address to the National Security Industrial Association on the front pages of their October 26 issues. An objective reporting of the event – that Eisenhower did indeed make a speech – and reprinting of the text could seem relatively mundane. The speech was a rough overview of the 1954 American economy with emphasis placed on how that plays into the strength of the U.S. nation. However, the themes – which strike amazing resemblance to the themes found in other U.S. propaganda of the time – present in the reprinted speech – as these papers were some of the most widely read in the U.S. – were disseminated to tens of millions of loyal readers.¹²¹ (The best that *Musikfest* could do was a couple thousand audience members who may or may not have read the program.) Thus, while East Germans attended the *Musikfest* performance, in the United States the newspaper and its rhetoric would be the performance with readers taking the role of the audience, their surroundings and lives – the physical space in which they grappled with established societal conventions, their experiences, the new information, and its ideological considerations – becoming the concert hall. Cultural and political information would be transmitted, interpreted, and possibly affect the material rituals of American individuals. This information would rely heavily on

¹²¹ Mark Wilson, "Chicago Tribune," *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, 2005, date accessed October 13th, 2016, <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/275.html>.; "The Los Angeles Times' history," *The Los Angeles Times*, September 21st, 2012, date accessed October 13th, 2016, <http://www.latimes.com/la-mediagroup-times-history-htmlstory.html>.; "Our History," *The New York Times*, date accessed October 13th, 2016, <http://www.nytc.com/who-we-are/culture/our-history/>.

established nationalist symbolic, iconic, and indexical associations to the speech's main concepts. Therefore, publicity could act as a means of ideological dissemination, where propagandistic messages could easily be transmitted to an engaged population in what was perceived as an "objective" medium. Put simply, the format and its "objective nature" could support ideological claims. These claims could then be seen as fact or as a way of framing people's daily actions. Because of this ideological framing, Americans' economic activity could now be seen as part and parcel of each individual's character, morality, culture, and patriotism. The performance's level of success would be made apparent by the audience's reactions. If Americans disparaged the ideological considerations offered by the performance like *Musikfest* audience members, then it would be a sign of ideological rejection. However, if they were comparatively more agreeable, then it seems the ideological redefinition had found a receptive audience.

Each of the articles opened with background information on why the speech was taking place as well as a summary of the speech's main points. These introductions also reiterated four key figures from the speech: the recent 400,000-person drop in unemployment, the possible \$3,000 increase in average household income by 1964, a total economy of \$365 billion, and a commitment to a future economy of \$500 within a decade.¹²² Certainly the rise in standard of living and economic revitalization held the greatest importance.

These figures would then be abstracted into arguments based in signs. Three main ideological signs are present in the speech: freedom, peace, and faith.

¹²² Joseph Loftus, "Eisenhower Charts 500 Billion Output and Ways to Get It," *New York Times* (New York, New York), October 26, 1954.

Freedom and the individualism required by it was what delineated the American worker from the Soviet worker. Communist Russia had become a “threat to individual freedom and liberty,”¹²³ unlike the United States labor force which was committed to their preservation. This link between individual American workers and their loyalty to individualism was made clear. Eisenhower stated that James Forrestal, the namesake of the award the was the president was accepting that night, correctly knew it was foolish to see the American economy as simply a group of powerful companies. Instead, both men rightfully saw the American economy as powerful because of “America’s people-farmers, teachers, shipbuilders, scientists, executives, machinists, truck drivers, all living under a system that encourages individualism.”¹²⁴ Everyone had their part to play in the American political economy, and they would not be forced to labor in a certain way by the government. By tapping into people’s “inherent” individualism, the United States was actually promoting the best system possible. Near the end of his speech, Eisenhower made a “forecast” for the American economy which continued to highlight the importance of freedom. Eisenhower claimed that overall future economic progress and “maximum opportunity to enjoy good health and a good job, a good home and a good education, a rising standard of living” depended on three “basic facts.”¹²⁵ The first of those was “our free way of life.”¹²⁶ The fact that America was free would lead to prosperity.

¹²³ Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Text of Eisenhower Address on National Economy,” *New York Times* (New York, New York), October 26, 1954.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

Eisenhower also told the American population that the push for a \$500 billion economy at home would expand freedom across the globe. By expanding markets abroad, “the security and solidarity of the free world” would be reinforced for “our economy can grow only as part, though a vastly important part, of a growing free world economy.”¹²⁷ Put simply, American economic incursions in foreign markets were the best way to fight Communism without fighting Communism.

In Eisenhower’s view, the “great free economy of America” was the ultimate source of the United States citizens’ freedom.¹²⁸ But it was not only that freedom and individualism ensured American success, American success reciprocally ensured American freedom and individualism. The logic was simple: the economy was the “source of our military strength” and “unless this economy were kept healthy, strong and expanding, there would be for the free world neither victory in war nor security in peace.”¹²⁹ That is, how could a free world with a lackluster economy expect to defend itself from the military might of imperialist Communism? The Soviets would simply outproduce the Americans and slowly expand their military presence until freedom and individualism were gone.

In the most sublime example of doublethink, Americans would have to destroy this threat with peace. However, peace was already ironically fraught with issues. For the American people in 1954, peace signified the entire 1953 recession and its bigger, scarier brother, the Great Depression.¹³⁰ Americans were afraid that their society would

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

slip into another depression without a war to keep it afloat. Since Americans from the war years had “blighted confidence” and “warped economic behavior” because the American economy had been weakest following World War I and most prosperous during World War II, their belief was that a post-WWII economy would collapse once again.¹³¹ The last time that Americans had peace after a world war, they suffered their greatest economic disaster. While the Soviet Union established its factories, the United States foundered.¹³² It was a time when capitalism experienced some of its greatest critiques. Thus, Americans met peace after World War II with fear. And as seen, the American economy experienced difficulties in 1952-1953. It seemed that everyone’s fears were confirmed. While Eisenhower wanted a strong peace to be the goal of economic activity, Americans could not move past their anxiety. Eisenhower assured “security in peace” as long as Americans could replace their emotional association of peace with economic apocalypse with the doublethink that he proposed.¹³³

He suggested that peace needed to be redefined within the Cold War context. Peace would no longer signify a period of collapse, but come to be a shorthand embodiment of *si vis pacem, fac bellum* (“If you want peace, make war.”). Thus, Eisenhower suggested that peace at this point in history would be a euphemism for the end and its mean. The end was global cooperation that would rise after the means – the Soviet Union’s containment, collapse, and destruction via economic and military might.¹³⁴ As he finished his speech, he wished to reveal one “thought, the most

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Stephen Kotkin, introduction to *Behind the Urals*, by John Scott (Bloomington: Indiana Press University, 1989), xii.

¹³³ Eisenhower, “Eisenhower Address.”

¹³⁴ Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 53.

important of all.”¹³⁵ Eisenhower steeped this thought in the euphemistic language of the time: “It is only when we win the struggle for permanent peace can we devote the full power of this mighty country of ours to the advancement of human happiness.”¹³⁶

That struggle, as Eisenhower clarified, would be in the mind of each and every American. Their weapon would be their faith. For the system to triumph, faith would be required down to the last man, woman, and child. Eisenhower claimed that the “state of our national economy is largely a national state of mind.”¹³⁷ When the American individual *felt* confident, the economy was strong. When the American individual *felt* discouraged, the economy was weak. Therefore, in an era of total mobilization, each and every mind had to be confident to achieve victory. Thus, rather like redirecting a Plinko token, Eisenhower wished to assert his more positive view on the nation’s economy, that “America’s prosperity does not necessarily depend on war’s sacrifices.”¹³⁸ The economy could succeed as long as the American individual replaced their anxiety with faith. As he noted, America’s economic future depended on tapping into the “treasure house of energy,” which was the very “brains and confidence of all 163,000,000 of our people.”¹³⁹ While the message may be seen as a call for the government to listen to their population, it can also be examined as an expectation of the American worker. In the most sympathetic light, Eisenhower was asking the government to listen to its peoples’ whims so that they would be productive, confident members of society that could defend itself. In the most cynical interpretation,

¹³⁵ Eisenhower, “Eisenhower Address.”

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

Eisenhower's message to the American was find their faith and fall in line or otherwise their economy would lose to the Communists.

The 1953 recession had shown that confidence was not as high in the United States as it needed to be, but Eisenhower was *confident* that a depression had been avoided and the recession would be ended with proper application of economic strategies. A full blown panic was avoided because confidence had been injected into the American populace properly, and the situation would certainly continue to improve. As Eisenhower remarked, the "objective" of the 1953 economic measures was to "maintain confidence among consumers and investors, among business men and working people."¹⁴⁰ He eventually closed the case on the economic downturn: "And the result? This year 1954 is our most prosperous peacetime year in all our history."¹⁴¹

Ultimately, Eisenhower suggested that every American was dependent upon a strong economy, and that strong economy depended upon the individual's mindset. It was a lofty suggestion. However, whether or not Eisenhower's analysis was believable was beside the point. His interpretation would work if Americans believed it would work. He had faith that his interpretation was correct, and he exuded the confidence that all Americans should emulate and maintain. With the general populace mirroring Eisenhower's confidence, his prophecy would be fulfilled. His expectations were manifested in a symbolic struggle for freedom, peace, and confidence within the mind of every single American worker. The American worker had their marching orders. Their confidence in American economic activity would be their ultimate weapon in the

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

battle for their mind. And if they believed in the effectiveness of that weapon to destroy the enemy of economic stagnation, then they would surely find the highest form of freedom and peace waiting for them in the United States once Communism had been defeated. Eisenhower concluded that “[w]ith this strength, with this confidence, our nation will be fortified in its quest for world peace—a quest that must never cease, never slacken, until the final goal has been attained.”¹⁴²

America Revitalizes with Ease

By November 23, 1954 the Dow Jones climbed to 381 points, the first time it had risen to that level since 1929.¹⁴³ Not only had the American economy finally recovered from its Great Depression, but it had dodged potential financial panic in 1954. This economic resurgence can, of course, not merely be attributed to Eisenhower’s address being printed in popular newspapers. But the Cold War logic about economics and faith presented in an article format represented a trend in effective and consistent information dissemination with emphasis put on concepts that distinguished American and their system from Communism.

This trend, which had begun before 1954 but was intensified then, had laid the groundwork for a receptive population. Americans had already been reading newspapers at an astounding rate. Therefore, as Althusser would likely say, the material ritual required for ideological coercion was already present before Eisenhower’s address was even reprinted. But this was not the only factor.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ “50 Years Ago, Dow Reached Lowest Level,” *New York Times*, July 8th, 1982.

Certain scholars rightly call these years from 1945-1955 the “Age of Consensus.”¹⁴⁴ While this label is most often used to explain Americans’ comradery in their battle against Communism or as a derogatory term explaining the conformity of the period, its underlying suggestion is worth exploring. Perhaps it should not be looked at as a consensus of opinion, but more of a consensus on ideology, particularly its associated material rituals. The phrase implies social confidence, a word that is part and parcel of economic growth, in the way that Americans did things then. And during this period, the self-sustaining confidence and the simplicity of reinvigorating that confidence was likely unprecedented. A 1952 study revealed the extent of this domestic confidence in the American populace. One part of the study focused on beliefs in opportunity and social class. The researchers asked participants if they felt “there is much or pretty much opportunity to get ahead in America.”¹⁴⁵ The percentage of respondents who affirmed that position was consistently above 75%.¹⁴⁶ Those who labelled their occupations as professional or semi-professional were quite enthusiastic, with 91% stating they agreed.¹⁴⁷ Even the percentage of those who were unemployed – where one might expect to see the lowest percentages – was 69%.¹⁴⁸ It seems that Americans were confident in their economy and their potential to get ahead.¹⁴⁹

The trend of confidence continued with presidential approval ratings. While they may have experienced difficulties, they bounced back extremely quickly. For example,

¹⁴⁴ See *The Eisenhower Era*, ed. Paul Holbo and Robert Sellen (Hinsdale: Dryden Press, 1974).

¹⁴⁵ Alfred De Grazia, *The Western Public: 1952 and Beyond* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1954), 174.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ For comparison, according to a Gallup poll from September 27th, 2016, only 27% of Americans feel the economy is “good” or “excellent.”

Truman had an abysmal approval rating of 22% in 1951.¹⁵⁰ Eisenhower then inherited the low approval, experiencing a rating of 28% the following year.¹⁵¹ However, by 1953, Eisenhower's annual average rating had jumped up to around 70%, one of the highest ratings since Gallup began tracking presidential approval ratings in 1945.¹⁵²

Therefore, it seems the heavy lifting had been done before Eisenhower took office. The ability for confidence to rebound in the United States was simply engrained before the 1953 recession. It could be one had to simply organize a small propaganda campaign in tandem with normal monetary policy shifts and economic issues would evaporate. In effect, the message became a self-fulfilling prophecy. Its expectations set the foundation upon which Americans would assimilate or "reassimilate" their behavior in accordance with the new or reasserted expectations. In sociology, this could be labelled as behavioral confirmation. Within a study of ideology, this just seems like a system of which had truly made concrete individuals into concrete subjects.

Whether one buys the current arguments and theory of ideology, it is easy to recognize the intense propaganda efforts that were occurring in the United States in 1954. Instead of an isolated event, this economic pep talk was part of a wider network of propagandistic "objective" news articles that were meant to motivate the American public and instill in them the belief that their free market ran by private interests would defeat Communism. This was not merely a statement made in a vacuum. It was an assertion that the U.S. system was better than the Soviet system. It was an insertion into

¹⁵⁰ Frank Newport, David Moore, and Lydia Saad, "Long Term Gallup Poll Trends," *Gallup*, December 20th 1999, accessed on October 13th, 2016, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/3400/longterm-gallup-poll-trends-portrait-american-public-opinion.aspx>.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

the mind of every newspaper-reading American that the economy depended upon their individual actions. The public was informed that their labor power needed to be mobilized in a global economic conflict.

Conclusion: To Inform is to Direct

“...under the surface of images, one invests bodies in depth; behind the great abstraction of exchange, there continues the meticulous, concrete training of useful forces; the circuits of communication are the supports of an accumulation and a centralization of knowledge; the play of signs defines the anchorages of power; it is not that the beautiful totality of the individual is amputated, repressed, altered by our social order, it is rather the individual is carefully fabricated in it, according to a whole technique of forces and bodies.”

-Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*

For Americans – who have normally been taught to recognize and scoff at Communist rhetoric – the ideology wrapped up in the program is obvious. This point was wonderfully illustrated when my quotes from the program text drew laughter from the crowd at my first presentation on *Musikfest*. The ideology present in the case of Eisenhower’s address may be comparatively less obvious, obfuscated by the “objective” medium but more importantly by our relative familiarity with the philosophical components of capitalism. And I make this point not as an interesting aside, but as a core example of my argument: The ideology of Eisenhower’s time, albeit with alterations, remains to this day. Of course, it is not often labelled as ideology but instead reality. That makes complete sense in that those who follow a certain ideology believe in it. That is truth to them. Just as the audience’s accustomed tastes were not satisfied by the selections at *Musikfest* or just as American propagandists at the USIA believed they were disseminating truth about the United States with each pamphlet or as the figures about the U.S. economy in Eisenhower’s speech were accurate, subjects *feel* their ideology is correct and true. To have questioned the *Musikfest* audience’s established tastes would have been to jump down the ideological rabbit hole where reasoning, feeling, and experience are intertwined to the point of opacity. Their thoughts on the music were set *before* they even walked into the concert hall. Nationalism played a grand role in these established feelings, hence why GDR composers felt the need to

engage with it. It could also be why their attempts ultimately failed. Conversely, it could be said that because of nationalism, the belief in capitalism was present in the United States long before Eisenhower's address was even printed. Was it simply that while one government was attuned to the natural economic feelings of their populace, the other was oblivious to the natural cultural feelings of their own people? Or could it be that both states were weaving between opinions about culture and economics that had been established by nationalism, previous personal experiences, and state policy while trying to guide these interpretations to, from the respective states' perspective, more helpful definitions? The latter question seems to be borne out by the analysis here. Americans were afraid of "peacetime capitalism," but their fears were swayed towards more positive associations as the Cold War progressed. Their distaste and anxiety about capitalism seemed to be a natural reaction to the Great Depression, but they were convinced to remain a subject of it. The receptivity of the two populations examined here is paramount. In other words, a population's receptiveness or lack thereof should not be seen as a simply natural phenomena or as if their support for an idea had been under the surface waiting to burst forth once the state recognized it. Support was found because the population's receptiveness had been constructed before these events even took place, often through confidence in arguments of nationalism founded on specific concepts with complex networks of symbolic, iconic, and indexical associations. The building of ideology required these states to reckon with past constructions of ideology, and if those past constructions included general receptiveness to the governments that were building these ideologies then the task was made simpler.

But then the question becomes, where, when, and how were these cultural tendencies and tastes first formed? This question is devilishly difficult to answer effectively not simply because no single ideological creation point exists, but also because often the supposed truth is so self-evident that it becomes difficult to recognize how one is surrounded by it and directed by it. This statement can be illuminated by the opening to David Foster Wallace's "This is Water":

There are these two young fish swimming along, and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way, who nods at them and says, "Morning, boys, how's the water?" And the two young fish swim on for a bit, and then eventually one of them looks over at the other and goes, "What the hell is water?"¹⁵³

As revealed in this thesis, this feeling that the state's perception of reality was true was not present at *Musikfest*. Most attendees did not *feel* for the music they heard, likely causing them to disregard the interpretations offered by the text, if they read them at all. It appears that this description may be more aptly applied to the analysis American newspaper readers.

However, despite differences in effectiveness of these two ideological construction attempts, both were attempting to convince the same audience. Each state was attempting to connect with their labor force. The GDR, for obvious practical and ideological reasons, was hoping to build a relationship with their workers so as to gain their support in the socialist revolution. The U.S. government wanted to sway their workers in order to shield them from the message of that socialist revolution. Thus, workers in 1954 were a hot commodity. Their loyalty and the productive power that

¹⁵³ David Foster Wallace, "This is Water," *Kenyon College*, accessed on October 13th 2016, <http://bulletin.kenyon.edu/x4280.html>.

came with it was extremely important to both states in their competition against the other's economic capabilities.

To return to and answer Andrew Port's question: Based on this thesis, the West was able to convey a more effective message, at least during the period in question. The U.S. ideology seems to have been more able to maintain and mobilize its productive forces. The ideology of the GDR, on the other hand, was unable to convince many of its workers, and was consistently hemorrhaging labor forces. To use Wallace's imagery, perhaps disenfranchised East Germans began to swim for different waters even as GDR ideology thawed, while Americans were content with their water or were otherwise unaware of it.

But this study about a specific day in history can hopefully spark thoughts of the current state of affairs. Could ideology still be working in the shadows – unnoticed like water to Wallace's fish – now in what some scholars have called the post-ideological age? David Welch argued in 1999 that propaganda differed from information and education. As he noted, "propaganda is distinct from information – which seeks to transmit facts objectively – and from education, which hopes to open up its students' minds."¹⁵⁴ The point of propaganda, he proposed, was to "persuade its subject or public of one point of view; and to close off other options."¹⁵⁵ These points reveal their own ideological underpinnings: Welch believed that objectivity was attainable, and that "facts" or information can be taught or disseminated in a manner that is not persuasive or laden with ideological considerations. Kenneth Osgood affirmed these points in his

¹⁵⁴ David Welch, "Powers of Persuasion," *History Today* 49 (1999): 26.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

2012 discussion of propaganda, suggesting that these definitions still hold sway.¹⁵⁶

Based off of the two previous analyses, however, Welch's points are questionable. I wish to propose a counterargument. To inform is to persuade, and to persuade is to direct. In other words, no information and its medium of presentation is free from ideological considerations by the creator, disseminator, or viewer. And, in fact, to believe that information can be free from ideology is to be predisposed to be more receptive to its persuasive messages for, like a fish in water, the ideological medium that humans live in will affect the way they behave and how they chose to "go" whether or not they are aware of it.

Let us put the problematic word of propaganda aside. Whether information is found in a program of a music festival, revealed in the interpretations of the audience, or printed in a newspaper, it went through decisions about presentation. That is, what was important to the organizer or performer either for personal reasons, to please a boss or colleague, or their audience, was *informed* by their status as a subject to some ideological apparatus. In both of the cases examined in this thesis, the organizers were working as representatives of the state. They formed texts to accompany performances, both literal and figurative. Much like a key found on a map that explains the significance and required interpretation to succeed at reading the map, these texts offered interpretations that assured success to their readers as long as the signifying interpretations were followed. As such the didactic texts that they disseminated into their respective, if I may propose a new term, cultural arenas (a means of communication run by an ideological apparatus with the hope of establishing or

¹⁵⁶ Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 8.

reproducing material rituals, or a performance accompanied by a text) were laden with state ideology. On October 26, 1954, the concert hall in Leipzig became a cultural arena, and the American breakfast table became a cultural arena. Each had their text, their material ritual, their audience, and their venue. The program text wished to redefine certain sonic characteristics in socialist terms. The newspaper article wished to redefine signs in a new Cold War context. These interpretations would then lead to new material rituals, where East Germans enjoyed socialism and its music, and Americans were more economically confident and active. Ultimately, because the proposed ideology was too weak, the audience was ideologically predisposed to being unreceptive, or a combination of those two factors, the East German ideology failed to do this. On the other side of the Atlantic, the American ideology succeeded. Its suggestions found an already receptive audience. This conclusion will hopefully elicit further exploration in not only the ideology that lost and the ideology that won, but the ideology of information past and current.

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