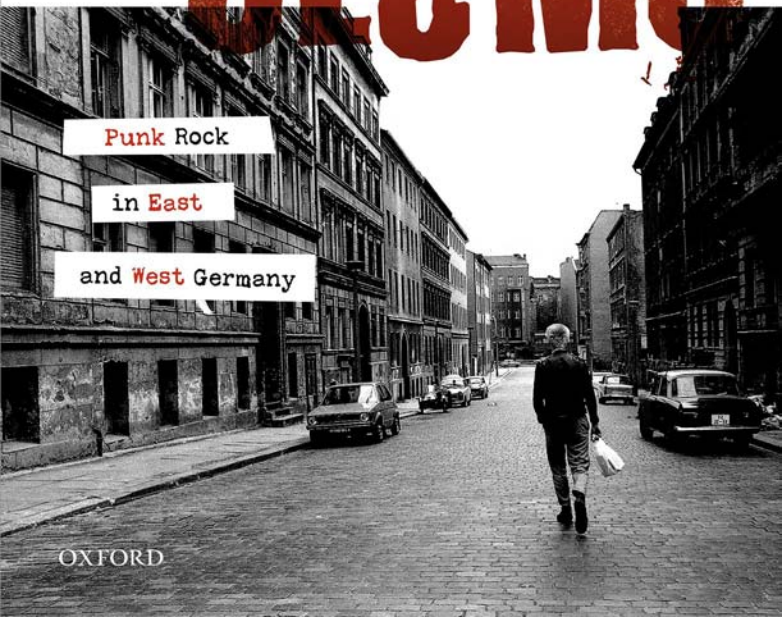
Jeff Hayton

CULTURE FROM THE SLUMS

Punk Rock in East and West Germany



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For my parents,

Elise de Stein and Greg Hayton

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Wichita, Fall 2021

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List of Abbreviations

AGR	Aggressive Rock Productions (*Aggressive Rockproduktionen*)
APPD	Anarchist Pogo Party of Germany (*Anarchistische Pogo-Partei Deutschland*)
ARD	Working Group of Public Broadcasters of the Federal Republic of Germany (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*)
BEK	League of Protestant Churches in the GDR (*Bund der Evangelischen Kirchen*)
BMG	Bertelsmann Music Group
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting System (Columbia Records)
CCCS	Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies
CDU	Christian Democratic Union of Germany (*Christlich-Demokratische Union Deutschlands*)
CSU	Christian Social Union in Bavaria (*Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern*)
DIY	do-it-yourself
DM	Deutschmark (West German currency)
EMI	Electric and Music Industries (EMI Records)
FDJ	Free German Youth (*Freie Deutsche Jugend*)
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany (*Bundesrepublik Deutschland*)
GDR	German Democratic Republic (*Deutsche Demokratische Republik*)
GKR	Parish Council (*Gemeindekirchenrat*)
HdjT	House of Young Talent (*Haus der jungen Talente*)
IM	Unofficial Collaborator (*Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter*)
JG	Young Congregations (*Junge Gemeinde*)
KKR	District Church Council (*Kreisenkirchenrat*)
MCA	Music Corporation of America
MfS	Ministry of State Security (*Ministerium für Staatssicherheit*, Stasi)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDR	Northern German Broadcasting (*Norddeutscher Rundfunk*)
NDW	New German Wave (*Neue Deutsche Welle*)
NVA	National People's Army (*Nationale Volksarmee*)
RAF	Red Army Faction (*Rote Armee Fraktion*)
RCA	Radio Corporation of America
RIAS	Radio in the American Sector (*Rundfunk im amerikanischen Sektor*)
SED	Socialist Unity Party of Germany (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*)
SPD	Social Democratic Party of Germany (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*)
WDR	West German Broadcasting (*Westdeutscher Rundfunk*)
WEA	Warner Elektra Atlantic (Warner Music Group)
ZDF	Second German Television (*Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen*)

Introduction

Punk Rock on the Spree

Punk Histories of Divided Germany

Hey ho, let's go! Hey ho, let's go!

The Ramones, "Blitzkrieg Bop"[1]

The Ramones are perhaps the most famous punk band in history. Getting their start in 1974, they were central figures in the New York punk scene around Max's Kansas City and CBGBs on the Lower East Side. Although never experiencing commercial success, their sound and style has been exceedingly influential.[2] Unsurprisingly, the Ramones Museum opened in 2005 to preserve the memory of the band for those too young to have watched them play but who still think *Rocket to Russia* (1977) is a great record.[3] As punk's creators increasingly exit the stage (all four original Ramones have now passed away), the genre has progressively become enshrined in houses of remembrance as a crucial component of our modern cultural legacy.[4]

However, the Ramones Museum is not located on the Lower East Side, or anywhere in New York for that matter. Rather, the Ramones Museum is steps from the Spree River in Berlin, Germany. The institution was founded by Florian Hayler who, after attending a Ramones concert in 1990, began collecting memorabilia that came to fill his apartment. In the new millennium—per the flyer recounting the genesis of the museum—Hayler was given an ultimatum by his then girlfriend: either the souvenirs go, or she does.[5] Today, she is long gone, but the Ramones Museum just celebrated its fifteenth-year anniversary and has been patronized by tens of thousands of visitors from across the globe. As Hayler has

[1] Ramones, "Blitzkrieg Bop," *Ramones* (Sire, SASD-7520, 1976).

[2] Everett True, *Hey Ho Let's Go: The Story of the Ramones*, updated edition (London: Omnibus Press, 2005).

[3] For example, 2016 was the fortieth anniversary of punk in Britain and to celebrate, cultural events took place all year in London. See Christopher D. Shea, "Hey Ho, It's Old: England Embraces Punk Rock 40 Years Later," *New York Times* (August 15, 2016), C1.

[4] "Ramones" Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. https://www.rockhall.com/inductees/ramones [February 13, 2021].

[5] "Welcome to Ramones Museum Berlin: Here's a few things you should know about this museum." (Berlin: Ramones Museum, n.d.), n.p.

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explained, the museum is a dedicated *lieux de mémoire* for fans to celebrate their musical tastes: "All kinds of people stop by," he told *Neues Deutschland* in 2006, "from professors to punks. Anyone who's ever heard the Ramones and immediately fallen under their spell."[6] A perusal of the guestbook substantiates these claims as fans from around the world have scrawled rejoinders like "Punk's Not Dead!" to emphasize punk's historical significance as a transnational community, impetus for alternative culture, and soundtrack for unconventional living.

At first glance, it might seem strange that the Ramones Museum is in Berlin and not New York, but upon closer inspection, it makes sense. Nowhere has punk burrowed deeper into the socio-cultural woodwork than in Germany. From youths encountered on the streets to the blaring of punk music on the radio, in clubs, or at protests, the genre has grown firmer roots in Germany than perhaps anywhere else in the world. Nor has its influence remained confined to a marginal subculture. German punk books have been bestsellers and German punk films award-winners. Punk couture graces the shelves of boutiques and department stores across Germany. Several of the country's biggest international music stars over the years—Einstürzende Neubauten, Nina Hagen, Nena, die Toten Hosen, Rammstein—began their careers as punks. The alternative music scene—more or less founded by punk—accounts for one-fifth of the German music market, the fourth-largest globally after the United States, Japan, and Great Britain.[7] The use of German-language lyrics in popular music found its initial mass popularization with German punk which in turn, has influenced hip-hop, techno, and other genres. German punks even have a political party, the Anarchist Pogo Party of Germany (*Anarchistische Pogo-Partei Deutschland*, APPD) and punks have been delegates in municipal, state, and national legislatures.[8] These influences even extend abroad as German punk bands are featured at international music festivals and non-Germans flock to cities like Berlin for its supposed nonconformity, an association deepened by punks and other alternatives in the 1970s and 1980s. This long list of punk influences can be extended almost indefinitely and illustrate the genre's remarkable impact on German politics, society, and culture. Despite first emerging in New York and London, punk has arguably had a more long-lasting echo in Germany than in either the United States or Great Britain.

[6] Sebastian Krüger, "Gammeljeans hinter Glas," *Neues Deutschland* (August 5/6, 2006). See also Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Memoire*," *Representations*, No. 26 (Spring 1989): 7–24. Cf. Peter Carrier, "Places, Politics, and the Archiving of Contemporary Memory in Pierre Nora's *Les lieux de mémoire*," in Susannah Radstone, ed., *Memory and Methodology* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 37–57.

[7] International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, *Global Music Report 2021* (London: IFPI, 2021), 11.

[8] *Die Partei hat immer Recht! Die gesammelten Schriften der APPD* (Berlin: Thomas Tilsner, 1998); and Angela Marquardt, *Was ich bin, was mir stinkt, was ich will* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1999).

Culture from the Slums explains why Germans endowed punk with such tremendous political, social, and cultural meaning, and how these investments shaped divided Germany in the 1970s and 1980s. In East and West Germany, punk facilitated individual and collective renewal as youths built alternative communities and fashioned unconventional identities to distinguish themselves from mainstream society. These efforts were grounded in a belief that the world they inhabited was inauthentic, but that punk could restore meaning and purpose to individuals and their lives. Whether through making music, creating independent institutions, or protesting mainstream convention, punk was an important vehicle for political, social, and cultural emancipation in both German states during the 1970s and 1980s. Despite vastly different contexts, youths on both sides of the Berlin Wall believed punk could help them nurture more genuine identities and more lively relations than those existing in their present societies. These similarities illustrate the remarkable resemblances and connections which existed between East and West at this time, convergences which challenge rigid Cold War divisions. Although certainly inflected differently on either side of the Iron Curtain, punks helped transform divided Germany by forcing both states and societies to respond to their provocations. Indeed, punk disturbances generated heated debates about German identity, society, and citizenship among the broader public, and in so doing, pushed divided Germany toward a more heterogeneous and pluralistic society. Punk has always been a minority taste, but its influence upon German life has been profound.

Such depth makes punk a useful lens to explore divided Germany in the 1970s and 1980s. These years are a significant if understudied era in postwar European history.[9] In the Federal Republic of Germany (*Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, FRG), the 1970s witnessed a gradual fatigue for the Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, SPD) coalition government under first Willy Brandt (1969–74) and then Helmut Schmidt (1974–82). Burdened by economic recession, domestic terrorism, leftist activism, and a renewed Cold War, West Germany increasingly staggered along until the confident return to power of the Christian Democratic Union (*Christlich-Demokratische Union Deutschlands*, CDU) under Helmut Kohl in 1982/3. In the German Democratic Republic (*Deutsche Demokratische Republik*, GDR), the initial political and social goodwill greeting the ascent of Erich Honecker to the leadership of the Socialist Unity Party (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*, SED) in 1971 was soon dashed by the expulsion of critical singer-songwriter Wolf Biermann in 1976 and the growing economic difficulties which ultimately contributed to state collapse in 1989.[10] The

[9] See Andreas Wirsching, ed., "The 1970s and 1980s as a Turning Point in European History?" *Journal of Modern European History* 9, No. 1 (2011): 8–26.

[10] On these decades generally, see Peter C. Caldwell and Karrin Hanshew, *Germany since 1945: Politics, Culture, and Society* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).

late 1970s and early 1980s are thus a moment across the Iron Curtain which looks to the future but does not seem to possess its own discrete historical impression.

In narrating these years, scholars often take the present as their starting point. For West Germany, the late 1970s and early 1980s are a period of heady challenges and uncertainties marked by international confrontations abroad and struggles for greater liberty at home. The difficulties of this era are contrasted with the renewed assurance of the mid-1980s under the guidance of the CDU which eventually led to reunification in 1990. For East Germany, these years function as an antechamber of collapse, as the moment when the many political, social, economic, and cultural loans which the SED had taken out over the years came due. In these interpretations, 1989/90 operates as a "vanishing point" or "ending myth" confirming the success of Western democratic capitalism and the failure of Eastern state socialism.[11] The various theoretical frameworks which have been developed over the years to account for the triumphs of the Berlin Republic—Americanization, Westernization, liberalization, democratization, re-civilization, etc.—speak to this narrative in which reconstruction, capitalism, parliamentarianism, civil society, and the rule of law in West Germany were crucial in the growth of democracy.[12] And since these developments did not take place in East Germany, only reunification has enabled Easterners to experience democracy and modernity, an account leaning heavily on an older historiography stressing a repressive state, and not more recent work elucidating the "limits of dictatorship" and the nuanced contours of everyday life in the GDR.[13] In these understandings, even before the recent rise of illiberal and populist sentiments which

[11] Jennifer L. Allen, "Against the 1989–1990 Ending Myth," *Central European History* 52, No. 1 (2019): 125–47; and Helmut Walser Smith, "The Vanishing Point of German History: An Essay on Perspective," *History & Memory* 17, No. 1/2 (Spring/Summer 2005): 269–95.

[12] See, e.g., Sonja Levsen and Cornelius Torp, eds., *Wo liegt die Bundesrepublik? Vergleichende Perspektiven auf die westdeutsche Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016); Ulrich Herbert, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2014); Eckart Conze, *Die Suche nach Sicherheit. Eine Geschichte der Bundesrepublik von 1949 bis in die Gegenwart* (Munich: Siedler, 2009); Heinrich August Winkler, *Germany: The Long Road West*, trans. Alexander J. Sager (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Thomas Hertfelder and Andreas Rödder, eds., *Modell Deutschland: Erfolgsgeschichte oder Illusion?* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007); Edgar Wolfrum, *Die geglückte Demokratie: Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2006); Konrad H. Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945–1995*, trans. Brandon Hunziker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Manfred Görtemaker, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Von der Gründung bis zur Gegenwart* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2004); Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, *Wie westlich sind die Deutschen? Amerikanisierung und Westernisierung im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999); and Axel Schildt, *Ankunft im Westen. Ein Essay zur Erfolgsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1999).

[13] See Andrew I. Port, "Introduction: The Banalities of East German Historiography," in *Becoming East German: Socialist Structures and Sensibilities after Hitler* (New York: Berghahn, 2013), 1–30; and Thomas Lindenberger, "Die Diktatur der Grenzen," in Thomas Lindenberger, ed., *Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn in der Diktatur: Studien zur Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1999), 13–44. For recent work, see e.g., Julia E. Ault, *Saving Nature Under Socialism: Transnational Environmentalism in East Germany, 1968-1990* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2021); Thomas Fleischman, *Communist Pigs: An Animal History of East Germany's Rise and Fall* (Seattle:

have called the future of Western-style modernity into question, Germany has come to embody a model liberal democratic state and the Berlin Republic a success story after decades of dictatorship, war, and genocide: not for nothing did *Time* magazine christen Chancellor Angela Merkel the "leader of the free world" in 2015.[14]

Yet scholars have become increasingly dissatisfied with these interpretations, even if no clear consensus has emerged on how to best understand the history of divided Germany. For starters, the difficulties of integrating East and West into a single account has proven remarkably elusive. While scholars have offered detailed comparisons of the early decades of the Cold War, the last two, by contrast, remain more cursory and impressionistic.[15] This disparity is related to sources and archival access, but it is equally a question of narrative frame. More problematic, however, is the emphasis on Western success and Eastern failure. Whereas an earlier generation of scholars regarded the postwar era as a story of successful Westernization culminating in the Berlin Republic, recent voices question this teleology as either relying on faulty analogies or overstating the degree to which German history can be reduced to a single, dominant narrative.[16] Critics argue these works judge postwar Germany against imaginary archetypes—and

University of Washington Press, 2020); Ned Richardson-Little, *The Human Rights Dictatorship: Socialism, Global Solidarity and Revolution in East Germany* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Eli Rubin, *Amnesiopolis: Modernity, Space, and Memory in East Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Sandrine Kott, *Communism Day-to-Day: State Enterprises in East German Society*, trans. Lisa Godin-Roger (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014); Heather Gumbert, *Envisioning Socialism: Television and the Cold War in the German Democratic Republic* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014); Josie McClellan, *Love in the Time of Communism: Intimacy and Sexuality in the GDR* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Paul Betts, *Within Walls: Private Life in the German Democratic Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); and Jan Palmowski, *Inventing a Socialist Nation: Heimat and the Politics of Everyday Life in the GDR, 1945-1990* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[14] Karl Vick, "Person of the Year. Angela Merkel: Chancellor of the Free World," *Time* (December 21, 2015).

[15] See, e.g., Edith Sheffer, *Burned Bridge: How East and West Germans Made the Iron Curtain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Monica Black, *Death in Berlin: From Weimar to Divided Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Frank Biess, *Homecomings: Returning POWs and the Legacies of Defeat in Postwar Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Elizabeth D. Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make? Women and Marital Status in Nazi and Postwar Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); and Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997). For important recent exceptions, see Katrin Schreiter, *Designing One Nation: The Politics of Economic Culture and Trade in Divided Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021); Marcel Thomas, *Local Lives, Parallel Histories: Villagers and Everyday Life in Divided Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020); Frank Bösch, ed., *A History Shared and Divided: East and West Germany since the 1970s*, trans. Jennifer Walcott Neuheiser (New York: Berghahn, 2018); and Tobias Hochscherf, Christoph Laucht, and Andrew Plowman, eds., *Divided, But Not Disconnected: German Experiences of the Cold War* (New York: Berghahn, 2010).

[16] On pluralizing narratives of West German history, see Frank Bajohr et al., eds., *Mehr als eine Erzählung: Zeitgeschichtliche Perspektiven auf die Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2016).

thereby engage in an updated version of the *Sonderweg* thesis—and fail to adequately account for either illiberal currents dogging the West, or the modernity of the East.[17] By elevating Western-style liberal democracy as the normative scaffolding against which states and societies are adjudicated, these histories moreover foster a condescending attitude toward the many ideas, groups, and developments which have been lost in the homogenizing march of modernity: that East Germany is dismissed as a "footnote of world history," a "satrapy" of Moscow, and "failed" state, illustrates just how inadequate "Western success" functions as a tool for writing the history of divided Germany.[18] More to the point: not only do narratives of "Western arrival" fail to capture the diversity of thought and behavior which has so marked German history during the postwar era, but they overlook the ways in which peripheral currents have been an integral part of the whole.

As these comments suggest, histories focusing on the Berlin Republic as the destination, ignore the multitude of life experiences that encompassed the journey. In the late 1970s and the early 1980s, on both sides of the Iron Curtain, East and West Germans did not know their countries would be reunified and lived their lives within the contexts of their separate yet entangled existences. For some, this meant imagining identities and constructing collectives counter to mainstream conceptions of self, state, and society. And for these individuals and their communities, this historical conjuncture provided unprecedented opportunities to pursue alternative modes of existence. The late 1970s and early 1980s was a moment of uncertainty in both East and West as assumptions and certitudes about politics, prosperity, and progress were put into question. In these years, unconventional lifestyles and alternative communities exploded across the Cold War divide, developments attesting to a widespread disenchantment felt by many Germans with their societies. Although this era is often understood as a period of crisis—which punk's nihilistic "No Future" ethos seems to personify beautifully—it was also seen as an opportunity to reimagine society.[19] In both East and West, many Germans during these decades endeavored to create alternative futures,

[17] Frank Biess and Astrid M. Eckert, "Introduction: Why Do We Need New Narratives for the History of the Federal Republic?" *Central European History* 52, No. 1 (2019): 1–18, esp. 6–8; and Katherine Pence and Paul Betts, "Introduction," in Katherine Pence and Paul Betts, eds., *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 1–34, esp. 6–15. On the German *Sonderweg*, see David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

[18] Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte. Fünfter Band: Bundesrepublik und DDR 1949–1990* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2008), 361, and 424–5. See also Donna Harsch, "Footnote or Footprint? The German Democratic Republic in History," *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 46 (Spring 2010): 9–25; and Thomas Lindenberger, "What's in this footnote? World History!" *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 46 (Spring 2010): 27–31.

[19] Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991* (London: Michael Joseph, 1994), 403ff. See also Niall Ferguson, "Crisis, What Crisis? The 1970s and the Shock of the Global," in Niall Ferguson, Charles S. Maier, Erez Manela, and Daniel J. Sargent, eds., *The Shock of the*

even if they ultimately remained deferred or, in many cases, unrealized. Nonetheless, their industry demands explanation, both because Germans at the time invested tremendous energy in these pursuits, and because their activities transformed East and West Germany in significant ways.

To write the history of divided Germany in the 1970s and 1980s means to take seriously the beliefs and practices of ordinary Germans, especially those who dissented from dominant discourses or rejected prevailing conventions, even if their strivings never amounted to much. Doing so can recuperate the many past futures which Germans pursued and can reorient our appreciation of this period in history. Nearly two decades ago, Michael Geyer and Konrad Jarausch implored scholars to rethink German history from the margins to "decenter received conceptions of what it meant to be German at a given time." The point, they cautioned, was not to add "previously silenced voices to the general chorus," but to communicate the "enormous diversity of life stories and group experiences" lost in the homogenizing effacements of difference.[20] What histories of the present miss is the conditional nature of the past, and how alternative visions of what Germany might have been has shaped the historical record. Investigating roads not taken thus restores contingency to a moment when Germany remained divided, its achievements in question, and its future trapped in the subjunctive.

Punk is a particularly fruitful means of accessing this historical moment. While punk never resolved its own contradictions—as we will see, they eventually tore the subculture apart—the genre nonetheless inspired Germans in the 1970s and 1980s to challenge existing orthodoxies and create new certainties, a revolt which upended the status quo. Indeed, the disruptions punks provoked oftentimes helped emancipate and pluralize divided Germany. Making these claims does not suggest triumphant progress: as will become clear, punk tumults very often reinforced convention, and in fact, German punk can be read as a poignant tale of unfulfilled promise. But the ideals and practices which punks pursued, and the debates and reactions unleashed by their subcultural activities, nevertheless shaped Germans and their societies profoundly. As we will see, the controversies surrounding punk—over space and behavior, fashion and music, consumerism and violence, rebellion and collusion—were disagreements about the contours of the subculture; but they were equally contestations about German politics and society.

As such, punk can help us better understand divided Germany in the 1970s and 1980s. As others have observed, punk was not simply a music genre but rather a field of cultural production in which sounds, styles, and stances were diverse and

Global: The 1970s in Perspective (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2010), 1–21. Cf. Cyrus Shahan, "Fehlfarben and German Punk: The Making of 'No Future,'" in Uwe Schütte, ed., *German Pop Music: A Companion* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 111–129, esp. 112.

[20] Konrad H. Jarausch and Michael Geyer, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 59 and 83.

often contradictory.[21] Plurality encouraged youths to mobilize punk in manifold ways, even if multiplicity led to friction and considerable division. But while punk as a subculture and movement remained contradictory, its reverberations were emancipatory. In both East and West, youths were attracted to punk because it offered them the possibility of reimagining the world, even if their efforts to make dreams become reality were often fraught with inconsistencies. And though punk undertakings were not always explicitly articulated as such, they nonetheless helped enlarge the contours of German politics and society by compelling the mainstream to react to their unconventionality, a dialectical process expanding German experiences. To say this does not reproduce the narrative of Western success, but rather to show how punks and others helped broaden the possibilities for expectant futures at a moment when the present seemed so unsettled.[22] In this way, *Culture from the Slums* explores how emancipatory sensibilities were renewed and reimagined by alternative communities on both sides of the Iron Curtain during the 1970s and 1980s.

In exploring how punk helped emancipate divided Germany during these years, *Culture from the Slums* makes two broad claims. First, I argue that punk was a medium for alternative living and a motor for social change. While I agree the subculture was not merely a waypoint in a progressive narrative running from the student movement in the 1960s to reunification in 1990, punk was much more than an "inventory of crises."[23] By investing the genre with emancipatory potential, Germans on both sides of the Berlin Wall mobilized punk to oppose convention and advance difference as a basis for alternative identities and communities. In the East, music and style was used to reject "real-existing socialism," while in the West, the punk revolt condemned democratic capitalism as inhibiting authentic existence. In each case, punk provided a powerful alternative to mainstream conformity and inspired new vistas for belonging, distinctiveness, and experimentation among Germans. Punk certainly encompassed significant contradictions, inconsistencies which regularly undermined its ideals and fractured the collective as we will see. In fact, despite a large literature extolling punk as a form of resistance, it would be wrong to ascribe such hagiography uncritically to the subculture. Punks constantly engaged in practices the subculture supposedly rejected, activities that were often deeply imbricated in mainstream society whether participating in consumer practices in the West or working with the state in the East. These examples and others

[21] Matthew Worley et al., "Introduction: From Protest to Resistance," in The Subcultures Network, eds., *Fight Back: Punk, Politics and Resistance* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2014), 1–2.

[22] On the deep imbrications between past, present, and future temporalities, see Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985).

[23] Cyrus Shahan, *Punk Rock and German Crisis: Adaption and Resistance after 1977* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 1–22, here 1 and 16.

indicate the complexity of punk and demonstrate how either/or dichotomizing are unhelpful for elucidating the full contours of the subculture. Yet despite these paradoxes, for many Germans in the 1970s and 1980s, punk pursuits enlarged their possibilities for difference, thus illustrating why the subculture is representative of the new forms, contents, and sensibilities of cultural politics that emerged during the 1960s.

Second, through a comparative analysis of the subculture, I argue that punk helps explain why West Germany flourished and why East Germany collapsed. At first glance, this claim appears to celebrate Western success. However, the opposite is in fact intended: while punk remained fundamentally indigestible to Eastern state socialism, it proved unable to withstand Western democratic capitalism. In West Germany, punk led to both an enriched civil society and a ghettoized subculture. Punk sonic experimentation and singing in German led to the creation of an indigenous popular music genre, the Neue Deutsche Welle (New German Wave) and gave youths access to an expressive new vernacular. Except success provoked backlash and critics questioned whether punk could retain its pretensions of alterity if beholden to commercial interests. Threatened by commodification, some youths retreated into a more exclusionary, violent, and isolated subculture, while others moved punk more readily into the mainstream: in both cases, by the mid-1980s, punk had ceased to function as an instrument of difference in the West.

By contrast, authorities were never able to control punk in East Germany. Despite initially dismissing punk as nonexistent in the GDR, continuing provocations convinced the SED to violently repress the subculture. Except coercion failed as youths rebuilt their shattered scenes and became socialized into the growing opposition groups gathering in the Protestant Churches. Having unsuccessfully hindered the subculture with force, the SED reversed course and instead tried to generate support for its tottering rule by endorsing punk at the end of the 1980s. Again, however, these efforts backfired as youths used their new privileges to only further erode the legitimacy of the state which, in the end, collapsed. These opposing outcomes demonstrate how democratic capitalism tamed alternative currents that contested its power to ascribe value and meaning, and why state socialism proved unable to absorb or constrain the challenges posed by punk and other subcultures. Perhaps most consequentially, such divergent aftermaths imply that alternative futures remained open for much longer in the East, than they did in the West, opportunities that should encourage a rethinking of Western "success" and Eastern "failure."

Culture from the Slums thus examines the roles which punk played in German politics, society, and culture, and how German contexts transformed punk. Put differently: this study is about punk in Germany, and Germany in punk. As many scholars have noted, popular culture has often nurtured pluralistic sensibilities and, in the postwar era, has frequently been the site of contested politics and social

change.[24] By forcing Germans to respond to its provocations, punk destabilized the existing social order and became a nexus for complex debates about divided Germany. Nor was this a smooth process as state and societal reactions to the subculture—indeed, panic over punk—tells us much about how the margins help construct the mainstream in both democracy and dictatorship. Punk, I argue, was both an expression and a consequence of the tremendous political, socio-economic, and cultural changes unfolding in East and West during the 1970s and 1980s. Understanding German punk can therefore help to explain why so many individuals devoted their lives to alternative politics and culture during this period, and how German politics, society, and culture were transformed by these pursuits.

Alternative Culture and Authenticity in East and West Germany

> Ugly made-up youths, wearing ripped clothes with Nazi-insignia and dog-collars, protesting unemployment and boredom in industrial society are on display. Their primitive 'Punk-Rock' is being successfully marketed by the record industry. Jet-setters from New York to Munich find the 'lumpen-fashion' to be the latest trend. But real punks are already critical about the big fuss: "Something crooked is going on."
>
> *Der Spiegel*, 1978[25]

As one of the more dramatic movements of the time, contemporary media reports on punk illustrate the importance of authenticity and alternative culture during these decades. My title is borrowed from an issue of *Der Spiegel* that sought to educate West Germans about punk in 1978. The cover depicted London punks sporting swastikas, Dave Vanian from The Damned dressed as Dracula, and the American transgender singer Jayne County (Figure 0.1). *Der Spiegel* paired these provocative images with a sensational headline: "Punk. Culture from the Slums: Brutal and Ugly." Within, the magazine detailed the dissolute nature of punk and its fans, as well as efforts by the music and fashion industry to monetize the genre. By stressing punk's repulsiveness and transgression, *Der Spiegel* shocked staid burghers even as it intrigued their kids.[26] But scandal also illuminates

[24] On the importance of popular culture in the study of postwar Germany, see Alexa Geisthövel and Bodo Mrozek, "Einleitung," in Alexa Geisthövel and Bodo Mrozek, eds., *Popgeschichte. Band 1: Konzepte und Methoden* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2014), 7–25.

[25] "Punk: Nadel im Ohr, Klinge am Hals," *Der Spiegel*, No. 4 (January 23, 1978), 140.

[26] Ute Wieners, *Zum Glück gab es Punk—Autobiografische Erzählungen* (Neustadt: Verlag des Arbeitskreises Regionalgeschichte e.V., 2012), 60–1.

Figure 0.1 *Der Spiegel* cover story on punk (January 23, 1978)
Source: *Der Spiegel*.

how punk was understood by East and West Germans, with the former following the latter in condemning the subculture as originating from the "garbage heap."[27] The word "slums" was an Anglo-American import much like punk itself and freighted with meaning: socio-economic decay, racial segregation, and cultural

[27] Ingold Bossenz, "Krisenkultur von der Müllhalde," *Neues Deutschland* (June 3/4, 1978), 16.

inferiority.[28] The term's use in divided Germany trafficked in persistent fears of American cultural hegemony and racial threat, embodied by the anxious responses to earlier music genres like jazz or rock 'n' roll; and by the 1970s, "slums" were used to describe ethnic enclaves in German cities inhabited by Turkish Muslims.[29] By associating punk with slums, *Der Spiegel* implied the subculture was both foreign and a menace.

Yet *Der Spiegel*'s allusion was not strictly one-sided. Punks too embraced slums because they believed these sites and their connotations conferred authenticity: slums were threatening, but also promised possibilities. Punks gravitated to slums both literal and metaphorical because they implied danger, liminality which strengthened their rejection of the status quo and aided in efforts at walling themselves off from what they perceived to be mainstream corruption. Slums—political, economic, racial, cultural—have often been pursued as a source of genuineness in postwar German history whether by Western student radicals in the 1960s or Eastern hip-hop enthusiasts in the 1980s.[30] And by positioning themselves as marginal to the mainstream—more invented than real, as we will see—punks sought to negotiate cultural politics in both German states from a location considered to be more authentic. For these reasons, *Der Spiegel*'s primer on punk sounded alarms, not only with the public but amongst youths too. After describing the genesis and contours of the British scene and its recent arrival in West Germany, the magazine questioned punk's future legitimacy as music producers and fashion gurus tried to capitalize on the genre. By underscoring punk's growing commodification, *Der Spiegel* signaled how the authenticity which alternative culture purported to bestow upon its members—"subcultural capital" in Sarah Thornton's classic terminology—was vulnerable to corrosion and decay.[31]

As the disquiet by "real punks" that "something crooked is going on" in *Der Spiegel* suggests, authenticity was central to punk, a concept at the heart of alternative culture. With connotations of "real" and "truth," authenticity is used to designate laws and spaces, artifacts and events, practices and behaviors that are

[28] On the American context, see Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

[29] Maria Stehle, *Ghetto Voices in Contemporary German Culture: Textscapes, Filmscapes, Soundscapes* (Rochester: Camden House, 2012), 11–17. See also Jonathan O. Wipplinger, *The Jazz Republic: Music, Race, and American Culture in Weimar Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017); Heide Fehrenbach, *Race after Hitler: Black Occupation Children in Postwar Germany and America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); and Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*.

[30] Leonard Schmieding, *"Das ist unsere Party": HipHop in der DDR* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2014); Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012); and Detlef Siegfried, "White Negroes: The Fascination of the Authentic in the West German Counterculture of the 1960s," in Belinda Davis, Wilfried Mausbach, Martin Klimke, and Carla MacDougall, eds., *Changing the World, Changing Oneself: Political Protest and Collective Identities in West Germany and the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s* (New York: Berghahn, 2010), 191–213.

[31] Sarah Thornton, *Club Cultures: Music, Media, and Subcultural Capital* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1995).

valued for their genuineness. We seek out authentic food, travel to authentic locales, and pursue authentic experiences: although difficult to define, authenticity structures daily life.[32] Evolving in the early modern era through political and socio-economic modernization, as Lionel Trilling classically argued, authenticity was concerned with the development of one's inner self and its presentation to and recognition by others outwardly.[33] Influenced by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, nineteenth-century Romantics felt that modern society, driven by industrial capitalism and bourgeois norms, with its stress on conformity, convention, and tradition, was inhibiting authenticity.[34] Nevertheless, despite such fetters, the authentic self could still be realized, especially by resisting homogenization and expressing one's individuality regardless of social expectations or typical beliefs. As these remarks indicate, by the twentieth century, authenticity was intimately linked with the relationship between individuals and society, and the pursuit of individuality had become the means to discover, experience, and express inner genuineness.

Efforts at differentiating themselves from a mainstream society believed to be inauthentic have guided alternatives throughout the twentieth century. From fin-de-siècle bohemians to the interwar era avant-garde, nonconformists in the first half of the century provoked controversy with their rejection of middle-class customs and adventurous tastes.[35] Even the division of the world into Eastern and Western blocs after 1945 saw efforts at overcoming synthetic existences on either side of the Iron Curtain. Labeling their endeavors "genuine" or "real," radicals in the West sought to restore meaning to lives they argued were bound by consumer culture, political stultification, and social conformity before, during, and after the sixties.[36] In the East, pursuing authenticity meant refusing the demands of dictatorship, or "living in truth" in Vaclav Havel's famous

[32] For recent works on authenticity, see Maiken Umbach and Mathew Humphrey, *Authenticity: The Cultural History of a Political Concept* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Martin Sabrow and Achim Saupe, eds., *Historische Authentizität* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2016); and Charles Lindholm, *Culture and Authenticity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008). For authenticity and popular music, see Hugh Barker and Yuval Taylor, *Faking It: The Quest for Authenticity in Popular Music* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007).

[33] Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971).

[34] Marshall Berman, *The Politics of Authenticity: Radical Individualism and the Emergence of Modern Society*, new edition (New York: Verso, 2009). See also Jerrold Seigel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe since the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

[35] Jerrold Seigel, *Bohemian Paris: Culture, Politics, and the Boundaries of Bourgeois Life, 1830–1930* (New York: Viking, 1986).

[36] For an introduction to this vast literature, see Timothy Scott Brown, *Sixties Europe* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Chen Jian et al., eds., *The Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties: Between Protest and Nation-Building* (London: Routledge, 2018); and Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth, eds., *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956–1977* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

formulation.[37] While authenticity has been conditioned by its historical contexts, in the postwar era, the objective remained remarkably similar: to nurture individual genuineness and reject societal conformity. Punks continued these efforts even though they departed from their predecessors in significant ways. For punks, in both East and West, authenticity was a regime of truth, a means of bestowing legitimacy to a range of practices and ideals that dissented from mainstream society. In this sense, punk is representative of a diverse collective—hippies, peaceniks, environmentalists, squatters, and others—who made up the alternative milieu in the 1970s and 1980s, groups who strove to reorient daily life in ways they felt were more authentic, even if such a regime always remained contested and unstable.[38] To German punks, authenticity was an incessantly negotiated entity whose politics and practices sought to distinguish youths from the mainstream by locating legitimacy on the margins.

As these comments suggest, slums and authenticity are deeply concerned with "margins" and "alternatives," and these terms are used throughout this study to denote individuals, groups, thoughts, and practices that were positioned—consciously or not—in contrast to the mainstream. Yet thinking about the margins and mainstream as dichotomous is not especially helpful. For these individuals and collectives, the margins or alternatives were relational and interactive, a stance or site from which to comment or act upon the center; while protagonists often spoke in terms of opposition, it is more useful to consider them dialectically.[39] On both sides of the Berlin Wall, marginal figures and their doings became central points of departure for the whole since they regularly forced the mainstream to respond to their antics. As nonconformists, punks were well-placed to question existing assumptions about life in East and West, and to compel the core to react to their rhythms on the periphery (Figure 0.2). As we will see, punks deliberately sought confrontations with the mainstream, not only to trouble the status quo but perhaps as importantly, to validate their marginality and thus authenticity. And by contesting dominant notions about what it meant to be German, punk praxis pluralized divided Germany, demonstrating how marginality is essential for understanding divided Germany during these decades.

Especially since the 1960s, alternative culture has been a crucial site of social change. Remarkable opportunities to pursue alternative endeavors existed in the 1970s and 1980s, a consequence of the dramatic socio-economic changes taking

[37] Vaclav Havel, "The Power of the Powerless," in Gale Stokes, ed., *From Stalinism to Pluralism: A Documentary History of Eastern Europe Since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 168–74.

[38] Sven Reichardt, *Authentizität und Gemeinschaft: Linksalternatives Leben in den siebziger und frühen achtziger Jahren* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2014); and Sven Reichardt and Detlef Siegfried, eds., *Das Alternative Milieu: Antibürgerlicher Lebensstil und linke Politik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Europa 1968–1983* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2010).

[39] On the margins in German history, see Neil Gregor, Nils Roemer, and Mark Roseman, "Introduction," in Neil Gregor, Nils Roemer, and Mark Roseman, eds., *German History from the Margins* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 1–26, esp. 1–7.

Figure 0.2 Maik "Ratte" Reichenbach, bassist for the Leipzig bands H.A.U. and L'Attentat, on a train to East Berlin (1983)
Source: Christiane Eisler.

place in Europe which ended the postwar period of prosperity in the West, and the building of socialism in the East.[40] In the West, drug centers, independent presses, housing co-opts, holistic homeopath clinics, experimental day-care facilities, autonomous youth centers, avant-garde music clubs—all offered Germans means to participate in unconventional collectives which revitalized daily life in the Federal Republic.[41] While dwarfed numerically by the scene in the West, alternative culture also sprang up in the cracks of socialist life in the East—tentative political associations, unofficial artistic performances, subversive reading circles, underground media networks—which gave participants some measure of autonomy outside state control, endeavors, ideas, and communities that would, in

[40] Anselm Doering-Manteuffel and Lutz Raphael, *Nach dem Boom: Perspektiven auf die Zeitgeschichte seit 1970*, 3rd revised edition (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012). See also Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, Lutz Raphael, and Thomas Schlemmer, eds., *Vorgeschichte der Gegenwart: Dimensionen des Strukturbruchs nach dem Boom* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016); and Konrad H. Jarausch, ed., *Das Ende der Zuversicht? Die siebziger Jahre als Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008).

[41] David Templin, *Freizeit ohne Kontrollen: Die Jugendzentrumsbewegung in der Bundesrepublik der 1970er Jahre* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2015); Reichardt, *Authentizität und Gemeinschaft*; Timothy Scott Brown, *West Germany and the Global Sixties: The Antiauthoritarian Revolt, 1962–1978* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Reichardt and Siegfried, eds., *Das Alternative Milieu*; Robert P. Stephens, *Germans on Drugs: The Complications of Modernization in Hamburg* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007); and Sabine von Dirke, *"All Power to the Imagination!" The West German Counterculture from the Student Movement to the Greens* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).

the end, help to bring down the Berlin Wall.[42] In both East and West, these decades saw young Germans question existing realities and imagine new worlds of political and social engagement which revolutionized daily life. While not every alternative project succeeded, nor did every alternative ideal or practice find purchase, nonetheless, the collective influence of alternative culture on East and West during these years has been substantial.

Positioned on the margins from which to challenge the status quo, hippies, squatters, punks, and others strove to reorient their daily lives in ways they felt to be more real, endeavors which often put them into conflict with authorities and society. These encounters tell us much about the political, social, and cultural stakes during these decades, and how relations between the mainstream and margins worked to construct identity and belonging for the whole. Although attuned to the peculiarities of historical context, German punk was nonetheless part of a global subculture that straddled the Iron Curtain. Comparing punk in East and West points to substantial differences but also surprising similarities which must revise our understandings of Cold War division.[43] Governed by notions of authenticity and belonging to a global network, punk provides a window into efforts by Germans to reimagine their world at a time when the existing state of affairs seemed ripe for questioning. Emancipation certainly looked different whether pursued under the conditions of capitalism or socialism—and youths rarely referred to their endeavors in these terms either. Nevertheless, punk provided the ideas, organizations, and practices toward a radical re-envisioning of what divided Germany could be.

Popular Music and Punk in Postwar Germany

Chaos in the suburbs
But not in Bilk and Derendorf
The situation is calm
On the inner-city front

Mittagspause, "Innen Stadt Front"[44]

[42] Juliane Fürst, *Flowers Through Concrete: Explorations in Soviet Hippieland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021); Juliane Fürst and Josie McLellan, eds., *Dropping out of Socialism: The Creation of Alternative Spheres in the Soviet Bloc* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2017); Cathleen M. Giustino, Catherine J. Plum, and Alexander Vari, eds., *Socialist Escapes: Breaking Away from Ideology and Everyday Routine in Eastern Europe, 1945–1989* (New York: Berghahn, 2013); Jonathan Bolton, *Worlds of Dissent: Charter 77, The Plastic People of the Universe, and Czech Culture under Communism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); and Padraic Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe in 1989* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

[43] Even works ostensibly studying alternative culture in East and West, rarely depart from a national framework and instead examine alternative movements in either East or West. See Joachim C. Häberlen, Mark Keck-Szajbel, and Kate Mahoney, eds., *The Politics of Authenticity: Counterculture and Radical Movements across the Iron Curtain, 1968–1989* (New York: Berghahn, 2019); and Martin Klimke, Jacco Pekelder, and Joachim Scharloth, eds., *Between Prague Spring and French May: Opposition and Revolt in Europe, 1960–1980* (New York: Berghahn, 2011).

[44] "Chaos am Stadtrand / doch nicht in Bilk und Derendorf / die Lage ist ruhig / an der Innenstadtfront." Mittagspause, "Innen Stadt Front," *Mittagspause* (Pure Freude CK 1, 1979).

One reason why punk is helpful for tracking change in divided Germany is because music has often been central in defining German identity and community throughout history. Whether in Felix Mendelssohn's revival of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, Richard Wagner's attempts to define Germanness musically, or Commandant Rudolf Höss' insistence that Jewish prisoners give concerts on Sunday afternoons in Auschwitz, music has played a critical role in transforming German politics, society, and culture for centuries.[45] For this reason, Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter have persuasively argued that "German" and "music" merge so seamlessly that their connection is "hardly ever questioned."[46] This was certainly the case in the postwar era as popular music was endowed with meaning and deployed by Germans to rebuild their nations, communities, and identities after National Socialism.[47] Such adoptions helped them create what William Sewell has called the "thin coherence" of cultural meaning necessary for individuals to make sense of their lives.[48] Throughout German history, popular music has been both a means of organizing individuals and society, and an instrument of empowerment, making it an important intersection of power and agency from which social reality is constructed and contested.

We can see these processes by briefly examining the development of popular music in Germany in the decades prior to punk. In the years before 1945, popular music became a key component of German society and culture. While classical music—what Germans call "serious music" (*Ernstmusik*, or E-Musik)—was focal, technological inventions, increased leisure time, and new consumer habits all led to the development of popular "entertainment music" (*Unterhaltungsmusik*, or U-Musik) in the last decades of the nineteenth century.[49] Featuring lighter sounds, vernacular vocals, and foot-tapping rhythms, the pre-World War I era witnessed a flourishing culture of popular music-oriented practices.[50] Although the war interrupted these developments, they were picked up again at the conclusion of hostilities and the 1920s saw the climax of this first wave of German popular music culture. The infusion of African American sounds helped fashion the legendary music culture of Weimar: jazz bands, dance halls, radio, and cabaret

[45] See Celia Applegate, *Bach in Berlin: Nation and Culture in Mendelssohn's Revival of the St. Matthew Passion* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Shirli Gilbert, *Music in the Holocaust: Confronting Life in the Nazi Ghettos and Camps* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005); and Hannu Salmi, *Imagined Germany: Richard Wagner's National Utopia* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999).

[46] Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter, "Germans as the 'People of Music': Genealogy of an Identity," in Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter, eds., *Music and German National Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 1.

[47] For an overview of the field, see Michael Ahlers and Christoph Jacke, eds., *Perspectives on German Popular Music* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017).

[48] William H. Sewell, Jr., "The Concept(s) of Culture," in Victoria Bonnell and Lynn Hunt, eds., *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 49–50.

[49] On "E-Musik" and "U-Musik," see Annette Blühdorn, *Pop and Poetry—Pleasure and Protest: Udo Lindenberg, Konstantin Wecker and the Tradition of German Cabaret* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2003), 39–47.

[50] Martin Rempe, *Kunst, Spiel, Arbeit: Musikerleben in Deutschland, 1850 bis 1960* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019); and Barbara Eichner, *History in Mighty Sounds: Musical Constructions of German National Identity, 1848–1914* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2012).

were all hallmarks of this profoundly musical era.[51] Nor did these trends halt under the Nazis. Despite their vocal disdain for "cultural degeneracy," they nonetheless mobilized popular music in the consolidation of the racial state, especially once the war began to turn sour.[52] By the end of the Third Reich, popular music had functioned as a vehicle of national and cultural politics, and a forum for identity and community, for nearly a century.

These trends continued in the postwar era with popular music playing an important role in the reconstruction of German society on both sides of the Iron Curtain. In the first decade, Western authorities encouraged popular music like jazz as a means of integrating residents into the new trans-Atlantic community, while in the East, the SED used it to transform the public into proper socialist citizens.[53] During these decades, *Schlager* (hits), a genus featuring easy rhythms and catchy melodies, with German-language lyrics about mountains, sunny lakes, and the joys of simple life and love was the dominant popular genre.[54] The mid-1950s, however, witnessed the arrival of rock 'n' roll and the subsequent explosion of Beat music following the success of the Beatles in the early 1960s.[55] Across the Iron Curtain, stimulated by the socio-economic changes attending the *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle) in the West, and the building of socialism in the East, German youths eagerly embraced these new sounds and styles, a development causing considerable consternation. In the West, authorities and the public worried that rock 'n' roll was disrupting gender norms and encouraging youth delinquency.[56] In the East, despite cautiously supporting Beat initially, after riots consumed Leipzig in 1965, rock 'n' roll was condemned by the SED as a decadent form of Western imperialism sent eastward to corrupt socialist youths.[57]

[51] Wipplinger, *The Jazz Republic*; Peter Jelavich, *Berlin Cabaret* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996); and Michael H. Kater, *Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[52] Brian Currid, *A National Acoustics: Music and Mass Publicity in Weimar and Nazi Germany* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); Michael H. Kater and Albrecht Riethmüller, eds., *Music and Nazism: Art under Tyranny, 1933–1945* (Laaber: Laaber, 2003); and Alan E. Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics in Nazi Germany: The Reich Chambers of Music, Theater, and the Visual Arts* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

[53] Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*.

[54] On *Schlager*, see Julio Mendivil, *Ein musikalisches Stück Heimat: Ethnologisches Beobachtungen zum deutschen Schlager* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2008).

[55] Julia Sneeringer, *A Social History of Early Rock'n'Roll in Germany: Hamburg from Burlesque to the Beatles, 1956–69* (London: Bloomsburg Academic, 2018).

[56] Bodo Mrozek, *Jugend, Pop, Kultur: Ein transnationale Geschichte* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2019); Sneeringer, *A Social History of Early Rock'n'Roll*; Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*; and Hermann Haring, *Rock aus Deutschland West. Von den Rattles bis Nena: Zwei Jahrzehnte Heimatklang* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1984).

[57] Mark Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs and Rock "n" Roll: Teenage Rebels in Cold-War East Germany* (New York: Berghahn, 2009); Dorothee Wierling, "Youth as Internal Enemy: Conflicts in the Education Dictatorship of the 1960s," in Katherine Pence and Paul Betts, eds., *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 157–82; and Michael Rauhut, *Beat in der Grauzone. DDR-Rock, 1964 bis 1972: Politik und Alltag* (Berlin: BasicDruck, 1993).

While authorities remained anxious, youths embraced popular music which became deeply embedded in leisure cultures during the long sixties on both sides of the Iron Curtain. During this decade, English-language rock 'n' roll became both the lingua franca of the global youth revolt and, paradoxically, imbricated in capitalist consumerism.[58] Except the Vietnam War soured young Germans on America and by the late 1960s, Anglo-American popular music was criticized as well. The political rupture with America encouraged sonic experimentation and young Germans began exploring new sounds, lyrics, and languages.[59] Although these efforts never attained mass commercial or popular success in the 1970s, whether in the Krautrock of Can, the proto-electronica of Kraftwerk, or the political rock of Ton Steine Scherben, music was increasingly regarded as a platform for nonconformist identities and communities.[60] In the East, fearful of subversion, SED authorities began promoting politically reliable rock bands, a genre which became known as Ostrock.[61] However, the SED was never able to fully control musical production and pockets of artistic autonomy remained, such as within the rebellious blues scene or in the critical lyrics of outspoken singer-songwriter Wolf Biermann, whose expulsion from the GDR in 1976 triggered a wave of protest.[62] As this brief summary illustrates, well before punk burst onto the scene in the

[58] Detlef Siegfried, *Time Is on My Side: Konsum und Politik in der westdeutschen Jugendkultur der 60er Jahre* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006). On English-language German popular music, see Richard Langston, "Roll Over Beethoven! Chuck Berry! Mick Jagger! 1960s Rock, the Myth of Progress, and the Burden of National Identity in West Germany," in Nora M. Alter and Lutz Koepnick, eds., *Sound Matters: Essays in the Acoustics of Modern German Culture* (New York: Berghahn, 2004), 183–96; Edward Larkey, "Just for Fun? Language Choice in German Popular Music," in Harris M. Berger and Michael Thomas Carroll, eds., *Global Pop, Local Language* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2003), 131–51; Osman Durrani, "Popular Music in the German-Speaking World," in Alison Phipps, ed., *Contemporary German Cultural Studies* (London: Arnold, 2002), 197–218; and Edward Larkey, "Postwar German Popular Music: Americanization, the Cold War, and the Post-Nazi-*Heimat*," in Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter, eds., *Music and German National Identity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 234–50.

[59] See Rüdiger Esch, *Electri_City: Elektronische_Musik_Aus_Düsseldrof, 1970–1986* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2014), 10.

[60] Melanie Schiller, *Soundtracking Germany: Popular Music and National Identity* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018); David Stubbs, *Future Days: Krautrock and the Building of Modern Germany* (London: Faber & Faber, 2014); Christoph Wagner, *Der Klang der Revolte: Die magischen Jahre des westdeutschen Musik-Underground* (Mainz: Schott, 2013); Sean Albiez and David Pattie, eds., *Kraftwerk: Music Non-Stop* (New York: Continuum, 2011); and Timothy Scott Brown, "Music as a Weapon? *Ton Steine Scherben* and the Politics of Rock in Cold War Berlin," *German Studies Review* 32, No. 1 (February 2009): 1–22.

[61] Puhdys, *Abenteuer Puhdys* (Berlin: Neues Leben, 2009); Gerd Dehnel and Christian Hentschel, eds., *Es brennt der Wald . . . Die Rockszene im Ostblock* (Berlin: Neues Leben, 2008); Christian Hentschel and Peter Matzke, *Als ich fortging . . . Das große DDR-Rock-Buch* (Berlin: Neues Leben, 2007); Michael Rauhut, *Rock in der DDR, 1964 bis 1989* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2002); and Jürgen Balitzki, *electra. LIFT. Stern Combo Meißen: Geschichten vom Sachsendreier* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2001).

[62] On the Biermann affair, see Fritz Pleitgen, ed., *Die Ausbürgerung: Anfang vom Ende der DDR* (Berlin: Ullstein, 2001); and Roland Berbig et al., eds., *In Sachen Biermann: Protokolle, Berichte und Briefe zu den Folgen einer Ausbürgerung* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 1994).

1970s, popular music had long been a site of emancipation and contestation throughout German history.

The history of punk has often been told and can be quickly summarized. Punk did not begin with a single song or specific band, but as a series of cultural antecedents in the late 1960s and early 1970s in response to mainstream Western society and rock 'n' roll culture. Dissatisfied with the self-absorption of rock acts and the more commercially oriented pop sounds, some youths sought rock 'n' roll that would reconnect performers with their audiences and return music to the amateur.[63] Instrumentation was simple: electric guitars and bass, drums, and vocals. Songs were short and fast, driven by simple, repetitive chords and played with little in the way of musical expertise. Lyrics emphasized the banalities of daily life and often dealt with controversial subject matter—drugs, sex, crime, boredom, etc.—to expose the hypocrisies of contemporary society.[64] The rejection of technical proficiency was typical of punk, integral to the democratizing impulse behind the do-it-yourself (DIY) ethos that urged action over words: the famous sketch in an early punk fanzine—"This is a chord, this is another, this is a third, *now form a band*"—well captured this imbrication of dilettantism and daring. Creating independent media and production enterprises—labels, shops, fanzines, clothes—was equally essential as punks worked to reclaim agency from the music industry.[65] In the final analysis, punk aspired to break the conventions of popular music: to rescue it from what it had become; to make rock 'n' roll dangerous again.

First used in the early 1970s by writers and musicians to describe these new sounds and endeavors, the term "punk" etymologically stretched back to Shakespeare and has been variously used to mean "prostitute," "queer," "garbage," and "scum."[66] Early punk pioneers adopted the term to signify their abjectness and to distance themselves from mainstream society. Over the 1970s, punk scenes arose across America before arriving in Great Britain. In London, masterminded by Malcolm McLaren—designer, entrepreneur, impresario—and his creation, the Sex Pistols, punk quickly swept the British Isles. McLaren and his partner Vivienne Westwood owned a clothing store on King's Road where they made and sold controversial fashions, and they assembled the Sex Pistols to promote their wares. Featuring Johnny Rotten on vocals, the band debuted in 1975 and

[63] The literature on punk is enormous but for an introduction, see Clinton Heylin, *Babylon's Burning: From Punk to Grunge* (London: Viking, 2007); Legs McNeil and Gillian McCain, *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk*, reprint edition (New York: Grove Press, 2006); and Jon Savage, *England's Dreaming: Anarchy, Sex Pistols, Punk Rock, and Beyond*, revised edition (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2002).

[64] The best analysis of punk music remains Dave Laing, *One Chord Wonders: Power and Meaning in Punk Rock*, revised edition (Oakland: PM Press, 2015 [1985]).

[65] Stacy Thompson, *Punk Productions: Unfinished Business* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004).

[66] See "A Punk Etymology," in Johan Kugelberg, ed., *Punk: An Aesthetic* (New York: Rizzou International Publications, 2012), 348–51.