

# GDR Cinema as Commodity: Marketing DEFA Films since Unification

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## ABSTRACT

For more than a decade, feature films produced by the GDR film company DEFA have been popular items in Germany. I analyze these films as commodities, arguing that this success by DEFA cinema needs to be read in conjunction with clever marketing strategies employed by the nonprofit foundation DEFA-Stiftung and the commercial home video distributor Icestorm Entertainment. Tracing some of these strategies, I show how DEFA feature films have become identifying markers that attest to a new eastern German regionalism and the reconsideration of the GDR past as part of Germany's cultural history.

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In an interview with the *Berliner Zeitung* in 1995, Eberhard Wagemann called the rights to films produced by the GDR film monopoly DEFA (Deutsche Filmaktiengesellschaft) "black gold."<sup>1</sup> The consultant, appointed by the federal holding company Treuhand to oversee the privatization of parts of the GDR film industry and to lay the groundwork for a future distribution network of DEFA films, was predicting a renaissance for a film corpus at a time when little evidence supported such a bold claim. On the contrary, a brief revival of banned DEFA films in 1990 had quickly returned to its dormant state; the former DEFA feature film studio in Babelsberg had been sold and renamed in 1992, and the trademark DEFA had been removed from Germany's federal trade register in 1994. Movie theaters no longer played the old GDR films, and on television, the occasional DEFA picture was broadcast only in undesirable late-night slots. DEFA cinema appeared to be bound for history's dustbin.

In hindsight, however, Wagemann's predictions turned out to be correct. While DEFA no longer produces new films, many films of its corpus, consisting of almost 950 full-length and short features completed between 1946 and 1994, have indeed turned into "hot items at the video store."<sup>2</sup> In the following essay, I explore reasons for

this success, suggesting that the marketing, in particular, of DEFA films contributed to their new popularity. Much like other products from the GDR that have seen a renaissance in unified Germany, DEFA films have become commodities. Yet unlike the iconic *Ampelmännchen* or the fetishized Trabant car, whose roles in contemporary German consumer culture have been subjects of previous inquiry, scholars so far have passed over the material impact of GDR films in postunification society.<sup>3</sup> I intend to expand the existing scholarship of GDR products as contemporary commodity items, proposing that the study of marketing DEFA films can also help us to understand the dynamics between the reinvention of GDR products and the motivation of consumers to seek out these things from a different time and culture. If this “postcolonial hybrid identity” serves as strategy to distinguish the cultural memory of the GDR from that of the old Federal Republic, as Paul Cooke suggests, I contend that DEFA films are not exceptions but further examples illustrating how East Germans formed a new regional identity.<sup>4</sup> Unraveling the various strategies successfully employed in the marketing of DEFA films—the focus of this article—also reveals that this identity formation has at least in part been implemented by a number of institutions one could consider a DEFA culture industry. Effective marketing strategies employed by the German nonprofit foundation DEFA Stiftung with its for-profit subsidiary defa-spektrum, and by the home video distributor Icestorm Entertainment resulted in the commodification of DEFA films.

Invoking Theodor W. Adorno’s notion of *Kulturindustrie* to discuss the marketing of GDR cinema is insofar useful as the success of DEFA films and their current popularity started with the systematic release of the films on videotapes for the fledgling German home-video market in 1999, followed by the switch to the new medium DVD soon thereafter.<sup>5</sup> A cooperation agreement with the tabloid *SuperIllu* to mass-market the most popular DVDs exponentially increased the exposure of DEFA films in 2006, while simultaneous work had begun to restore and reconstruct four never-before-seen films. As we will see, the reconstruction and revival of the four films, *Die Schönste* (*The Most Beautiful*, Ernesto Remani/Walter Beck, 1957/1958/2002), *Fräulein Schmetterling* (*Miss Butterfly*, Kurt Barthel, 1965/2005), *Hände hoch, oder ich schieße* (*Hands Up, or I’ll Shoot*, Hans-Joachim Kasprzik (1966/2010), and *Die Taube auf dem Dach* (*The Dove on the Roof*, Iris Gusner, 1973/1990/2010), mark the culmination in the series of DEFA films as a commercial success story. This impact on Germany’s market economy is rather ironic, since many of them were originally commissioned to build and develop a socialist GDR society while pointing out the deficiencies of the Federal Republic. Yet since the demise of the GDR, DEFA films have left a larger cultural and commercial imprint on Germans than before. All in all, working with DEFA cinema is now big business.

Reviving DEFA cinema in a democratic GDR and rebooting it in the new states of the Federal Republic after unification had a difficult beginning. In an initial attempt

in 1990 to spark interest in DEFA cinema, film historian Ralf Richter formed the Verband der Film- und Fernsehschaffenden der DDR (VFF) as a democratic organization to replace the previous centralist, state-governed structure. One goal of this commission was the release of DEFA's banned films from the years of *Kahlschlag*. This "clear-cutting" of GDR art that followed the leading Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (SED) party's Eleventh Plenum shelved almost the entire annual GDR feature-film production of 1965. The success of VFF hinged on financial support to unearth and prepare a number of these formerly banned films for public screenings.<sup>6</sup> After a 35-year ban, audiences were finally able to see them in movie theaters between March and October 1990. Kurt Maetzig's *Das Kaninchen bin ich* (*The Rabbit is Me*, 1965)—the film that gave the group of banned films their name *Kaninchenfilme* (rabbit films)—started in March.<sup>7</sup> Frank Vogel's *Denk bloß nicht, ich heule* (*Just Don't Think I'll Cry*, 1964/65) followed in April, Gerhard Klein's *Berlin um die Ecke* (*Berlin around the Corner*, 1965) in May, and Hermann Zschoche's *Karla* (*Carla*, 1965/66) in June. Jürgen Böttcher's *Jahrgang 45* (*Born in '45*, 1966) and Egon Günther's *Wenn du groß bist, lieber Adam* (*When You're Older, Adam*, 1965) closed out the season of premieres in October.<sup>8</sup> However, public interest in these and other DEFA films subsided once audiences realized that in many instances the films had been banned for reasons that retrospectively seemed trivial. Audiences no longer cared for the ways these films presented an outdated GDR society and proposed fictional solutions for matters no longer of concern for a country preparing for unification with the Federal Republic of Germany. Without much further public interest, DEFA films disappeared from the big screen.

More structural changes to Germany's audiovisual landscape sealed the fate for DEFA films. 1990 marked the end of GDR cinema in more than one way. For instance, the GDR Film Archive was integrated into the Federal Republic's Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, and DEFA ceased producing feature films at their Babelsberg studio. Also, it closed its animation studio in Dresden and the studio for documentary film in Berlin in preparation for privatization and sale. Even the traditional television home of DEFA broadcasts, the two GDR (and now eastern German) channels of the Deutscher Fernsehfunk, DFF 1 and 2, were terminated. Their replacements, the regional public television channels Ostdeutscher Rundfunk Brandenburg (ORB; now known as Radio Brandenburg-Berlin, RBB) and Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk (MDR), relegated the few DEFA films still shown on television to late-night slots. When the DEFA logo disappeared from the studio premises in Babelsberg after the new owner, the French real-estate firm Compagnie Immobilière Phénix (CIP), had renamed the former DEFA studio into Studio Babelsberg, and when the last DEFA film projects wrapped up almost unnoticed in 1994, the final chapter of DEFA cinema appeared to have been written.<sup>9</sup> Given those bleak circumstances, Eberhard Wagemann's exultations of the future economic potential of DEFA films sounded excessively optimistic

and reminded one of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's promises of "blossoming landscapes" in the new German states in 1990.

Put bluntly, DEFA in 1994 was a defunct film company with rarely screened, outdated films that very few people were interesting in watching after all. Things changed merely a few years later when Germans in the new states began to seek out ways to reintegrate their history and memories from the GDR past into their lives. They looked to bring back GDR products and things, partially for nostalgic reasons, and many of these products found a second life or were (re-)introduced to the German economy during the heydays of *Ostalgie*, as the nostalgia for things from the GDR came to be called. These East Germans started driving their old two-stroke Trabant cars again, lobbied successfully to keep the stop-motion television puppet show *Sandmännchen* on the air and the *Ampelmännchen* on stoplights in the new states, and favored Vita Cola over Coca-Cola when shopping. Anthropologist Daphne Berdahl has explained these activities as recollections of an imagined, idealized past stripped from its political subtext and as oppositional practice against a dominating cultural superstructure dominated by West German ideals.<sup>10</sup> Her verdict that the "interplay between nostalgia and memory" is linked by consumption becomes one of the important revelations for the understanding of the commodification of GDR brands—and therefore of DEFA films. Once eastern Germans realized that a unified German identity centering "almost exclusively on West German values" made it virtually impossible to watch "their" programming, they asserted their regional identity by looking for DEFA films.<sup>11</sup>

Due to the almost total disappearance of DEFA films from movie theaters and television a few years earlier, Germany's market economy was initially unable to fulfill this demand. The films were not available on home video, as only a few titles had been released in the old Federal Republic and none ever in the GDR due to concerns by the SED government that this media might be used to produce contraband.<sup>12</sup> West German Gerhard Sieber filled this void with his small start-up company, Icestorm. Sieber, who had worked for one of the West German companies producing and selling DEFA fairytale films in the old Federal Republic, realized the potential of DEFA films and started to license and distribute DEFA films on VHS in 1998, after the complicated copyright issues—split between rights in the old and new states had been clarified.<sup>13</sup> To him, as to Wagemann, these films rivaled the discovery of "black gold."<sup>14</sup> By the end of the year, Icestorm had already released eighty-two titles and marketed them successfully to a growing customer base in eastern Germany.<sup>15</sup> This juncture of consumerism and East German identity, a phenomenon Paul Cooke calls "postcolonial hybrid identity," confirms a "co-existence of both contemporary western consumer culture and of the GDR past."<sup>16</sup> Thus, what one may consider an oxymoron between the realms of capitalism and socialism is in fact a development that takes into account the changed cultural and economic realities in eastern Germany. The

onset of marketing a socialist past by way of selling DEFA films is therefore not a contradiction in itself but instead affirms the successful adaptation to new structures introduced by German unification. In a way, DEFA films became valuable for their economic value within a system that had already started the commodification of the GDR via *Ostalgie*.

Over time, Icestorm perfected the sales of DEFA films. The company's initial marketing of the films on home video duplicated the reintroduction of more mundane products (as, for example, Bautz'ner Senf) to an eastern German market, promoting brand names known to them from their GDR past. Even though DEFA films had technically never been available on VHS to GDR citizens, they were recognized as familiar products. By transforming the films from intangible products into commodity items that could be purchased and owned by individuals, Icestorm established DEFA as a unique eastern German brand name, allowing former GDR citizens to claim them as part of their identities. Initially, the company selected titles for release based on the input from previous customers to determine the most successful DEFA film genres in the GDR and therefore the most promising products for commercialization on home video. Thus, the first wave of VHS releases saw fairytales such as Wolfgang Staudte's *Die Geschichte vom kleinen Muck* (*The Story of Little Mook*, 1953) that had enchanted children and adults alike in the GDR and now targeted parents who wanted their children to grow up with these movies of their childhood, too. A different genre, the series of "Red Westerns"—known to eastern Germans as *Indianerfilme* and counterpart to the regular TV broadcasts of the West German Winnetou films—brought the GDR star Gojko Mitic back into their living rooms. Furthermore, the *Kaninchenfilme* from 1965 were now released with VHS case wrappers using replica images of imaginary, red-stamped censoring documents. That graphic design was perhaps intended to help eastern Germans identify the hitherto largely unknown films as DEFA blockbusters whose success had been stifled by the film ban after the Eleventh Plenum. When Icestorm perpetually referenced the GDR past, they used it as a marketing tool to link this past with the present situation of an emerging regional eastern German identity. The initial transformation of eastern Germany from socialist country into a region of the Federal Republic had also resulted in the attempt of the population to adapt the new country's visual culture, leaving behind the previously unloved DEFA films. When eastern Germans realized that these changes threatened to eliminate reminders of their personal histories, they eagerly embraced the opportunity to secure a piece of GDR history by purchasing the Icestorm videotapes of DEFA film—a pattern Eric Hobsbawm described in a different context as reaction intended to symbolize social cohesion.<sup>17</sup> At least for some, obtaining these videotapes was therefore a rite of initiation, representing the conscious display of eastern German individuality.

The introduction of the DVD as the preferred medium in the home video market opened up opportunities, and Icestorm soon shifted new releases to DVD with great

success. When Icestorm offered almost 250 titles for sale in 2002, marketing manager Brigitte Miesen suggested a “DEFA euphoria,” a radical change from the people’s indifference toward GDR films only a few years after unification.<sup>18</sup> The eventual breakthrough came in 2005, when Icestorm entered into a partnership with the eastern German yellow-press weekly *SuperIllu*. Beginning in September, the magazine was sold as a monthly special edition containing a DVD supplement with DEFA films for a surcharge of €2. The marketing agreement that started with “twelve DEFA films that made history” has continued to the present, giving the films exposure to almost 3.7 million readers—and potential viewers—each month.<sup>19</sup> Particularly noteworthy about this cooperation are two things: first, the replication of state subsidies in the GDR by adding the deeply discounted DVD to the magazine; and second, the culturation of GDR history as part of a post-unification German identity affirmed by the partnership of two distinctively eastern German media sources. The low price (€2) for the DVD allowed anyone to start a collection of the most essential DEFA films, replace the VHS cassettes with DVDs, or even discover and sample DEFA cinema. To eastern Germans having grown up in the GDR, the low price also echoed the government subsidies for things covering elementary needs (such as rent, bread, public transport, and even child care) that allowed both parents to work. In a variation of the GDR social-support system, Icestorm thus subsidized a luxury to encourage the renewed consumption of DEFA films. The slogan of the twelve films indicates further their significance for presumably not only GDR or eastern German history but for all of Germany. Compared to the initial phase of marketing the films as reactionary tools intended to establish a discrete eastern German identity in opposition to a western German way of life, this step promised familiarity and served as a conduit to a time when the GDR still existed. Deeply discounting the DEFA DVDs turned them into promotional items and depoliticized them to a point that allowed Icestorm to socialize GDR cinema alongside the ongoing *Ostalgie* wave without fetishizing the films. To some extent, the normalization and integration of DEFA cinema into German post-unification society—or, in general terms, the “shift from an ideological to a visceral understanding of the place of the GDR in contemporary culture”—succeeded due to its prudential commercialization by Icestorm.<sup>20</sup>

It is unclear how much revenue Icestorm generated in these first years by selling DEFA films on home video and equally difficult to determine the exact monetary impact of the *SuperIllu* DVDs for Siebert’s company. A contract guaranteed a substantial amount of money to be paid from Icestorm by way of the distribution company Progress-Filmverleih to the DEFA-Stiftung as owner of the film rights—more than €330,000 in 2008, for instance.<sup>21</sup> That same year, the DEFA-Stiftung reported the receipt of an additional €280,000 based on sales figures, suggesting a series of very successful years for Icestorm and a substantial amount of revenue for the DEFA-Stiftung since the beginning of DEFA-film marketing. A look at the way these monies

are currently put to use reveals another pillar in the marketing structure of DEFA films. Using the slogan “Rediscover the Past—Support the Future,” the DEFA-Stiftung engages in the preservation of DEFA films and “oversee[s] their use for the public good as part of Germany’s national heritage.”<sup>22</sup> In addition to the widely known support of film projects and research concerned with DEFA cinema, the Stiftung also committed substantial amounts of money to restore four previously damaged DEFA films and then released them commercially to the public. Read in conjunction with the commercialization of other DEFA films, the reconstructions and subsequent releases of the films *Die Schönste*, *Fräulein Schmetterling*, *Hände hoch, oder ich schieße*, and *Die Taube auf dem Dach* open up another stage in the commodification of DEFA cinema. The combination of appealing to DEFA film “experts” and attempting to help new audiences discover GDR cinema aims to take advantage of the success the brand DEFA film has had since the beginning of commercialization in 1998. The completion of unfinished films fulfilled the Stiftung’s mission to make all DEFA films available and had the convenient side effect of creating films with a potential blockbuster effect, a series of “new” DEFA films—released fifteen years after unification.

The misnomer “new” to describe the four films is also an apt label for a subgroup of DEFA films that did not see their original release in the GDR. None of them had cleared the multiple hurdles of censorship, and all of them were produced during times of restrictive and rigid control imposed by the SED. Their ban at three time points in GDR film history marked instances when politics forced DEFA filmmaking to toe the line, constraining its artistic freedom—which the party considered counterproductive to the nation’s political development toward communism. Although only a few would go so far as to describe these films as revolutionary pieces, they nevertheless contain elements that caused censors to shelve the films for good. Unlike most other banned DEFA films that remained locked up in the studio’s “poison cabinets,” to be retrieved by the VFF for their public cinematic premiere screenings in 1990, the four films could not be released at that point. Some had never been finished, and others were severely damaged, partially destroyed, or otherwise incapable of being shown to the general public at that time. The eventual start date of the first, ambitious project (*Die Schönste*, in 2001) therefore suggested that changes had taken place that now warranted an investment in new DEFA projects, and the revenue the films were generating through sales supplied the financial backing for the film restoration.<sup>23</sup> Along with the DEFA-Stiftung’s mission to preserve and make accessible DEFA films to the general public, rising interest in the GDR at the onset of the *Ostalgie* wave promised to feed the desire of eastern Germans for things from the GDR. From a marketing perspective, hitherto unknown DEFA films both benefited from the success of DEFA films on home video and also had the potential to rekindle interest in audiences for purchasing other DEFA films and for seeking out television broadcasts and public screenings at cinemas, film festivals, and other venues. In a continuation

of the first wave of marketing DEFA films—their release on home video—this second wave illustrates further, and in much more detail, how the commodification of DEFA cinema is linked with sociocultural developments in eastern Germany. The study of the restoration and eventual marketing of the four films attests to how it has become more important in recent years to expand marketing strategies to find the attention of new target audiences, especially those of eastern Germans born after unification.

The first-ever restoration project initiated by the DEFA-Stiftung, Ernesto Remani's feature *Die Schönste*, however, was aimed at a target audience of both eastern and western Germans. Originally slated for release in 1957, Remani's blend of detective story and family drama followed the conventions of 1950s film and the aesthetics of prewar times. Conceptualized for entertaining audiences instead of indoctrinating the masses, South Tyrolean director Remani, who had worked for Universum-Film AG ("UFA") under his German alias Ernst Rechenmacher in the 1930s and 1940s, directed the film about a bet between thirteen-year-old friends Thomas Bernsdorf and Hannes Wille. The son of a West German businessman, Thomas claims that his mother is the most beautiful woman ever, while Hannes, son of the head mechanic at a car garage, believes that only her expensive necklace is the reason for a magazine to feature her in an article. To test their thesis, Thomas steals the necklace while Hannes hides his mother's golden brooch. The reactions in both homes are quite different: Hannes's family shrugs off the misplacement, while the Bernsdorf household falls apart when it turns out that the necklace had never been paid for but only used by Mr. Bernsdorf to appear rich and successful in order to expand his business. Meanwhile, Thomas is trying to recover the necklace from the car in which he hid it, yet he needs to leave Berlin and go to Hamburg to do so. During this time, Thomas's mother discovers not only that her husband is more concerned about his own wealth and reputation than he is about his son, but also that he was unfaithful to her. However, when Thomas and the necklace return unharmed and Mr. Bernsdorf's reputation is restored, his business is more successful than ever; the family becomes richer than before, with the new infusion of money even causing Mrs. Bernsdorf to forgive her husband.

It is no coincidence that the film synopsis reads like a film that could have been made in the Federal Republic of the 1950s as well. Until politics forced DEFA to return to the political dogmatism of the Stalin years, a more liberal climate within the studio encouraged directors to create films with a bourgeois aesthetic, the goal of which was to export the films and receive hard currency in exchange. The coproduction of *Die Schönste* with Munich-based producer Erich Mehl and his Swedish Pandora Film Company even helped DEFA overcome the trade restrictions caused by the Hallstein Doctrine; otherwise, this West German policy would have prevented the export of the film to most western European countries. The film's similarity to western productions, however, turned out to be its downfall when a GDR film conference from July 3–5,

1958, ended the brief period of liberalism in DEFA.<sup>24</sup> As a result, censors banned *Die Schönste* under the new political standards for supposedly inferior quality, superficial treatment of highly political topics, and overall triviality—in short, the film was too western for the new GDR standards.<sup>25</sup> While another Pandora coproduction, *Die Spielbankaffäre* (*Murder in the Casino*, Artur Pohl, 1957), at least saw the release of a black-and-white version (to avoid the colorful images of the French Riviera), *Die Schönste* was shelved. DEFA fired Remani and hired Walter Beck to edit the film in accordance with the new political guidelines. Yet even agit-prop songs performed by a young Manfred Krug and a new ending showing disillusionment and the failure of capitalism did not convince the censors. In March 1959, the Hauptverwaltung Film shelved the film for good.<sup>26</sup>

Why did *Die Schönste* not make the initial round of releases in 1990? A mundane aspect might have prevented the VFF to consider the film. When film scholar Ralf Schenk searched for the film in the Bundesarchiv in 2001, he discovered no complete print but more than 320 containers holding raw material of the film: “Parts of film prints and negatives, edited material, pieces containing sound track, and test scenes were mixed in the containers. I discovered some sequences that did not exist in the screenplay at all, which led me to believe that there had been an attempt to save the film by editing it thoroughly in 1959.”<sup>27</sup> Schenk’s encounter with the material may have been the first since the film was locked away in 1959; with many other banned DEFA films ready to be screened in 1990 with little or no work necessary, restoring *Die Schönste* at such an early point proved to be too much to handle both financially and logistically.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps even more crucial to the decision might have been the film’s lack of “rebellious” quality compared to the 1965 films that openly criticized SED politics of the past. Whereas it is obvious why GDR censors took action in those cases, no apparent rebellion takes place in either Remani’s or Beck’s version of *Die Schönste*; in fact, the film displays its “propagandistic aspirations . . . so openly that they almost invite condescension,” writes Manfred Hermes in a contemporary review.<sup>29</sup> Even at the 2003 cinematic premiere, public reception was mediocre.

At a time when Icestorm had already turned the most successful DEFA films into eastern German home-video bestsellers, the release of *Die Schönste* served a different clientele. Unfazed by the slow reception of the film in the theater, both film versions appeared in a two-disc box in late 2003, supplemented with extensive bonus material including a documentary detailing the restoration process, the entire screenplay, promotional material of the film, and the official records containing the process of censorship. The unusually rich bonus material (compared to previous Icestorm releases) emphasized the historic significance of the reconstruction and the unique character of the film, indicating that the company and the DEFA-Stiftung looked to connect with historically inclined audiences and film critics. By calling attention to this significance in interviews with phrases such as “there is no other film that

illustrates this time's mindset and censorship practices equally well," it was possible to downplay the quality of the films.<sup>30</sup> According to Progress-Filmverleih spokeswoman Brigitte Löblein, *Icestorm* had sold only about 1,000 copies by 2010, but it received an honorable mention for DVD compilation as runner-up in the competition for the Willy Haas Award during CineGraph's prestigious annual CineFest.<sup>31</sup> The DVD cover design that identifies the "banned and mutilated" film as "a fascinating chapter in German film history" refrains from associating the film with the GDR at the height of the *Ostalgie* wave, further confirming that the reconstruction and DVD sale of *Die Schönste* served a different purpose than that, for instance, of the *Kaninchenfilme*. Identification of eastern Germans with *Die Schönste* as film affirming a regional identity was neither intended nor possible.

If the case of *Die Schönste* showed a marketing variety that situated DEFA film within the context of one common German national cinema spanning the Iron Curtain, the following project pursued the opposite strategy. The DEFA-Stiftung embarked upon the restoration of Kurt Barthel's feature film *Fräulein Schmetterling* in 2003, hoping to complete one of three still unfinished films from the 1965 batch of the *Kaninchenfilme* as an example of a distinctive GDR cinema.<sup>32</sup> With considerable interest among eastern Germans in this film, as had been the case with previous *Kaninchenfilme*, Barthel's restored debut film would have renewed interest in the subcategory of banned GDR films. In this particular case, playing up the involvement of famous GDR author Christa Wolf as scriptwriter of this film could have served as an additional marketing tool, bringing together the GDR past and the eastern German present by way of celebrating the release of this DEFA film after almost forty years. Based on autobiographic experiences of Wolf and her two daughters, she envisioned the film as an illustration of the struggle between individualism and the demands of GDR society in the 1960s. Two teenage girls, eighteen-year-old Helene and her younger sister Asta, are placed under the supervision of the state after the death of their father. The girls have to leave their old, run-down-but-beloved apartment, and Helene starts a job selling fish at the Berlin market. Her constant daydreaming—illustrated by dream sequences interspersed within the regular plot and showing alternate futures of Helene as a model or flight attendant—results in the loss of not only this occupation but also two more (as a salesgirl at a fashion store and as a bus conductor). The film leaves the problem unresolved, ending with the sisters partnering up with a clown from the circus in town and putting smiles on people's faces as they hand out sunflowers on Alexanderplatz.

This critical film about two sisters unwilling to play their part in socialism was not released in 1990 due to Kurt Barthel's concerns about the supposedly poor condition of the archival film print.<sup>33</sup> Preliminary sightings in 2002 of almost 200 containers stored at the Bundesarchiv confirmed this, as only an incomplete print with gaps in the plotline and synchronization surfaced. Even worse, only some of the film

soundtrack was usable due to excessive background noise and lead actress Melanie Jakubisková speaking her native Slovak, while other sequences of the soundtrack were missing entirely. A completely new dubbing of the film was impossible, too, since at least four actors—Herwart Grosse, Carola Braunbock, Irene Korb, and Hans Hardt-Hardtloff—had died. A project report thus proposed a study version in video quality instead of a commercial release. Consequently, in 2003 the DEFA-Stiftung initiated the restoration of 2,139 meters of film, along with a re-editing of the entire video track according to Christa Wolf's original screenplay and the addition of subtitles for the parts with damaged sound.<sup>34</sup> The result of these efforts was a film unviable for commercial release.<sup>35</sup>

Yet *Fräulein Schmetterling* did not fail; in fact, the decision to limit its screenings exposes another layer of the commodification of DEFA films. Presently, screenings of the film take place only occasionally and are restricted to a specially designated format: before the actual film, introductory remarks by a representative of the DEFA-Stiftung explain the production conditions of GDR cinema of 1965 that led to the film's ban and its current condition. While these remarks help filmgoers decode the three narrative layers used in the film and thus understand reasons that caused problems with the GDR censors, they also classify *Fräulein Schmetterling* as film with a special status.<sup>36</sup> The refusal to commercially market the film therefore instrumentalizes and exoticizes it as a paradigm of a particularly special GDR cinema identity. In a similar case of a heavily damaged banned film, missing scenes in Egon Günther's film *Wenn du groß bist, lieber Adam* had been replaced by intertitles describing the plot when it was released in 1999 on videotape. Hence, the changes in marketing strategy to restrict the commercial marketing of *Fräulein Schmetterling* only a few years later appear to take into account the changing attitudes towards the GDR. By restricting access, the film then turns into a prime example of GDR heritage as a postcolonial hybrid identity, both refusing the commodification of this film by deliberately not turning it into an item for sale on the home-video market and reinforcing the demand for other DEFA films as easily available representations of a now exotic GDR film. Attending a rare screening of *Fräulein Schmetterling*, on the other hand, privileges audiences as members of a somewhat elite circle with access to a rare piece of DEFA cinema. I have shown elsewhere that seeking out screenings of DEFA films at the height of *Ostalgie* in 2004 was one way for eastern Germans to establish a distinctive regional identity. Accordingly, being able to catch *Fräulein Schmetterling* at the theater could be interpreted as a hallmark event that indicated being part of this eastern German community.<sup>37</sup>

If DEFA cinema occupies the junction of the GDR past and an eastern German present as representation of a postcolonial hybrid identity, the question of its future arises. Until recently, the marketing of DEFA films was tailored toward a generation of older viewers and audiences already familiar with them. With over 250 films

available on videocassette, DVD, and Blu-ray, and with most of the formerly banned feature films restored, a hunger for rare and hitherto unknown GDR cinema had already satisfied many viewers. In response to this saturation, significant changes in the marketing infrastructure took place that aimed to advertise DEFA cinema as products for a postunification generation. With the help of social-media advertising of film clips on YouTube, and with a Facebook presence of the DEFA Stiftung and its for-profit distribution subsidiary, defa-spektrum, the two most frequent restorations, *Hände hoch oder ich schieße* in 2009 and *Die Taube auf dem Dach* in 2010, have continued the success story of DEFA cinema after unification.

The initial reconstruction of these films was similar to that of *Die Schönste* and *Fräulein Schmetterling*. For *Hände hoch*, a restoration team worked through more than 570 storage containers of material holding ten reels of edited film, the entire soundtrack, and a sound-on-film recording resembling the rough cut of 1966. The restoration itself appeared to be uncomplicated, and the amount and quality of the material allowed restoration and editing processes to be completed in less than a year.<sup>38</sup> The final cut, based on the original 1965 screenplay, premiered on June 28, 2009, and opened a week later to the public. It attracted over 8,600 spectators during July 2009 and approximately 16,500 people through mid-2011, and it sold more than 3,600 DVD copies by the end of 2010.<sup>39</sup> The first time this film was considered for release, in 1990, director Kasprzik and screenwriter Rudi Strahl decided against it, believing their film to be too superficial and lighthearted at a time when audiences appeared to be interested in the dark sides of the SED dictatorship and the suppression of critical voices prevalent in the *Kaninchenfilme* of the 1960s.

Originally intended as a comedy and counterpoint to the serious films of those years, *Hände hoch* tells the story of bored police officer Holms in the small town of Wolkenheim. Wolkenheim is an idyllic place where the most serious “crime”—the theft of a rabbit—turns out to be caused by a hole in the fence; Holms longs for a serious case to prove that his abilities as criminalist resemble those of the British namesake detective. His friends, a group of retired petty criminals, make a plan to steal the monument from the town center and provide him with the longed-for case. During the investigation, Holms is able not only to recover the bounty but also to win the heart of the woman he secretly admires. Yet “the epitome of an innocuous story” did not protect the film from the censors.<sup>40</sup> After a screening of the rough cut in February 1966, the DEFA studio requested substantial changes to dialogue and demanded a thorough re-editing of the film. Kasprzik’s alterations appeased the studio but not the Hauptverwaltung Film; they banned the film, criticizing its ridicule of the work of GDR security forces.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, the names of persons and locations, as well as much of the subtle dialogue, commented tongue-in-cheek on the discrepancy between socialist ideal and reality. For instance, the name of the town Wolkenheim reminds one of Wolkenkuckucksheim (fool’s paradise), an ironic critical reference to

the GDR, and police officer Holms is not anything like Arthur Conan Doyle's cleverly reasoning Sherlock Holmes. When the criminals refuse to sell the stolen statue for US dollars, referring to their grounding in socialist morality, the mockery of socialist lingo could no longer be overlooked. In September 1966, the film was banned and locked away in the archive, only premiering in unified Germany more than forty years later.

Unlike in 1990, when the film comedy's ironic comment on the SED's notion of the GDR as a crime-free country was the reason not to pursue the release of *Hände hoch*, its humorous content as an often overlooked part of the GDR past became an important factor that helped sell this film to a mixed audience of viewers well versed in DEFA cinema and younger audiences with a general interest in the GDR. The juxtaposition of the DVD cover with the editing of the online trailer proves to be especially illuminating as an illustration of the two-pronged marketing strategy. The modest, black-and-white-tinted design unites names and faces of the film's main actors, attracting older audiences familiar with DEFA cinema. But the DVD cover picture also reveals a political reference to the GDR: in yellow boldface uppercase letters and a font design resembling the spotty ink of a stamp used to reject film scripts, the slogan reads, "The last banned film from the GDR."<sup>42</sup> This appeals to potential buyers' current interest in the years when extensive media coverage of the 1989 revolution paired the memories of older generations with the film as historical document. The font also revisits the "Censored" stamp featured on the video covers of the first banned DEFA films in 1999, both referencing and completing the home-video series of *Kaninchenfilme*. For those viewers without personal connections to the GDR past, a film trailer posted on YouTube accompanied the release and promoted *Hände hoch* as comedy in the style of a Leslie Nielsen comedy.<sup>43</sup> The trailer thus accomplishes the exact opposite of the DVD cover: it captures and retains the attention of younger audiences via quick cuts, witty dialogue, a number of innovative camera positions, and musical tidbits reminiscent of the DEFA cult films *Heißer Sommer* (*Hot Summer*, Joachim Hasler, 1967) and *Die Legende von Paul und Paula* (*The Legend of Paul and Paula*, Heiner Carow, 1973). In this instance, the GDR is profiled as a depoliticized part of Germany's past that can also be enjoyed for its entertainment value. Its people, not its politics, are foregrounded, allowing an amalgamation of perspectives to bridge the multigenerational gap in the reception of the films. *Hände hoch* is at the same time political and apolitical, nostalgic and modern—made possible by the variety of marketing strategies.

Unbeknownst to audiences, *Hände hoch* was also the first DEFA film since 1950 to be distributed by the new company defa-spektrum instead of the established company Progress. Founded in 2006 as a commercial subsidiary of the DEFA-Stiftung with the "aim of managing and distributing the archives belonging to the DEFA-Foundation," the start of defa-spektrum coincided with the sixtieth anniversary of the original DEFA in 1946.<sup>44</sup> Selecting this symbolic date to launch a commercial distribution arm of

the DEFA-Stiftung implies the start of yet another chapter in the commodification of DEFA film. The revenue stream generated from the sale and screening of the films has become substantial enough to recreate DEFA as an enterprise in the current Federal Republic and suggests that the films have indeed turned into the “black gold” Wagemann had predicted over fifteen years before. A look at the latest DEFA reconstruction project so far, and its marketing, exposes how well this new DEFA corporation functions.

Much like *Hände hoch*, Iris Gusner’s 1973 debut, *Die Taube auf dem Dach*, offers a similar bonding experience between pre- and post-Wall generations. Although Gusner’s film required a more nuanced marketing strategy than the intellectually lightweight *Hände hoch* because of its experimental character and ruptured storyline due to censorship editing, the results of the cinematic film release and DVD release attest to another successful campaign to further establish DEFA cinema in postunification Germany. The film premiered on September 9, 2010, at the 220-seat Berlin Kino Arsenal in front of more than 250 enthusiastic spectators and ran for five weeks. Over 5,600 people attended public screenings of Gusner’s film, and in 2010 about 200 DVD copies of the films sold.<sup>45</sup>

Part of this fascination with *Die Taube* probably was caused by its turbulent history, which was the part most promoted when announcing this release. In 1973, the DEFA studio had banned Gusner’s debut film; she was one of the few female directors of DEFA. Her film resembles the basic premise of the 1967 forbidden film *Spur der Steine* (*Trace of Stones*, Frank Beyer, 1966). Gusner’s plot revolves around the female engineer Linda Hinrichs, who is torn between a spontaneous student, Daniel, and Hans Böwe, a foreman loyal to the regime who has worked on many GDR construction sites. Linda dates both men, struggling to make up her mind and find her place in society. She rejects Böwe’s marriage proposal but is equally unsure whether the daydreaming Daniel will be able to provide her with the security she longs for. The film leaves her decision open, though suggesting she might be reconsidering Böwe’s proposal when they walk away together in the end.

In the 1970s, *Die Taube auf dem Dach* appeared to have little problem receiving approval by the DEFA studio at first, especially because Erich Honecker became head of state when he took over as First Secretary of the GDR Central Committee in 1971. When he announced the end of all taboos for arts and literature, the SED leadership even encouraged artists to engage in open, constructive, and creative controversy—which appeared to help Gusner address the topic of nonconformist ideals and individualism in socialist society.<sup>46</sup> At the final-approval screening in April 1973, however, the DEFA studio leadership refused to authorize the film, reflecting once again the tightening attitude of politics toward liberal artistic expressions voiced in the Ninth Plenum of the Central Committee.<sup>47</sup> Instead of an outright ban, the committee asked for a proposal containing suggestions for changes to the plot by

May 10.<sup>48</sup> Eventually, the DEFA studio shelved Gusner's film for good and probably destroyed it. One print of the film, still labeled with the working title *Daniel*, survived in a storage room and was discovered by the film's cinematographer, Roland Gräf, in 1990; it screened twice that year as a black-and-white release print because the DEFA studio was not capable of fixing the damaged color print. After these screenings the color copy disappeared completely, but the black-and-white dupe negative resurfaced eventually and became the source for the new restoration project in 2009.<sup>49</sup>

The 2010 release of the film was a well-orchestrated effort to take advantage of a historic date—almost twenty years after German unification in October 1990—and the first, futile attempt to premiere *Die Taube*. This second time around, repeated references to the GDR past permeate a YouTube trailer that blends the editing style of quick cuts with the story of an emancipated young woman caught between two men while trying to assert herself in a male-dominated profession.<sup>50</sup> The topic hit a nerve of the younger generation. According to Iris Gusner, three students who belonged to the first postunification generation approached her following one film screening in Berlin. They compared the events in the film to contemporary Germany, stating “not much has changed since then; workers have no voice, the role of women is largely unchanged, and there are plenty of people belonging to the petty bourgeoisie.”<sup>51</sup> Their statement underscores how DEFA films have meanwhile turned into tools for audiences to “read” the GDR past as part of Germany's history. The DVD release furthers this idea of *Die Taube* (and therefore DEFA films) as a historic document: the phrase “1973—banned destroyed lost discovered. 2010—finally in theaters,” printed on the cover suggests a teleology for DEFA film that leads from a critical voice suppressed in a repressive society to the politically correct discovery and release.<sup>52</sup> Using the current date, 2010, along with “finally in theaters” implies an experience of history in the making (that is, to participate in an “authentic” piece of GDR history) regardless of the spectator's age. Downplaying the fact that the original film was not shot in black and white has the additional effect of removing the viewer into the past. The black-and-white version evokes the impression of authenticity as document of the past to forge a community among audiences, simulating the space of a re-imagined, idealized GDR without censorship and repression.<sup>53</sup>

Farsighted planning by the DEFA-Stiftung, and a variety of creative marketing strategies for diverse audiences by Icestorm and defa-spektrum, not only ensured continuous success in selling the products of a bygone era but also allowed DEFA films to become emancipated. By way of their commodification, the corpus of DEFA films now stands out as a paradigm of the successful absorption of GDR culture into that of a contemporary Germany. Pre- and post-Wall generations come together in the consumption of the films to share their knowledge of the past and to celebrate the GDR as part of Germany's history. DEFA cinema has been commodified, propelling the films to never-before-seen popularity. In 1992, DEFA personnel were hoping for

a continuation of filmmaking under their label, and although this did not happen, more DEFA films will appear on the German market as a mix of releases: closing the blank spaces in the Icestorm catalog, re-releasing popular films to raise funds, and restoring or completing projects locked away during restrictive periods of GDR filmmaking. Even attempts to reference, continue, and complete films such as *Allez Hopp* (Hans Fritz Köllner, 1946) and *Ritter des Regens* (*Rainbow Knights*; Egon Schlegel and Dieter Roth, 1965) might be tried. Whether these projects are welcome, financially feasible, or acceptable to audiences remains to be seen.

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#### Notes

1. Torsten Wahl, "DEFA-Filme als Renner der Videothek?," *Berliner Zeitung*, June 30, 1995, <http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/archiv/bis-zum-jahresende-soll-progress-filmverleih-verkauft-sein---jubilaumsnacht-im-kino--boerse--defa-filme-als-renner-der-videothek-,10810590,8971612.html>.
2. Wahl, "DEFA-Filme als Renner der Videothek?" DEFA began operating as a company in the Soviet Occupied Zone in 1946, and it ceased operations under this name in 1994 after a brief period of operating as a privatized studio in 1990.
3. See for instance Daphne Berdahl, "(N)ostalgia for the Present: Memory, Longing, and East German Things," *Ethnos* 64, no. 2 (1999): 192–211; Michael Richardson, "A World of Objects: Consumer Culture in Filmic Reconstructions of the GDR," in *The Collapse of the Conventional*, eds. Jaimey Fisher and Brad Prager (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010), 216–23; Martin Blum, "Remaking the East German Past: *Ostalgie*, Identity, and Material Culture," *Journal of Popular Culture* 34, no. 3 (2000): 229–53; and Jonathan Bach, "'The Taste Remains': Consumption, (N)Ostalgia, and the Production of East Germany," *Public Culture* 14, no. 3 (2002): 545–56.
4. Paul Cooke, *Representing East Germany since Unification: From Colonization to Nostalgia* (Oxford: Berg, 2005), 201.
5. Theodor W. Adorno, *The Culture Industry. Selected Essays on Mass Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1991).
6. Daniela Berghahn, "The Forbidden Films: Film Censorship in the Wake of the Eleventh Plenum," in *100 Years of European Cinema: Entertainment or Ideology?*, eds. Diana Holmes and Alison Smith (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 44.
7. *Kaninchenfilme*, or *Regalfilme*, is the term for the group of feature films censored in the wake of the Eleventh Plenum in the GDR. After a brief liberal period of critical filmmaking was allowed following the building of the Wall in 1961, the Plenum demanded that the arts support the nation's political mission.
8. Susanne Brömsel and Renate Biehl, "Filmographie. Die Kino-Spielfilme der DEFA 1946 bis 1993," in *Das zweite Leben der Filmstadt Babelsberg. DEFA Spielfilme 1946 bis 1992*, ed. Ralf Schenk (Berlin: Henschel, 1994), 556–641.
9. Bärbel Dalichow, "Das letzte Kapitel: 1989 bis 1993," in *Das zweite Leben der Filmstadt Babelsberg. DEFA Spielfilme 1946 bis 1992*, ed. Ralf Schenk (Berlin: Henschel, 1994), 351.
10. Daphne Berdahl, *Where the World Ended: Re-unification and Identity in the German Borderland* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 176.
11. Daniela Berghahn, *Hollywood behind the Wall: The Cinema of East Germany* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 212.
12. These were DEFA films sold by the DEFA Außenhandel to West German distributors, a situation that complicated the release of the films on home video after unification. The sale of VCRs in the GDR was illegal, since any duplication device potentially served as a weapon against the government, according to Karin Fritzsche and Klaus Löser, eds., *Gegenbilder: Filmische Subversion in der DDR 1976–1989* (Berlin: Janus, 1996). This also explains the surging popularity of

- those machines immediately after unification, when more than 75 percent of all East German households had acquired a VCR by the end of 1998, as recorded by the Statistisches Bundesamt, *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1999).
13. For copyright issues of DEFA films see Jan Hegemann, *Nutzungs- und Verwertungsrechte an dem Filmstock der DEFA* (Berlin: Arno Spitz, 1996).
  14. Wiebke Schweer, "Schwarzes Gold aus Babelsberg," *Aufbau—Deutsch-jüdische Zeitung*. May 28, 1999, [http://www.backtogombin.com/AUFBAU\\_\\_DEUTSCH\\_JUEDISCHE\\_.HTM](http://www.backtogombin.com/AUFBAU__DEUTSCH_JUEDISCHE_.HTM).
  15. Brigitte Miesen, "Icestorm Entertainment GmbH. Ein Report der ersten Jahre," in *Apropos: Film 2002. Das Jahrbuch der DEFA-Stiftung*, eds. Ralf Schenk and Erika Richter (Berlin: Henschel, 2002), 316.
  16. Cooke, *Representing East Germany since Unification*, 201.
  17. Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 1–14.
  18. Miesen, "Icestorm Entertainment," 316.
  19. "Markenprofile SuperIllu1," SUPERIllu, <http://www.burda-community-network.com/Service/Download-Center/Download/?downloadDocument=adedbce3-45a3-31d9-128e-7462be6beed7>.
  20. Cooke, *Representing East Germany since Unification*, 201.
  21. See the 2009 annual report of the DEFA-Stiftung, "Geschäftsbericht," [http://www.defa.de/docs/attachments/ab566678-ceee-4f98-a68e-f8a779073db6/Jahresbericht\\_2009\\_Homepage.pdf](http://www.defa.de/docs/attachments/ab566678-ceee-4f98-a68e-f8a779073db6/Jahresbericht_2009_Homepage.pdf), 12. These numbers combine the license fees for both the home-video market covered by Icestorm and the commercial distribution for television and cinemas by Progress Film-Verleih. It is important to note that Icestorm received its license from Progress in 1998 because the DEFA-Stiftung did not exist yet. However, Icestorm purchased Progress in 2011, making it legitimate to combine the revenue fees paid to the DEFA-Stiftung into one amount.
  22. "DEFA Foundation – Home," <http://www.defa.de/cms/en>.
  23. Wolfgang Klaue, "Ein wichtiges Jahr. Die DEFA-Stiftung 2002," in *Apropos: Film 2003. Das Jahrbuch der DEFA-Stiftung*, eds. Ralf Schenk and Erika Richter (Berlin: Bertz, 2003), 306–7.
  24. Thomas Heimann, *DEFA, Künstler und SED-Kulturpolitik: Zum Verhältnis von Kulturpolitik und Filmproduktion in der SBZ/DDR 1945 bis 1959* (Bern: Vistas, 1994).
  25. Ralf Schenk, "Mitten im Kalten Krieg: 1950 bis 1960," in *Das zweite Leben der Filmstadt Babelsberg. DEFA Spielfilme 1946 bis 1992*, ed. Ralf Schenk (Berlin: Henschel, 1994), 142.
  26. Heimann, *DEFA, Künstler und SED-Kulturpolitik*, 272.
  27. "Uraufführung des ersten verbotenen Defa-Films nach 45 Jahren," *NMZ—Neue Musikzeitung*, <http://www.nmz.de/kiz/nachrichten/urauffuehrung-des-ersten-verbotenen-defa-films-nach-45-jahren>.
  28. "Uraufführung des ersten verbotenen Defa-Films nach 45 Jahren." It took more than two years and €35,000 to reconstruct the two versions of the film according to the original screenplay and to correspondence demanding changes to Remani's version.
  29. Manfred Hermes, "Geschichten über Anwerbung, Antifaschismus und asoziales Verhalten: Dunkle Vorräte von Vitalität," *Der Freitag*, June 13, 2003, <http://www.freitag.de/autoren/der-freitag/dunkle-vorräte-von-vitalität>.
  30. "Uraufführung."
  31. Barbara Löblein, e-mail message to author, September 20, 2011. Löblein is the Progress PR spokesperson. For the award, see "Filmprogramm Cinefest 2004," CineGraph, <http://www.cinegraph.de/Willy%20Haas-Preis.html>.
  32. Hans-Joachim Kasprzik's *Hände hoch, oder ich schieße* and Egon Schlegel and Dieter Roth's film debut, *Ritter des Regens* (*Rainbow Knights*), were the other two films unfinished at this point.
  33. Christa Wolf, *Parting from Phantoms: Selected Writings, 1990–1994*, trans. and ed. Jan van Heurck (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 53.
  34. Helmut Morsbach, "Die DEFA-Stiftung 2004: Auszüge aus dem Jahresbericht," in *Apropos: Film 2005. Das Jahrbuch der DEFA-Stiftung*, eds. Ralf Schenk and Erika Richter (Berlin: Bertz, 2005), 279.

35. Ralf Schenk, "Schmetterlinge am geteilten Himmel," *Film-Dienst* 5 (2004): 12–14.
36. In addition to the regular storyline, there is a layer of dream sequences symbolized by almost exclusively pantomimic scenes allowing Helene and Asta to cope with death, ponder their future, and search for their position in society. A third layer, documentary material of street life filmed with hidden cameras, introduces a similar struggle when it depicts the reality of society confronting the conflict between ideological promises and socialist reality. For instance, the fashion boutique where Helene works lies in one of the most luxurious locations in the GDR, and a hidden camera captures a plentitude of East Germans in front of the show windows, thus depicting class division in the GDR.
37. In my dissertation, I show that the vast majority of attendees visiting DEFA films in movie theaters in 2004 were from eastern Germany: "The Afterlife of DEFA in Post-Unification Germany: Characteristics, Traditions, and Cultural Legacy" (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2006).
38. "Hände hoch, oder ich schieße. Presseheft," DEFA-Stiftung, [http://www.defa.de/cms/Docs/Attachments/c2934c45-4ad6-44c5-97ae-0cedf5fa6fb1/H%C3%A4nde%20hoch%20oder%20ich%20schie%C3%9Fe\\_20.3.09.pdf](http://www.defa.de/cms/Docs/Attachments/c2934c45-4ad6-44c5-97ae-0cedf5fa6fb1/H%C3%A4nde%20hoch%20oder%20ich%20schie%C3%9Fe_20.3.09.pdf).
39. See "Aktuelles—Hände hoch," DEFA-Stiftung, <http://www.defa.de/cms/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabID=1511>. For the statistics, see "Filmhitliste: Monat Juli 2009," FFA—Filmförderungsanstalt: German Federal Film Board, [http://ffa.de/content/filmhit\\_druckversion.phtml?page=filmhitlisten&language=&typ=7&jahr=2009&&st=40&druck=1](http://ffa.de/content/filmhit_druckversion.phtml?page=filmhitlisten&language=&typ=7&jahr=2009&&st=40&druck=1). Attendance figures and statistics provided by Manja Meister, e-mail to the author, August 2, 2011. Meister was the defa-spektrum CEO.
40. Daniel Kothenschulte, "Die Angst vor der perfekten DDR," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, July 1, 2009, <http://www.fr-online.de/film/haende-hoch-oder-ich-schiess--die-angst-vor-der-perfekten-ddr,1473350,2858450.html>.
41. "Hände hoch, oder ich schieße. Presseheft."
42. For a cover copy, see for example <https://gfx.videobuster.de/archive/resized/h550/2010/04/image/jpeg/d12ee9b106c0f20751717ae8bb486522.jpg?title=haende-hoch-oder-ich-schiess&k=DVD+online+leihen+download+cover>.
43. The trailer is still posted on the YouTube channel run by defa-spektrum at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EFY5J1qF04>.
44. "Profil," DEFA-Spektrum GmbH, <http://defa-spektrum.de/?Profil>.
45. Manja Meister, e-mail to the author, August 2, 2011.
46. "Taube Presseheft," defa-spektrum GmbH, [http://h1636769.stratoserver.net/defa\\_spektrum\\_verleih/www/dl/movies/1015889/4/TAUBE\\_Presseheft.pdf](http://h1636769.stratoserver.net/defa_spektrum_verleih/www/dl/movies/1015889/4/TAUBE_Presseheft.pdf).
47. Many other films of this year shared a similar fate. For example, Heiner Carow's *Die Legende von Paul und Paula* saw only a limited release without any press reviews; Siegfried Kühn's *Das zweite Leben des Friedrich Wilhelm Georg Platow* (*The Second Life of Friedrich Wilhelm Georg Platow*, 1973) and Egon Günther's *Die Schlüssel* (*The Keys*, 1974) had to undergo significant re-editing, and production on Rainer Simon's *Till Eulenspiegel* (1974) and Roland Gräf's film *Die zweite Haut* (*Second Skin*, 1973) was halted and their scripts rewritten before filming could commence.
48. "Taube Presseheft," 20.
49. "Taube Presseheft," 17.
50. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RLsPgrABGTM>.
51. Iris Gusner, e-mail to the author, May 27, 2011.
52. "TAUBE\_Platat," [http://h1636769.stratoserver.net/defa\\_spektrum\\_verleih/www/dl/movies/1015889/0/TAUBE\\_Platat.jpg](http://h1636769.stratoserver.net/defa_spektrum_verleih/www/dl/movies/1015889/0/TAUBE_Platat.jpg).
53. Audiences appeared to accept this approach: between its release and the end of December 2010, an average of five to seven screens all over Germany booked the film at the same time during any given week.