

Papers

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A contribution to the history of the subject in the Post-War period

Abstract: This paper investigates the way politics, media practice, and academia interact using the example of journalism studies in the early GDR. How do the social constraints and the requirements of editorial offices influence teaching and research? Based on Bourdieu's field theory and on records, contemporary witness reports, and publications from the training facility in Leipzig, the paper shows that the logic of the academic field and the expertise developed there overruled interventions by the ruling Party. With journalistic practice reliant on staff from Leipzig, its signals were more important than what the SED leadership wanted. However, journalism studies in the GDR was only developed by the students of the first generation of professors. The way the subject was structured, with a focus on style, journalistic methods, genres, and the working process in editorial offices, was a world apart from the social sciences focus of communication studies in West Germany. This also made it impossible to integrate the two after 1989.

1. Subject of interest, theoretical basis, and sources

Using the example of journalism in the early GDR, this paper investigates the way politics, media practice, and academia interact. How do the social constraints and the requirements of editorial offices influence the structure of teaching and research in degree programs whose names imply an education in the field of public communication (newspaper and communication studies, media studies, journalism studies) and thus also suggest that they can help »to guarantee use of the mass media in the public interest« or at least to provide knowledge that makes »the working of the ›tool‹ more transparent« (Lazarsfeld 1973: 8, 15)? In exaggerated, theoretical terms: How autonomous are academics in a subject that was initially created in the German Empire and the Weimar Republic primarily at the

request of practicing organizations (cf. Bruch 1980, Kutsch 2016), only to become a pawn of political and economic interests in the period of National Socialism and beyond (cf. Duchkowitsch/Hausjell/Semrad 2004; Pöttker 2005; Meyen/Wendelin 2008), and that continues to benefit from the increasing importance of the media and the rush of students into such professions to this day (cf. Meyen/Löblich 2006: 33-71)?

The theoretical basis behind this search for answers is Pierre Bourdieu's field theory. The term »field« here is intended to aid understanding of »cultural production« and to prevent a »short circuit« between »text« and »context.« In this theory, fields are »relatively autonomous« spaces that are subject to different laws from the »macro-cosmos,« even if they cannot be entirely separate from the constraints it creates. However, according to the theory, external requirements (such as a party's desire for legitimation, a specific need to solve a problem in society, or suggestions from journalism) »only take effect through communication of the field.« The »logic of the field« breaks through such constraints and puts them in a specific form (Bourdieu 1998: 17-22). Since Bourdieu conceived the scientific field as a social world in which there are power relations like anywhere else, autonomy became »one of the big questions« for him: Which »resistances« and which »mechanisms« can the micro-cosmos of the academic field or sub-field (e.g. journalism studies) use to remove itself from external constraints »that are exercised through the origin and scope of the available money, regulations, research assignments, contractual provisions, etc.?« The ultimate goal here (and for Bourdieu one of the »crucial differences« between the disciplines) is »to only follow one's own, internal stipulations« (ibid.: 18f.).

At first glance, it might seem unusual to want to examine this problem using the GDR as an example. However, the main objection can be reformulated into a research question based on Bourdieu. Because the »objective relationships between the actors« determine the room to maneuver of people or institutions in every social field (cf. Bourdieu 1998: 17-25), the level of autonomy and the relationships to policymakers become the subject of investigation alongside the actors, the hierarchies, and the logic of the field: Which actors were involved? Who was in charge of whom? And what capital was needed in order to rise up the hierarchy? Another reason why this is interesting is the fact that the social position (the capital one possesses compared to others) also determines the habitus. For Bourdieu, the habitus is not determined at birth, but comes from a person's experiences. These (individual and collective) experiences lead to »systems of permanent dispositions« that work as »structuring structures« (Bourdieu 1976: 165). The habitus concept is Bourdieu's attempt to overcome the antagonism between structure and action. As such, it not only allows the work of scientists to be examined in different historical contexts (because they can be located within one of the large, systematic social theories, cf. Park 2013), but also offers a link between socialization

and specialist understanding on the one hand, and the structures of the relevant scientific field and the social space as a whole on the other. Largely unnoticed by the actors, the habitus generates behavior that corresponds to the logic of the field, thus appears »sensible« to them (the actors), and is therefore documented in biographical statements with no significant inhibitions.

Despite this, even at second glance, it is worth considering whether Bourdieu's assumptions (developed in France in the 1960s and 1970s) are truly suitable for examining the beginnings of journalism studies in the GDR. There is no doubt that journalism was part of the political field there and that politicians pulled the strings. This means that, if there were any doubt, the material published was based not on journalistic principles (e.g. information to help with orientation in a complex society), but on what appeared to best support the latest goals of the respective publisher (cf. Meyen/Fiedler 2011; Fiedler 2014). In education, this influence was broken by academic logic on the one hand. For example, Emil Dusiska, Dean of the Journalism Studies Faculty in Leipzig from 1967 and then Director of Journalism Studies until 1978, failed in his attempt to establish an Institute of Journalism outside the university, with its own right to award doctorates (cf. Knipping 2017). On the other hand, current literature assumes that there was strong »SED intervention in communication studies« and that the Party's ideas on the content and organization of such studies was based »on the example of journalistic practice in the Soviet Union.« »The objective was to educate comprehensively trained, politically indoctrinated cadres« (Jedraszczyk 2017a).

This paper begins by showing how the logic of the academic field succeeded in overruling such external influences. These influences could not have been as strong as suggested in the literature, not least because politicians in the GDR had greater priorities than journalist training and simply did not have the expertise to conduct detailed monitoring. The same applies to an even greater extent to the Soviet Union, where the academic discipline of the same name was also in its infancy and would have had to build on a very different tradition both at universities and in journalism. The second hypothesis of this paper argues that the signals from journalistic practice in the GDR were far more important than the specifications of the SED's leaders or even orientation on a role model (of whatever kind) in Moscow or Leningrad. In the GDR, one relied on staff from Leipzig and therefore did everything possible to ensure that its graduates had all the skills they would need in their work at the editorial office.

The first generation of professors, however, was not yet in a position to invent a kind of Journalism Studies »made in the GDR« – as the third hypothesis argues. Unlike Walter Hagemann in the Federal Republic, for example (cf. Wiedemann 2012), Hermann Budzislowski, Wieland Herzfelde, Wilhelm Eildermann, and Heinrich Bruhn (to name but four) lacked the necessary academic ambition and the belief in the Party's journalistic ideal (Budzislowski) or the educational back-

ground that was needed, even in the GDR, to succeed at university. The journalistic exercise system – the core of the practical curriculum until 1990 – was only developed by three students of these founding fathers. This is similar to the situation in West Germany, where it was also the first generation of graduates in the Post-War period that determined what ›good‹ media, journalism, and communication studies look like (to this day) (cf. Meyen 2007; Löblich 2010).

The fourth hypothesis is directly linked to this: The idea that there were two entirely different subjects (one with a focus on style, journalistic methods, genres, and working processes in editorial offices; the other an empirical social science) can be explained by the differences in the logic of the social spaces in general and the political field in particular. This also means that Journalism Studies in the GDR was by no means ›better‹ or ›worse‹ than the subject that developed from the same tradition on the other side of the German border (key points: foundation of the Institute of Newspaper Studies [Institut für Zeitungskunde] in Leipzig in 1916; cautious academization at the end of the Weimar Republic; instrumentalization by National Socialism, cf. Auerbeck 1999; Koenen 2016). Journalism studies in the GDR was different from communication studies in West Germany, which is why it was impossible to integrate after 1989 (cf. Meyen/Wiedemann 2017). Judgments on academic quality always depend in part on the relevant paradigms and thus on the interests pursued by those making them (cf. Kuhn 1973).

Apart from the literature, this argument is based on three types of source: – records from the media steering apparatus [Medienlenkungsapparat] in the Federal Archive and the training facilities in Leipzig (faculty, section) in the university archive; publications by the training facilities in Leipzig; and discussions with contemporary witnesses and personal records. Six lecturers (in alphabetical order: Fritz Beckert, Werner Michaelis, Hans Poerschke, Klaus Preisigke, Karl-Heinz-Röhr, Wulf Skaun) were interviewed for this paper, the majority of whom studied Journalism Studies in Leipzig (exceptions: Beckert, Michaelis, cf. Meyen 2015), and Ingeborg Schmidt, a student at the Faculty from 1954 to 1958 and a protagonist in Brigitte Klump's novel *Das rote Kloster* (1991), later married to Siegfried Schmidt, lecturer in the Journalism Studies Section. Interviews were also conducted with Franz Knipping (Dean of the Faculty of Journalism Studies from 1965 to 1967) and Heinz Halbach (professor from 1977 to 1992) – both also former students (cf. Meyen 2017). A catalog of professors, painstakingly compiled by Hans-Dieter Daniel (2015), was also consulted.

This paper brings together multiple source editions and publications by the author on the topic (cf. Meyen 2015, 2017; Meyen/Wiedemann 2017) and is intended to provide inspiration to examine the history of Journalism Studies in the GDR in more detail. It is no substitute for such a history, not least because looking at the topic from the point of view of Bourdieu inevitably shifts the focus onto the field structures (relations between positions), the habitus of the actors, and the

field autonomy and thus enables only a fleeting look at the content of teaching and research.

2. Hermann Budzislawski: An »American« as the founding father

Brigitte Klump was born in to a farming family in Glöwen, gained her high school diploma in Havelberg in 1953, worked as a trainee at weekly paper *Der Freie Bauer* in Berlin for a year, and was then assigned a place to study at the Faculty in Leipzig, despite actually wanting to study drama and become a critic. Her interview for the Press Association was the first time she saw Hermann Budzislawski, the Dean of the Journalism Studies Faculty. »A man with a face of stone. A bow tie around his neck.« According to Klump, Budzislawski asked her what she saw as the role of the newspaper, expecting, »as he told me later, that I would argue in Leninist terms that the newspaper should be a collective agitator, propagandist, an agitator, the mouthpiece of the party.« Since she was not »familiar« with »press theory,« she thought briefly and then reported how the farmers used newspapers: to wrap their sandwiches or on the toilet. »Everyone laughed,« and Brigitte Klump was accepted (Klump 1991: 27, 35f.).

As is often the case with such memories, the others in the story are long gone. At that interview in summer 1954, Hermann Budzislawski might not even have known that he would later become the first Dean of the new Faculty. Franz Knipping, a student at the Institute of Media and Newspaper Studies in Leipzig from 1951, research assistant from 1954, and then Dean himself from 1965, recounted shortly before his death that another professor (Wilhelm Eildermann) had »already prepared his inaugural address as Dean. [...] It was all ready on his desk. Suddenly, the decision was made to choose ›the American,‹ as Budzislawski was known back then. It was a complete surprise to everyone« (Knipping 2017).

Eildermann or Budzislawski: Looking back, there is no question. Born in 1901, the »American« brought with him not only a doctorate (awarded in Tübingen in 1923) but the aura of a well-travelled journalist. He had written for Ossietzky's *Weltbühne*, headed the *Neue Weltbühne* during his exile, and then made a career in the USA (cf. Schmidt 2017). His return to East Germany was a question of prestige for the SED. Budzislawski had »a big name as an anti-fascist journalist,« wrote Willi Lehmann, Head of Personnel at the German Administration for People's Education in the Soviet occupation zone, in his recommendation on April 22, 1948. Having remained true to his convictions during his exile, he was one of the »very few progressive specialists in the international press that [came] into question for a professorship at the Faculty of Social Sciences«. ¹¹ In his application to the Ministry of People's Education in Saxony on February 12, 1948, Friedrich

1 Federal Archive Berlin (BA), DR 3-B 14978 (Hermann Budzislawski), Bl. 22.

Behrens, Dean of the Faculty in Leipzig, also referred to the competition. He claimed that Budzislawski had two other offers – one from Berlin and one »from another German university«.^[2]

The candidate knew how valuable he was. Budzislawski was in the same league as Ernst Bloch and Julius Lips. The trio were awarded »special remuneration for returners«.^[3] When Budzislawski became the first of the three new stars from America to arrive in Leipzig in fall 1948, he also used this argument to reduce the rent on a »beautiful« house in Eutritzsch from 300 to 200 Marks per month.^[4] But the journalist was not to become an academic. Although he gave lectures (initially on the »history of public opinion in Europe« and the »techniques of journalism«), offered seminars and practical sessions, and expanded the (still tiny) Institute of Media Studies, which had one assistant (Hans Meergans) and one secretary in fall 1949, he also continued to do what he did best. His radio comment show, broadcast every Thursday, was the »most listened to« on the Leipzig station, according to a letter he wrote in November 1949 to Helmut Holtzhauer, Minister for People's Education in Dresden, to back up his request for a staff car. Further arguments included his many »lectures and speeches« and the Provisional Volkskammer [People's Assembly], in which Budzislawski had sat as a representative since October 7, 1949 and, if one believes his own accounts, »more or less« led the Cultural Association group.^[5] Its nominal chair was Klaus Gysi.

»We all had respect for Budzislawski,« said Ingeborg Schmidt, a classmate of Brigitte Klump, in Leipzig in early 2017. »We were proud to have him with us. He held a two-hour lecture every week for two years.« What about the other professors? »Heinrich Bruhn and Wilhelm Eildermann were deserving comrades for whom a position needed to be found. I didn't learn a single word from them, but I am not cross about it today.« The post-war generation needed the old fighters (the »mistrustful patriarchs«) as »political father figures« (cf. Schüle/Ahbe/Gries 2006). The communists, many of whom had been fighting fascism since the Weimar Republic and especially during the Third Reich, suffering personal sacrifices such as imprisonment or exile, were beyond all reproach – not least because many of the younger ones had »participated« in some way themselves and only became part of the winning side by joining the Free German Youth [the official youth movement of the GDR] (cf. Niethammer 1994).

We will hear more of Bruhn and Eildermann later. When it comes to Budzislawski, reports from contemporary witnesses largely match up. Heinz Halbach, born in 1930 and enlisted from the Hitler Youth in Prague to the last German line

2 Friedrich Behrens to the Ministry of People's Education, February 12, 1948. *ibid.*, Bl. 12.

3 *ibid.*, Bl. 46.

4 Rocholl, State Government of Saxony, to Erich Zeigner, Mayor of Leipzig, October 1, 1948 (draft); Zeigner to Rocholl, October 14, 1948. *ibid.*, Bl. 64, 68.

5 Budzislawski to Holtzhauer, November 11, 1949. *ibid.*, Bl. 89.

of defense just before the end of the War, had heard him on the radio while he was still taking care of young farm workers. »I heard the polished way he spoke. But I was especially impressed by his arguments. You didn't read stuff like that anywhere else. It was unique to him. When I heard that he was teaching Media Studies, I was pleased to be allowed to learn from him« (Halbach 2017). Budzislawski certainly enjoyed respect and pride (Ingeborg Schmidt). Some even venerated him – such as Karl-Heinz Röhr, who studied Journalism Studies from 1956 to 1960 before joining the Faculty as »a kind of adjutant« to Budzislawski. »Budzislawski bridges the gap between classic academics and Media Studies teachers. Well-read, analytical, creative, stimulating, multilingual« (Röhr 2015). However, barely conducting any academic work, Budzislawski was hardly a suitable academic role model. *Sozialistische Journalistik*, published under his name in 1966, was more the work of his staff. Karl-Heinz Röhr, who is honored to this effect in the foreword (Budzislawski 1966: 10): »Very little of it was down to him personally. We had to do all the preliminary work. He then tore it all up, dictated something and wrote as well. The name at the end was Budzislawski. He had a way with words, far removed from the German of officialdom« (Röhr 2015).

The claim that Budzislawski wanted Brigitte Klump to quote Lenin's theory of the press in summer 1954 does not seem to fit in with anything else reported on him. Hans Poerschke, himself a Professor of Journalism Studies in Leipzig from 1983 to 1990, carved out the two fronts that squared up to one another in the Faculty's predecessor institution as early as 1952: On one side were deserved KPD fighters like Wilhelm Eildermann, who saw the press exclusively as an instrument of the party in line with Leninist-Stalinist theory; on the other Budzislawski, Dietrich Schmidt, and (later) Willy Walther, for whom newspapers were more than political institutions, related to the literature and the children of the modern society (Poerschke 2010: 159f.). Hans Poerschke has thus condensed this conflict into a simple equation: instrument of the party vs. reflection of reality. Its referee after August 13, 1961 was the leadership of the university wing of the Party in meetings on the scandal surrounding the student cabaret show *Rat der Spötter*, [Council of satirists], which demanded »unconditional submission to the media policy of the Party leadership (Poerschke 2010: 176). Suppressing information, twisting information to serve one's own interests, inventing a world intended to get its own citizens enthusiastic about socialism and that offers no point of attack for the West (cf. Fiedler 2014): all a world away from Budzislawski's theory of reflection.

And this success story of an »American« in Leipzig had another blot on its copybook – just like the stories of many of the emigrants who returned to East Germany from the West (the USA, France, the UK) after the War. In August 1949, less than a year after Budzislawski's arrival in Leipzig, Willi Lehmann at the German Administration for People's Education received a less than gushing report from the University. Although Budzislawski had joined the Party, »particular par-

ticipation in the work of the local group has not been seen,« wrote Ernst Eichler, who had been »Curator« – a kind of political minder for the higher positions at the University – since October 1948. »No clear judgment on him can be delivered, neither from a political nor an academic point of view.«.⁶ The first assessment from Albert Norden, Head of the Press Department at the Office for Information, in January 1950 was also sobering: just ten graduates in summer 1949, with »not entirely satisfactory« examination results. Although another 30 students were expected to graduate in fall 1950, »Budzislawski [had] not yet succeeded in linking the work of the Institute with the democratic press.«⁷

It can therefore have come as no great surprise to the »American« when he was informed on November 22, 1950 of the SED Central Committee's decision to restructure the Institute of Media Studies without him. Budzislawski had been fighting a losing battle. »I saw my appointment in Leipzig as a mission to play a significant role in training practical journalists, given that I am a practitioner myself,« he wrote on April 13, 1950 in a letter to the Department of Universities at the Ministry of People's Education in Berlin. But, he continued, there was a lack of sufficient staff and, especially, orientation. There was no reply from Albert Norden, whom Budzislawski had known in the USA, nor from Hermann Axen, another emigrant to the West who had been in the upper echelons of the Party as Head of the Department of Mass Agitation since 1949. Budzislawski spoke to Gerhart Eisler, Georg Stibi, Hans Mahle, Kurt Heiß⁸ – a who's who of the new media world in East Berlin. He developed study and examination regulations⁹ and, having received no response from the Party leadership for some weeks, sent the paper to Paul Wandel, Minister for People's Education, on June 16, 1950.¹⁰ It was all in vain – even though Budzislawski referred to experience of the Soviet Union in journalist training and even offered to »return more to the area of theory«.¹¹ He was allowed to keep his title, continue speaking on the radio, and keep hoping to stand up in front of students once again, but his Institute was closed at the end of 1950.

3. Budzislawski's colleagues: Careers on the back of the Party

When Hermann Budzislawski interviewed applicant Brigitte Klump in summer 1954, it was the end of three-and-a-half turbulent years for the »American« and journalist training in Leipzig. A commission from Berlin had examined all stu-

6 Budzislawski to Sindermann, November 24, 1962. In: BA, SAPMO, DY 30/ IV 2/9.02/ 67, Bl. 20.

7 Halle to Norden, January 6, 1950. In: BA, DR 3, 5962, no page number.

8 Budzislawski to Kippenhagen (sic!), April 13, 1950. *ibid.*

9 Draft study and examination regulations for Communication Studies students under Gewifa Leipzig, May 1950. In: BA, DR 3-B 14978 (Hermann Budzislawski), Bl. 96-100.

10 Budzislawski to Wandel, June 16, 1950. In: BA, DR 3, 5962, no page number.

11 Budzislawski to Kippenhagen (see Note 8).

dents from November 27 to 29, 1950. Already active in the background was Eduard Schulz, who enjoyed the kind of stellar career that is only possible in times of radical changes in power, perhaps even only during the formative years of the GDR. The first record of Schulz is from November 20, 1950 in a letter to the Ministry. The header on the writing paper reads *Friedenspost*, the weekly newspaper of the Society for German-Soviet Friendship, where Schulz had been an editor since 1949. There could be no doubt that he was the new big man in Leipzig. What about Budzislawski? He would continue operations until the Ministry closed his Institute, before holding talks on the »history of the press in capitalist countries.« »As far as we can see, there is no question of further lectures for him.« Schulz himself announced lectures about the »history of the Soviet and people's democratic press,« demanded a »Lectureship for Practical Journalism Studies and Newspaper Studies,« and mentioned in passing that Hermann Axen had proposed Georg Krausz – deskman at *Neues Deutschland* since October and formerly in the Party apparatus – for the role.^[12]

The records of how many students passed their examinations at the end of 1950 are unclear. When Eduard Schulz wrote his letter in November, there were apparently 101 registered students, of whom 55 were in their first semester.^[13] An instruction from the Minister for People's Education dated January 8, 1951 mentions 80 students.^[14] This is similar to the figures submitted by the new Institute for Media Studies and Newspaper Studies in early 1952 (78 transferred, eleven left the University), in a report that is scathing about the first Budzislawski students and their professor. They are described as »bourgeois and petit bourgeois elements« with unclear professional goals and sporadic attendance at lectures. »What was presented to students in these lectures was un-Marxist at the very least. It was based on the methods of the Schools of Journalism. Attempts were made to apply these ›theories‹ to our role and circumstances.« The report also names names, for example Carl N. Warren, who had published a book on news factors in 1934 (cf. Warren 1934).^[15]

Eduard Schulz was already history by this time, having been fired without notice at the end of June 1951 following »accusations of rape« (Schemmert/Siemens 2013: 210). Hermann Budzislawski had informed Gerhard Harig, Minister for Universities, as far back as May 14 that he had heard »things« about Schulz that would »rule out collaboration.« This letter was triggered by the situation of the »American« – although he was still receiving his salary, »my professorship

12 Schulz to Kippenhahn, November 20, 1950. In: BA, DR 3, 5962, no page number.

13 *ibid.*

14 Minister for People's Education, Instruction No. 81 of January 8, 1951, relates to foundation of a Department of Communication and Newspaper Studies at the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Leipzig. In: University Archive Leipzig (UAL), Phil Fak B 01_14_50, Vol. 2, Bl. 7.

15 Heinrich Bruhn; Horst Illmayer: Overview of the conditions for the development of press cadres at the University of Leipzig, January 11, 1952. In: BA Berlin, NY 5251/63 (Eildermann legacy), Bl. 206-224.

is floating in an airless space.« He claimed not to know whether he would be teaching at all in the summer semester, which had long since begun, and what he should prepare or announce.¹⁶ Two months later, the situation had not changed and Budzislawski wrote again to Harig. Fred Oelßner, Propaganda Secretary in the Zentralkomitee, however, had by then informed him that the Party continued to view him as an academic teacher and that a »restructuring of Institute-related matters [was] imminent.«¹⁷ At the end of that hot summer, this »restructuring« was entrusted to Wilhelm Eildermann, one of the two professors from whom Ingeborg Schmidt »didn't learn a single word.« The other, Heinrich Bruhn, had been appointed professor in February 1951 and would remain in post until January 1, 1977. Neither had had anything to do with the University before.

Bruhn, born in Holstein in 1913 as the son of a carpenter and a laborer and thus one of the youngest ›distrustful patriarchs‹ in the generational structure of the GDR (cf. Schüle/Ahbe/Gries 2006), had contact with the labor movement early on. His road into the KPD began in the youth wings of both the Party and the Spartacus League. In 1936 he was sentenced to two and a half years' imprisonment for »preparation for high treason,« some of which time he spent in the Fuhlsbüttel concentration camp together with his wife and mother. Enlisted in 1939, he was captured by the Americans in early 1945. After his release in May of that year, Heinrich Bruhn first became a policeman in the Mansfeld operations, then a party official (Secretary of the SED District Association Hettstedt), and finally an deskman at the daily newspaper *Freiheit* in 1948. Just as for Eduard Schulz, things move quickly: delegated to the State Party School in 1949; retained there as a teacher; from June 1950 head of the school for young deskmen at the SED's Zentralkomitee in Kleinmachnow; after a single course there, called to the University »with full responsibility for teaching the subject ›History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (B).« The leap in his income was also impressive: from 720 Marks in Kleinmachnow to 2800 in Leipzig. A glance at Bruhn's personnel records shows that this decision was made in a hurry. When the University requested the appointment as of February 1 retrospectively on March 1, 1951, the personnel file was not even available in Leipzig.¹⁸

It must have been difficult for Heinrich Bruhn to enjoy this lightning-fast career, with the Schulz case breathing down his neck and later with students like Brigitte Klump, who were well aware that he did not have a PhD. »I did not obtain a professorship under false pretenses,« said Bruhn to Brigitte Klump (1991: 59) in a private conversation with the student, probably during her first year in 1954/55. »I was given it for my services to the labor movement.« The files show that Bruhn

16 Budzislawski to Harig, May 14, 1951. In: BA, DR 3-B 14978 (Hermann Budzislawski), Bl. 102.

17 Budzislawski to Harig, July 11, 1951. *ibid.*, B. 103.

18 Personnel record for Heinrich Bruhn, dated March 20, 1951; résumé, no date; University of Leipzig to the State Secretariat for Universities, March 1, 1951. In: UAL, PA 356 (Heinrich Bruhn), Bl. 1f., 9, 30.

requested a transfer to the Kasernierte Volkspolizei [Barracked People's Police] in spring 1955. Cadre instructor Schöne writes that the Professor had »great difficulty in meeting the requirements of the University.« His »extensive, politically important activities« made it difficult for him to »learn scientific working methods and skills.«¹⁹¹ Bruhn had been a member of the Volkskammer, in the FDGB group, since October 1954, just as Budzislawski would be in the next parliament. The Party needed Bruhn in education, however, and in 1956 posted him to the Party University in Moscow, where he received a degree in social sciences in 1959. It was not a PhD, but at least he was no longer the »professor without a high school diploma« who taught Brigitte Klump (1991: 59).

Wilhelm Eildermann, born in Bremen 1897 to a tobacco worker and a housewife, also came to Leipzig without a high school diploma, albeit with decades of practical experience. Having started at the *Bremer Bürgerzeitung* as a trainee at just 15, he worked for various KPD papers in the 1920s and became Editor in Chief of the *Tribüne* in Magdeburg in 1929, before shortly afterwards being sentenced to 21 months' imprisonment. A »wandering orator« (as the older Eildermann said of the younger in 1977), steeled by illegality, imprisonment, and escape, he joined the editorial office of the newspaper *Freies Deutschland* in Moscow in 1944 and finally the anti-fascist schools. The fact that this man led the SED leadership's press service after his return to East Berlin fits perfectly into his life story. His professorship in Leipzig did not. The Party sent Wilhelm Eildermann to the University in late summer 1951, because shooting star Eduard Schulz had burned out much too quickly.

The poor decision to appoint Eduard Schulz had consequences that went far beyond the appointment of rescuer Wilhelm Eildermann. Plans to expand the Institute of Media and Newspaper Studies into a faculty or even a separate university had to be suddenly put on hold. On May 2, 1951, Heinrich Bruhn and Eduard Schulz met representatives of the University, the Ministry, and the Departments of Agitation and Propaganda in the SED Zentralkomitee in Leipzig to map out the future of journalist training in the GDR. They found that there was not sufficient personnel, funding, or time for a totally new facility subordinate only to the Office for Information. They decided to scale down: a separate faculty with a boarding school in Leipzig, free from the academic shackles that a Philosophical Faculty would place on future journalists, even in the socialist GDR. Appointments, doctorates, post-doctorates: Why should the other disciplines have a say when it came to the heralds of the new fatherland? Assignment to the Philosophical Faculty was »considered impractical for political reasons,« said the small group on May 2, 1951. Two weeks later, Secretary of State Harig back-pedaled and made a hand-written addition to the minutes of the meeting: »Given the

19 Schöne, cadre instructor: Assessment of comrade Professor Heinrich Bruhn, April 29, 1955. *ibid.*, Bl. 38f.

unresolved situation in Leipzig (Prof. E. Schulz), conversion into a faculty is now impossible.«^[20]

Almost exactly three years later (on May 14, 1954), the time came. Wilhelm Eildermann sent another letter to the Secretary of State, applying to set up a Faculty of Journalism Studies. In 1951, he wrote, this step had not been considered (a complete lie, as Gerhard Harig must have known) »because there were no academic teams, because there was not complete clarity about the scope and sequence of the training, and because it was not yet possible to tell whether the Institute would fulfil the task placed upon it.« Now, three years later, he continued, it was clear that this constellation »was not able to accommodate the particular features of Journalism Studies.« Eildermann indicated the otherwise »not usual entrance examination,« the »particular type of promotion« that this examination necessitated, the »practical training« that »in individual cases« had demanded »the appointment of experienced experts from press practice, who did not always hold a university degree,« and the »particularly intensive political and moral education that is made easier in a boarding school, in part due to the pooling of students in one place.«^[21]

The applicant was aware of the debt he owed the zeitgeist. The »individual cases« Eildermann mentions were the norm in Leipzig. Wieland Herzfelde was the only one of the professors to have attended a university. We will return to him shortly. Karl Jakobi, who taught »contemporary press« for eighteen months from September 1951, came from the old KPD, like Bruhn and Eildermann. He was Editor in Chief of the *Landes-Zeitung* in Schwerin when he received the call from the University. In May 1953, the SED Zentralkomitee sent him to Magdeburg as Editor in Chief of the *Volksstimme*^[22]. Hedwig Voegt, lecturer in the history of literature from fall 1953, was a trained telegraph operator, entered the Communist Party in 1925, and was imprisoned by the National Socialists in various jails including Lübeck-Lauerhof and Fuhlsbüttel. In February 1954, Vladimir Andrejevich Ruban arrived from Kiev, bringing, if one can believe Wilhelm Eildermann, »the experience of Soviet academia to Leipzig.«^[23] Ruban stayed until the end of July 1956. His topic was the history of the press at home. »They were not actually teachers with academic training,« said Heinz Halbach fifty years later of the habitus of his teachers. »None of them had any idea about systematic research. They had experience of life and had been politically active. That was all. That was why they picked out people from among the students who they thought could become

20 Felix-Heinrich Gentzen: Report on the meeting on May 2, 1951 at the Institute of Communication Studies Leipzig, May 9, 1951. In: BA, DR 3/5962, no page number.

21 Eildermann to Harig, May 14, 1954: Application for faculty foundation. In: UAL, Phil. Fak B 01 14 50, Vol. 2, Bl. 61-66, here 62-64.

22 BA, DR 3-B 15062 (Karl Jakobi).

23 Eildermann to Vice Chancellor Georg Mayer, September 4, 1954. In: UAL, Journ. Fak 28, Bl. 2-7, hier 4.

academics. All the seminars at the time were led by assistants like me. There just were not many assistants« (Halbach 2017).

Those selected were not really asked. Heinz Halbach: »In July 1954, Wilhelm Eildermann invited seven or eight people from our year over and said: You will be working here as assistants from September 1. I put up my hand straight away and said: No, I do not agree. I do not feel suitable. Eildermann said: That may be, but the Zentralkomitee Department of Agitation has already confirmed your appointments.« That was the end of Halbach's dream to do »something sensible,« such as study properly or write for the newspaper. »Later there were commissions who spoke to every graduate,« says Heinz Halbach. »But in 1954, nobody asked. You were appointed and that was it.« From then on, Halbach had »a new role almost every year«: history of the press, foreign press, distance learning (cf. Halbach 2017). It was the same story for his colleagues of the same age. An academic career was not (yet) an option – because they had gone to university to prepare for journalism; because that in itself was more than the families of these working class children could have imagined; because there were no academic role models to provide orientation. Journalism Studies ›made in Leipzig‹ was yet to be invented (cf. Meyen/Wiedemann 2017). Field autonomy was a long way off.

The reputation of the young discipline (or, with Bourdieu, its scientific capital) began to suffer under this mix of young bucks who taught students more or less of their own accord and old KPD warriors who had never been inside a university until they were appointed professors. Just like in West Germany, where renowned practitioners like Walter Hagemann (Münster), Fritz Eberhard (FU Berlin), Hanns Braun, and Otto B. Roegele (Munich) dragged media and newspaper studies out of the mire of National Socialist involvement but were not able to celebrate the first post-doctorate (Kurt Koszyk at the FU) until 1968, the new addition in the GDR was also cut from long-established disciplines. Although the party leadership at the University was in favor of founding a faculty with the right to award doctorates in July 1954, it took the concerns («no professors with post-doctorates») seriously and asked that the comrades work more closely with the university management and the State Secretariat, instead of isolating themselves »as in the past« and dealing »only with the specialist department in the Zentralkomitee.«^[24]

Despite this, the Faculty of Journalism Studies was not granted the right to award doctorates until 1960.^[25] Before that, the State Secretariat decided »on a case by case basis«. Their justification was that there were too few PhDs and professors in the Faculty's Academic Council.^[26] The Party could not help either – not even

24 SED Party organization at the University of Leipzig to the State Secretariat for Universities, July 22, 1954. In: BA, DR 3, 5958 (no page number).

25 Cf. Faculty of Journalism Studies: Regulations for doctorate process at the Faculty of Journalism Studies at the University of Leipzig, January 7, 1960. In: UAL, Journ. Fak 44, Bl. 3-10.

26 Schad, State Secretariat for Universities, to Dr. Karras, Head of Department, December 4, 1956. In: BA, DR 3, 4089 (no page number).

Franz Dahlem, Deputy to the Secretary of State and (more importantly), following his rehabilitation, member of the SED Zentralkomitee from February 1957. Even in a dictatorship of the proletariat, a »university tradition« cannot be created overnight.^[27] The plan for a University of Journalism Studies in Berlin, developed by Emil Dusiska in the second half of the 1960s and (without saying it) building on the first attempt in the early 1950s, explicitly included the right to award doctorates.^[28]

Appointments would also have been easier to push through at this Dusiska-run university than they were in Leipzig. While even in the GDR other disciplines were sending three-candidate shortlists to the Ministry from the mid-1950s, as is the procedure in other German states,^[29] Journalism Studies tended to have only one candidate – who did not really meet the usual standards. One example to illustrate this shortage of staff: When Hermann Budzislawski suggested to the Vice Chancellor on August 11, 1959 that Arnold Hoffmann be appointed as a lecturer in image journalism studies, he really had to beg – the candidate had only just been awarded his first degree, through long-distance learning while working as the Editor in Chief of the illustrated paper *DDR*. A »new field,« wrote Budzislawski, so there were barely any »experts,« let alone any »with an appropriate academic career« behind them. That meant, he continued, that one »very often [had to] use tried-and-tested practitioners, in order to lay the foundation.« Luckily, Budzislawski went on, the Zentralkomitee had now recommended just such a person (a suggestion with power) and the Vice Chancellor should decide as quickly as possible, as Hoffmann would »otherwise be used elsewhere.« Even in the tenth year of the GDR, good people with the right attitude and a clean record were hard to come by. Budzislawski offered Arnold Hoffmann the chance of a doctorate within two years.^[30] The fact that it actually took three and a half years should not be viewed negatively – given that the average time between graduation and completion of a doctorate was eight years (according to figures from 1965), it was almost a sprint.^[31] Be it professorships or lectureships, the problem of formal qualifications among the journalism teachers in Leipzig remained a problem. 15 years later, the triumvirate of University, Ministry, and Party would be discussing not the doctorates, but the lack of post-doctorates.^[32]

27 State Secretary for Universities to Franz Dahlem, February 1, 1957. *ibid.* cf. Karras to Georg Mayer, April 30, 1957. *ibid.*

28 cf. Submission to the Secretariat of the SED Zentralkomitee regarding transfer of the Journalism Studies Section of the University of Leipzig from Leipzig to Berlin and its restructuring as a »University of Journalism Studies« of the GDR, July 15, 1970. Developed by Georg Förster, signed by Werner Lamberz. Not attended to in Secretariat. In: BA, SAPMO, DY 30/5462, Bl. 203-207, here 203.

29 cf. Budzislawski to Georg Mayer, November 24, 1956. In: BA, DR 3-B, 13898 (Teubner), Bl. 27f.

30 Hermann Budzislawski to Georg Mayer, August 11, 1959. In: BA Berlin, DR 3-B, 11549 (Arnold Hoffmann), Bl. 37f.

31 Faculty of Journalism Studies, Party leadership: Additions to the cadre analysis of March 17, 1965, 5. Mai 1965. In: UAL, Journ. Fak. 43, Bl. 14-19, hier 14.

32 cf. for example note in minutes from Hans Piazza (Prorector for Social Sciences) about meeting with Minister Schirmer on September 14, 1976 on the Secretariat resolution of December 3, 1975. In: UAL, SJ 2, Bl. 3-7.

The biggest misunderstanding in the founding team in Leipzig was Wieland Herzfelde, who knew Hermann Budzislawski from the USA and came to the University of Leipzig in 1949 on the same ticket as the future Dean. A founding member of the KPD, he was best known as a publishing legend. The Malik and Aurora publishing houses were worshipped by the German left – but that did not make Wieland Herzfelde a professor. Gerhard Menz, who was entirely impartial (cf. Jedraszczyk 2017b), voiced doubts in an appraisal as early as August 1948 that a three-page review (the only academic publication by the candidate that could be found) was enough to appoint someone a Professor of Literature, »quite apart from the fact that this also entails academic teaching ability, for which there is currently no evidence«. [33] The Ministry in Dresden took a similar view in late 1949, but knew that the promise made to the famous comrade could not be retracted »without insult«. [34]

Herzfelde and his professorship moved to the Institute for Media and Newspaper Studies on September 1, 1952. Just six months later, Director Eildermann asked the Vice Chancellor to retract this decision. He had only heard about it shortly before Christmas, he said, and until then had assumed that, although Herzfelde would be giving lectures at the Institute (about world literature and about literature and art critique), he would otherwise remain in German Studies. [35] However, because that Department was pleased to have got rid of their »cuckoo in the nest,« the Faculty of Journalism Studies was stuck with him. Although the Institute Director and the Dean constantly complained about their colleague's laziness and incompetence to the responsible State Secretariat in Berlin, it was not until fall 1958 that Herzfelde agreed to take a leave of absence until his retirement.

Daniel Siemens (2013: 32-37) painted a picture of an »outsider« whom the GDR needed as a big name but then stripped of any form of influence at the University, perhaps even with anti-Semitic motives. The records tell a different story. Here, Wieland Herzfelde was a man who saw the professorship as well-deserved reward for his services. Unlike Bruhn and Eildermann, he did not even make efforts to meet the University's standards, thus annoying his colleagues. As early as summer 1953, Wilhelm Eildermann had to promise the State Secretariat that he would improve Herzfelde's lectures through open critique, rather than continuing to allow students and teaching staff to »grumble behind his back.« All those involved knew that the Professor would literally be »lying on the street« if this professorship was abolished. [36] Budzislawski made many interventions in Berlin. Two examples: »Collaboration with Prof. Herzfelde becomes impossible as soon

33 Appraisal of Gerhard Menz, August 18, 1948. In: UAL, PA 573 (Herzfelde), Bl. 15.

34 Rocholl, State Government of Saxony, to the Ministry of People's Education in the GDR, Universities and Science Departments, November 15, 1949. In: BA, DR 3-B, 15048 (Herzfelde), Bl. 27.

35 Eildermann to the Vice Chancellor, February 28, 1953. *ibid.*, Bl. 77.

36 Zeuske, note in records regarding a conversation with Wilhelm Eildermann, July 31, 1953. *ibid.*, Bl. 79.

as he is asked to fulfill the obligations of his office« (Budzislawski on December 8, 1955)^[37] and »Herzfelde has never conducted research and has no idea what it is« (Budzislawski on August 1, 1958).^[38] Students and staff could not fail to notice the conflict. »I really did not understand what was going on,« says Heinz Halbach, looking back. »These famous professors, famous anti-fascists, both Jewish. And at war with each other. I tried to mediate, but I did not succeed« (Halbach 2017).

4. Content of training: Journalism Studies moves towards a practical course

The literature continues to maintain the idea that the Faculty of Journalism Studies at the University of Leipzig was founded in 1954 based on the »Moscow model« (Jedraszcyk 2017a). Moscow State University had had a Faculty of Journalism Studies since 1952; it had been set up as a spin-off from the Faculty of Philology, where the Department of Journalism Studies had been established in 1947. Until then, it had been common practice in the Soviet Union to train young journalists at Party schools, with no academic background at all (cf. Zassursky 2016). Journalists were simply Communist Party officials.

Having worked in the Soviet Union for a long time, Eduard Schulz and Wilhelm Eildermann would have been familiar with this system. Like Hermann Budzislawski, both repeatedly referred to the motherland of socialism in concept papers and letters – rhetorical accompaniment intended to gain the good grace of decision-makers. Schulz, at least, may have had plans in this regard. A report in the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* on his inaugural visit on January 7, 1951 explicitly stated that the new professor would apply »experience of the Soviet press«. »The work of the Institute will be modelled on the Communication Studies Departments at the universities in Moscow and Leningrad«. ^[39] The idea of setting up a new faculty and a boarding school to go with it first appears in the records on November 30, 1950 – shortly after Eduard Schulz had appeared on the scene and the students had been tested. Material from the Soviet Union was suddenly on the menu: Lessons, literature, newspapers, and magazines were to be procured from Moscow and Leningrad.^[40] Following Schulz' departure, the State Secretariat spent the summer of 1951 desperately searching for a guest professor who could take over the lecture series on Soviet communication studies and hoping that their sister

37 Budzislawski to Nultsch, Head of Department in State Secretariat, December 8, 1955. *ibid.*, Bl. 175f., here 176.

38 Budzislawski to Bönninger, Deputy State Secretary, August 1, 1958. *ibid.*, Bl. 114f., here 115.

39 CL: Ein neues Institut für Publizistik. In: *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, January 7, 1951.

40 Cf. Schulz to the Mayor of Leipzig, November 30, 1950; note in records »New Institute of Communication Studies in Leipzig«, no date (late 1950). In: BA, DR 3, 5962 (no page number).

Party could help.^[41] However, it was not until February 1954 that a real Soviet citizen (Vladimir Andrejevich Ruban from Kiev) arrived in Leipzig.

Although the professors in Leipzig were familiar with the curricula from the Soviet Union^[42] before this, it was not of any great use. They knew that things were done very differently there from in the GDR. Journalism was different, the tradition was different, and practice pursued different aims. At the request of Wilhelm Eildermann, in February 1954 the Moscow lecturer Juschin described the two departments in his faculty: Newspapers and Publishing. »If I judge your letter correctly, the role of the Institute is slightly different to that of our Faculty. Is that right?«^[43] To put it clearly: Even if Eildermann had wanted to, he would not have been able to copy the Soviet model. This model did not even really exist. In July 1954, Moscow State University rejected the request to send lecturers to Eildermann. The two topics in question (industry and agriculture in the Soviet Union) would have only been launched in 1953/54 and would have first had to be revised.^[44]

In September 1954, just after the Faculty in Leipzig was founded, Heinz Mießlitz, Head of Sector in the Science and Propaganda Department of the SED's Zentralkomitee, travelled to Moscow. He wanted a detailed, first-hand report – albeit somewhat late. The result was sobering. The Moscow Faculty trained »literary deskmen« and »academics in the field of publishing.« The first two years consisted solely of lectures, while third-year seminars covered translations, literary style, and »editing mass literature.« There were few textbooks, just aids. According to him, the science of journalism studies still had to be developed »all over the world.« Despite this, the Dean of Moscow State University advised »developing the training of editorial cadres in a similar way at our University.« After all, he said, the GDR also needed »good specialist literature and other books.«^[45]

That might have been the case. But even more than that, the GDR needed journalists who could fight for the cause and write well. The second half of the 1950s saw a flurry of letters and visits between Leipzig and the large faculties in the Soviet Union. They sent each other curricula, literature, and practice newspapers. Hermann Budzislawski travelled to Leningrad, Moscow, and Kiev, where he saw his colleagues struggling with the same problems as he did: long-established disciplines that wanted to banish Journalism Studies; practitioners that saw themselves as artists and did not want to believe that journalism can be learned. The

41 Gerhard Harig to the Department of Propaganda in the SED Zentralkomitee, August 8, 1951. *ibid.*

42 At least the curricula of the Moscow Department of Journalism Studies (before the Faculty was founded at Moscow State University) are in the University Archive in Leipzig: *Journ. Fak.* 59, Bl. 48-51, 52f.

43 Juschin to Eildermann, February 10, 1954. *ibid.*, Bl. 59-63, here 63.

44 Chudjakov to Eildermann, July 21, 1954. *ibid.*, Bl. 66.

45 Notes by comrade Mießlitz, visit to the Faculty of Journalism at Moscow State University on September 16, 1954. *ibid.*, Bl. 1-4.

first Dean in Moscow was Yevgeny Chudjakov, formerly Deputy Editor in Chief of the daily newspaper Tageszeitung *Iswestija*. The comrades spoke to each other on an equal footing. Both were searching for answers, curious about what the others were trying out. If Budzislawski had not known it before, these trips also showed him the key difference: Investment there was in philology, here it was in editorial skills. Journalist Chudjakov was quickly unofficially replaced in Moscow by Yassen Zassursky, a renowned literary scholar from a good family (his father had represented the Soviet Union abroad), who specialized in American novelists (cf. Zassursky 2016). The arrangement was made official in 1965. The conclusion that the delegates from Leipzig came to was that, in the Soviet Union, universities, practitioners, and »leading comrades« »completely« rejected the »practical method of training, as is common in the USA.«^[46]

The »American« in Leipzig also did not immediately introduce laboratory classes in which students could produce and edit articles in a realistic journalism setting. Setting up this kind of »exercise system« took at least 15 years and the strong arm of Emil Dovifat. As soon as he was appointed in the 1966/67 academic year, he relieved the staff at the »Institute for the Theory and Practice of Press Work« from many of their tasks in order to develop the curriculum that would teach journalism to the next generation right up to the end of the GDR^[47] (cf. Röhr 2015). Alongside the obligatory Marxist subjects, general studies, and foreign languages (a lot of content), Budzislawski's first degree program from mid-1950 contained nothing but internships and exercises in German. That is not to say that talent was not important: »The language test must decide whether the student is suitable for a degree in Media Studies. Poor performance means a change of subject!«^[48] Students like Heinz Halbach, who began their studies in fall 1951, had four hours of German »language and style« and four hours of practical exercises every week for the first two years.^[49]

This was not enough, claimed the editorial office of *Neues Deutschland* in June 1952: The interns from Leipzig were »[unable] to work well and responsibly at the fast pace of press work.«^[50] Still not enough, said the German Press Association (VDP) and then the Party leadership in 1955, although suitability for the profession was at least as important as attitude right from the entrance interviews at the very start, and although many students wrote not only during seminars, but

46 Report on the study trip to the Soviet Union, May 21 to June 4, 1957. In: BA, DY 30 / IV 2 / 9.04 / 230, Bl. 1-21, here if.

47 Regulations for the system of journalistic exercises in the study program for training graduate journalists. Signed by Franz Knipping, July 14, 1967. In: UAL, Journ. Fak 78, Bl. 1-15.

48 Draft study and examination regulations for Communication Studies students under Gewifa Leipzig, Mai 1950. In: BA, DR 3-B, 14978 (Budzislawski), Bl. 96-100, here 97.

49 Curriculum for Communication and Newspaper Studies, no date (late 1951). In UAL, Phil_Fak_B_01_14_50_Bd_02, Bl. 24-26.

50 Bodesheim: Report on monitoring of the professional internship for second-year Communication Studies students at the editorial office of ND, June 28, 1952. In: BA, DR 3, 5962 (no page number).

also during the holidays and sometimes even in proper editorial offices. Ingeborg Schmidt now speaks of »dry runs« at university one day a week. »The genres were handed out and we worked through them. News, report, portrait, feature, reportage. We learned one after the other. There were also lectures on them. Then we had a chance to try them out, for around five hours. And then we read them aloud to each other and analyzed them. None of it was intended for publication, but it was hard work nonetheless.« Typical dry runs. »I thought it was a shame. The pieces I wrote as a people's correspondent were always published.« But she does not have a bad word to say about the German lessons to this day. »I was grateful for them. Style was an integral part of the program for me. We didn't have much that was not directly related to the profession. German language and style: Those were the tools of our trade.«

If one is looking for Soviet influences in Leipzig, this is where one is most likely to find them. Joachim Pötschke (1997: 142f.), who graduated from the Faculty of Journalism Studies' predecessor institution in 1951 and was Professor for Style of Language in Journalism from 1977 to 1989, referred to a lecture by Vladimir Ruban (the guest professor from Kiev), which was quickly printed (cf. Ruban 1954), and a text book by the Moscow linguist Elise Riesel (1959). Werner Michaelis (2015) also remembers both publications – albeit merely as »a good addition to that which we already knew.« This interpretation is backed up by the timescale and the people involved. There had been German lecturers in Leipzig before: as well as Pötschke, for example, there were Willy Michaelis, who had been a high school teacher in the Weimar Republic and a teacher trainer in the early years of the GDR (from 1951), his son Werner, who had been deputy head of a school in the Leipzig area (from 1953), and Siegfried Krahl, who came from the workers and farmers faculty in Halle. These lateral entrants to the Faculty »thought about what we want to teach the students. What does a journalist need? The same three answers were true right to the end: language skills, the ability to assess language, and language formation skills. A journalist must know his language. He must be able to justify the edits he makes. And he must write convincingly« (Michaelis 2015). The publications by Ruban (1954) and Riesel (1959) helped with teaching and provided legitimation – but there was still no »Moscow model.« Elise Riesel had nothing to do with journalism studies (she taught at a school of foreign languages), while Vladimir Ruban was a press historian (cf. Pötschke 1997: 142). His ability to say a little about style came from the focuses of journalism studies in the Soviet Union. But the need for teaching in this field was determined not by Moscow, but by the wishes of practitioners in the GDR and the ruling Party.

»Mastery of the German language« thus became one of the three pillars of the 1955 reform, which was decided by the Secretariat of the SED's Zentralkomitee on September 7 and prepared by the central delegates' conference of the VDP on

February 12, through interventions from practitioners and the Department of Agitation. The other two pillars were »journalistic skills« and »solid specialist knowledge.«^[51] All the papers on the subject called for talent. To ensure that no duds made it to Leipzig and that only »journalists with stylistic talent« were trained, as a commission of the State Radio Committee requested in June 1955^[52], applicants from then on had to have worked in an editorial office for at least a year – not necessarily in a traineeship, but at least an internship. In setting this standard, the teachers were reacting to their experiences during the first few months of the cohort that included Ingeborg Schmidt and Brigitte Klump. In June 1955, they complained in an internal Faculty paper that, in fall 1954, »almost exclusively 18-year-old high school students« had joined the University, with »neither sufficient maturity nor sufficient experience in work in society.« If there were a »kind of pre-internship,« it would quickly show whether people were really suitable – plus the Faculty would no longer have to teach its students how to read a newspaper or discuss the »most primitive journalistic terms.«^[53]

Studying Journalism Studies in Leipzig in the 1950s also meant being flexible. Everything changes except change itself. Teaching was discussed in almost every session of the Faculty Council. How long should student presentations be? What is on the compulsory reading list? What is tested? Why do not all students attend lectures? How can we help them to prepare better for seminars? What do we do with the students »who cannot write«? Should we include »the language and style aspect« in our assessment of other seminar papers? The Council also examined critique from students, both in general terms and, in October 1955, specifically on the lectures on »agricultural economics« and »modern history.«^[54] This criticism reached not only the FDJ group, the Party group, and the Dean, but went as high as the State Secretariat for Universities in Berlin – in December 1954, for example, via the Council for the Frankfurt/Oder district and a »VdN comrade,« [someone who had been persecuted by the Nazis for anti-fascist views] whose daughter felt overwhelmed in Leipzig: »I have one free afternoon, when I have to study for eight subjects. (...) Apart from that, we grapple with editorials, comment pieces etc., all without instruction, because the curriculum has to be met. Protests have so far been unsuccessful.«^[55]

51 Horst Sindermann: System of qualification of journalistic cadre by the German Press Association. Submission to the Secretariat, September 2, 1955. In: BA, DY 30/J IV 2/3A, Bl. 180-183, here 180. – cf. VDP: Guidelines for the appointment, training, and examination of staff of the dem. press. Passed at the extraordinary Central Delegates' Conference of the VDP on February 12, 1955. *ibid.*, Bl. 184-197; Department of Agitation: Resolution on the reorganization of the Faculty of Journalism Studies. Submission to the Secretariat, August 26, 1955. *ibid.*, Bl. 198-201.

52 Commission for Training, June 29, 1955. In: BA, DR 6, 288 (no page number).

53 For enrolment in the Journalism Studies program, June 6, 1955. In: UAL, Journ. Fak 78, Bl. 1-3.

54 Faculty of Journalism Studies: minutes of the Faculty Council meeting of September 22, 1955, p. 2. *ibid.*

55 Council for the Frankfurt/Oder district to the State Secretariat for Universities, December 1, 1954. In: BA Berlin, DR 3, 5958 (no page number).

The constant fiddling with the curriculum, which is reflected in the many draft new study regulations that remain on record, was only partly the result of pressure from above, in the form of the installation of Eduard Schulz in 1950 and the reforms decided by the Zentralkomitee Secretariat in 1955. More important for the day-to-day life of the Faculty were the experience that teachers and students gained on the ground and the feedback from the editorial offices who had to work with the graduates. The four pillars of the degree program – Marxist-Leninism, history of the press, German language and literature, and practice – were never shaken, although the focus did shift more towards editorial skills. Even the major reform of 1955 did not bear fruit straight away. How could it have done, when practitioners remained skeptical and when the teacher's lectern was occupied by self-taught teachers who themselves were not entirely sure what they should offer students who brought with them plenty of ambition and good will, but hardly any academic background and sometimes nothing more than the new teachers in the post-war schools had taught them. Ingrid Kirschey-Feix, born in 1950, heard as late as 1969 as a trainee at the *Junge Welt* that Leipzig would not give her »complete fulfillment,« offering only »knowledge that is not needed in practice« (Meyen/Fiedler 2011: 211).

In December 1957, almost two and a half years after the reform of 1955, the Department of Agitation/Propaganda of the SED's Zentralkomitee still made a positive interim assessment. Although it had not yet been possible to motivate sufficient »experienced journalists from practice« to take part and the »political training and education of the students« remained »poor« (especially among those who came »directly from high school to university« and held no official role in Leipzig), they said, »the vast majority of graduates« (374 directly in the subject since 1951) had proven successful. »After around a year in practice, most become fully-fledged deskmen.«^[56]

5. The invention of journalism studies by the post-war generation

The fact that journalism studies was established by practitioners in Leipzig after 1945 and only made into an academic discipline by its students is not unique to the GDR (cf. Meyen/Wiedemann 2017). Before the subject began to orient itself on the standards of the leading research universities and especially on psychological theories and elaborated processes of data analysis in the 1960s (cf. Meyen 2012), the academic schools of journalism were headed by journalists like Carl Ackerman (Columbia University), Walter Williams (University of Missouri), and Raymond B. Nixon (University of Minnesota) and were largely focused on the skills of the

56 or.: Der Volksmund spricht vom »Roten Kloster«. Ein Besuch in der Fakultät für Journalistik der Leipziger Karl-Marx-Universität. In: FAZ on October 1, 1955.

trade, rather than academic capital (cf. Rogers 1994). In West Germany, Newspaper and Media Studies resolved its existential crisis after the Second World War by appointing practitioners whose name alone (rather than their academic reputation) would help to polish the subject's reputation at universities and in society as a whole. Otto B. Roegele, for example, acquired two doctorates in medicine and philosophy in 1945, before the end of the War. His reputation at the Chair of Newspaper Studies in Munich was largely thanks to his position in the Catholic media (cf. Löblich 2010).

Some of the founders in Leipzig did not even have a doctorate, or acquired one at a similarly advanced age (shortly before becoming professors). Hermann Budzislawski (the only Journalism Studies professor in the GDR, who had gained his doctorate in the Weimar Republic and had the bourgeois press to thank for this professional status) did not set a suitable academic example. Asked about his dissertation on the press in the television age, Karl-Heinz Röhr (2015) responded »I chose it myself.« Werner Michaelis (2015) had a similar story. Although Budzislawski was officially his mentor, looking back, he cannot call him an academic teacher. »That would be saying too much, although I admired him as a seasoned journalist. As a dissertation supervisor, he did not give me much at all. Perhaps the occasional literature tip.« Hans Poerschke (2015) was also unable to name anyone who had taught him how to conduct academic work. »We were given responsibility very quickly.« What about doctorates? »That is a strange story. Some topic or other was chosen for me. I just worked on my own and moved away from it.«

Given this background, it is easy to see why the self-taught like Karl-Heinz Röhr, Hans Poerschke, and Klaus Preisigke could, or had to, invent journalism studies as an academic discipline in Leipzig themselves, without any help from experienced mentors. Mostly born after 1930 and therefore uninvolved in the crimes of the Nazi era, these professors were part of the generation that built the GDR – the generation that carried the GDR until the fall of the Berlin Wall. A look at the Party's personnel reserves is all it takes to understand why the SED was forced to rely on people coming back from the War or who had been members of the Hitler Youth to provide academic journalist training. There were a lot of positions to fill, and many of the best communists had been killed by the fascists. This enabled the post-war generation to enjoy the kind of stellar careers that they and their parents could otherwise only have dreamed of – careers that tied them to the GDR. Lutz Niethammer (1994) spoke of a »collective educational novel« – an experience that could never be repeated by the generation that followed, because the new elites had positioned themselves over society like a »lead plate.«

The interviews with contemporary witnesses confirm this picture. Werner Michaelis and Fritz Beckert became school headteachers in their early 20s, themselves looking for qualified people, while Karl-Heinz Röhr was given the night shift for foreign policy at *Neues Deutschland* at the age of just 17, when Politbuero

member Fred Oelßner appeared in the editorial office following the events of June 17, 1953. However, it is clear that the desire for a ›pure‹ background (child of workers, no relations in the West) was as much of a limitation on the choice of personnel and thus the opportunity for outstanding academic performance as the need to fill a large number of top positions in a very short space of time. They were ambitious young people who were instructed by Party members, who had proved themselves in work for the Party, in agitation, and in the fight against fascism, but who brought with them few of the skills needed at a university. This constellation explains both the dissatisfaction among many students (cf. Klump 1991) and the continuing discussions about the concept of the training. »The program was overloaded with history of the press, although this was at least useful in terms of general knowledge,« said Klaus Preisigke (2015), who started the Journalism Studies course in 1961. »But when it comes to the subject itself, the journalistic methods: It was sparse back then.« It was not until the students of Hermann Budziszlawski and his colleagues came along in 1969 (15 years after the Faculty was founded) that the journalistic exercise system could be installed that would remain in place until the Journalism Studies Department was wound up.

However, instead of being autonomous, the academic field was always subject to the primacy of politics in the GDR. Although this applies to some extent to Communication Studies in West Germany, too, where appointments right up to the fall of the Berlin Wall were often made based on party membership and political loyalty (cf. Meyen/Löblich 2007), the SED intervened much further in recruitment in the GDR. The positions of Dean and (from 1969) Department Director remained political positions filled not with outstanding academics but with Party workers who had proved themselves in media practice (the exception was Franz Knipping, cf. Meyen/Wiedemann 2017: 1850). In addition, graduates were given positions that appeared useful to the relevant officials at the time. As a result, academic careers were much more difficult to plan than in West Germany or the USA. In the case of Hans Poerschke (born in 1937), for example, the decision that he would remain in the Faculty after graduation, rather than being sent to a newspaper of the National People's Army, »was made literally on the last day.« Why did he not go into practice? »No idea. One was given a position. For me, it went without saying that that was what happened.« Poerschke then had a similar experience when he spent three years in the FDJ apparatus, before returning to academia, where he completed a doctorate and advanced to become the leading theoretician in Leipzig (cf. Poerschke 2015). After completing his doctorate, Günter Raue (1938-2015) was delegated to *Neues Deutschland*. He was to return to Leipzig as a lecturer twelve years later, but not before he had worked as a foreign correspondent (in Moscow) and deskman in the business section. It was a similar story for Jürgen Grubitzsch (born in 1937), who had 26 years in leading positions at editorial offices under his belt before he was appointed Professor of Journalistic

Methods in 1988. Frank Knipping's (1931-2015) career, on the other hand, ran in reverse: He had been a professor and briefly even the Dean of the Faculty in Leipzig (1965-1967) when the Party sent him to *Neues Deutschland* as Head of Department in 1968. Although he remained a guest lecturer in Leipzig, he never returned as a professor.

The fact that political work came first and a position at the university was a (rather random) consequence of talent and personnel requirements undoubtedly had consequences for the way the latest generation of professors in Leipzig saw themselves (a key part of the *habitus*). Although the average age at which they gained their doctorates and post-doctorates remained high (between early thirties and mid-forties), these home-grown academics were the first journalism studies professors in the GDR to be formally qualified for the position. Just like their predecessors, who had stepped up to train journalists for a new society, these home-grown academics also saw research as of secondary importance. »I enjoyed being an educator,« says Karl-Heinz Röhr (2015) today. »I liked teaching. Asking questions, moderating, explaining things, even if I sometimes lacked practical experience.« Klaus Preisigke (2015) also concentrated on training: »I enjoyed being a university teacher, passionate and dedicated. I won multiple awards for promoting young people. My people knew that I would get them to where they wanted to be.« To this day, Preisigke remains proud of the text book of journalistic methods for which he led the collective of authors (1985). »In terms of facts and content, it is at a high level. It can match Haller (cf. Haller 1983, 1987). But the whole thing is overloaded with ideology.«

6. Conclusion: The Journalism Studies Faculty in the 1950s

There is no need to repeat the hypotheses from the introduction here. Of course the Journalism Studies Faculty was a school of the Party, educating the next generation of journalists who would promote the SED and its socialist state in the press, on the radio and on television. The Party leadership in Berlin provided the framework for this school: how many staff there were and who was among them, how many graduates were needed, and the skills those graduates ultimately needed to have. This framework also included the Party leadership's disinterest in data on media content and use, and their desire for the Leipzig graduates to function in a guided media system (cf. Meyen/Wiedemann 2017: 1851). However, the political logic was broken by the logic of the academic field. Even in the GDR, this was oriented not solely on the specifications of the ruling party, but also on academic standards, many of which had their roots in the German university tradition. That meant that the officials who became professors in the new Faculty had to either gain academic qualifications or leave the university again. The repeated failure to establish an independent university (due initially to the personnel constella-

tion and later to the resistance that always comes from established structures) ultimately led to the birth of journalism studies in the GDR. Its founding fathers were the students of the 1950s and early 1960s, who had been placed on a professorship career path by the Party and were the first to be able to complete a full academic career in the new discipline, including doctoral and post-doctoral studies (cf. Meyen/Wiedemann 2017).

Some may wonder why the Ministry of State Security has not been mentioned in this analysis. The reason is simple: It was not present. Christian Schemmert and Daniel Siemens (2013: 228) have shown that just three members of staff were responsible for the entire University of Leipzig when Brigitte Klump was a student there. There was just a single »secret informer« at the Faculty of Journalism Studies in early 1955, although the Ministry at the time generally complained of its people's lack of qualifications, incompetence, and »dispersal.« Although the Stasi of 1955 was in no way comparable with the Stasi of 1989 (cf. Kowalczyk 2014), Schemmert and Siemens (2013: 231) have claimed that the mere presence of these few, clearly overwhelmed staff had far-reaching consequences. From the point of view of state security, they say, gaining informers or useful information was not so important at that time. Instead, the idea was for the students to »find out about the role and power of the GDR secret service« and to learn »not to make this role of the state secret service the subject of public discussion.«

This is hard to refute. People experience any »institutionalized world« as »objective reality« and internalize the regime in a process of socialization. They then adapt their behavior to the regime and pass the »knowledge« on to the next generation – especially when the regime is legitimized; then there are symbolic realms that provide justification (Berger/Luckmann 2016: 64f.). Ingeborg Schmidt, Heinz Halbach, Franz Knipping, Karl-Heinz Röhr, and even Brigitte Klump were all students for whom the »institutionalized world« of the young GDR was much larger than the Stasi. They had a university place, complete support, and a bursary. There were anti-fascists dabbling as professors, but whose careers made them untouchable. There was the promise of career progression and early trust and responsibility, for seminars and newspapers. One is particularly likely to consider this kind of »institutionalized world« legitimate when one has experienced its formation. Those that come after need more – they need arguments and sense. Every »institutional regime« has »to be communicated to a new generation«; must gain the »dignity of the normative« with them, too (Berger/Luckmann 2016: 100). In the language of social constructivism, the fact that the lives of the GDR and the post-war generation ran in parallel says that the legitimation of the symbolic world of socialism later failed – and with it the graduates of the Faculty of Journalism Studies.

What was taught in Leipzig had to be fought out between those involved on the ground. The Party leadership in Berlin had neither the personnel nor the

expertise to get involved in the detail. Minds were always on the skills needed by practitioners. Although the journalistic field in the GDR was dominated by the political logic much more than the academic field was (cf. Meyen/Fiedler 2011), the editorial offices on the ground ultimately needed people who had mastered their craft: finding topics, writing, taking photographs, editing, building pages and programs. That is why talent was just as important as conviction in student selection from the very beginning. The Soviet Union was not a suitable blueprint, not least because the newspapers there worked differently and the linguists in charge in Moscow, for example, rejected the idea of practical courses at university. Led by Hermann Budzislowski, the founders of the Faculty in Leipzig based their work more on the tradition of Karl Bücher's Institute of Newspaper Studies (cf. Schlimper 2007) and the schools of journalism in the USA, of which the first Dean had gained experience in exile. Communicating openly about these relationships (such as strategy papers) would have been fatal in the GDR. Instead, the actors preferred to refer to (alleged) 'role models' in Moscow, Leningrad, or Kiev and to resolutions of the SED leadership – rhetoric that misleads historians to this day.

Translation: Sophie Costella

About the author

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