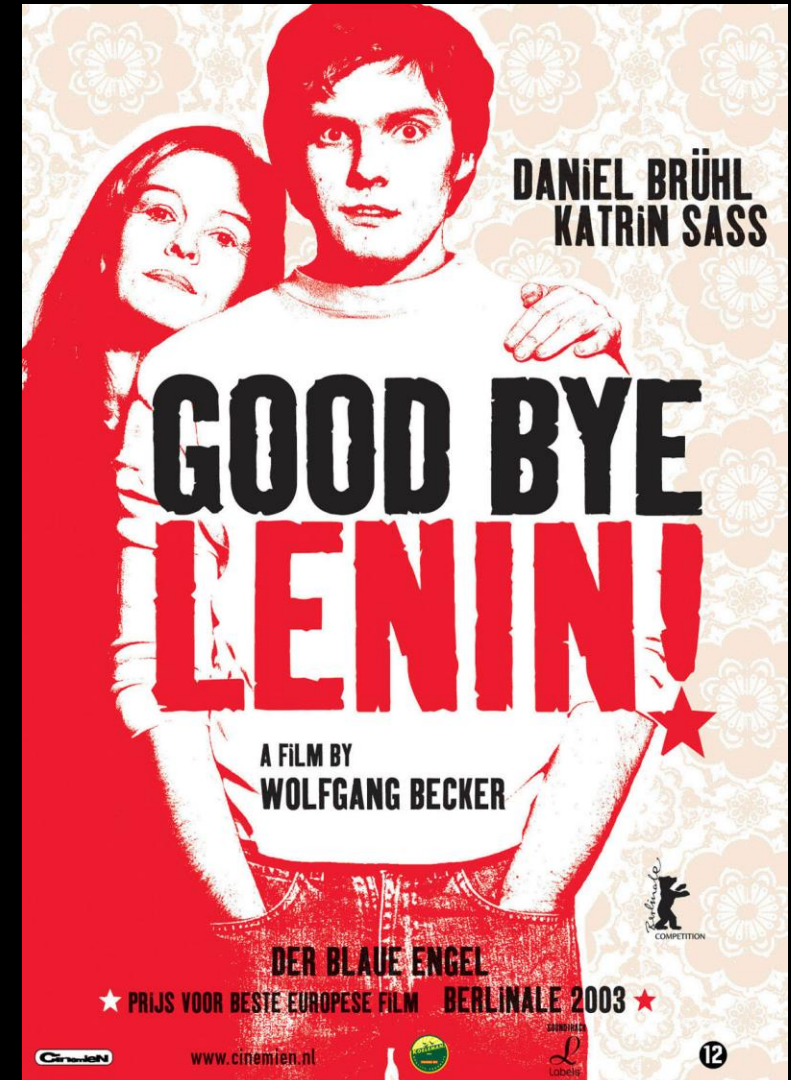
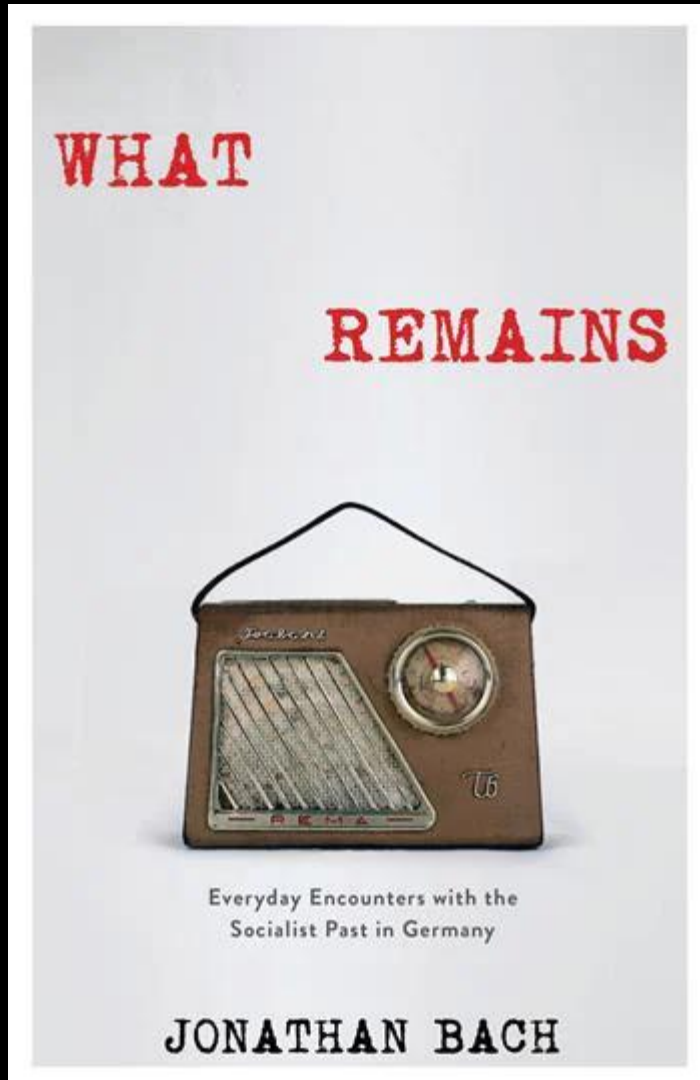




'OSTALGIE' AND MEMORY OF THE GDR

READING AND WATCHING

- Jonathan Bach, *What Remains: Everyday Encounters with the Socialist Past in Germany* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), pp. 15–89.
- *Good Bye Lenin!* (Germany, 2003)



OVERVIEW

PREAMBLE: WHAT IS OSTALGIE?

PART ONE: Understanding the GDR

1. Historical Context

- Division of Germany
- Terminology and nomenclature
- Cold War Berlin
- Space and Architecture in a Divided City
- Palace of the Republic

2. Past in the Present

- Urban Palimpsests
- 'Taste Remains'

3. Interpreting Life in the GDR

- Christa Wolf, What Remains
- 'Stasiland'
- Types of Stasi informants
- 'Participatory Dictatorship'?

PART TWO: Q&A with Dr Katharina Zinn

PART THREE: Material Culture and Ostalgie

- Marketing Ostalgie
- *Good Bye Lenin!*
- GDR Museums



OSTALGIE

- What is Ostalgie?

PART ONE – HISTORICAL CONTEXT: DIVISION OF GERMANY



TERMINOLOGY

West Germany

**Federal Republic of Germany
(FRG), est. 1949**

*Bundesrepublik Deutschland
(BRD)*



East Germany

**German Democratic Republic
(GDR), est. 1949; dissolved 1990**

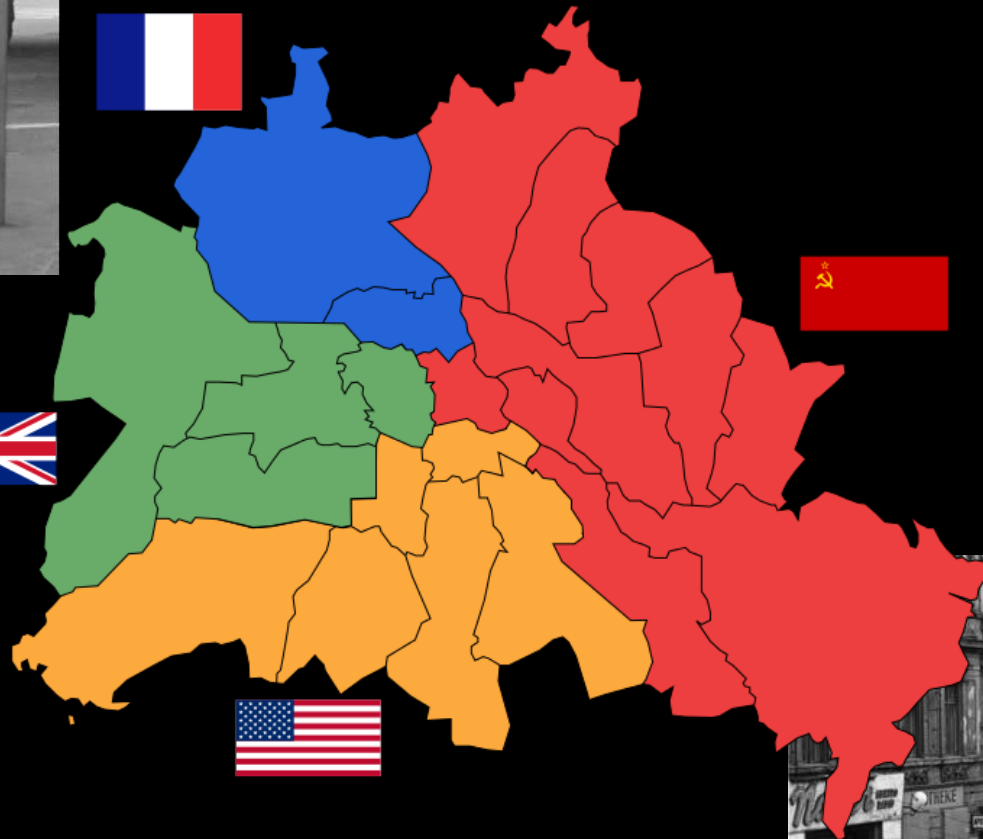
*Deutsche Demokratische
Republik (DDR)*



SED

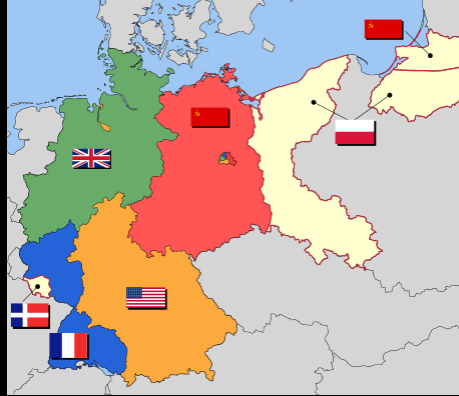
- **Socialist Unity Party of Germany (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, SED) est. April 1946**
 - Merger of East German wings of Communist Party of Germany (est. 1918) and Social Democratic Party of Germany (est. 1863); mandated by Josef Stalin
- **Ruling party** (of nominally-democratic nominally-multiparty state), in power October 1949–December 1989





Cold War Berlin

Berlin Blockade and Airlift (1948–1949)



- Soviet forces blockaded Western Allies' railway, road and canal access to sectors under British, French and American control
- 200,000 flights by American, British and Commonwealth airforces to supply West Berliners with food
- Blockade abandoned 1949 – the same year the two German states are established:
- East Berlin remains capital of GDR

Excerpt from map of East Germany, 1988.
See Andrew Henderson, 'Mapping Divided Berlin: The Politics of Under- and Over-Representation,' *The Yale Review of International Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Spring 2013), pp. 17-25



Space and Architecture in a Divided City: Friedrichstrasse

- Manned border between East and West
- Passport control – *Tränenpalast* ('Palace of Tears') for easterners exiting to West



Space and Architecture in a Divided City: Friedrichstrasse

- **Intershops** -
GDR stores
where Western
produce
could be
purchased





Space and
Architecture
in a Divided City:
Karl Marx Allee,
built 1952 to 1962
(East Berlin)





Space and Architecture
in a Divided City:
Karl Marx Allee
(East Berlin)



Space and Architecture in a Divided City: Alexanderplatz (East Berlin)



- TV Tower built 1965 to 1969

Space and Architecture in a Divided City: Palace of the Republic (East Berlin)

- Built 1973 to 1976
- Seat of Volkskammer (People's Chamber) parliament
- Also housed art galleries, a theatre, restaurants, a bowling alley and disco





PAST IN THE PRESENT

Palace of the Republic (East Berlin)

- Former site of Berliner Stadtschloss – various iterations from 15th century onwards
 - Stadtschloss bombed 1945; demolished 1950
 - GDR Palace closed 1990; completely demolished 2008
- To house rebuilt Humboldt Forum –delayed (AGAIN!) due to Covid-19





Frank Thiel, Palace
of the Republic





Frank Thiel, Reichstag



Past in the Present Urban Palimpsests



“ ... What is now emerging is the intriguing notion of Berlin as **palimpsest**.”

- Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 81

[illegible]

Space and Architecture in a Divided City: Urban Palimpsests



“ ... What is now emerging is the intriguing notion of Berlin as **palimpsest**, a disparate city-text that is being rewritten while earlier texts are preserved, traces restored, erasures documented – all of this producing a complex web of historical markers that point to the continuing heterogeneous life of a vital city ambivalent about its built past and its urban future.”

- Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 81

“The GDR Never Existed”



“ ... the GDR became a present absence, invoked mostly to be disavowed.”

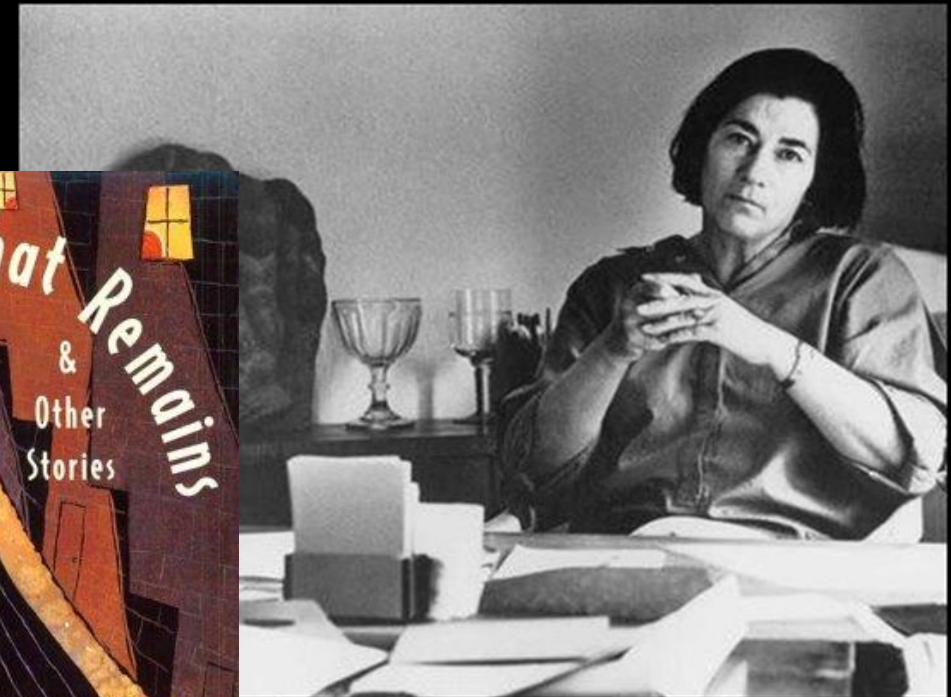
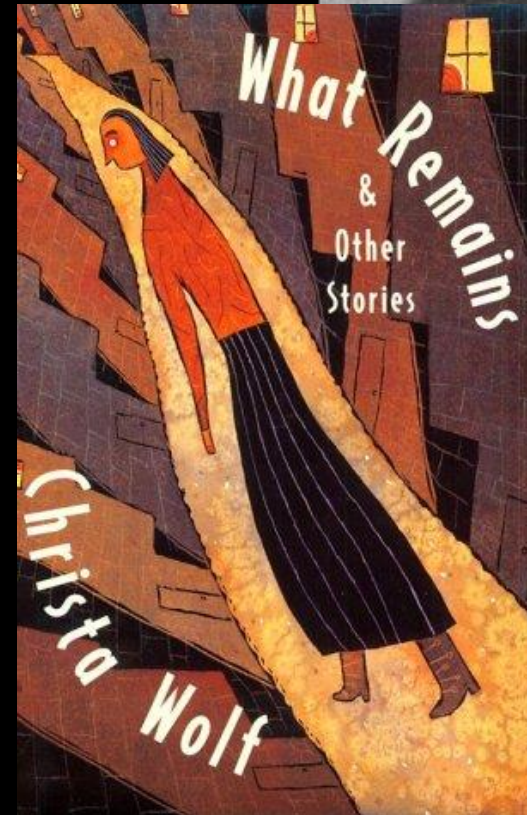
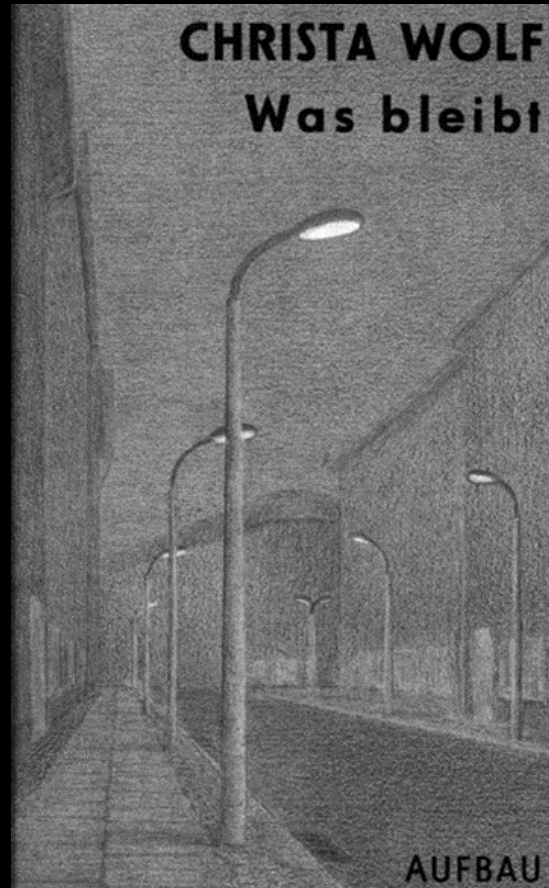
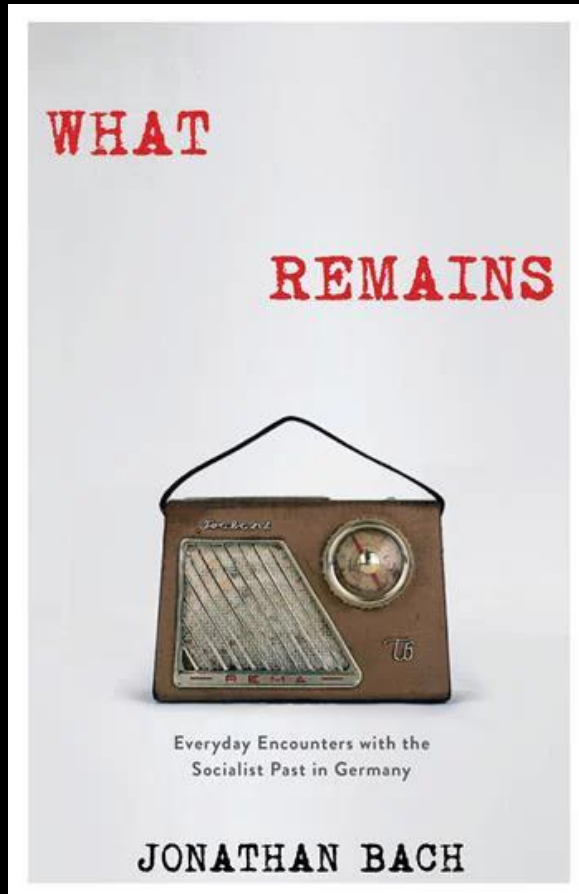
- Jonathan Bach, *What Remains: Everyday Encounters with the Socialist Past in Germany* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), p. 1

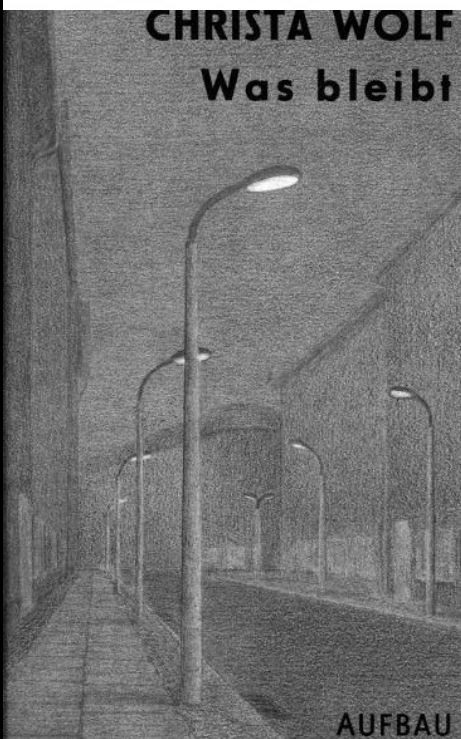
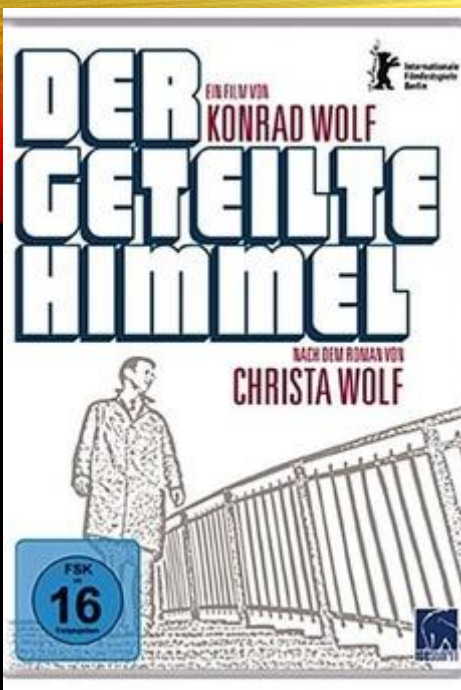
'THE TASTE REMAINS' *DER GESCHMACK BLEIBT*



FIGURE 1.3 Cigarettes from Saxony. GDR brand cigarettes Juwel, f6, and Karo, manufactured in Saxony, in their postunification reincarnation after being bought by Phillip Morris. Photo by picture-alliance/
ZB/Martin Schutt.

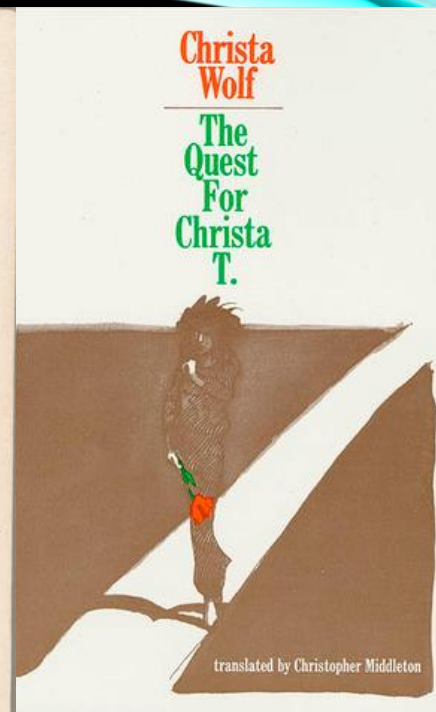
CHRISTA WOLF, WHAT REMAINS (WRITTEN 1979, PUBLISHED 1990)





CHRISTA WOLF

- Wolf b. 1929 in Landsberg an der Warthe in Prussia – now Gorzów Wielkopolski, Poland; d. Berlin 2011
- Most internationally-acclaimed GDR writer
 - *Divided Heaven* (1963; film version 1964)
 - *The Quest for Christa T* (1968)
 - *What Remains* (1990)

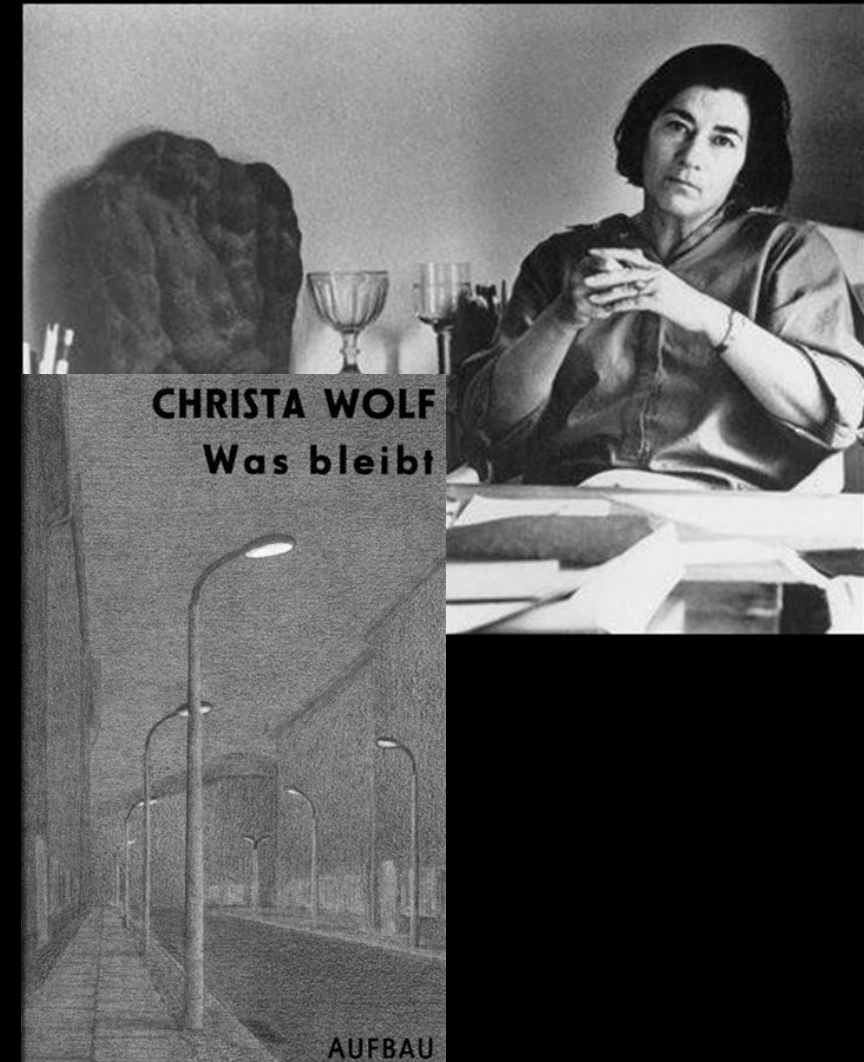


CHRISTA WOLF, *WHAT REMAINS*

- *What Remains* essentially 'a day in the life' story of a GDR academic (not-dissimilar to Wolf herself)

"Every day I told myself that a privileged life like mine could only be justified by attempting to go beyond the borders of the sayable, knowing full well that border violations of any kind are punished."

"All the while I was observing myself from a particular height."



STASILAND: 'DICTATORSHIP OF LIMITS'

“Thomas Lindenberger described the general setting of East German society as a ‘dictatorship of limits.’ These limits included, first and foremost, the large concrete border, but a lot of restrictions in everyday life as well that citizens had to learn and know. These taboos, which were sometimes more, sometimes less, defined, framed the field of personal agency. Aside from the mere existence of the real concrete wall and the threat of being killed if they attempted to flee, East Germans experienced open violence and repression from 1945 until the late 1950s that strongly influenced their behavior, particularly in the ranks of the older generations: the more than one hundred thousand prisoners in special internment camps, the several thousand victims of Soviet military tribunals, and other political prisoners. The period of harsh repression after the second SED party conference in July 1952, the suppression of the June uprising in 1953 or other local unrest (like 1951 in Saalfeld), the expropriations and collectivization of private property, and, finally, the building of the Berlin Wall itself were all major fields in which memories were taboo.”

- Jens Gieseke, 'The Stasi and East German Society: Some Remarks on Current Research,' *German Historical Institute Bulletin*, No. 9 (2014), pp. 64–65

STASILAND: VOLKSPOLIZEI

- Deutsche Volkspolizei (German People's Police), colloquially known as the VoPo – national police force of GDR
- Law enforcement but also paramilitary
- Recruitment required at least ten years of education, vocational training, military service, and a history of political loyalty.



STASI

- Ministry for State Security (*Ministerium für Staatssicherheit* [MfS]), commonly known as the Stasi
- Formally affiliated with KGB until 1957
- Stasi motto '*Schild und Schwert der Partei*' (Shield and Sword of the Party)
- Combined functions of intelligence service and secret police

Agency executives

Wilhelm Zaisser (1950–1953)

Ernst Wollweber (1953–1957)

Erich Mielke (1957–1989, pictured)

Wolfgang Schwanzitz (1989–1990)



STASILAND: BUREAUCRATIC REGIME

Stasi HQ,
now Stasi
Museum,
Berlin



STASI INFORMANTS (IMS)

Network of informal/unofficial collaborators (*inoffizieller Mitarbeiter/informeller Mitarbeiter* - IMs)

Various types:

- Informal Collaborators with special tasks (*IMA/Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter mit besonderen Aufgaben*)
- Informal Collaborators for [homeland] defense with enemy-connections and for the immediate processing of persons suspected of enemy-connected actions (*IMB/Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter der Abwehr mit Feindverbindung bzw. zur unmittelbaren Bearbeitung im Verdacht der Feindtätigkeit stehender Personen*)
- Informal Collaborators on special operations (*IME/Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter im besonderen Einsatz*)
- Informal Collaborators for Protection from Conspiracies and Subversive groupings (*IMK/Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter zur Sicherung der Konspiration und des Verbindungswesens*)
- Informal Collaborators for Political-operative Penetration and for Protection of Responsibility areas (*IMS/Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter zur politisch-operativen Durchdringung und Sicherung des Verantwortungsbereiches*)
- Leading IMs (FIM / Führungs-IM)

'CONTACT PERSONS'

Contact persons (Kontaktpersonen)

- Stasi officers received information from individuals who were not official informants
- Included factory managers, school principals, landlords, hospital directors and even acquaintances of Stasi officers themselves.

“Contact persons are not informants. . . . We know of cases, however, where their work differs from that of an informant only in so far as one is registered, the other not.”

- Erich Mielke, 1989

'STASILAND'

- GDR population (according to Federal Statistical Office of Germany)

1950 est. 18,388,000

1970 est. 17,068,000

1990 est. 16,111,000

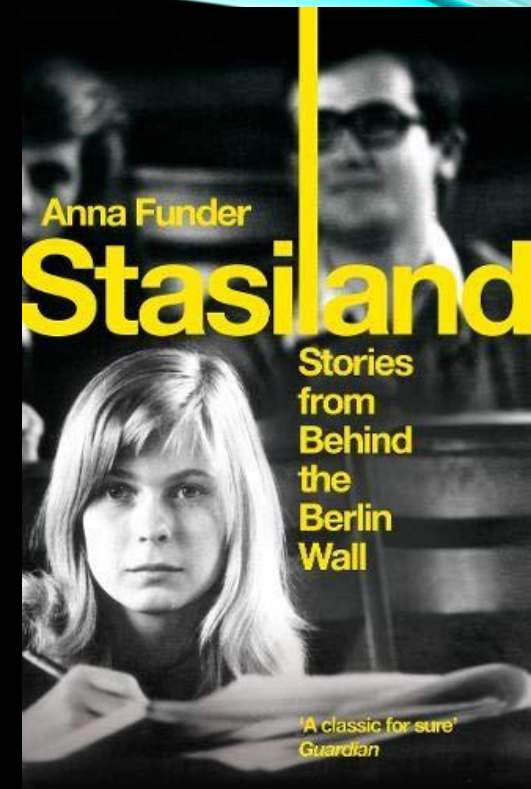
- At the time of the end of the regime, there were:

- 91,000 full-time Stasi employees (versus 7,000 Gestapo employees for whole of Germany pre-WWII)

Note: this figure includes "every single Stasi employee, from the operational officer who held sway over the life opportunities of East Germans, to the night watchman at a remote Stasi post in the countryside."

- 173,000 informants

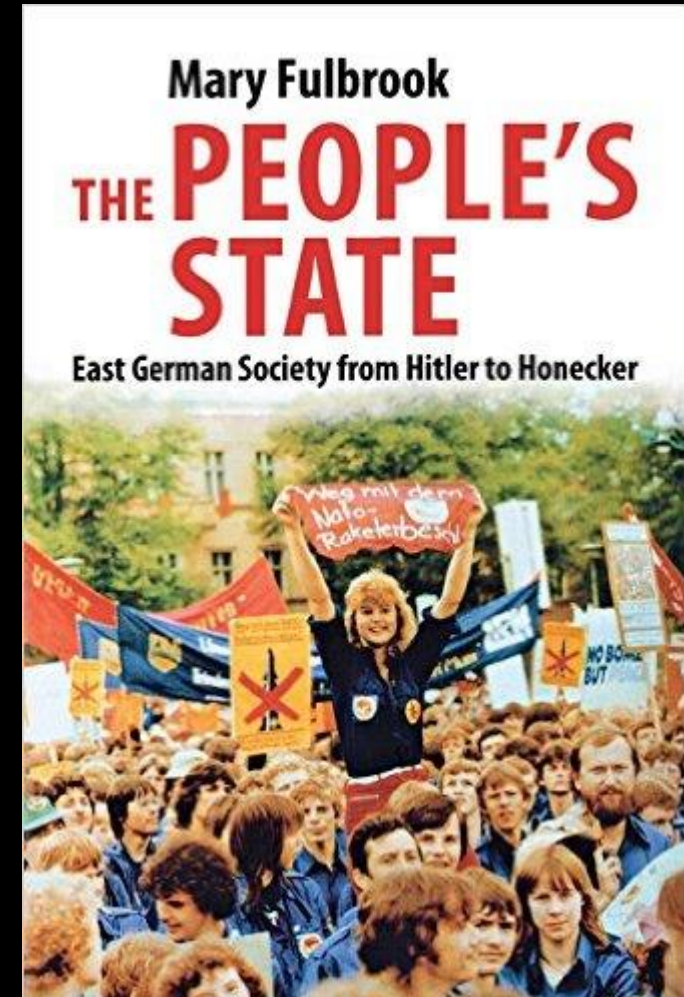
- This means that c. 264,000 – around 1 in 60 – East Germans were either formally employed or affiliated with the Stasi (a figure that does not include 'contact persons' or those who offered information on a onetime basis)



'PARTICIPATORY DICTATORSHIP'

"It is necessary to rethink the social character of political processes in the GDR with respects to the means, the structures and the goals of politics. In this book, I develop the notion of a '**participatory dictatorship**' ... [a] somewhat oxymoronic expression intended to emphasise the extent to which 'democratic centralism' as practiced in the GDR **did actually involve large numbers of people**, for a wide variety of reasons: *not always or necessarily out of a genuine commitment to Marxist-Leninist ideals; nor always as a result of being coerced or cowed into compliance; nor always in a defiant representation of one's own interests.* The notion of a participatory democracy is intended to **underline the ways in which the people themselves were at one and the same time constrained and affected by, and yet also actively and voluntarily carried the ever-changing social and political system of the GDR.**"

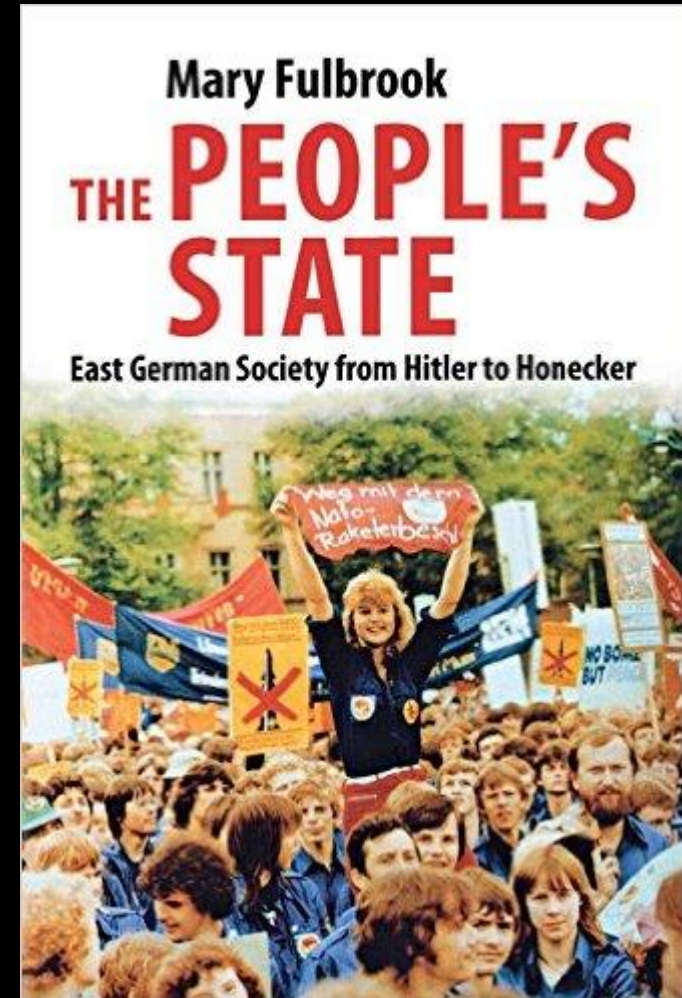
- Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University, 2005)



'PARTICIPATORY DICTATORSHIP'

" ... The exercise of power was in many areas both far more multifaceted and complex, and less sinister and less repressive, than totalitarian theorists would have us believe. The 'state' or 'regime' was not a unitary actor, which simply did (mostly nasty) things to the ill-defined, undifferentiated mass of 'the people.' There were hugely repressive and clearly reprehensible aspects of the SED regime; but there were also areas in which thousands of citizens cooperated and felt able to pursue common goals and ideals."

- Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University, 2005)



CHRISTA WOLF, *WHAT REMAINS*

- Wolf member of Hitler Youth in childhood
- Member of ruling Socialist Unity Party of Germany, 1949–1989 – remained socialist and opposed reunification
- Centre of *Literaturstreit* (literature quarrel)
 - Why did Wolf wait so long to publish *What Remains*?
 - Who has the right to call themselves ‘victims’ when remembering GDR?
 - Parallels *Historikerstreit* (historians’ quarrel) over how to interpret Nazism

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- **1993 – Stasi file disclosure showed that Wolf was herself an informant, 1959–1962**



QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

- How to remember the GDR in a manner that recognises the complexity, multifaceted character of its history?
- How to remember the GDR in a manner which does not just efface the past?
- How to remember, and respect, East Germans' everyday experiences without denying existence of a repressive state regime?

PART TWO:
Q&A DR KATHARINA ZINN

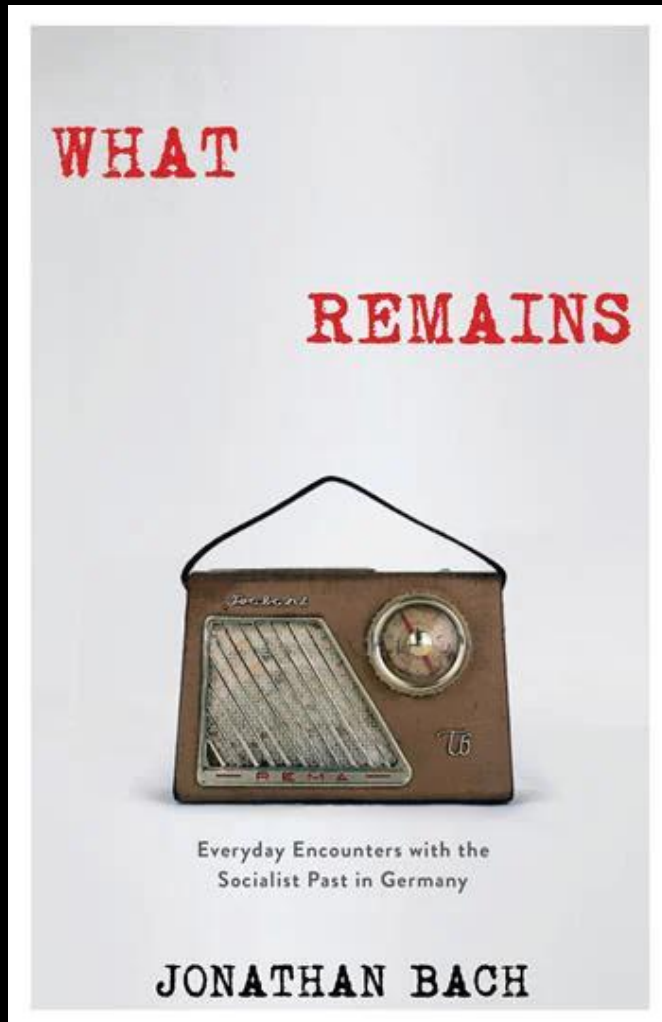


PART TWO: Q&A DR KATHARINA ZINN

- Can you say a little bit about your background?
- What does Ostalgie mean to you? Are you comfortable with the term?

PART THREE:

MATERIAL CULTURE AND OSTALGIE



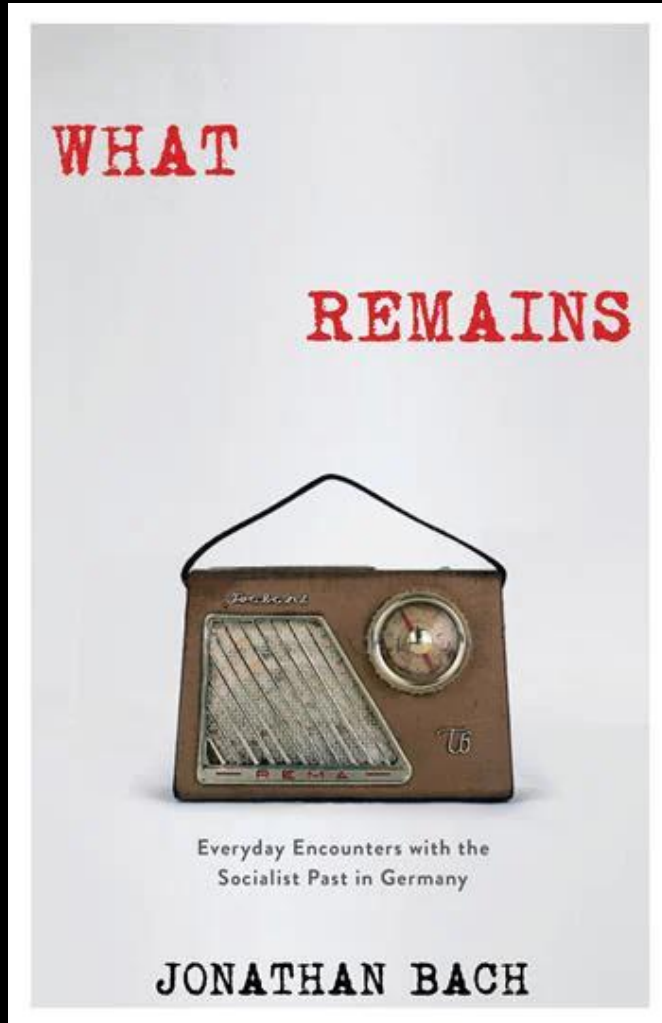
- In what ways is material culture expressive and constitutive of Ostalgie?
- Why has material culture proven so important for many former citizens of the GDR?

“East Germany, considered the most economically and technologically advanced country in the Eastern Bloc, disappeared in 1990, less than a year after its fortieth anniversary. With its precipitous collapse, **an entire modern state’s materiality seemed abruptly obsolete, from clothes and detergent to factories to the Berlin Wall.** Such a thoroughgoing reversal was possible because the East’s end was technically **an accession** to the West, not integration between two equal states: at midnight on October 3, 1990, federal (West) German law applied literally overnight throughout the East. Many former East Germans (and some former Westerners) decried this approach to unification as disabling the agency of the East to set the terms of its transformation, betraying the spirit of the original revolution against the communist government and coming uncomfortably close to colonization. Whether unification was fated to happen in this way or not, it set the stage for both **an unequal power relationship** and **an unprecedented case of cultural obsolescence**, as an entire country’s infrastructure, products, and standards were in short order widely considered inferior.”

- Bach, *What Remains*, p. 4.

MATERIAL CULTURE AND OSTALGIE: MARKETING OSTALGIE

- What are some of the ways that Ostalgie has been used commercially?



MATERIAL CULTURE AND OSTALGIE: MARKETING OSTALGIE



FIGURE 1.1 Intershop 2000 in Berlin. Intershop 2000 (*right*) next to another former Mitropa “space expansion hall.” The shop is located on the site of the former GDR Narva light bulb factory in an industrial section of the popular Friedrichshain district in Berlin. 2012. Photo by author.

Verschicken Sie Ihr **OSTPAKET!**

*...Gutes
aus dem
Osten!*

10 Jahre Ostprodukte
www.ostpaket-berlin.de



OSTPAKET
Das Einkaufserlebnis in Berlin-Mitte
www.ostpaket-berlin.de

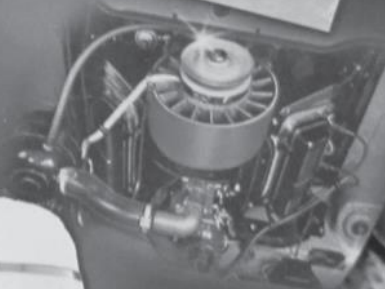


Salesman dressed
as "People's
Police" at the
East Products Trade
Fair.



WO DU DEINE
„ERSTE LIEBE“ WIEDER FINDEST...

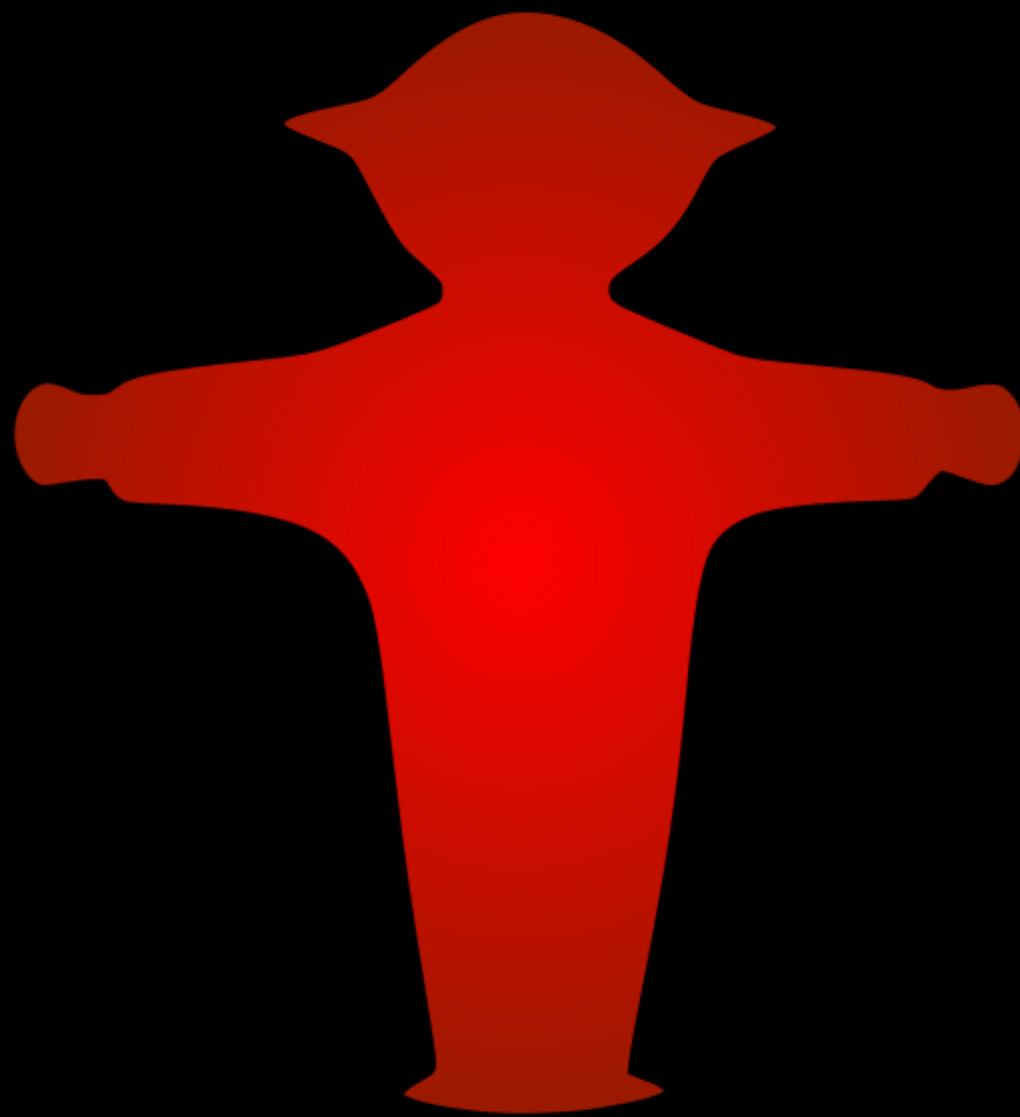
Jugendträume in der



Zaporozhets ZAZ 968
Das originellste Importauto in der DDR war der „Zapo“.
In seiner zweiten Entwicklungsstufe, als Typ 968, kam er zwischen 1972 und 1979 ins Land. Seinen Antrieb besorgte ein laut knatternder, luftgekühlter V4 im Heck: Der 1,2-Liter aus dem ukrainischen Zaporoshje schaffte 40 PS. Der Zweitürer war so robust, dass ihn russische Kolchos-Bauern als Zugfahrzeug für den Pflug einsetzten.

Sternquell ...DA BIST DU ZU HAUSE!

150 JAHRE



'THE TASTE REMAINS' *DER GESCHMACK BLEIBT*



FIGURE 1.3 Cigarettes from Saxony. GDR brand cigarettes Juwel, f6, and Karo, manufactured in Saxony, in their postunification reincarnation after being bought by Phillip Morris. Photo by picture-alliance/
ZB/Martin Schutt.



GOOD BYE LENIN!

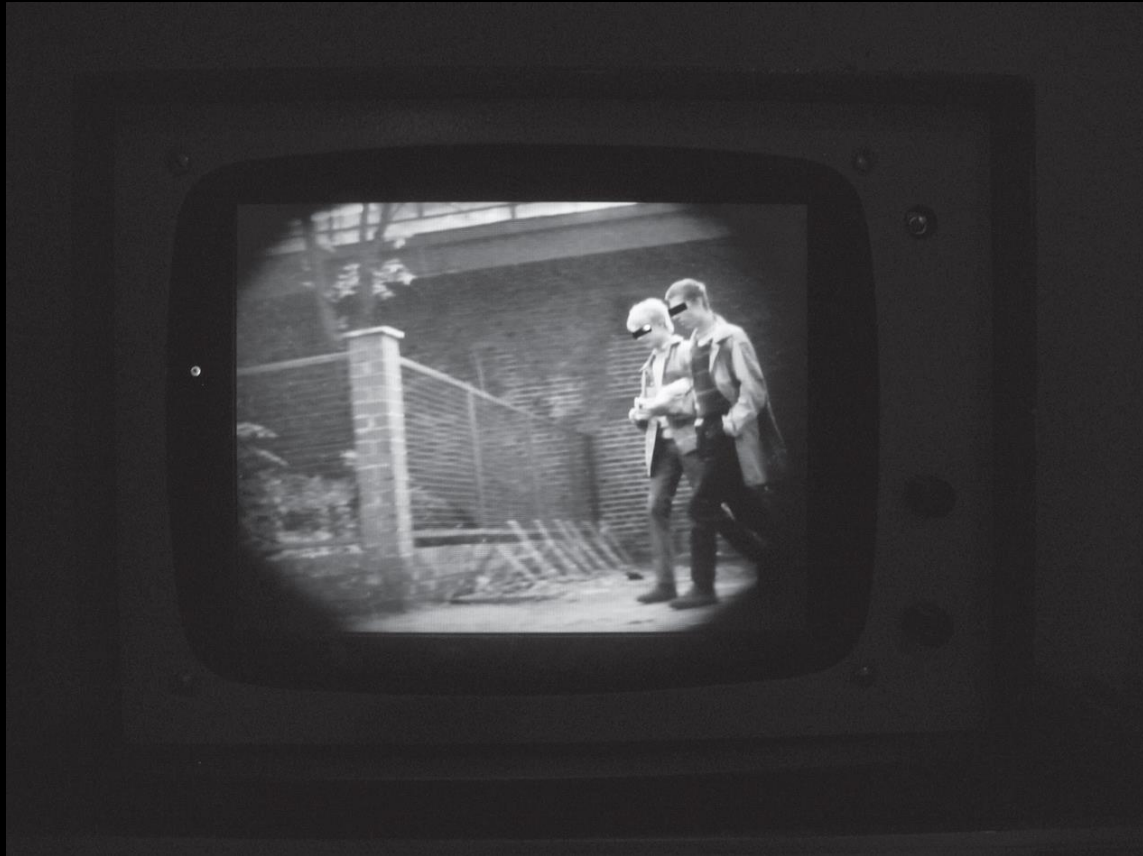
- What did you make of the film?
- What makes the film an example of Ostalgie?



DDR MUSEUMS

- What different motivations surround the collection and display of DDR memorabilia and artefacts?
- Where and how did the DDR museum 'phenomenon' start, and who was involved?
- How do DDR museums relate to other historical museums in Germany?
- What are some of the characteristic 'selling points' of DDR museums?

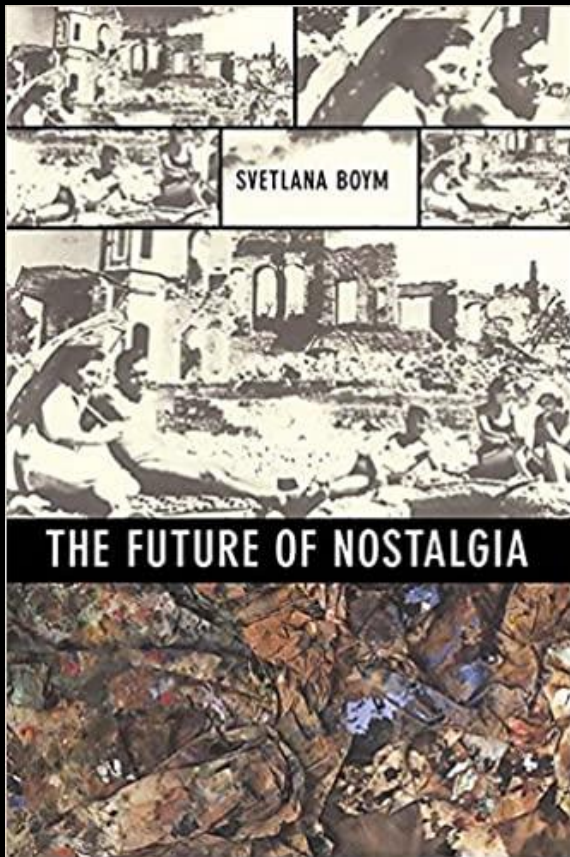
DDR MUSEUM BERLIN



GDR EVERYDAY MUSEUM, HOUSE OF HISTORY, BERLIN



THE FUTURE OF OSTALGIE?



In 2031, it will be forty-one years since the collapse of the GDR. After this point, the GDR will have been out of existence for longer than it ever existed.]

- Will Ostalgie continue as a phenomenon in future generations?