
Mass Media and the Generation of Conflict: West Germany's Long Sixties and the Formation of a Critical Public Sphere

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Abstract

From the 1950s to 1970s the West German public sphere underwent a rapid politicisation which was part of the ongoing socio-cultural democratisation of the Federal Republic. This article examines the role of the mass media and journalistic elites in bringing about this change. It analyses how and when political coverage in the media evolved from an instrument of consensus to a forum of conflict. Arguing that generational shifts in journalism were crucial to this process, two generations, termed the '45ers' and the '68ers', are described in regard to their professional ethos and their attitudes toward democracy, mass culture, German traditions and Western models.

The 1960s have recently been identified as the key phase in West Germany's postwar history; scholars have characterised this decade as launching the democratisation and liberalisation of society.¹ In this context, some have termed the long sixties the era of a

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¹ Three recent volumes analyse the sixties from different angles: Ulrich Herbert, ed., *Wandlungsprozesse in Westdeutschland: Belastung, Integration, Liberalisierung 1945–1980* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2002); Karl Lammers, Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried, eds., *Dynamische Zeiten: Die 60er Jahre in den beiden deutschen Gesellschaften* (Hamburg: Christians, 2000); Mathias Frese, Julia Paulus and Karl Teppe, eds., *Demokratisierung und gesellschaftlicher Aufbruch: Die sechziger Jahre als Wendezeit der Bundesrepublik* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2003). A growing body of literature deals with the transformation of cultural norms and memory since the fifties. See, e.g., Hanna Schissler, ed., *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949–1968* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Jeffrey

'second founding' of the Federal Republic – arguing that after the initial establishment of a democratic political system in the period to 1949, a deeper democratisation of political culture and society was carried out only much later. But although this opinion seems to be gaining greater acceptance,² there is no consensus regarding the actual agents and factors that brought about this change, or its exact timing. Those who emphasise the impact of the various protest movements of the late sixties credit the student generation, as the first post-National Socialist generation, with the more thoroughgoing democratisation of West Germany.³ On the other hand there are those who maintain that crucial changes occurred a decade earlier, and that the so-called '68ers' were not the only, and not even the most important, leaders of the Federal Republic's 'second founding'.

The following study examines when and how this socio-cultural democratisation came about by focusing on the public sphere of West Germany during the 'long' sixties (roughly encompassing the last third of the 1950s to the first third of the 1970s). Evidence indicates that at the time when the Cold War cooled down and the Federal Republic became increasingly stable and affluent, the public sphere suddenly turned more critical. But what exactly triggered the appearance of more confrontational, conflict-laden political debates in the mass media? And should a specific generation be credited with fostering the move towards greater conflict and criticism?

This article looks at journalistic elites as the key players whose avant-garde role had a significant impact on both changes in political decision-making and audience expectations. It will explore changing patterns of media coverage of political conflicts, the emergence of new and challenging professional practices in journalism and the shifting generational composition of media elites. In tracing these developments, I shall try to understand how the mass media transformed the ways in which West German society negotiated change and conflict. Because popular opinion in Germany often defines the 68ers – the protest generation of the late sixties – as the driving force of the country's true democratisation, the link between '1968' and the transformation of the public sphere is of particular importance.⁴ I shall therefore analyse how the

Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

2 Clemens Albrecht et al., *Die intellektuelle Gründung der Bundesrepublik: Eine Wirkungsgeschichte der Frankfurter Schule* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1999); Manfred Görtemaker, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Von der Gründung bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: Beck, 1999), 184, 475; Axel Schildt, *Ankunft im Westen: Ein Essay zur Erfolgsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1999), 38–9.

3 For the changes since the late fifties see Axel Schildt, *Moderne Zeiten: Freizeit, Massenmedien und 'Zeitgeist' in der Bundesrepublik der 50er Jahre* (Hamburg: Christians, 1995). For the impact of the 68ers see Gerhard Schulze, *Die Erlebnisgesellschaft: Kulturosoziologie der Gegenwart*, 6th edn (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1996), ch. 12; Jochen Hoffmann and Ulrich Sarcinelli, 'Politische Wirkungen der Medien', in Jürgen Wilke, ed., *Mediengeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1999), 720–48, 727.

4 In Germany, the protest events of the years 1967 to 1969 are commonly referred to as '1968', and the student generation of the time is labelled 'the 68ers'.

mass media reacted to the student unrest, as well as how the activists of the late sixties set out to reform the public sphere. It is also necessary to compare the contribution of the 68ers to the role of their predecessor generation, the '45ers', whose impact on the changes starting in the late fifties will be examined in detail. This issue has recently generated much scholarly debate.⁵

In tracing the gradual democratisation of West German political culture, it is crucial to examine the mass media. The effective functioning of a critical public sphere is a key element in a democratic political culture, as various theorists have acknowledged from different perspectives.⁶ The transformations that media practices, media elites and audiences undergo reflect the changing relationship of politics and the public, of state and society. Recognising this connection, the Western Allies – especially the Americans – undertook extraordinary efforts to democratise the German mass media after the Second World War. Indeed, the Allies succeeded in permanently reorganising the media landscape and at least temporarily denazifying its most senior ranks. While Allied media policies have been documented extensively,⁷ it is less well known what became of them during the decades after the founding of the republic in 1949. New research has established that a widespread integration of former Nazi editors and reporters took place almost immediately after the occupying states loosened their grip. The persistence of prewar patterns of journalistic practice also stood in the way of lasting change.⁸

5 Bernd Weisbrod, 'Generation und Generationalität in der Neueren Geschichte', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 8 (2005), 3–9; Ulrike Jureit and Michael Wildt, eds., *Generationen: Zur Relevanz eines wissenschaftlichen Grundbegriffs* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2005). For more on the 45ers, see n. 33 below.

6 My notion of the public sphere does not follow Jürgen Habermas's well-known study, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, since his book (written in 1959) is so sceptical of the role of modern mass media that it fails to describe accurately the role of mass media and journalism in modern democracies. I define 'public sphere' broadly as a structure of many co-existing forums in which a society selects topics for debate and negotiates patterns of interpretation, values and conflicting interests. In modern societies the forum of the mass media can be deemed a 'master forum', because it reflects and reports on the debates carried out in most other societal forums, and because its importance is assumed by almost all members of the different forums. Journalists, as gatekeepers and players who regulate access and structure the content of the mass media, are therefore crucial for the functioning of the modern public sphere. For similar concepts see Kurt Imhof, "'Öffentlichkeit" als historische Kategorie und als Kategorie der Historie', *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte*, 46 (1996): 3–25; Myra M. Ferree et al., *Shaping Abortion Discourse: Democracy and the Public Sphere in Germany and the United States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 10–12.

7 See Harold Hurwitz, *Die Stunde Null der deutschen Presse: Die amerikanische Pressepolitik in Deutschland 1945–1949* (Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1972); Peter J. Humphreys, *Media and Media Policy in West Germany: The Press and Broadcasting since 1945* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990); Jessica Gienow-Hecht, *Transmission Impossible: American Journalism as Cultural Diplomacy in Postwar Germany 1945–1955* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999); Norbert Frei, *Amerikanische Lizenzpolitik und deutsche Pressetradition: Die Geschichte der Nachkriegszeitung Südost-Kurier* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1986); Daniel A. Gossel, *Die Hamburger Presse nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg: Neuanfang unter britischer Besatzungsherrschaft* (Hamburg: Verlag Verein für Hamburgische Geschichte, 1993); Kurt Koszyk, *Pressepolitik für Deutsche 1945–1949: Geschichte der deutschen Presse*, vol. 4 (Berlin: Colloquium, 1986); Stephan Schölzel, *Die Pressepolitik in der französischen Besatzungszone 1945–1949* (Mainz: v. Hase u. Köhler, 1986).

8 See the regional study by Sigrun Schmid, *Journalisten der frühen Nachkriegszeit: Eine kollektive Biographie am Beispiel von Rheinland-Pfalz* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2000), and the essay by Matthias Weiss, 'Journalisten:

It is not surprising that a more thorough overhaul was beyond the reach of the Allies. What was needed – the acceptance of new values and practices that could foster and maintain a critical, democratically functioning public sphere – could not be ordered from above and could not be achieved overnight. Democratising the public sphere turned out to be a gradual process from within, encompassing a multitude of conflicts and setbacks. What today, in hindsight, looks like a journey to democracy appeared at the time as an intricate and enormously large puzzle of slowly changing patterns of perception, thought and behaviour on the level of the individual and the profession: in the media, in politics and among audiences. And wherever these patterns broached the issues of participation and pluralism, consensus and conflict, the private and the public, their negotiation and redefinition contributed to a new understanding of the basis of political power. More and more openly, the mass media started to scrutinise older concepts of political legitimation that rested chiefly on tradition, nation and the idea of the state. They promoted the ideas of public debate, pluralist discourse and productive conflict to challenge a governing style of closed-door, consensus politics from above. The more the mass media acted as agenda setters, fora of political debate and instruments of control, the more the public learned to criticise the legitimacy of tradition and state interest, and the more the government was forced to adapt to the new pattern of legitimation through public discourse and more transparent governance. Changes in the way in which media elites perceived their role, carried out their daily business and dealt with politicians and state institutions thus had a major impact on the legitimation and practice of political power.

The rise of a critical public sphere in West Germany, and the new journalistic practices that accompanied it, have not yet been subjected to scrutiny. Although scholars widely agree that the public sphere of the fledgling West German republic experienced rapid and breathtaking changes until the late 1960s, few efforts have been made to analyse these developments. In-depth historical research on postwar journalism and the impact of the mass media on the democratisation process is almost entirely lacking, and investigations of media issues regarding 1968 are just as scarce.⁹ To explain the birth of a lively, politically engaged public sphere, historians of the Federal Republic usually point to the infamous ‘*Spiegel* affair’ – a 1962 scandal about a news weekly which led to a crisis in the Adenauer government – which brought about

Worte als Taten’, in Norbert Frei, ed., *Karrieren im Zwielficht: Hitlers Eliten nach 1945* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2001), 241–301; also Hodenberg, *Konsens und Krise*, ch. 3.1.

⁹ There are a few short pieces which discuss the subject but do not provide an overview. Bernd Söseman, ‘Die 68er Bewegung und die Massenmedien’, in Wilke, *Mediengeschichte der Bundesrepublik*, 672–97; Wolfgang Kraushaar, ‘1968 und Massenmedien’, *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 41 (2001): 317–47; Stuart J. Hilwig, ‘The Revolt against the Establishment: Students versus the Press in West Germany and Italy’, in Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert and Detlef Junker, eds., *1968: The World Transformed* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 321–49; Werner Lindner, ‘Die Studentenbewegung im Spiegel der Ruhrgebietspresse’, *Westfälische Forschungen*, 48 (1998): 217–40; Michael A. Schmidtke, ‘“1968” und die Massenmedien – Momente europäischer Öffentlichkeit’, in Jörg Requate and Martin Schulze-Wessel, eds., *Europäische Öffentlichkeit: Transnationale Kommunikation seit dem 18. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2002), 273–94.

large-scale demonstrations and an almost unanimous protest by journalists against the government's efforts to rein in the media. Often the event is not only taken as a starting point for the emergence of a critical public sphere, but also as its main cause.¹⁰ But, as I shall argue, the *Spiegel* affair should be understood as a symptom rather than as a cause. It was part of an underlying shift of political culture that was already well under way by 1962 and involved both the media elite and the public.

In order to examine the dynamics of this process, my discussion will draw on three groups of primary sources: contemporary mass media, reflections of professional journalists and official reports about developments in the public sphere. Concentrating on those media that reached millions and that regularly took part in political discussions, I chose the most popular illustrated weeklies, *Stern* and *Quick*, and the television and radio programmes of the (public, non-commercial) broadcasting stations Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Südwestfunk and Norddeutscher Rundfunk. In addition, I worked with the news weeklies *Der Spiegel* and *Die Zeit* and used the massive body of media history studies that focus on single newspapers and the treatment of particular issues in the printed press. To trace the ethos and everyday practices of the media elite, I systematically screened the professional journals of the time, and the biographies and memoirs of journalists. Moreover, records from West Germany's federal archives in Koblenz and the US national archives in Washington indicate how German and US officials assessed the development of the Federal Republic's mass media.¹¹ The evolution of the West German mass media – from an instrument of consensus into a forum of conflict and open discussion – was observed by many contemporaries, and widely commented on by both supporters and opponents.

From consensus to conflict

During the 1950s the West German public sphere was depoliticised to an astonishing extent. The sole television channel, on the air since 1954, completely abstained from political programmes and editorials. Although it was a publicly owned broadcasting station with a market monopoly, and thus not dependent on audience ratings or publishers' guidelines, it failed to take advantage of its privileged position. The channel waited until 1957 to add political feature programmes and until 1962 to

10 In late October 1962, police raided the offices of the critical news weekly *Der Spiegel* and arrested several of its top editors, who were subsequently charged with high treason. This sparked a wave of protests and eventually a crisis of the governing coalition, because it turned out that the defence minister Franz-Josef Strauss – a sworn enemy of the magazine – had been behind the raid. In the end, the legal charges against the journalists were ruled unfounded by the courts. See also n. 44 below.

11 I examined the complete volumes 1950–69 of the magazines *Stern* and *Quick*. Among the professional periodicals I studied were *Funk-Korrespondenz*, *Fernseh-Rundschau* and *Herder-Korrespondenz*. In the Federal Archives (Bundesarchiv) in Koblenz, I worked mainly with records of the Federal Press Office (Bundespresseamt) and the Chancellor's Office (Bundeskanzleramt). In the US National Archives in Washington DC, I consulted predominantly files of the State Department. Extensively used were the historical archives of the broadcasting agencies Südwestdeutscher Rundfunk in Baden-Baden and Westdeutscher Rundfunk in Cologne; the Medienarchiv of the Norddeutscher Rundfunk in Hamburg; and the German Radio Archives in Frankfurt. Neither the archival files of the broadcasting stations nor of the Bundesarchiv are paginated.

add opinion pieces to its repertoire.¹² Until then West German television essentially remained ‘a medium of simple minds’ with a programme ‘of polished provinciality’.¹³ Popular print media such as *Stern*, *Quick* and *Hör Zu!*, selling millions of copies every week, followed a similar path. They avoided editorials (*Stern* was the first to introduce this type of writing in 1958) and aimed to reach maximum audiences by excluding politics. The main strategy of the illustrated weeklies was to promote the image of a harmonious society without major conflicts. The bestselling radio and television magazine *Hör Zu!*, which was oriented towards the ‘world of the family, the world of everyone’s own four walls, and of introspection [*Besinnung*]’, mirrors this tendency to perfection.¹⁴ The patriarchal family was held up as the embodiment of tradition and the antithesis of the challenges of the postwar era; it was celebrated as a refuge where ordinary Germans could retreat from the conflicts, uncertainties and instabilities of society and politics in the fledgling Federal Republic. And this held true not only for *Hör Zu!* but for almost all the illustrated weeklies. They typically strove to be regarded as ‘the great family medium’.¹⁵ Consciously playing up traditional values and societal integration, they shied away from controversy and anything deemed ‘political’. Thus the editor-in-chief of *Stern*, Henri Nannen, assured readers in 1955 that ‘we don’t want to make *Stern* into a political journal, even in this tension-ridden time’.¹⁶ Likewise, the editors of the *Deutsche Illustrierte* pointed out that they preferred to concentrate on ‘less political issues’.¹⁷ Political scandals were routinely brushed over rather than exploited by the media. Before 1960, no West German cabinet minister resigned due to public pressure.¹⁸ The only mass medium that routinely took on government representatives and abuses of power during the 1950s was *Der Spiegel*, and its market share only expanded significantly after 1961.¹⁹

The year 1970 reveals a striking contrast to the depoliticised journalism of the fifties. By then, the now multiplied television channels not only broadcast daily opinion pieces; they also gave weekly slots to six different political feature programmes, all of which specialised in critical reporting. These programmes were commonly

12 See Rüdiger Steinmetz, *Freies Fernsehen: Das erste privat-kommerzielle Fernsehprogramm in Deutschland* (Konstanz: UVK Medien, 1996), 60.

13 Knut Hickethier, *Geschichte des deutschen Fernsehens* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1998), 92, 80 (quoting *Spiegel* of 15 July 1959).

14 By the mid-fifties, this weekly reached more readers than any other magazine. See Lu Seegers, *Hör Zu!: Eduard Rhein und die Rundfunkprogrammzeitschriften, 1931–1965* (Potsdam: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 2001), 199.

15 This is how the editor-in-chief of the magazine *Münchener Illustrierte* described the aims of its competitor *Revue* in 1954. Federal Press Office, report on the illustrated weeklies from Feb. 22, 1954, Federal Archives Koblenz (hereafter FAK), B 145/1735.

16 *Stern* no. 58, 20 Feb. 1955, 1.

17 In a conversation with officials of the Federal Press Office on 22 Feb. 1954 (see n. 15 above).

18 See Frank Bösch, ‘Öffentliche Geheimnisse: Die verzögerte Renaissance des Medienskandals zwischen Staatsgründung und Ära Brandt’, in Bernd Weisbrod, ed., *Die Politik der Öffentlichkeit – Die Öffentlichkeit der Politik: Politische Medialisierung in der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003), 125–50, 128.

19 Dieter Just, ‘Der Spiegel: Untersuchungen zur redaktionellen Arbeitsweise, zum Inhalt und zur Wirkung eines deutschen Nachrichtenmagazins’, Ph.D. thesis, Berlin, 1966, 152.

known as the 'TV magazines'.²⁰ Even more significantly, the politicisation had spilled over into parts of the programming that had always been regarded as pure entertainment. Music programmes and animal films as well as sports coverage and children's cartoons were now consciously used as instruments of political change. 'Social criticism, better: social politics in television and radio . . . reaches from the news . . . to the soccer game, yes, it even extends to *Sandmännchen*', declared Klaus von Bismarck, the chief executive of the biggest West German broadcasting station Westdeutscher Rundfunk, in 1969. By *Sandmännchen* von Bismarck was referring to an immensely popular programme for toddlers: a daily five-minute television lullaby that German children had enjoyed since 1959. Thus he stressed that the education of the media consumer as a critical participant in democratic society should be total: it should target everyone, even children, and should particularly build on popular genres previously deemed to be apolitical.²¹ Some of the most successful television genres, such as animal series and beat music programmes, now opened up to new strategies. The animal series started to criticise politicians, to argue for environmental awareness, and to denounce the exploitation of animals for economic purposes.²² And almost all of the beat music programmes for young people on radio and television (such as *Beat-Club* or *baff*) began to introduce 'socially relevant' content – much to the dismay of the audience, which clearly favoured beat over politics.²³

Empirical studies conducted at the time agreed that a majority of journalists embraced a political mission and celebrated the concepts of conflict and criticism. In 1972 a study found that 90 per cent of the freelance writers for television programmes felt 'a professional obligation to fight the problems of this society'.²⁴ The newly found consensus that the mass media had a political role to play affected not only the output of the broadcasting stations but also of the commercialised print media. All the major illustrated weeklies had started to exploit as scandals political misbehaviour and even politicians' private lives (as in the cases of Willy Brandt and Franz-Josef Strauss)

20 These programmes were *Panorama*, *Report*, *Bericht aus Bonn*, *Monitor*, *Kontraste*, and *Weltspiegel*. For details see Ernst Loewy and Achim Klünder, eds., *Magazinbeiträge im Deutschen Fernsehen*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv, 1973), 2: 193 ff.; Gerhard Lampe, *Panorama, Report und Monitor: Geschichte der politischen Fernsehmagazine, 1957–1990* (Konstanz: UVK Medien, 2000).

21 Klaus von Bismarck, 'Der gesellschaftskritische Auftrag des Fernsehens für das Programm', in *Fernseh-Kritik: Die gesellschaftskritische Funktion des Fernsehens*, ed. Dieter Stolte (Mainz: v. Hase u. Köhler, 1970), 47–69, 47.

22 Specifically the series *Ein Platz für Tiere* with Bernhard Grzimek and *Sterns Stunde* with Horst Stern. Jens Ivo Engels, 'Von der Sorge um die Tiere zur Sorge um die Umwelt: Tiersendungen als Umweltpolitik in Westdeutschland zwischen 1950 und 1980', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 43 (2003), 297–323.

23 This was a wave from 1967 to 1970: Detlef Siegfried, 'Draht zum Westen: Populäre Jugendkultur in den Medien 1963 bis 1971', in Monika Estermann and Edgar Lersch, eds., *Buch, Buchhandel und Rundfunk: 1968 und die Folgen* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003), 83–109, 104–7.

24 Karla Fohrbeck and Andreas J. Wiesand, 'Der TV-Schreiber: Ein 'Stück Rundfunkfreiheit'? Zur Soziologie der Fernsehautoren in der BRD', in Christian Longolius, ed., *Fernsehen in Deutschland*, vol. 3: *Macht und Ohnmacht der Autoren Fernsehen in Deutschland* (Mainz: v. Hase u. Köhler, 1973), 225–67, 257. Another such study with similar findings is Reinhart Stalman, 'Über die Professionalisierungstendenzen bei den Pressejournalisten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland', Ph.D. thesis, Zürich, 1974.

by 1970. The important weeklies, as well as some radio stations, were so intent on fostering independent steps towards *Ostpolitik* – initiating their own campaigns in order to ‘help pierce the Iron Curtain’²⁵ and negotiating mutual co-operation with the East German Press Office – that Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger in 1967 lamented the existence of a dangerous *Anerkennungspartei* (supporters of recognising the East German state) in the media.²⁶ Many print journalists now also favoured the idea of educating their readers in order to foster democratisation. Surprisingly, this attitude even extended to family-oriented magazines such as *Hör Zu!*, which was owned by the notoriously conservative publisher Axel Springer. In 1971 this weekly vowed to cater ‘not to the self-satisfied reader but to the critical one’ and to support ‘new ideas that help break down ossified prejudices, even if they encounter boiling rage at first’. It even stressed that ‘we don’t want to be a paper that always reassures its readers’.²⁷ Within little more than a decade, most mass media had come to support what they had previously opposed: conscious efforts to politicise media consumers, sharp criticism of the government, media-induced political scandals and media-triggered political debate.

The contrast between the West German mass media of the mid-fifties and the early seventies is striking, and it gives rise to important questions. When did the change come, and who or what initiated it? To begin with, there are many indications that the late fifties were a turning point. In 1958 the Springer-owned tabloid *Bild* began to reserve more room for political reporting,²⁸ and in 1957 public television broadcast its first political programmes. The critical ‘TV magazines’ launched at that time quickly became famous for harsh attacks on government politics and for unleashing numerous political scandals. They presented well-researched pieces on controversial issues and introduced new methods to television reporting: the calculated affront, a confrontational style of interviewing and the anchorman’s polite but sharp criticism of authorities and politicians. These programmes often dealt with highly charged topics such as the integration of Nazi perpetrators, the shortcomings of defence policy and the contradictory stance of the government towards East Germany.²⁹

25 The broadcasting station Westdeutscher Rundfunk in particular was infamous for such independent foreign policy moves. The above quotation, by its chief executive Klaus von Bismarck, stems from 1966. FAK, B 145/4480, note from 13 April 1966. See also Josef Schmid, ‘Intendant Klaus von Bismarck und die Kampagne gegen den ‘Rotfunk’ WDR’, *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 41 (2001): 349–81, 363–6.

26 By this, Kiesinger (chancellor from 1966 to 1969) was alluding to a large group of influential journalists who promoted the diplomatic recognition of the German Democratic Republic, and thus challenged the traditional West German politics of isolating the Eastern state. Speech in parliament on 13 October 1967: Kurt Georg Kiesinger, *Die Große Koalition 1966–1969: Reden und Erklärungen des Bundeskanzlers*, ed. Dieter Oberndörfer (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1979), 122–3.

27 Lu Seegers, ‘Fernsehstars und ‘freie Liebe’: Zur Karriere der Programmzeitschrift ‘Hör Zu’, 1965–1974’, *Zeithistorische Forschungen*, online edition, 1 (2004), 12.

28 Gudrun Kruip, *Das ‘Welt’-‘Bild’ des Axel Springer Verlages* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1999), 177.

29 The first programme, with the unwieldy title *Panorama – worüber man spricht, worüber man sprechen sollte* (Panorama – what one does and should talk about), was a forerunner of what was to become the successful series *Panorama* and *Report* from 1960/1961 on. Lampe, *Panorama, Report und Monitor*, 16–17; Hodenberg, *Konsens und Krise*, ch. 5.2.

Around 1960, different polling institutes found that the public had started to embrace political programmes and weeklies. Political television programmes such as *Panorama* and *Report* pulled in ever growing numbers of viewers, and sales of the news weekly *Der Spiegel* ballooned.³⁰ These facts were not lost on their market competitors. *Stern* and *Quick* began to include editorials and opinion pieces by well-known publicists, printed more and more letters to the editors, hired politicians as guest columnists and invented phone-in dialogue with high-ranking members of the government. And *Hör Zu!* concluded in 1962 that it needed to spice up its content because 'the simple man on the street is now used to sharper reporting'.³¹ Observers in the Federal Press Office (a powerful government institution overseeing the media) found the development particularly worrying: 'The former style of the illustrated weeklies is waning', they remarked; 'the mounting politicisation of the magazines is causing trouble . . . and negating the interest of the state'.³²

One of the most important factors behind these changes was a generational shift within the media elites. During the last third of the fifties, younger journalists gained control over pivotal sectors of the mass media. In fact, from 1956 onwards political coverage by television and radio stations came to be almost exclusively dominated by men born in the 1920s and early 1930s. Around 1960, the influence of this generational group made itself felt in the illustrated press as well. This group is often called the '45ers' because the year 1945 became the crucial turning point in their lives. Having grown up during the National Socialist period, this generation's ideals were shattered by the war's end, but this also opened up new opportunities.³³ Many were offered extraordinary career privileges during the occupation years, as an overall analysis of biographical patterns shows.

Those born between roughly 1921 and 1932 were the first generation of journalists who had been too young to go through professional socialisation in the pre-war media. Before 1945 they had been adolescents, students or soldiers, but not in media careers. Since they were untainted by the Nazi propaganda system, the Allied denazification efforts worked in their favour, and they could enter the media at a very young age, often without any professional training. In the late fifties their hour came: while still in their late twenties to early forties, they quickly leapfrogged their older colleagues, many of whom were tainted by their affiliation with the Nazi

30 For average ratings of the 'TV magazines', see Loewy and Klünder, *Magazinbeiträge* 2: 193 ff. The news weekly *Der Spiegel* had been known as the 'enfant terrible' of the West German media landscape before, but until 1961 the number of people it was able to reach by opting out of consensus journalism had been much more limited. See n. 19 above.

31 Quoted in Seegers, *Hör Zu!*, 227.

32 Report from 19 Feb. 1960, written by Kostka; note by Ruth Müller from 8 Nov. 1963. Both in FAK, B 145/1735.

33 A. Dirk Moses, 'The Forty-Fivers: A Generation between Fascism and Democracy', *German Politics and Society*, 17 (1999): 94–126; Franz-Werner Kersting, 'Helmut Schelskys 'Skeptische Generation' von 1957: Zur Publikations- und Wirkungsgeschichte eines Standardwerkes', *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 50 (2002), 465–495; Rolf Schörken, *Jugend 1945: Politisches Denken und Lebensgeschichte* (Opladen: Leske u. Budrich, 1990); Friedhelm Boll, 'Jugend im Umbruch vom Nationalsozialismus zur Nachkriegsdemokratie', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 37 (1997), S. 482–520.

system and burdened with the outdated and inflexible professional attitudes of prewar journalism. This argument is supported by a compilation of career data of 283 West German journalists of the 1940s–70s, and by biographical evidence pertaining to the editorial staff of particular mass media.³⁴ When we isolate from these 283 editors and reporters sixty-three belonging to the group of younger 45ers, we find that more than 60 per cent (thirty-nine) advanced to a leading position in the period from 1956 to 1963.³⁵ Many of the most prominent West German media makers of the sixties and seventies – including Peter Boenisch, Claus Jacobi, Klaus Harpprecht, Rudolf Augstein, Gerd Ruge, Günter Prinz and Matthias Walden – were born between 1926 and 1929, started as greenhorns after 1945 and climbed to the top of the ladder while they were still in their twenties.³⁶

From the late fifties on, and even more so in the sixties, this younger generation steered the course of the most influential mass media. This was especially true for the new medium of television. The staff of the important political programmes *Panorama* and *Report* belonged to this age group,³⁷ as did the main contributors to the renowned documentary film section of Süddeutscher Rundfunk.³⁸ In addition, 45ers led many of the regional broadcasting stations behind television's Channel One.³⁹ As in television, some of the most important weeklies were produced by young editors and reporters. *Der Spiegel* had always been a bulwark of this generation,⁴⁰ and its success story during the sixties was tied to Augstein, Conrad Ahlers (born 1922), Claus Jacobi (born 1927) and Hans Detlev Becker (born 1921). *Quick*, to name one more example, was led at this time by Günter Prinz (born 1929), Karl-Heinz Hagen (born 1919) and Peter Bachér (born 1927).

Interestingly, the well-known conservative mass media were not yet affected by the generational shift. Although 38 per cent of the 140 *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* journalists belonged to the 45er age group in 1964, 84 per cent (sixteen of nineteen) of

34 There is no strict division of labor between editors and reporters in Germany; thus all who produce media content and are fully employed are referred to as 'editors' (*Redakteure*).

35 The database I compiled contains data about 283 West German journalists culled from various files in the archives of Westdeutscher Rundfunk and Südwestfunk, Hamburger Weltwirtschaftsarchiv, and the US National Archives. Also used were data given in biographies, autobiographies, and the specialised literature on particular media. Included were especially journalists of the broadcasting stations cited above, of television stations, and of the magazines *Zeit*, *Stern*, *Quick*, *Constanze*, *Hör Zu!*, and *Christ und Welt*. Since biographical information is most readily available on those who became well known or stayed with the profession for decades, the top positions are overrepresented.

36 Of the above mentioned, only Augstein was slightly older – born in 1923, he already headed *Der Spiegel* in 1947.

37 This holds true for Gert von Paczensky, Joachim Fest, Peter Merseburger and Bernt Engelmann at *Panorama*, and for Günter Gaus, Wolf Littmann, Helmut Hammerschmidt and Claus Hinrich Casdorff at *Report*.

38 The 45ers who gathered there were Helmut Jedele, Heinz Huber, Hans Gottschalk, Peter Adler, Horst Jaedicke, Martin Walser, Wilhelm Bittorf and Dieter Ertel, among others.

39 To give a few examples: Franz Wördemann, born in 1923, headed the *Westdeutscher Rundfunk* television department from 1962; Hans Heigert, born in 1925, led the *Bayerischer Rundfunk* television from 1961; Rolf Menzel, born in 1924, headed the *Sender Freies Berlin* television from 1956.

40 Just, 'Der Spiegel', 50; Martin Löffler, *Der Verfassungsauftrag der Presse: Modellfall Spiegel* (Karlsruhe: Müller, 1963), 26–7.

the top positions were still held by those born before 1914. *Christ und Welt* displayed the same relative resistance to generational change. The core of its editorial staff, which consisted of journalists born between 1902 and 1910, remained essentially intact from 1948 until at least 1963.⁴¹ In the case of Axel Springer's papers, the publisher hand-picked younger editors who fitted in with his political agenda (such as the more conservative 45ers Peter Boenisch and Matthias Walden) while weeding out many 45ers who developed the more typical liberal ambitions (such as Gert von Paczensky) and holding on to aging conservatives (such as Hans Zehrer or Eduard Rhein).⁴² Not surprisingly, then, these media resisted the new brand of journalism championed by the 45ers.

The marked differences in age composition fuelled a growing polarisation of the West German mass media during the long sixties. While television, radio, and the more liberal weeklies jumped on the bandwagon of critical reporting, most daily papers and the other decidedly conservative print media regularly denounced what they saw as the harmful effects of popular politicisation on the state and the nation. Faced with this competition, German audiences increasingly opted for the newer journalistic style that embraced criticism, political debate, and scepticism towards government measures. The strategies of the 45ers fell on fertile ground as the political television programmes became ever more popular, *Stern* and *Quick* dwarfed rival magazines such as the apolitical *Revue* and the conservative *Kristall*, and the government-friendly *Christ und Welt* was swiftly overtaken by the more liberal *Die Zeit*.⁴³

Thus, at the point when West German society began to feel affluent and become affluent, the mass media discovered that their audience longed for more politics. It should be noted that this twist in public taste became apparent well before the infamous *Spiegel* affair of 1962. This affair, which is commonly interpreted by historians as the trigger for the emergence of a critical public sphere in West Germany, was in fact but one station on a long journey that had begun five years earlier.⁴⁴ A closer look at major public debates in the Federal Republic from 1958 to 1964 shows that the *Spiegel* scandal was only one of many highly publicised conflicts raging between politics and the mass media at the time – if arguably the most far-reaching. Since the late fifties the younger reporters and editors in weeklies and broadcasting

41 Based on the biographies of *Frankfurter Allgemeine* journalists in the brochure *Sie redigieren und schreiben die Frankfurter Allgemeine, Zeitung für Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main, 1964). For *Christ und Welt*, see David Matern, 'Die intellektuelle Rechte auf ihrem Weg in die Bundesrepublik: Die Wochenzeitung "Christ und Welt" zwischen 1948 und 1963', M.A. thesis, Freiburg University, 2001, 15–26.

42 Kruij, *Das 'Welt'-'Bild'*, 106–113, 121; Seegers, *Hör Zu!*, 174–90, 226–30.

43 See the data in a parliamentary report: *Schlußbericht der Pressekommission des Bundestages*, 3 July 1968 (Deutscher Bundestag, 5. Wahlperiode, Drucksache V/3122), 132, 136, 138, 151–7.

44 For evaluations by historians, see A. J. Nicholls, *The Bonn Republic: West German Democracy, 1945–1990* (London: Longman, 1997), 177; Heinrich August Winkler, *Der lange Weg nach Westen*, 2 vols., 4th edn (Munich: Beck, 2002), 2: 209; Dietrich Thränhardt, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 2nd edn (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996), 152; Thomas Ellwein, *Krisen und Reformen: Die Bundesrepublik seit den sechziger Jahren*, 2nd edn (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1993), 33; Daniela Münkler, 'Die Medienpolitik von Konrad Adenauer und Willy Brandt', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 41 (2001), 297–316, 310; Weiss, 'Journalisten', 272–3.

stations had triggered a fair number of similar affairs – such as the ‘Heye affair’, the ‘Schnurre affair’, the ‘bugging affair’ (*Abhöraffaire*) and the ‘Wienand affair’, to name just a few. The television programme *Panorama* unleashed multiple scandals, which led to the resignation of four of its famous anchormen in succession. Likewise, the sharply critical television cabaret show *Hallo Nachbarn* (Hello Neighbours) fought off several attempts to censor it.⁴⁵ At the heart of these scandals lay breaches of the anti-communist, Cold-War national consensus that supposedly guaranteed strength in the fight against the internal and external enemies. Media reports typically ran into trouble whenever they criticised the West German military or depicted East Germany in a favourable light.⁴⁶ Without diminishing the significance of the *Spiegel* affair in 1962, it can thus be concluded that this scandal was neither a singular incident nor the ‘big bang’ that brought about a democratised public sphere. Rather, as the climax of a long series of conflicts, it mirrored tensions that had built up since the late fifties in the form of the strained relations between government and mass media, the increasing polarisation of the media spectrum and the growing influence of younger journalists who had discovered critical political reporting to be a formula for success.

Journalistic practices and media generations

From the late fifties onwards, the generational shift in the media elites contributed not only to an unusual accumulation of media scandals but also to a profound change in journalistic practices. A new brand of political journalism emerged, launched mainly by 45ers, and labelled ‘*Zeitkritik*’ or ‘*zeitkritischer Journalismus*’ (critical contemporary journalism). Two West German media embodied *Zeitkritik* at its purest, namely the television programme *Panorama* and the news weekly *Der Spiegel*. At the time, both were widely perceived as symbols of this new type of journalism, and both were produced by the new generation of journalists that defied the professional ethos of the 1950s. For a definition of *Zeitkritik*, one can turn to the Federal Press Office. In July 1962, in a letter critical of *Der Spiegel* before the *Spiegel* affair unfolded, it characterised ‘the so-called *Zeitkritik*’ as a kind of journalism ‘which predominantly focuses on political issues, discussing them in a way that includes sharp, and often unjustified, criticism of government agencies and personages of public significance’, and which moreover preferred to report on ‘scandalous affairs’.⁴⁷ Whenever contemporaries talked about *Zeitkritik*, they were referring to a particular concept of mass-oriented political journalism that challenged the traditional, more elitist approach of German media. Now, more than ever before, journalists tried to sell politics in a less intellectual and more entertaining way. They wanted to encourage controversy and to use the inherent attraction of political scandal. They embraced selected patterns of Western

45 In the publicly owned West German broadcasting system, the major political parties were at times able to oust leading journalists or censor programmes due to their representation in the controlling committees. See the numerous files of press reactions to both programmes from the 1960s, Medienarchiv, Norddeutscher Rundfunk, Hamburg.

46 For a more detailed listing and analysis of scandals, see Hodenberg, *Konsens und Krise*, ch. 5.3.

47 Note of Federal Press Office to Foreign Office, 27 Feb. 1962. FAK, B 145/4124.

journalism, even modelling entire programmes and periodicals on British and US examples. This was a remarkable departure from the practice of the fifties, when top editors in almost all mass media were inherently suspicious of 'American' or 'Western' journalistic patterns and insisted on the idea of a superior, German, highbrow culture. At this point it will be necessary to draw a more general picture of the journalistic ethos of the 1950s against which the *Zeitkritiker* among the media makers rallied.

The label 'consensus journalism' fits the dominant journalistic practices of the fifties best. This ethos was partly grounded in traditions inherited from Nazi, Weimar, and imperial Germany, and was partly a reaction against the sharp divisions in Weimar political culture that had contributed to the rise of Nazism.⁴⁸ At its heart lay the idea that the function of the mass media was to foster social and political consensus. This consensus in turn was meant to stabilise the state, which was regarded as a high value in itself. Since the media were supposed to serve the interests of the state, and state and government were basically identical, 'consensus journalists' promoted broad co-operation with governmental institutions, shied away from conflicts and reserved more substantial and opinionated political reporting for the 'respectable' media and thus an educated elite readership. Another core idea, apart from securing consensus and stabilising the state, was to defend a supposedly superior, traditional German culture against new, 'Western' influences. Until the mid-fifties the Federal Republic was indeed a rather unstable, provisional, not even fully sovereign body politic, threatened by deep social cleavages as well as by national division, the Cold War and a past that deeply discredited nationalism. Therefore the logic of consensus journalism was convincing to a majority of the elites and the public. A few examples can illustrate the extent to which consensus journalism ruled during the fifties.

As noted earlier, the mass media tried to abstain from politics and oriented their marketing strategies towards selling harmony. This definitely met audiences' needs during the fifties, as opinion polls indicate. Critical reporting made readers feel uneasy: in 1955, only one in two West Germans thought that the media should be allowed to criticise foreign policy decisions by the chancellor, and only 42 per cent defended the right of the press to cover neo-Nazi issues and instances of governmental corruption.⁴⁹ Media elites themselves subscribed to a severely limited concept of freedom of the press. When a 1956 study interviewed 'a representative sample of responsible editors of West Germany's 700 daily and weekly newspapers' about issues of freedom of the press, it found that 'A majority of the editors feel that the press should *not* report on everything. Their primary concern is with violations of "common taste" . . . The great majority are willing to accept some restrictions on their freedom, while only a small group insists that its rights must never be abridged'.

48 For imperial and Weimar traditions, see Jörg Requate, *Journalismus als Beruf: Entstehung und Entwicklung des Journalistenberufs im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1995); Ute Daniel, 'Die Politik der Propaganda: Zur Praxis gouvernementaler Selbstrepräsentation vom Kaiserreich bis zur Bundesrepublik', in U. D. and Wolfram Siemann, eds., *Propaganda: Meinungskampf, Verführung und politische Sinnstiftung, 1789–1989* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1994), 44–82. For the Nazi era, see Norbert Frei and Johannes Schmitz, *Journalismus im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Beck, 1989).

49 Surveys conducted for the US High Commissioner in West Germany. Hurwitz, *Die Stunde Null*, 297.

Government encroachment was tolerated by 53 per cent of journalists, who deemed the limitation of press freedoms to be acceptable as long as they were related to the prevention of state-threatening crises, the leakage of military secrets or illegal media practices.⁵⁰ Compared with their British colleagues, West German journalists were also much less likely to use secret government material for their reporting.⁵¹

This attitude was mirrored in the way in which leading journalists defined their professional role. Helmut Cron, head of the German Association of Journalists (Deutscher Journalisten-Verband) from 1950 to 1953, declared that the media should 'act in conformity with society, and integrate in a rational manner'. He wanted 'the actions of the political press to correspond with the situation and demands of society' and to ensure this by 'self-discipline by our own free will'. Accordingly, for Cron, the 'cardinal virtues' of the editor were 'humility and bravery', 'renunciation and the will to sacrifice'.⁵² Humility was also a core concept for Alfred Frankenfeld, the spokesman of the professional association of Hamburg journalists. He advised young editors to embark on 'character formation', to weed out 'arrogance and presumption' and to cultivate 'the humility needed for the true mission of the journalist: writing the chronicle of the times'.⁵³ Freedom of the press was acceptable only when coupled with media responsibility, as shown by the bearing of the German Press Council during the fifties. This independent media organisation intended not only to guard the freedom of the press but also 'to fight the abuse of this freedom'.⁵⁴

Being humble, responsible and self-disciplined, the journalists of the fifties felt entitled to be part of the elite, and sought close ties to those who governed. Reporters relied heavily on informal circles and personal relationships to provide political information, cultivating traditions that went back to the nineteenth century.⁵⁵ Indeed, government press conferences in Bonn were less lively than, for instance, press conferences under the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations in the United States. They yielded few useful details and consisted mainly of announcements by the so-called *Bundespressechef* – that is, the head of the Federal Press Office. Journalists mostly

50 Research Staff, Office of Public Affairs, US Embassy, Germany, 'West German Editors Assess the Press', Report C-6, Series no. 3, 21 Feb. 1957.

51 Renate Köcher, 'Spürhund und Missionar: Eine vergleichende Untersuchung über Berufsethik und Aufgabenverständnis britischer und deutscher Journalisten', Ph.D. thesis, Munich, 1985, 160.

52 Cron (born 1899), 'Der Journalist und seine Verbände', in Harry Pross, ed., *Deutsche Presse seit 1945* (Bern: Scherz, 1965), 11–26, here 25–6, 18–19.

53 Frankenfeld, born 1898, was editor-in-chief and led the 'Berufsvereinigung Hamburger Journalisten' from 1951. 'Problematik der journalistischen Nachwuchs-Ausbildung', in Deutscher Journalisten-Verband e.v., ed., *Zehn Jahre Deutscher Journalisten-Verband: Festschrift anlässlich der Hauptversammlung des DJV vom 23. bis zum 27. März 1960 in Berlin* (Bonn: Neuwied, 1960), 13–15, 15.

54 As explained by Rupert Giessler, head of the Deutscher Journalisten-Verband 1952 to 1965, and member of the Council. 'Der deutsche Presserat', in *ibid.*, 23–6, 26.

55 See Requate, 270–1, 330–7; Margaret L. Anderson, *Practicing Democracy: Elections and Political Culture in Imperial Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 369–73; Gunda Stöber, *Pressepolitik als Notwendigkeit: Zum Verhältnis von Staat und Öffentlichkeit im Wilhelminischen Deutschland, 1890–1914* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2000), 60.

refrained from aggressive questioning, and the chancellor showed up only rarely.⁵⁶ What really mattered was membership in informal circles. Being invited to Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's 'chats over tea' (*Teegespräche*) or becoming a member of the Deutsche Presseclub, where high-ranking members of the Adenauer administration socialised with Bonn journalists, meant being among the first to know the news. The press club was formally independent, but in reality it relied heavily on the Federal Press Office, which provided the money, the premises, the legal expertise and the impetus for its founding. Interestingly, foreign reporters and those working for Allied media were excluded.⁵⁷

When facing criticism from abroad German editors liked to defend their practices by pointing out deficiencies in the Western media. 'The modern American paper', a journalism textbook maintained in 1951, was subject to 'the taste of the broad masses' and a 'dictatorship of the reader' which brought about 'sensationalism in every area' and a mixture 'of news and fiction'.⁵⁸ Some of the most influential editors of the 1950s – such as Walter Jänecke, head of the association of press publishers, Richard Tüngel, editor-in-chief of *Die Zeit*, or the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* correspondent Margret Boveri – even wrote blunt anti-American tracts.⁵⁹ 'Western' or 'un-German' journalistic patterns were so unpopular that during the late 1940s and early 1950s even the editors of the *Neue Zeitung* (a US-produced newspaper for Germany) opted to drape their message in traditional German clothing.⁶⁰

Consensus journalism offered many advantages to journalists who had been professionally socialised in the Weimar and Nazi eras. It adapted somewhat to the new democratic system but retained a good measure of journalistic tradition. It did away with the superior German nation but held on to German cultural superiority. In the eyes of these editors and reporters, backing the government meant backing the state, stability and democracy, and refraining from opinionated, critical coverage

56 Details in Horst O. Walker, *Das Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung: Eine Untersuchung zu Fragen der Organisation, Koordination und Kontrolle der Presse- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit der Bundesregierung* (Frankfurt am Main: Haag u. Herchen, 1982), 184–5.

57 Heinz Murmann, *Mit 'C' ist es feiner: Der Deutsche Presseclub Bonn von 1952 bis heute* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1997); Konrad Adenauer, *Teegespräche 1950–1963*, ed. Rudolf Morsey and Hans-Peter Schwarz, 4 vols. (Berlin: Siedler, 1984–92).

58 Handbook *Der Journalist: Das Handbuch für den Publizisten*, ed. Karl d'Estes and Ewald W. Remy, vol. 1 (Giessen: Presse-Verlag, 1951). Quoted are the essays by Ruth Münster-Göldner, 114, and Rolf Meyer, 166.

59 Jänecke had written an anonymous pamphlet in 1948, sharply criticising the media policies of the US occupation: see Franz B. Gross, 'Freedom of the Press under Military Government in Western Germany (1945–1949), The Origin and the Development of the New German Press', Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1952, 218–21. Tüngel published a clearly anti-American book together with Hans Rudolf Berndorff, the successful author of serial novels for the weeklies of the fifties: *Auf dem Bauche sollst Du kriechen ... Deutschland unter den Besatzungsmächten* (Hamburg: Wegner, 1958). Boveri's *Amerikafibel* celebrated German culture against the backdrop of a bleak United States: see Michaela Hoenicke Moore, 'German Journalists and the "Boundless Continent" after 1945: America as a Theme in the Narrative Refashioning of the Political Self', paper given at the German Studies Association Conference, New Orleans, September 2003.

60 Gienow-Hecht, *Transmission Impossible*.

signalled that journalists had learned a lesson from the partiality and political clashes that had contributed to the failure of the Weimar Republic.

At the end of the fifties, however, with the generational shift consensus journalism came increasingly under attack. The younger generation not only challenged traditional patterns of daily journalistic practice, but tried to redefine the values and the mission of the profession. The contemporary discourse within the media elites shows that most 45er editors explicitly railed against any formation of consensus. In 1961, when Hans Magnus Enzensberger, a frequent contributor to radio programmes and periodicals, denounced 'the leading men' in the mass media for having succumbed to the 'occupational disease' of self-censorship and *Gratisangst* (cheap fear), his intervention triggered many positive responses from colleagues. Enzensberger wrote in *Die Zeit*,

Our constitution states: 'There is no censorship' . . . Isn't that well known by now? Seriously, does the chief executive of the broadcasting station have to fear being put up against the wall if he's no longer in favour? . . . What kind of 'trouble' is it that we hear so much about, that is spoken of in every editors' conference, and that everyone is afraid of getting into all the time?⁶¹

These 45ers agreed that it was criticism, not consensus, that was needed. Demanding 'societal harmony' meant nothing other than 'lulling the watchful citizen to sleep, and preventing public checks on power', wrote Joachim Fest, anchorman of the television programme *Panorama*. He and others also targeted the quiet societal integration of former Nazis that had taken place after the end of denazification. Fest faulted audiences for 'a totalitarian, or at least authoritarian, mindset'.⁶² Thirty-four-year-old Werner Holzer, managing editor of the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, lamented 'a lot of inchoate pro-Nazi sentiment among the German masses' and thought that West Germany was far from being a 'truly democratic state'.⁶³ His colleague Wolfgang Leonhard even called the Federal Republic a 'manipulated mixture of democracy and authoritarianism'.⁶⁴

Like the older generation, the 45ers feared for the stability of the Federal Republic, but they drew a very different conclusion. They worried more about the prospects of West German democracy than about those of the West German state, and thus their main aim was to foster democratisation by establishing a more participatory public sphere. They attacked the idea of a state beyond criticism, called for discussion

61 *Die Zeit* no. 8, 17 Feb. 1961. For responses, see Harry Pross, 'Eigentümlichkeiten der Meinungsbildung', in *Politik und Publizistik in Deutschland seit 1945: Zeitbedingte Positionen* (Munich: R. Piper, 1980), 84–93, 86, 90–1; A. L. Adriaan, 'Die Bewußtseins-Industrie und ihr Kritiker', *Merkur*, 17 (1963), 82–8, 83.

62 Joachim Fest, 'Schwierigkeiten mit der Kritik: Die demokratische Funktion der Fernsehmagazine', in Christian Longolius, ed., *Fernsehen in Deutschland*, vol. 1: *Gesellschaftspolitische Aufgaben und Wirkungen eines Mediums* (Mainz: v. Hase u. Köhler, 1967), 105–10, 107.

63 Holzer's views as reported by the US Consul General in Frankfurt, W. Wendell Blancké, to the Department of State on 27 Jan. 1960. National Archives Washington (hereafter NAW), RG 59, Box 3069, 962a.61/1-2760.

64 Leonhard was a freelancer; his discussion contribution in *Darmstädter Gespräch 1960: Der Mensch und seine Meinung*, ed. Eugen Kogon and Heinz Winfried Sabais (Darmstadt: Neue Darmstädter Verlagsanstalt, 1961), 138.

and dissent, and tried to get viewers and readers involved. Defining themselves as 'the vanguard of critical thought and intellectual progress',⁶⁵ the young journalists wanted 'in a way, to manipulate' audiences, even use a bit of 'demagoguery' to make people 'actively support democracy'.⁶⁶ Speaking out against the traditional concept of the state, they argued that 'the supposedly sovereign power of the state which trumps individual freedom' was a concept right out of 'absolutism'.⁶⁷ Those reporters who covered political events on television made their mission especially explicit. The media should help bring about 'a climate of liberties', counteract 'authoritarian beliefs', and 'confront simple people with political questions' – these were the judgements of Rüdiger Proske, Eugen Kogon and Franz Wördemann.⁶⁸ The editor Karl Moersch summed up, 'We younger people agreed that we had to incur the responsibility for the new democratic state'.⁶⁹

On a more general level, these 45ers scrutinised traditional German values with respect to their contribution to a democratic society. In the West they sought not only a safeguard against the communist enemy, but also new values that could replace anachronistic traditions. 'We were able to look up to the model of the United States', the newspaper editor Werner Birkenmaier confessed,⁷⁰ and his television colleague Thilo Koch, comparing West Germany with the United States, diagnosed in the Germans 'a lack of freedom in individual attitudes'.⁷¹ From the early sixties onwards, young editors of *Spiegel* and *Zeit*, Westdeutscher Rundfunk and Norddeutscher Rundfunk joined the 'Congress for Cultural Freedom' in growing numbers. This network of intellectuals, created by US agencies, had just shifted its role from promoting anti-communism to pushing for a more general Westernisation and liberalisation of political culture. It therefore appealed to the new generation of journalists.⁷²

At least in part, the considerable impact of Western and especially US models on this journalistic generation can be attributed to the conscious reorientation policy of

65 Hansjakob Stehle, manuscript for a programme in the radio series *Unteilbares Deutschland*, Historical Archive of Westdeutscher Rundfunk, no. 2764, 12 Oct. 1963, 1.

66 Harry Pross in *Darmstädter Gespräch 1960*, 133; Rüdiger Proske, *ibid.*, 143; Werner Steltzer, *ibid.*, 220.

67 Alexander Kluge, 'Instrumentarium unseres Verratsbegriffs', *Merkur* 17 (1963), 107–12, 110.

68 Proske in *Darmstädter Gespräch 1960*, 90; Eugen Kogon in a speech to the editors of *Panorama* in December 1964, quoted in Gerhard Lampe and Heidemarie Schumacher, *Das 'Panorama' der 60er Jahre: Zur Geschichte des ersten politischen Fernsehmagazins der BRD* (Berlin: Spiess, 1991), 228; Franz Wördemann, 'Konkurrent und Sündenbock: Zur Kritik an politischen Fernsehsendungen', in Longolius, *Fernsehen in Deutschland*, 1: 99–104, 103.

69 Moersch (newspaper editor, born 1926), 'Pro und Contra', in Hermann Fünfgeld, ed., *Von außen besehen: Markenzeichen des Süddeutschen Rundfunks* (Stuttgart: Süddeutscher Rundfunk, 1998), 305–15, 307.

70 Birkenmaier (born 1934), 'Von der 'Umerziehung' zur 'Aufklärung': Die politische Sozialisation eines Journalisten durch den Stuttgarter Rundfunk', in *ibid.*, 171–80, 175.

71 Koch, 'Die guten Genieser mit dem schlechten Gewissen', *Die Zeit* no. 37, 11 Sept. 1964.

72 Among its members from 1959 onwards were Klaus Harpprecht, Gerd Ruge, Jürgen Rühle, Theo Sommer, Hans Gresmann, Rudolf Walter Leonhardt, Franz Wördemann, Carola Stern, Leonhard Reinisch, Rolf Becker and Wolf Jobst Siedler. The Hamburg section of the Congress was likened to a 'circle of journalists'. See Michael Hochgeschwender, *Freiheit in der Offensive? Der Kongress für kulturelle Freiheit und die Deutschen* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998), ch. 9, and 525, 484, 492 (quotation: 499).

the former occupying powers. On the one hand, many of these editors remembered their privileged entry into the profession under the auspices of denazification and the training they had received in US-led occupation media. Peter Boenisch, later to become the top editor at *Bravo*, *Revue* and *Bild*, called himself ‘a foster child of the Americans’. *Süddeutsche Zeitung* reporter-in-chief Hans-Ulrich Kempfski admitted, ‘I learned a lot from American press officers’. Their ‘tolerance and liberalism’ was also praised by Egon Bahr, who had been trained as a journalist with the US-controlled media *Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Neue Zeitung* and RIAS (Radio in the American Sector).⁷³ The Americans also ran a large exchange programme that was aimed to no small extent at journalists. Biographical data indicate that at least a quarter of 45er editors spent some time in Western countries before 1960, usually as interns or students or on exchanges. They mostly headed to the United States, to a lesser extent to Britain and France.⁷⁴ American reports emphasised that the reorientation programme produced ‘a steady though limited flow of German journalists and writers to the United States’, and from 1948 to 1954 ‘practically every editor-in-chief and radio station director’ had participated.⁷⁵ The US State Department focused not only on top personnel, but also on promising young professionals. Among the selected journalists, many of whom later rose to prominence, were Matthias Walden (‘one of the most able younger television directors of public affairs programmes’),⁷⁶ Franz Wördemann (‘television commentator and editor of regional programme *Hier und Heute*’),⁷⁷ and Carola Stern (‘one of the best interpreters of Eastern Zone conditions and developments . . . Through her writings she has been of valuable service to American, British and West German government agencies’).⁷⁸

Searching for alternatives to replace an obsolete professional ethos, many 45ers turned their experience abroad into a veritable mine of reform ideas. It is no coincidence that *Der Spiegel* was modelled after *Time* magazine, and that *Panorama* copied the British television programmes *Panorama* and *That Was the Week That Was*. For colleagues who wanted to introduce *Zeitkritik* to television, Klaus Bölling at Norddeutscher Rundfunk recommended taking a look at ‘the renowned political

73 Kempfski in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 3 Aug. 2002. Boenisch, born 1927, quoted in Kaspar Maase, *Bravo Amerika: Erkundungen zur Jugendkultur der Bundesrepublik in den fünfziger Jahren* (Hamburg: Junius, 1992), 262, nn. 76–7. Egon Bahr, *Zu meiner Zeit*, 2nd edn (Munich: K. Blessing, 1996), 63.

74 See the database mentioned above: for twenty-one of ninety-three 45ers, longer stays in one or more of these countries are documented before 1960.

75 Up to 1954, at least 597 editors were flown to the United States. See Henry P. Pilgert, *Press, Radio and Film in West Germany 1945–1953*, Historical Division, Office of the Executive Secretary, Office of the US High Commissioner For Germany (n.p., 1953), 64; Henry P. Pilgert, *The Exchange of Persons Program in Western Germany*, Historical Division (n.p., 1951), 34; Henry J. Kellermann, *Cultural Relations as an Instrument of US Foreign Policy: The Educational Exchange Program Between the United States and Germany 1945–1954*, Historical Studies, Cultural Relations Programs of the US Department of State, vol. 3 (Washington, DC, 1978), 99, 104.

76 Public Affairs Officer USBER Berlin, Albert E. Hemsing, to Department of State, 21 Sept. 1962: NAW, RG 59, Box 3068, 962a.40/9-2162, 3.

77 Letter of 12 June 1959: NAW, RG 59, Microfilm C 0056, Reel 36, 962a.6211/6-1259, appendix 1, 1.

78 Ibid., 962a.6211/2-1959 (letter of 19 Feb. 1959), appendix 1, 3. Stern, born as Erika Ahsmus in 1925, fled the German Democratic Republic in 1951 and then worked for West German magazines and radio stations.

programmes in America'.⁷⁹ Indeed, the first editor to plan and implement critical political programmes on West German television – Rüdiger Proske at Norddeutscher Rundfunk – 'had been in America longer and more often than the others, and had experienced the genres of American feature, documentary and TV magazine first-hand'.⁸⁰

Many of the practices that *Zeitkritiker* used to challenge consensus journalism were conceived to be somewhat 'Western'. This goes for daily practices such as teamwork, the division of labour between reporters and editors, critical reporting from a neutral stance, reserving prime slots for letters to the editor, and more generally, the concept of the press as a watchdog over the powerful and a forum of broad political debate. Investigative journalism and particularly scandalmongering were also identified as 'American' traits. And those 45ers who regularly used political scandal to spice up their programmes and columns (and to boost their own careers) justified this approach as an effort to adapt to the standards of Western democracies. Scandals were an acceptable means to 'mobilise citizens' and to ensure that the media effectively 'kept an eye on politics', as Walter Menningen of *Panorama* stated. Television correspondent Thilo Koch saw journalists putting on the 'emergency brakes' on behalf of democracy, as in the United States. And Johannes Gaitanides praised scandalmongering in a broadcast from Bayerischer Rundfunk: 'To prevent rusting, a democracy needs the provocation, the oil of scandal'.⁸¹

Not surprisingly, the growing gap between media generations and the conflicts surrounding the deficiencies of consensus journalism and the scandals of *Zeitkritik* greatly accelerated the political polarisation of the West German media landscape. By the late sixties, *zeitkritische* media such as *Spiegel*, *Stern*, and *konkret* were more successful, and more leftist, than ever. The conservative media radicalised as well. From 1963 onwards, publisher Axel Springer pushed his papers *Welt* and *Bild* to the nationalist right, and the weekly *Christ und Welt* fell into line.⁸² Highly publicised, protracted battles concerning Springer's market share followed. At this point, a new movement and a new generation came into play.

'1968' and the media

For the Federal Republic, the last third of the 1960s was the apex of polarisation – not only of the mass media, but also on the streets. Protest demonstrations, student movements and battles with the police culminated in 1967 and 1968. Most of the protesters were students, born roughly from the mid-1930s to the late 1940s, and later called the '68er' generation. This non-parliamentary opposition crystallised around a few main issues, among them the Vietnam War, the Nazi past of West German elites,

79 Klaus Bölling, 'Politisches Fernsehen: Gefahr und Auftrag', in *Rundfunk und Fernsehen*, 11 (1963), 365–74, 373.

80 Co-editor Manfred Jenke, quoted in Lampe and Schumacher, *Das 'Panorama' der 60er Jahre*, 34–5.

81 Quotations from manuscripts of the evening programme of Bayerischer Rundfunk on 24 Sept. 1965 and 31 July 1967. Bayerischer Rundfunk Historical Archive (hereafter BR HA), HF 2143 and HF 2145. Koch, 'Pensioniert von der Geschichte', *Die Zeit* no. 36, 4 Sept. 1964.

82 Kruij, *Das 'Welt'-'Bild'*, 106–9, 121; Matern, 'Die intellektuelle Rechte', 98.

hierarchical university structures – and the power of media tycoon Axel Springer.⁸³ Indeed, the clash of the protesters with Springer's yellow press has often been seen as a defining feature of the movement. But to characterise the relationship of 68ers with the mass media as enmity would hardly be correct.⁸⁴ Many of the most important mass media fuelled the criticism and sympathised with the actions of the protesters and later offered them career opportunities. To determine what 1968 meant for the process of democratisation, it is necessary first to look at how much the mass media supported the protest movement, and second to follow the careers of the next, 68er generation of journalists and their quest to change media practices.

It is a popular myth that the West German mass media opposed the student protesters and generally backed the 'establishment'.⁸⁵ Of course, the Springer press (with the papers *Bild* and *Welt*) and other conservative media strongly condemned the protests and endorsed the most brutal police measures. But these media represented the smaller and less influential pole of the divided media spectrum of the time. By 1967/1968, *Zeitkritik* already heavily dominated mass media. The public sphere in the city of Berlin, where the student actions climaxed and where Springer controlled most of the printed press, was thus not representative of West Germany as a whole. A look at television programmes, radio broadcasts and the popular weeklies of the time reveals that most of the reporters actually welcomed protest and rebellion. Klaus von Bismarck (chief executive of Westdeutscher Rundfunk) admitted in 1969 that 'many programme makers were overjoyed to see young people engaging in politics'. For this reason, television broadcasts had 'surely covered the actions of the rebellious youth in too much detail and way too positively'.⁸⁶

This should not come as a surprise. After all, most journalists who covered the protests for *zeitkritische* mass media were 45ers who wanted to encourage more participation in politics and more conflicts in public, and who had helped to publicise many of the signature topics of the extra-parliamentary opposition since at least the mid-sixties. For example, the Vietnam reporting by television, radio and weeklies like *Spiegel* and *Stern* had acquired a sharply critical tone as early as 1965. As US diplomats wrote in August 1966, 'Coverage of the Viet Nam war on West German television is definitely inimical to the interest of the United States Government ... Not only the news broadcasts, but also the special commentary programmes such as *Report* and *Panorama* present film after film depicting the horrors of war'.⁸⁷

83 Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, *Die 68er Bewegung: Deutschland – Westeuropa – USA* (Munich: Beck, 2001); Michael A. Schmidtke, *Der Aufbruch der jungen Intelligenz: Die 68er-Jahre in der Bundesrepublik und den USA* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2003).

84 Cf. Söseman 'Die 68er Bewegung'; Kraushaar, '1968 und Massenmedien'; Schmidtke, '1968' und die Massenmedien'.

85 A recent example for the reproduction of this myth is Hilwig, 'The Revolt against the Establishment'.

86 Bismarck, 'Der gesellschaftskritische Auftrag', 52.

87 NAW, RG 59, Box 1468, TEL 9-2 Ger-W: USIS Bonn to Department of State, signed Hillenbrand, 16 Aug. 1966. – '*Spiegel* has been highly critical of the US position in Viet Nam', *ibid.*, Box 424, PPB 7 Ger W-US, 20 Jan. 1966, Embassy Bonn, McGhee, to Secretary of State. *Stern* headlines in 1965 read variously 'America's Dirty War' (no. 12, March 21, 1965, 38), 'A Crime' (no. 24, 13 June 1965, 122-23), 'The Hopeless War' (no. 44, 31 Oct. 1965, 60).

In addition to the Vietnam War, these media had focused on the Nazi past of West German professors before 1964,⁸⁸ and stimulated a public debate about the 'educational catastrophe' (*Bildungskatastrophe*) and the universities in 1964.⁸⁹

When major protests erupted in the summer of 1967, many 45ers in the media tried to de-escalate the situation and convey the message of the student movement to a mass audience. The anchorman of the political television programme *Monitor*, Claus Hinrich Casdorff, was no exception when he stressed in a broadcast of November 1967, 'We want to make sure that the activists outside the political parties, outside parliament are treated fairly, and that a sober debate is possible'.⁹⁰ In television, radio and weeklies, editors tried to engage in an unbiased discussion of the issues that had sparked protest, and subtly to counterbalance popular prejudices.⁹¹ The police were heavily criticised for overreacting, and Rudolf Augstein, editor-in-chief of *Spiegel*, called officers who beat female students 'a brutish gang'.⁹² In interviews student leaders, such as Rudi Dutschke, Bernd Rabehl, Knut Nevermann, Klaus Meschkat and Daniel Cohn-Bendit, were given ample opportunity to speak.⁹³ Prime-time programmes on television tried to evoke sympathy or at least understanding for the youth movement.⁹⁴ Some television programmes, especially *Report*, even revealed how fascinated some 45er journalists had become with alternative lifestyles. They reported on LSD trips, communes, San Francisco hippies, Amsterdam 'provos' and sexual experimentation, all in a positive, more or less uncritical manner.⁹⁵

Obviously the political polarisation that had gripped the mass media since the early sixties heavily influenced the coverage of events in 1967 and 1968.⁹⁶ Conservative

88 Particularly *Die Zeit* and *Spiegel*; see Bernd-A. Rusinek, 'Von der Entdeckung der NS-Vergangenheit zum generellen Faschismusverdacht: Akademische Diskurse in der Bundesrepublik der 60er Jahre', in Lammers et al., *Dynamische Zeiten*, 114–47, 118.

89 Initiated by an article series by Georg Picht in *Die Zeit*, 1964.

90 Quoted in Lampe, *Panorama, Report und Monitor*, 215.

91 Good examples of this tendency are programmes or articles that started off with a highly emotional, prejudice-laden narrative only to deconstruct it later on, and to discuss the students' arguments matter-of-factly. See *Quick*, no. 18, 1 May 1968, 14–18; piece on Dutschke in *Monitor*, 3 Nov. 1967 (quoted in Lampe, 216–22); *Spiegel*: no. 51, 11 Dec. 1967, cover and 52 ff.

92 For examples, see *Spiegel*: no. 24, 5 June 1967, cover, 47; no. 26, 19 June 1967, 18, 26 (quotation); *Quick*: no. 25, 18 June 1967, 24; no. 18, 1 May 1968, 18; no. 31, 30 July 1969, 23–4.

93 For Dutschke, see *Spiegel*: no. 29, 10 July 1967, 29 ff.; no. 51, 11 Dec. 1967, 52 ff.; no. 1, 1 Jan. 1968, 39; no. 4, 22 Jan. 1968, 25; no. 11, 11 March 1968, 72–3. *Stern*: no. 5, 4 Feb. 1968, 91–4; no. 8, 25 Feb. 1968, 9; no. 10, 10 March 1968, 188–9. For Rabehl, see *Spiegel* no. 18, 29 Apr. 1968, 86, and the television programme *Bericht aus Bonn*, 3 May 1968. For Nevermann, see television interviews in *Monitor*, 10 Feb. 1967; *Report*, 19 Apr. 1968, and *Panorama*, 11 Sept. 1967. For Meschkat, see *Panorama*, 13 Feb. 1967, and 22 Apr. 1968; *Monitor*, 26 Apr. 1968. For Cohn-Bendit, see *Spiegel* no. 22, 27 May 1968, 111; *Stern* no. 21, 26 May 1968, 155–9.

94 Especially Roman Brodmann's documentary on the events surrounding the visit of the Persian shah in 1967 ('Der Polizeistaatsbesuch', see Kay Hoffmann, *Zeichen der Zeit: Zur Geschichte der Stuttgarter Schule* (Munich: VHS video with brochure, 1996), 114–20), and Günter Gaus' interview with Dutschke ('Zu Protokoll', broadcast on 3 Dec. 1967).

95 See pieces for *Report* by Horst Hano, Dagobert Lindau and Reimar Allerdt from 1966 to 1968. Lampe, *Panorama, Report und Monitor*, 153–61.

96 See also Charlotte Hospelt, 'Die Presseberichterstattung zum Thema Jugendprotest in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland', Ph.D. thesis, Cologne University, 1995, 106.

media and *Zeitkritik* media differed not only in their choice of words – the labels they applied to the protesters – but also in the way in which they related them to the communist enemy in the Cold War. While Springer-owned papers like *Bild* and *Welt* wrote about ‘troublemakers’, ‘rowdies’, ‘rioters’ and ‘bums’,⁹⁷ *Spiegel*, *Quick* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* termed the same people ‘academic rebels’, ‘young revolutionaries’ and ‘rebellious intellectuals’.⁹⁸ And while the conservative media were quick to label the protesters communists who endangered the democratic system, even comparing them to the Nazi movement threatening the Weimar republic in 1933,⁹⁹ the critical media stressed the differences between the West German movement and Soviet-style communism. *Stern* reported on how German student activists were kept from speaking and even beaten during an international youth festival in Bulgaria in 1968. *Quick* argued that the students fought for highly theoretical ‘ideas that would be incomprehensible even for people behind the Iron Curtain’. *Der Spiegel* estimated that ‘at most, 200 members of the SDS [Socialist Students Federation] dreamed of a socialist revolution that had nothing in common with “Ulbricht-style” GDR socialism’.¹⁰⁰

So deep was the polarisation of the mass media, so pronounced the animosity towards tycoon Axel Springer, that the *Zeitkritik* media even supported violent actions against Springer-owned papers. Indeed, Axel Springer, whose media trust had been at the heart of tedious political struggles since the mid-sixties, was one of the protesters’ main targets. Their criticism of the media usually focused on his conservative papers and explicitly excluded the left-leaning weeklies and television and radio stations. In 1967 activists ran an ‘Expropriate Springer’ campaign; in 1968, they organised an ‘Anti-fascist Springer Tribunal’; and after Rudi Dutschke was shot by a fanatic who was influenced by the Springer press, students threw stones at Springer’s offices and blocked the distribution of *Bild*.¹⁰¹ Surprisingly, these crude attempts to curtail the freedom of the (right-leaning) press were endorsed by many journalists and intellectuals. In *Stern*, historian Golo Mann commented that he supported ‘the SDS without reserve, regarding the issue of the Springer trust’, and social philosopher Alexander Mitscherlich declared the publishing house to be ‘an extra-parliamentary propaganda ministry endangering our democracy’. For *Die Zeit*, Springer’s Berlin papers were ‘Goebbels’ heirs’, and in the television programme *Panorama*, editor Gerhard Bott blamed *Bild* for the escalating violence.¹⁰² Not at all

97 Examples in Hilwig, ‘The Revolt against the Establishment’, and (for the conservative daily *Münchener Merkur*) Andreas Renz, *Die Studentenproteste von 1967/68 im Spiegel der Münchener Presse* (Munich: Tuduv, 1992), 43 ff. For a compilation of headlines, see *Spiegel* no. 19, 6 May 1968, 38–41.

98 *Spiegel*: no. 26, 19 June 1967, 18, 25; no. 24, 5 June 1967, cover, 48, 50. *Quick*: no. 18, 1 May 1968, 18; no. 31, 30 July 1969, 24; *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, quoted in Renz, *Studentenproteste*, 117, 119.

99 See Hilwig, ‘The Revolt against the Establishment’, 330–5.

100 *Spiegel*: no. 51, 11 Dec. 1967, 68; no. 29, 10 July 1967, 27–8; *Quick* no. 18, 1 May 1968, 18; *Stern* no. 33, 18 Aug. 1968, 14–17, 77.

101 See also Hilwig, ‘The Revolt against the Establishment’, 326–7.

102 *Stern* no. 18, 5 May 1968, 16, 110. Kai Hermann in *Die Zeit*, 26 April 1968, quoted in Sösemann, 695. Bott quoted in Lampe, *Panorama, Report und Monitor*, 261.

afraid to hurt a competitor, Augstein's *Spiegel* embarked on a series of Springer-bashing articles, calling for at least partial expropriation by the government.¹⁰³ Even regional dailies echoed anti-Springer arguments, and fourteen prominent writers and professors signed a petition attacking the Springer press as 'the union of an unscrupulous consumerist journalism and a revitalised nationalist ideology'.¹⁰⁴ Clearly, the issue of Springer's market share united young protesters, 45er journalists and the critical intellectuals on the left. Their push was not without success: in 1967 and 1968, Springer's publishing imperium was temporarily threatened by a parliamentary committee investigating the power of media monopolies, and Springer decided to sell a third of his periodicals.¹⁰⁵

But beyond the issue of Springer's might, how did the quest of the 68ers change the West German mass media? Many activists and fellow travellers of the student movement became journalists, and from the late sixties onwards, the generation of the protest movement gained a stronger voice in the media. For those who wanted to foster political change, and who had studied social sciences or humanities at the university (with or without a degree), the mass media offered good career opportunities until the mid-seventies.¹⁰⁶ The 68ers did not yet take over the leading positions – which stayed in the hands of the 45ers – but they joined the staffs of media outlets in impressive numbers. Around 1975, almost half of all editors and reporters in the print media were under 37.¹⁰⁷ And these newcomers brought with them a change in the professional climate. They tended to see their job as an opportunity to initiate reform, and sociological studies of the time show that they were more often unionised.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, major conflicts within the editorial staffs were surprisingly rare. If the generation clash occurred at all, small, conservative regional newspapers were affected. In 1969 the Federal Press Office reacted to the grievances of several such papers and tried to confront the 'problem of the "angry young men" in the editorial offices' head-on. To keep reform-minded newcomers from 'hijacking the papers behind the back of the editor-in-chief', the office invited ten such young

103 The editor-in-chief of *Spiegel*, Rudolf Augstein, originally supported the students' 1968 'Springer Hearing', but pulled back after the rioting. See Gretchen Dutschke, *Wir hatten ein barbarisches, schönes Leben: Rudi Dutschke, eine Biographie* (Cologne: Kiepenhauer u. Witsch, 1996), 175; Schmidtke, *Aufbruch*, 180–1, 199. The series in *Spiegel*: no. 1–8, 1968, see esp. no. 19, 6 May 1968, 38–46, and no. 21, 20 May 1968, 33.

104 Lindner, 'Die Studentenbewegung', 237 (analysing four daily papers from the Ruhr region). 'Declaration of the Fourteen', 19 Apr. 1968, in Wolfgang Kraushaar, ed., *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung: Von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail, 1946–1995*, 3 vols. (Hamburg: Rogner u. Bernhard, 1998), 2: 363.

105 So-called 'Günther-Kommission'. See *Schlußbericht der Pressekommission* (n. 43 above); Kruij, *Das 'Welt'-'Bild'*, 112.

106 The radio and television sector was growing at the time, and was not subject to the decree banning radicals from state service in 1972. Stephan Rechlin, *Rundfunk und Machtwechsel: Der Südwestfunk in den Jahren 1965–1977* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1999), 295; Helmut Hammerschmidt, 'Ausbildung allein genügt nicht', in Henner Faehndrich and Wolfgang Hempel, eds., *Zur kommunikationspolitischen Diskussion: Reden und Aufsätze 1965–1976* (Berlin: Spiess, 1978), 172–83, 173–4.

107 Stalman, 'Über die Professionalisierungstendenzen', 62.

108 *Ibid.*, 87, 90, 93, 95; Jürgen Prott, *Bewußtsein von Journalisten: Standesdenken oder gewerkschaftliche Solidarisierung?* (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1976), 90–1.

journalists to attend a two-day seminar in Bonn.¹⁰⁹ Apart from this government intervention, few indicators point to generational struggles within the media in the late 1960s. Overwhelmingly, the two generations seemed to get along well – in marked contrast to what happened at the universities.

In journalism, 45ers and 68ers soon realised they could pursue a common project if they built on the legacy of *Zeitkritik*. Those 45ers who held top positions in *Zeitkritik* media were initially fascinated with their younger colleagues and, although somewhat sceptical, they let them have their way. Most of them definitely welcomed the enthusiasm, the determination to start anew and the political engagement of the 68ers. What Günter Gaus, a top editor of *Südwestfunk* and then *Spiegel*, liked about ‘our younger combatants’ was the willingness ‘to sing out loud, to translate emotions into policy’.¹¹⁰ Other 45ers, such as Dietrich Schwarzkopf at Norddeutscher Rundfunk and Dagobert Lindlau at *Report*, described the spirit of the newcomers as ‘contagious’.¹¹¹ Although the leading editors often criticised the ‘25-year old reporters’ for being too engaged too early on (*Zufrühengagiertsein*), and for striving to save the world with every six-minute-broadcast they prepared, they usually gave them leeway, tolerated their ideas and even defended their work against attacks from outside.¹¹² This intergenerational truce worked because only a small minority of 68er journalists advocated system change and anti-capitalist revolution; the vast majority sought reforms within the existing system. The 68ers in fact fully embraced *Zeitkritik*, even if they threw their weight into a new version of it which can be labelled ‘engaged journalism’.

The media practices that the 68ers sought to implement were somewhat more radical and noisy, but in many respects similar to the earlier trend. ‘Engaged journalists’ wanted to be politically involved and active. They saw themselves as champions of a more democratic society and public sphere, attracting the masses to democracy – much in the way their predecessors did. Like the 45ers they rejected a consensual public and the idea of an authoritarian state, and argued for a climate of discussion and conflict. But, in addition, they called the power of publishers and the hierarchy within the profession into question. While only a few challenged the capitalist structure of the (print) media, a great many wanted to penetrate the veil of media-made ‘false consciousness’ by unmasking for a mass audience political manipulation, social injustice and discrimination. Interviews conducted with young print media journalists

109 FAK, B 145/6969: report by Heinz Otto, 28 Feb. 1969 (quotations); see also the reports by Schüller, 14 May 1969, and Zöller, 16 May 1969.

110 Günter Gaus, *Die Welt der Westdeutschen: Kritische Betrachtungen* (Cologne: Kiepenhauer u. Witsch, 1986), 71–2.

111 Lindlau quoted in Lampe, *Panorama, Report und Monitor*, 159–60; Schwarzkopf quoted in Schmidtke, *Aufbruch*, 184. Likewise Carola Stern in Stern, *Doppelleben: Eine Autobiographie* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer u. Witsch, 2001), 192, 195.

112 Quotations: Günter Gaus, lecture ‘Report, Panorama, Monitor – Wie sollen politische Sendungen aussehen? [1968]’, 4–5, in Historical Archive of Südwestfunk, P 28591. Hans Heigert, editor-in-chief of Bayerischer Rundfunk television, and Klaus von Bismarck, CEO of Westdeutscher Rundfunk, are other examples for this attitude. Lampe, *Panorama, Report und Monitor*, 51; Schmid, ‘Intendant Klaus von Bismarck’, 366.

and television writers during the early 1970s show that a majority defined themselves as fighters for a better society.¹¹³ And ever since the smaller of the two journalist unions, the Deutsche Journalisten-Union, came under the control of 68ers in 1970, it called on all editors and reporters to carry out 'consciously political actions for democratic change'; they were asked to fight for the 'democratisation of society' and 'the democratisation of the consciousness industry'.¹¹⁴ Fritz Brühl, director of the radio programmes of Westdeutscher Rundfunk, advised younger colleagues, 'Those who are only looking for combat in journalism should become warriors and behave likewise. The editor wears civilian clothes'.¹¹⁵

In the daily practice of journalism, the 'engaged' approach of this new generation meant the swift politicisation of programmes previously deemed apolitical (as described at the beginning of this article) and a new openness to experimental genres and investigative methods. Live discussions with ordinary people, formerly held to be unsuitable for the coverage of political issues, became popular on television and radio. Undercover reports 'from below' – perfected by the reporter Günter Wallraff – won new appeal. And *Panorama* even tried to shock its audience by live coverage of an illegal abortion (in 1974).¹¹⁶ More than ever before, mass media now reported on the plight of the disadvantaged, such as foreign workers, orphaned teenagers and the homeless. *Der Spiegel* introduced a new genre called 'reports on the underprivileged' (*Unterprivilegierten-Reports*) which was supposed to convey 'an anti-capitalist message'.¹¹⁷ Younger television authors often tried consciously to counteract the tendency 'to reproduce the interests and values of the upper classes'.¹¹⁸ Across the board 'engaged journalism' led to a fresh willingness to reassess well-worn formats and habits. At the end of the sixties, even those media known for a more moderate stance, such as the Bayerischer Rundfunk, made it known to their audience that they were working on giving their programmes a more 'experimental character'.¹¹⁹ And in 1971 the second channel of the public television system (ZDF) embarked on a

113 When Stalman in 1973/74 interviewed twelve editors born after 1936, seven emphasized the political motives guiding their career and their willingness to risk conflict: 'Über die Professionalisierungstendenzen', 137, 141, 143, 150, 155, 158–60, 163. For the television authors, see Fohrbeck and Wiesand, 'Der TV-Schreiber', 257–8.

114 The term 'consciousness industry' refers to Hans Magnus Enzensberger's concept of a manipulative culture industry. From the dju-journal 'Die Feder', quoted in Wolfgang R. Langenbucher and Günther Neufeldt, 'Journalistische Berufsvorstellungen im Wandel von drei Jahrzehnten', in Hans Wagner, ed., *Idee und Wirklichkeit des Journalismus: Festschrift für Heinz Starkulla* (Munich: Olzog, 1988), 257–72, 267–8.

115 Quoted in Stern, *Doppelleben*, 194.

116 Kristina Schulz, *Der lange Atem der Provokation: Die Frauenbewegung in der Bundesrepublik und in Frankreich, 1968–1976* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2002), 169; Rechlin, *Rundfunk und Machtwechsel*, 269; Ferree et al., *Shaping Abortion Discourse*, 269.

117 Bodo Zeuner, *Veto gegen Augstein: Der Kampf in der 'Spiegel'-Redaktion um Mitbestimmung* (Hamburg, 1972), 172–3. Also typical for this genre are the television and radio contributions of journalist Ulrike Meinhof, who went on to become a leading member of the terrorist Red Army Faction. See Rechlin, *Rundfunk und Machtwechsel*, 285–6; Lampe, *Panorama, Report und Monitor*, 129.

118 Empirical study from 1970–1972. Fohrbeck and Wiesand, 'Der TV-Schreiber', 257–8.

119 BR HA, Winterprogramm 1967/68 (brochure), 13.

new concept for its programming, embracing ‘the fact that we are a society living with conflict – permanent conflict’.¹²⁰

While the 68ers managed to accelerate the change in media practices, they were only partly successful in their endeavour to overturn power relations in the media. Arguing that a democratisation of society must include a democratisation of the media, they set a new initiative in motion: the so-called ‘editors’ movement’ which also became known as ‘movement for statutes’ or for ‘internal freedom of the press’ (*Redakteursbewegung; Statutenbewegung; innere Pressefreiheit*). From 1968 to the mid-seventies, with a high point in 1969–70, a majority of media editors and reporters all over the republic were called on to work for a new level of participation in decision making, chipping away at the power of publishers, chief executives and editors-in-chief. Their aim was to negotiate legally binding guidelines with the management in order to secure for the editorial staff a veto, or at least a voice, in major business and personnel decisions. In 1970 the journalist Hans Dieter Müller reported on the events:

Everywhere, the *Statutenbewegung* follows a similar or identical course: groups develop spontaneously, mostly on the basis of informal contacts. With respect to their place in the hierarchy, they consist mainly of the lower-ranging, younger, more practically oriented editors, who are not yet privileged in terms of salary. The informal groups draft statutes. They call in journalists’ assemblies. They fight to win over their colleagues.¹²¹

In this way, editors and reporters organised themselves not only at most of the major dailies and weeklies but also in many of the regional public broadcasting agencies during the years 1969 and 1970. By 1975, eight dailies and the weeklies *Die Zeit*, *Stern* and *konkret* had formally adopted statutes which gave the journalists the right to elect a council and some measure of decision-making power. Many other media, including broadcasting stations, had agreed on guidelines (*Richtlinien*) which, often for the first time, spelled out the rights and responsibilities of publishers and journalists, and described the general political stance of the medium in question.¹²²

A look at the struggles within the media and the texts of the statutes under discussion reveal the role that 68er journalists played in the movement and how their older colleagues reacted to their agenda. In fact, the editors’ movement split into different factions early on. And this split deepened over time, when small groups radicalised while the majority opted for consensual negotiations with the management. There was a vanguard of socialist-minded, young 68er editors who sparked the movement but subsequently realised that their demands had been ‘watered

120 Dieter Stolte, head of the central programme planning department of Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen, in Konrad Dussel and Edgar Lersch, eds., *Quellen zur Programmggeschichte des deutschen Hörfunks und Fernsehens* (Göttingen: Muster-Schmidt, 1999), 439.

121 ‘Fünf Thesen zur “Politisierung” der Statutenbewegung (1970)’, in Fritz Vilmar, ed., *Strategien der Demokratisierung*, vol. 2 (Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1973), 194–5.

122 For information on the movement see Udo Branahl and Wolfgang Hoffmann-Riem, *Redaktionsstatute in der Bewährung: Eine empirische Untersuchung über Redaktionsstatute in deutschen Zeitungen* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1975); Ansgar Skriver, *Schreiben und schreiben lassen: Innere Pressefreiheit – Redaktionsstatute* (Karlsruhe: C. F. Müller, 1970). See also Rechlin, *Rundfunk und Machtwechsel*; Zeuner, *Veto*.

down' in the course of events. Not coincidentally, these activists were typically employed at those mass media that had been most thoroughly imbued with the spirit of *Zeitkritik*, such as *Spiegel*, *konkret*, and Westdeutscher Rundfunk. This is why the managers of these media were faced with the most radical demands from their editorial staff. An exemplary case is *Der Spiegel*, where young left-wingers such as Bodo Zeuner (born 1942), Hermann Gremliza (born 1940) and Otto Koehler (born 1935) strove to break the authority of editor-in-chief Rudolf Augstein, to free the news weekly's staff from 'exploitation and patronizing' (*Ausbeutung und Entmündigung*), and to put an end to commercial advertising. Their agitation led to protracted struggles and split the editorial staff, a majority of whom rejected the demands as too far-reaching. The outcome left five of the activists fired and all the *Spiegel* editors with no power of decision-making – but with a share of the profit.¹²³ Several of the fired journalists then switched to the leftist magazine *konkret*, where they managed to oust editor-in-chief Klaus Rainer Röhl, to reinvent the medium as 'a forum of socialist, alternative information and agitation' and to go bust within a few months.¹²⁴ The same division of personnel into opposing factions happened at the broadcasting agency Westdeutscher Rundfunk, whose rather liberal-minded chief executive Klaus von Bismarck initially supported the editors' movement, but in 1974 harshly criticised a self-appointed 'editors' council' which kept demanding more substantial decision-making powers. According to Bismarck, some 'forces of the extreme left . . . misused the editorial office to propagandise their personal political agenda'. The reaction to the chief executive's attack exposed the extent to which the initial solidarity among journalists had already crumbled. While a few sided with the councillors, seventy editors openly backed Bismarck's intervention.¹²⁵

During the early seventies it became obvious that the 'editors' movement' failed to gather enough support among editors to realise two core demands: the curtailment of management's power and the redefinition of the role of the media according to a socialist agenda. A majority of journalists rejected these demands. Instead, most subscribed to a politically moderate programme, as the text of almost all (drafted or implemented) statutes shows. These statutes were far from demanding a change of the political system. In fact, they regularly invoked 'the spirit of the Basic Law' (i.e., of West Germany's constitution), of 'the federal and state constitutions' or 'free democratic society'. In addition, they often explicitly denounced 'radical groups' or 'left-wing extremism'.¹²⁶ The main attraction of the editors' movement thus lay not

123 See Zeuner, *Veto*. Quotation from a leaflet written by six editors, 1 April 1969, *ibid.*, 181–2. See also Skriver, *Schreiben*, 98 ff.

124 The above-mentioned Hermann Gremliza headed the experiment. See Alexander Gallus, 'Zeitschriftenporträt: konkret', in *Jahrbuch Extremismus & Demokratie*, 13 (2001), 227–49, 236–7 (quotation from *konkret* no. 37, 1973 *ibid.*); Klaus Rainer Röhl, *Fünf Finger sind keine Faust* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer u. Witsch, 1974), 410, 434.

125 Schmid, 'Intendant Klaus von Bismarck', 366–77.

126 Statutes for *Frankfurter Rundschau*, *Mannheimer Morgen*, *Stern*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*. These and more examples in Skriver, *Schreiben* (quotations: 67, 75, 77), and Branahl and Hoffmann-Riem, *Redaktionsstatute*, 320 ff.

in its political demands but in its opposition to overly hierarchical structures within the media.

There was a broad consensus among journalists that editors-in-chief ruled in too authoritarian a manner, and that more open discussion was needed. Indeed, in West German mass media of the 1950s and early 1960s the boss often dictated work schedules and layouts down to the most minute detail. Editors' conferences were somewhat rare, and some editors-in-chief eavesdropped on telephone conversations and checked the length of employees' lunch breaks.¹²⁷ Tired of this, large majorities of journalists now demanded 'collective decision-making', less 'autocracy' (*Selbstherrlichkeit*), and 'the dismantling of the authoritarian mindset and ossified hierarchies'.¹²⁸ As a consequence, more and more departments in the media began to emphasise teamwork and collective decisions. This held true for the culture department of Südwestfunk or for the political magazines on television, which for a while were no longer presented by the anchormen (who also used to head the staff), but by the authors of the individual broadcast pieces. These tendencies deeply worried some of the older editors-in-chief, such as the director of the Mainz radio studio, Theodor Zwermann: 'Wrongly extending the political concept of "democracy" to the workplace, even some of the not-so-young scatterbrains believe they have to speak up for a "collegial system", in which nobody has a say any more'.¹²⁹ Nevertheless, the assault on inflexible hierarchies in the editorial offices proved to be the biggest success of the movement for statutes. Within a few years, and with the support of overwhelming majorities of journalists, the autocracy of editors-in-chief gave way to more staff co-operation, discussion and information-sharing in almost all mass media.¹³⁰

The long-lasting changes that the 68ers brought to the West German mass media can thus be seen as a logical progression from what their predecessor generation had accomplished. The 'engaged journalism' of the younger colleagues built on *Zeitkritik* without challenging it, and the attack on hierarchies extended the criticism of authoritarian structures (which 45ers had championed) to the workplace of the journalists themselves. In many ways the two generations teamed up and helped each other: while the 45ers, in the top positions, tolerated modest to slightly radical versions of engaged journalism, the 68ers in turn helped them to dominate conservative opponents in the media and to win a final victory over the traditional ethics of German journalism. Without the push of the 68er generation, the shift from integration via consensus to integration via conflict would have taken longer; it would not have reached the most remote media and audiences by the 1970s.

127 Well-known examples of autocratic rule are Henri Nannen at *Stern*, Rudolf Augstein at *Spiegel* and Eduard Rhein at *Hör Zu!*. Seegers, *Hör Zu!*, 223–5; see also Sylvia Lott, *Die Frauenzeitschriften von Hans Huffzky und John Jahr: Zur Geschichte der deutschen Frauenzeitschrift zwischen 1933 und 1970* (Berlin: Spiess, 1985), 426.

128 Quotations from Ansgar Skriver, one of the outspoken activists of the movement (*Schreiben*, 8), and from Carola Stern (*Doppelleben*, 192).

129 Zwermann was born in 1910. Letter from 10 July 1969, to the chief executive of *Südwestfunk*, quoted in Rechlin, *Rundfunk und Machtwechsel*, 330.

130 See the results of a 1975 survey, in Branahl and Hoffmann-Riem, *Redaktionsstatute*.

Conclusion

In little more than a decade the West German mass media had come a long way. The first stirrings of a critical, politically active public sphere date back not to 1968 or even the *Spiegel* affair of 1962, but to the last third of the 1950s. This period saw the rise of the first generation of editors untainted by Nazism and open to Western models, and a deeper political polarisation of the media landscape. Not coincidentally, historians point to the late 1950s as the time when the mass media first started to discuss the Nazi past critically.¹³¹ A look at the media sector thus confirms the notion of the 'long' sixties, beginning in 1957/58, as the crucial phase of inner democratisation of West Germany. The profound changes in journalistic practice during this period not only mirrored but also significantly influenced the transformation of the political culture of the time. Journalists were among the key players, encouraging critical debate and public negotiation. More specifically, it was two new generations of media elites, professionally socialised in the postwar era – the 45ers and 68ers – who contributed to this development. Interestingly, in the media these generational groups did not get caught up in bitter intergenerational struggles. Instead, they worked together to convert the masses to democracy and foster the growth of a pluralistic public sphere, and their co-operation ensured a swift victory over the forces of tradition. This was possible only because of two conditions. First, the 45ers had already begun to reform the media in the late fifties, and they treated the student protests of the late sixties with clear sympathy. And, second, the majority of 68ers not only agreed with the reforms that had taken place but, when challenged by more radical demands, opted to side with the older generation and choose moderate reform over revolution. This is why the involvement of 68ers in media careers never translated into a 'long march through the institutions' – the quest to transform and overcome the capitalist system from within that had been evoked by student leaders at the end of the sixties. In the media most of those who marched either had only a pleasant walk in mind or morphed into reformers as they went along. Thus, there is no single 'generation of conflict': both generations should be credited equally with the 'second founding' of the Federal Republic during the long sixties. The 45ers were the ones who started the project; the 68ers then broadened the approach and secured its long-term victory: overcoming the legacy of an authoritarian past.

131 Herf, *Divided Memory*, 335; Moeller, *War Stories*, 174; Heiko Buschke, *Deutsche Presse, Rechtsextremismus und nationalsozialistische Vergangenheit in der Ära Adenauer* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2003), 29.

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