

Wawrzyn, Lienhard. *Der Blaue: Das Spitzelsystem der DDR*. Verlag Klaus Wagenbach: Berlin, 1990. DM 15.

While Germans as a whole suffered under the 12-year reign of the National Socialists, those living in the later GDR endured another 44 years under the Soviet occupation and its successor. During this time, the existence of the secret police was all-pervasive, whether agents of the Gestapo or the Stasi were physically present or not. Lienhard Wawrzyn contends that one cannot begin to understand life in the GDR until one has investigated the phenomenon of the "Spitzel," the informer, also known as "Der Blaue," a nickname coined from the color of his/her files in the government's record-keeping system. Wawrzyn estimates that altogether some 500,000 informers served the regime at one time or another during the 40 years of its existence, i.e. one out of every 30 men, women, and children.

These agents themselves assumed a second name and with it a second identity, in most cases unknown to others, even close family members and friends. Like almost all citizens of the GDR, they spoke two languages as well: one public, expressing their loyalty to the state, and one private. With the system of the informer, however, one could never be sure when one could employ this private speech. The informer could be anyone, and everyone had to be constantly on guard. The psychology of this informer-system, in Wawrzyn's view, created a climate of distrust among the people, undermined their loyalty to the state, and contributed in the end to the collapse of that state.

In this investigation, which consists of introductory material, a number of case histories and various related items (such as a lexicon of Stasi speech, a description of operations procedures, etc.), Wawrzyn is concerned with three major questions: 1) Who were the informers and what did they experience? 2) What made them work for the Stasi? 3) Who were their superiors and what role did they play? He also divides the informers into four groups: the adventurers, the cunning, the adaptable, and the experts. Many of these people worked in public occupations, such as waiters or cab-drivers, and some, such as physicians, even came from professional areas. They were, for the most part, forced to become informers as a result of threats; others were won over, however, by promises of a better material life.

The process of becoming an informer had been made easier by the educational system, which was aimed from the beginning at the creation of a totally submissive society. No matter what his background or educational experience might be, the informer was, by and large, despised by the very people who directed him, although in time some informers and their superiors in the Stasi did establish a close relationship. In order to alleviate the internal contradictions resulting from their positions, most informers sought to convince themselves that they were serving a noble cause.

In drawing his conclusion, Wawrzyn lists three insights he has gained from this investigation: 1) He finds state spy-systems to be expensive, ineffective and outmoded. 2) He is now aware that people are capable of what he calls the "aufrichtige Lüge." 3) He is convinced that the citizens of the former GDR will never see their files, especially since the eastern political parties were absorbed as blocs, resulting in the presence of former Stasi-agents in the political and governmental systems of the reunited nation. Germans in high places, whether in Bonn or Berlin, have little if any desire to lift the veil of secrecy from the face of the Stasi.

Lest the western German reader feel he is totally free of what he considers to be reprehensible behavior on the part of his former eastern adversary, Wawrzyn reminds his readers of the "Radikalerlaß" and its poisoning of the atmosphere in the other part of the formerly divided nation, the Federal Republic.

This rather slender volume was quite interesting and provides the general observer of German culture with a good background by way of introduction to the public debate concerning the Stasi and its former members and informers.

Robert Ambacher
Millersville University

Wichner, Ernst und Herbert Wiesner (Hrsg.). *Zensur in der DDR. Geschichte, Praxis und "Ästhetik" der Behinderung von Literatur. Ausstellungsbuch. Literaturhaus Berlin*, 1991. 200 S.

Die Ausstellung "Zensur in der DDR," die vom 17. März bis 1. Mai 1991 im Literaturhaus Berlin und vom 15. Mai bis 29. Juni 1991 im Literaturhaus Frankfurt a. M. zu sehen bzw. zu lesen war, ist durch ein Ausstellungsbuch vorzüglich dokumentiert worden. Wie Herbert Wiesner, einer der beiden Herausgeber, in seinem Vorwort "Zensiert - Gefördert - Verhindert" anmerkt, ist es mehr "als ein Katalog von Exponaten, [es] zitiert die Dokumente meist ausführlicher und stellt sie in einen gegenüber der Ausstellung erweiterten Kontext aus Quellen und Originalbeiträgen zum Thema der Zensur, die Schriftsteller der ehemaligen DDR für diesen Ausstellungskatalog geschrieben haben" (13).

Die mehr oder weniger subtilen Mechanismen der "Druckgenehmigungspraxis," die Maßregelung von Autoren, der Entzug des Reiseprivilegs, Einschränkung oder Verbot der Buchwerbung, Rückstufung von Ausstattungsqualität und Auflagenhöhe bis hin zu bestellten Rezensionen und die mit drohendem Unterton nahegelegten Verhaltensanweisungen mit westdeutschen Interviewern zeigen das Netz der kulturpolitischen Lenkung, das u.a. auf einer irrationalen Angst vor dem gedruckten Wort basiert. Wie auch immer geartete, sogar konstruktive Kritik an den bestehenden Verhältnissen konnte ja "vom Klassenfeind gegen den Sozialismus" verwendet werden.

Auf dem X. Schriftstellerkongreß vom 24. - 27. November 1987 wurden von Günter de Bruyn und Christoph Hein scharfe Reden gegen die im offiziellen Sprachgebrauch niemals "Zensur" genannten "Druckgenehmigungsverfahren" gehalten—Hein sprach über ihre Überlebens-, Nutzlosigkeit, Paradoxie, Menschen- und Volksfeindlichkeit, Ungesetzlichkeit und Strafbarkeit (34). Nichtsdestoweniger hatte z. B. Therese Hörnigks Christa Wolf-Monographie zum 60. Geburtstag der Schriftstellerin (2 Jahre nach dem Schriftstellerkongreß!) Probleme zu erscheinen, was nicht zum Ruhm des Verlages Volk und Wissen beiträgt, der selbst auch zu den zensierten Zensoren (75ff.) gehörte.

Was die Zensurmechanismen bei vielen Autoren bewirkten, beschreiben Joachim Seyppel mit dem Begriff "Porzellanhund" (25) und Joachim Walther mit der Paraphrase "Jacken, die ich in den Text gehängt hatte" (26)—Selbstdisziplinierung, Selbstzensur, eine Schere im Kopf, die schon vorher die "gefährlichen Stellen" wegschnitt, Ablenkungsmanöver, um die Aufmerksamkeit der Zensoren auf plakative "Frechheiten"