Chapter Two
German Science Fiction before 1949

Science fiction is itself a comparatively young genre, emerging as a distinct form during the mid-19th century. The creator of *voyages extraordinaires*, Jules Verne's (1828–1905) mixture of the fairy tale with exotic adventure lent itself easily to the addition of new scientific inventions. Literary scholar Roland Innenhofer describes Verne as a modern writer, who incorporated a veritable encyclopedia into his stories and created a new genre for mass consumption (31). Such classics as *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873) combined the new technology of the hot air balloon with the genre of travel literature. In other publications, including *From the Earth to the Moon* (1865) and *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1869), Verne envisioned the airship, the submarine, the automobile and many other future inventions.

Verne's writing played a key role in the development of German science fiction. He became extremely popular in Germany and appealed particularly to young readers who also favored Karl May (1842–1912), an author of German westerns and adventure novels. Verne's success helped to establish science fiction as a commercially viable genre in Germany. The generic designation "story in the style of Junes Verne" or "the German Jules Verne" appeared on the cover of early German science fiction publications (Innenhofer 13).

Kurd Lasswitz is credited with writing the first German science fiction.[1] Born in Breslau on April 20, 1848, he taught philosophy, math and physics at a preparatory school in Gotha, Germany. A scholar by training, Lasswitz turned to writing what he called "modern fairy tales" when he failed to attain a university professorship. Yet it

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1   Darko Suvin lists E.T.A. Hoffmann's *The Sandman* as a proto-science fiction story (*Metamorphosis* 132). Science fiction by German women at this point was very rare. See for instance, the Austrian peace activist Bertha von Suttner (*Das Maschinenzeitalter*, 1889 and *Der Menschheit Hochgedanken*, 1911). German feminist Rosa Voigt wrote utopian fiction (*Anno domini 2000*, 1909).

was his interdisciplinary academic training that enabled him to evolve a theory that brought together both science and literature.

Studies of Lasswitz emphasize the manner in which he incorporated fantasy with the concept of reason from Germany's rich Enlightenment heritage. William Fischer explains that Lasswitz, as a Neo-Kantian, "conceive[d] of space and time as subjective modes of perception." (62) The writer believed that both space and time could be articulated in a rational and quantifiable manner through scientific study or in a creative manner through art. For Lasswitz, the combination of science and literature provided the ideal method with which to explore a future on the basis of science but in a manner of which science could not yet conceive. The sciences are dependent upon the past and the present as their sources for comprehending the natural world. Through his modern fairy tales, Lasswitz believed he could enable the writer to see into the science of the future (Fischer 64–68).

Lasswitz is perhaps best known for the socialist utopian epic *Auf zwei Planeten* (Two Planets, 1897) that chronicles the first contact between a Martian civilization and humanity. During a hot air balloon expedition, explorers discover an alien colony at the North Pole. The colony turns out to be a research station manned by peaceful Martians, who hope to exploit Earth's energy resources. The novel takes the form of an encounter between these two cultures, the Martian civilization having long since reached a social and technical level far beyond that of Earth. This apparently utopian civilization shares its knowledge with humanity. However, the encounter reveals aspects of the Martian civilization that conflict with the aliens' universal code of ethics. The collision between the two cultures leads to a critique of the method in which the Martians "enforce" their humanist model upon the inhabitants of Earth. In the context of the day, the novel questioned Germany's colonial and industrial aspirations.[2]

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2   Kurd Lasswitz' novels were banned by the Nazis (Fischer 80). His works did not appear in East Germany until the late seventies and eighties. In his dissertation, Adolf Sckerl attributed this to the difficulty and relatively small number of Lasswitz' publications (34). The Verlag Das Neue Berlin first published *Bis zum Nullpunkt des Seins*, a collection of his short stories in 1979. See Olaf Spittel "Gutachten zu Kurd Lasswitz *Bis zum Nullpunkt des Seins*."

40

At the turn of the century and up to the end of the Weimar Republic, Germany had a number of science fiction writers whose stories varied both in quality and political conviction.[3] However, none of them published as many novels nor were as successful as Hans Dominik (1872–1945).[4] Born on November 15, 1872 in Zwickau, he spent the majority of his life in Berlin. Dominik lived for a period of time in the United States as a student in 1895 and then as an electrical engineer, before he found employment as a technical writer for Siemens. Beginning in 1924, he dedicated himself entirely to writing. Like Jules Verne, Dominik relied on his popular novels as his only source of income and published almost one novel a year between 1922 and 1939 with the Scherl Verlag. Many stories appeared first in serial form in the popular science magazine *Das neue Universum* (The New Universe). Several of his best-known novels include *Die Macht der Drei: Ein Roman aus dem Jahre 1955* (The Power of the Three: A Novel from the Year 1955, 1921), *Die Spur des Dschingis-Khan: Ein Roman aus dem 21. Jahrhundert* (The Trail of Genghis Khan: A Novel from the Twenty-first Century, 1923) and *Der Wettflug der Nationen* (The International Airplane Race, 1933).[5] Dominik's name also dominated the narrow range of right wing science fiction published from 1933 to 1945. He was so popular that, by the end of the World War II, his name had become synonymous with German

3   In 1929, Hugo Gernsback, a German immigrant to the United States, coined the term "science fiction" to describe the type of stories to appear in his newly founded magazine *Amazing Stories*. He wrote, "I mean the Jules Verne, H.G. Wells, and Edgar Allan Poe type of story – a charming romance intermingled with scientific fact and prophetic vision" (Clareson 15}. Gernsback had problems finding German authors to publish in his American magazine *Amazing Stories* in 1926 (William Fischer 6). Still, although German science fiction was still in its infancy, Manfred Nagl notes that many more German science fiction novels were translated into English between 1920 and 1933 than the reverse (171). For more information on early German science fiction, see also Roland Innerhofer *Deutsche Science Fiction 1870–1914*.

4   There is, in fact, an ironic connection between Lasswitz and Dominik. A student at the high school where Lasswitz taught, Dominik admired this teacher for his science fiction (William Fischer 180).

5   All English translations of novels by Lasswitz and Dominik come from William Fischer.

41

science fiction.[6] Numerous post-war editions of Dominik's works brought out by the Gebrüder Weiss Verlag and the Heyne Verlag attest to the author's enduring success in West Germany. Only *Perry Rhodan*, the most successful post-war West German science fiction series, can compete.

Dominik's works belong to a type of German science fiction that initially reflected the country's imperial and colonialist ambitions at the turn of the century. These goals were politically conservative, nationalistic, and often racist. During the Weimar Republic, this kind of science fiction became even more reactionary as economic and political tensions heightened. Its militaristic fantasies and technocratic futures formed an "ersatz" utopia (Manfred Nagl) for those whose irrational, völkisch aspirations of German world dominance remained unfulfilled at the end of World War I. Such science fiction easily integrated the legend of the "stab in the back" that developed among those who refused to accept the conditions of the Treaty of Versailles. Nagl argues that the revisionist, fascistic utopias imagined by authors such as Alfred Reifenberg and Pierre Lhande provided fertile ground for and even foretold of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.[7]

Nagl includes Dominik as a leading figure within right wing science fiction circles, who contributed greatly to the fantasies of German domination through technological superiority (159). Not all critics, though, are willing to associate Dominik as closely with National Socialism as does Nagl. For instance, Alfons Höger emphasizes the differences in Dominik's nationalism of the Bismarck era and that of National Socialism (387). William Fischer finds that his "racist and chauvinist […] attitudes and works easily lent themselves to the aims of National Socialism" (179). These ideological overtones notwithstanding, it is important to look at Dominik's writing form and content, since it influenced German science fiction in both East and West for years to come.

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6   This was in part due to his dominance of the science fiction market under the National Socialists.

7   See Nagl, *Science Fiction in Deutschland* 155–163. For further information on science fiction in the Weimar Republic, see also Rolf Tzschaschel *Der Zukunftsroman der Weimarer Republik,* and Peter Fisher *Fantasy and Politics: Visions of the Future in the Weimar Republic.*

42

Fischer juxtaposes Lasswitz and Dominik politically, so that they underscore the theory of the German *Sonderweg*. For Fischer, Lasswitz' science fiction reflects a side of Germany that still considered itself to be a "land of poets and thinkers" (61). Conversely, Dominik's writing reveals a new German national image as the land of scientists and technologists. However, Fischer himself recognizes that this presentation fails to mention the variety of science fiction written by many other less-prolific writers of the era.

Fischer's characterization of the individual style of both writers is accurate. In contrast to Lasswitz' often playful and self-reflective stories, Dominik pioneered the more formulaic "technical novel of the future" (*technischer Zukunftsroman*). Heavily focused on the superiority of German technology, his stories contained tales of nationalist intrigue and industrialist competition for new technical innovations and natural resources. Intended primarily for young men, Dominik hoped to inspire a new sense of national identity through his fiction as well as educate his readers in science and technology, particularly in the areas of electrical engineering and rocket science. The novels themselves combined elements of melodrama, romance, and adventure fiction with Dominik's experience from his days as a popular science journalist. His primary models included Jules Verne, Rudyard Kipling, Karl May, as well as Alexander Dumas (Fischer 179–196 and Höger 387).

The content and form of all sixteen of Dominik's novels are remarkably similar. Each relies on the basic structure of conflict between good and evil. At the center of the story is a heroic German scientist. Inherently a man of action, this morally upright male is fearless and fanatically devoted to his work. He intends to use his superior knowledge of science for the greater good of humanity and is an unwavering German patriot (Höger 390). Moreover, he is aided by a number of lesser, but as equally devoted individuals, including some women. However, these Teutonic women, although often portrayed as having superior scientific knowledge, take on the role of damsel in distress or wait at home for their hero to return (Fischer 205–206).

On the side of evil, the reader finds an array of characters, which supposedly endanger a modernizing yet conservative Germany. A primary example is the (sometimes Jewish) industrialist from the

United States who jeopardizes German or world stability for personal gain or out of envy. In a series of novels published in the late twenties, Dominik developed a German-European confederation that fought off the dangers of capitalism, the Bolsheviks, the "yellow danger" the Morrocans, the Arabs, and the Africans.[8] Interestingly, Dominik's stories contain no female villains. He also employed neither aliens, nor robotic beings, nor the *femme fatale*, unlike the Anglo–American science fiction of the time (Fischer 206).

A final influential German science fiction author was, of course, Thea von Harbou (1888–1954). Unlike most of her contemporaries, von Harbou composed directly for the new medium of silent film. She later developed scripts for "talkies" under the National Socialists and in the Federal Republic of Germany.[9] Von Harbou's screenplays *Metropolis* (1927) and *Frau im Mond* (Woman in the Moon, 1929) provided the basis for Fritz Lang's classic science fiction films of the same name. *Metropolis* has been read by German cinema's most famous film critic, Siegfried Krakauer, as a quintessential example of the period's cultural affirmation of German absolutism (*Caligari* 162–163). Where, Freder, the son of an autocratic industrialist, rebels against his father, he eventually rejoins him at the end of the film. "The mediator between brain and muscle must be the Heart" (Harbou 2). Although Freder, the heart, represents the interests of the working classes shown to him by Maria, the head-hand hierarchy remains intact. More recent scholarship points to the paradoxes of modernity as portrayed in Metropolis' vision of the city, class, religion, and gender. Such analyses demonstrate how the screenplay and the subsequent film, which are rarely studied separately, captured the anxieties of an age of rapid technological advancement in a manner that has influenced film making ever since. Von Harbou's subsequent screen-

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8   These titles were *Die Spur des Dchingis-Khan* (The Trail of Genghis Khan, 1923), *Atlantis* (1925), *Der Brand des Cheopspyramide* (The Burning of the Pyramid of Cheops, 1926), and *Das Erbe der Uraniden* (The Legacy of the Uranids, 1928), see Höger 388.
9   Thea von Harbou stayed in Germany after 1933. Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels infamously asked Fritz Lang to stay and make films for Hitler. Lang chose to immigrate to the United States (Nagl, *Science Fiction in Deutschland* 167).

play, *Frau im Mond,* glorified recent advances in German rocket technology and was meant as a continuation of the story presented in *Metropolis*. The majority of film critics attacked its rather thin plot, while the reactionary press praised its fantasy of progress among the German *Volk* (Keiner 104–106). This film has not endured in the same manner as its predecessor.

Socialist Science Fiction in the Weimar Republic

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, Russia developed a substantial tradition in leftist utopian literature and science fiction. A similar tradition of socialist science fiction began to appear in the Weimar Republic. As Peter Fisher writes, however, these authors were often socialist outsiders and wrote in "critical relation" to the two organized parties, the SPD and the KPD (157). For instance, the disillusioned Konrad Loele was unable to predict a bright communist future in his antiutopian *Züllinger und seine Zucht* (Züllinger and his Generation, 1920) following the failed revolution of 1918–1919. Several pacifist dystopias warned of a coming war and criticized rampant German militarism (Arthur Zapp *Revanche für Versailles!* [Revenge for Versailles, 1924] and Hanns Gobsch *Wahn-Europa 1934* [Insane Europe 1934, 1931]).

One exception to this trend was *(CHC1-CH)3 As (Levisite) oder Der einzig gerechte Krieg* (Levisite, or The Only Just War, 1926) by Johannes R. Becher. He was very active in the KPD during the Weimar era. Due to the publication of *Levisite* and several other works, Becher was accused of treason. Although German authorities confiscated his literature and jailed two Communist book dealers, Becher himself escaped prison (Fisher 160). After 1933, he went into exile, first to Prague, then Paris and finally, in 1935, to Moscow. Following World War II, Becher became the head of the Kulturbund in the Soviet Zone, as well as East Germany's first Minister of Culture

45

from 1954–56. Interestingly, Becher's novel was not reprinted in the GDR until 1969.[10]

According to Becher, *Levisite* was intended as a call to arms for the proletariat (Fisher 160). It follows the experiences of soldier Peter Friedjung from his return home after World War I to his death during a future class war in Germany. The novel focuses on Friedjung's conversion to Communism, when he rejects the revanchism of his family and friends. It also justifies the need for an immediate, preemptive communist revolution that would wipe out the class system in Germany and, therefore, avoid another world war. Friedjung is ultimately wounded in a street skirmish and tortured by police before he dies.

Becher's novel is typical of the millenarianism on both sides of the political spectrum in the latter half of the Weimar Republic. As Fisher emphasizes, Becher's protagonist represents the martyred comrade who attains transcendence through his act. Friedjung's own identity has been absorbed into the mass that gives it strength, meaning and purpose (Fisher 160–162). This characterization is not unlike similar portrayals in ultranationalist writings of the time.

In 1930, the Malik Verlag published Walter Müller's alternate history *Wenn wir 1918…* (If we in 1918…). In a series of fictitious articles from the SPD newspaper *Vorwärts*, it replayed the events of the Weimar Republic and envisioned a working class united with the radical left. In the story, the "pseudo-Marxist" SPD loses power immediately and a Soviet-style revolution takes place in Germany under Lenin's guidance. As Fisher notes, the novel received mixed

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10   By contrast, Bernhard Kellermann's novel *Der Tunnel* (1912–13) appeared in 1950. Kellermann was active in the Kulturbund in the Soviet Zone (Heidtmann, *Utopische* 226). Soviet editor of the *Tägliche Rundschau* and later head of the cultural section of the Soviet Military Administration in Germany, Alexander Dymschiz remembered meeting Kellermann after the war: "For this reason, I met Bernhard Kellermann in Werder. He was full of mental energy, completely obsessed with his work and thoughts to blaze the trail to a better future for his people." See Dymschiz's memoir: *Ein unvergeßlicher Frühling* quoted by Jäger 9. Upon Kellermann´s death Johannes Becher commemorated his role as a founding member of the Kulturbund at a meeting of that organization in 1951. See "Protokoll der Präsidialratssitzung des Kulturbunds" 169.

46

reviews in the socialist press. The *Neue Revue* (The New Revue), *Die Literatur*, *Die rote Fahne* (The Red Flag), and *Die Linkskurve* (The Left-hand Curve) all recommended it to its readers with minor reservations. *Vorwärts* accused Müller of avoiding reality in favor of idealized dreaming and rejected the novel as a simplification of the present (Fisher 202). Moreover, a somewhat critical review in the communist newspaper, *Die Internationale*, pointed to the danger of utopian thought to Marxism. This argument echoed Friedrich Engel's prohibition of utopian socialism in favor of scientific socialism (Stites 225–241). Opponents of science fiction repeatedly quoted this proclamation in the GDR.

Encouraged by the Social Democratic book club and publisher, *Der Bücherkreis* (The Book Circle), Werner Illing, wrote *Utopolis* (1930) with the intent of creating a socialist alternative to the right-wing *Zukunftsroman*. It was received very favorably in SPD circles (Fisher 188). The first portion of the novel consists of a socialist utopia, rare to Germany of the inter-war years. The remaining portion relates the war between the city of Utopolis and the capitalist dystopia U-Privat. The capitalists in U-Privat keep the working class from revolting by offering them cheap goods and free cocaine. U-Privat slowly gains the upper hand among the citizens of Utopolis through the use of secret rays, which destroy their class-consciousness. It seems Utopolis is doomed, in much the same way as socialists of the Weimar Republic lost targeted supporters to the right wing parties. The city is ultimately saved by a socialist dictator, but only after it has sunk into chaos. With this finale, Illing expresses his political frustrations with Germany's unstable democracy that continued to be influenced by conservative industrialists and was unable to ward off increased right-wing reactionaries. He supports the establishment of a temporary dictatorship of the proletariat that will be followed by a "true" democracy (Fisher 193–200 and Tzschaschel 98–101). *Utopolis* did not appear in the Soviet Zone or in the GDR.

The relatively small number of socialist science fiction titles in the Weimar Republic is in part due to the contentious status of socialist popular literature. The debate concerning popular literature in the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) involved controversies that also were key to the formulation of the party's literary policy. Soon

after the revolution of 1918–1919, the newly founded German communist organization, the *Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei* (Independent Social Democratic Party, USPD), called for the creation of a proletarian culture modeled on the Soviet *Proletkult* movement. In 1920, an article in this organization's newspaper*, Die Internationale*, maintained that ascendancy to cultural power could only occur when the working class had developed its own "cultural confidence" (quoted in Trommler 432). The creation of a proletarian literature became one of the central tenets of KPD cultural policy when it merged with the leftwing of the USPD in 1921. The KPD leadership saw culture as a crucial revolutionary tool in the unstable economic and political conditions of post-World War I Germany. They felt that literature should not contain the values and morals of an elite-upper class, but rather should reflect the experiences and everyday life of the working class. However, two central question remained: 1) Which would come first – communism or a literature of the proletariat? 2) How much continuity should exist between literary forms developed in a bourgeois society and those of the envisioned communist society? (Trommler 431–436).

Many in the KPD considered popular literature to be "Schund" (trash) and "Schmutz" (smut) literature and therefore unusable in a socialist society. In the Weimar Republic, these terms were often used to refer to the substantial number of dime novels and lending library editions that appeared and were read primarily, but not exclusively, by the lower classes. Broadly, "Schund" designated literature believed to be of a bad quality. "Schmutz" on the other hand referred to literature that was deemed to be morally dangerous (Beissel 6–8). The pejorative "Trivialliteratur" also appeared in this context, to indicate all popular literature of which "Schund" and "Schmutz" made up one part. In 1926, the German parliament passed a law designed to protect children and young adults from "Schund" and "Schmutz" literature. In a 1928 ruling on the definition of "Schund," the Upper Inspection Office (*Oberprüfstelle*) determined that a work falls under this category, "if the story plays either on the unsuspecting reader's base instincts or naivité" (quoted in Beissel 8). As can be expected, the definitions of "Schund" und "Schmutz" remained controversial through 1933.

48

Many in the communist party in the twenties adapted the terms "Schund" and "Schmutz," as well as "Trivialliteratur," to refer to mass-produced literature under capitalism. They believed such literature to be a tool of the upper classes used to pacify the proletariat. Wieland Herzfelde, the head of the Malik Verlag, an early communist publisher, described the so-called "trash and commercial writers" as authors that are motivated by profit alone. Herzfelde acknowledged that popular literature did constitute the only existing literature of the masses. In his opinion, however, until the real needs of the working class were met, there would still be a demand for bourgeois popular literature or what he called "Schundliteratur" (quoted in Mallinckrodt 16).

There was also active support for the creation of socialist popular literature. In 1922, an anonymous article in *Die Rote Fahne* appealed for lighter fare that would supplement political reading. As political conflict heightened in the late twenties, emphasis on the pedagogical effectiveness of literature increased. At the Eleventh Party Congress of the KPD in 1927, there were calls for a "red cultural front" as well as the production of cheap literature for the masses (Mallinckrodt 17–18). Furthermore, Johannes R. Becher fully supported the production of socialist popular literature. In an article in *Die Linkskurve* from October 1931, he complained that an "avant garde attitude" was underestimating the effectiveness of "socialist mass literature." Despite his support, Becher believed the existing methodology was insufficient and consisted of the following: "Trash and offensive material, colored red – and we have, what we want" ("Unsere Wendung" 417). He stressed that authors needed to work harder to create truly socialist popular literature.

As discussed above, a number of communist-sponsored popular publications did materialize in the Weimar Republic. First was the Malik Verlag's "Red Novel" series, which appeared from 1921 to 1924 and contained thirteen titles by such authors as Upton Sinclair, Anna Meyenburg, and Oskar Maria Graf. Moreover, this publisher printed a series of twelve dime novels between 1920 and 1923 entitled the "Little Revolutionary Library." These booklets contained poems, essays and various documents. In 1928, the newly founded *Bund Proletarisch-Revolutionärer Schriftsteller* (League of Proletarian

49

Revolutionary Writers) started its own magazine, *Die Linkskurve*.
Kurt Kläber, the editor of this magazine, also published the one-mark
novel starting in 1930 as an alternative to the offerings of Verlag
Ullstein and Scherl. The *Internationaler Arbeiterverlag* (International
Workers Publisher, IAV) initiated its series "The International Novel"
in 1929. Anita Mallinckrodt notes that the production of socialist
popular literature increased rapidly in the years immediately preceding
1933, yet also confronted increasing efforts at censorship on the part
of the government (16–20).

Science Fiction in the Soviet Occupational Zone

At the end of the World War II, the Allies divided Germany into four
parts: the French, British, American, and Soviet sectors. On August 2,
1945 at the Potsdam Conference, the Allies had agreed to the
following guiding principals in an effort to coordinate policy-making
in the respective zones: the demilitarization, denazification, democra-
tization and decartelization of Germany. Almost immediately, it be-
came apparent that the Soviet interpretation of these principals in their
reeducation and reconstruction efforts differed greatly from those of
the other three Allies. Allied administration in the western sectors
began to instill the economic, political, and social values of western,
free market democracy. In contrast, the *Sowjetische Militäradmini-
stration in Deutschland* (Soviet Military Administration in Germany
or SMAD) adapted the ideals and methods of Marxism–Leninism to
the German context. Where a common German enemy had allowed
the Allies to put aside their ideological differences for a time, these
modes of thought quickly resurfaced and hindered initial efforts at
German reunification. Consequently, in 1949, the French, British, and
American zones became the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and
the Soviet Occupational Zone (SBZ) the German Democratic Repub-
lic (GDR).

Cultural historian Manfred Jäger emphasizes the Soviet's desire
to establish continuity between the Germany before 1933 and the post-

war period. He also points to a long-standing respect in the Soviet Union for the classical heritage of the German Enlightenment, of which Marxism–Leninism considered itself an heir (19). Based on the Communist International's declaration of a Popular Front (*Volksfront*) in the thirties, SMAD initially focused on a policy of "antifascism" and "democracy" in the SBZ. The central element of this effort remained the reeducation of the German people to rid them of fascist tendencies and instruct them in the redemptive qualities of the German Enlightenment. Both the head of the Cultural Office of SMAD, Alexander Dymschiz, and the head of its Information Office, Sergei Tulpanov, intended to emphasize the existence of great authors not only in Germany, but also in various world literatures. In Tulpanov's opinion, as German society transformed into a more democratic form, it would too be able to create its own socialist literature. However, this would take some time ("Zeit des Neubeginns" 9).

The newly reformed KPD lost no time in creating a cultural infrastructure with which to begin the process of denazification and reeducation processes demanded by the Allies. In August 1945, former KPD member Johannes Becher helped to found the *Kulturbund zur demokratischen Erneuerung Deutschlands* (Cultural Alliance for the Democratic Renewal of Germany) with this in mind:

> We must give decisive, powerful, convincing, and radiant expression to the rich heritage of Humanism, the Classical Period, and the rich heritage of the Workers' Movement in the political and moral stance of our people once more. (*Manifest* 39)

In accordance with SMAD's support of "bourgeois humanist" and "socialist literature," the Kulturbund's press, the Aufbau Verlag, published works by Goethe, Schiller, and Heine. Such writers were deemed to represent the enlightened, rational period of Germany's history in a time before the introduction of the irrationalism of the Romantic era, which was linked increasingly to fascism (Feinstein 19–27).

Most existing German popular literature proved unsuitable to the current political situation and new manuscripts were rare. This circumstance was due in part to the Allied prohibition on September 16,

51

1945, of any national socialist or militaristic material. Much of the German spy, science fiction, and detective novels written prior to 1945 contained one of the following: fascist propaganda, racial theories, references to the conquest of other countries, comments directed against the Soviet Union and its Allies, or scientific and technical references that dealt with war ("Ausschaltung der nazistischen und militaristischen Literatur" 1). An essay by Hans Dominik appeared in the 1946 and 1948 editions of the *Liste der auszusondernen Literatur,* a list of banned books in the Soviet Sector. By 1953, four of Hans Dominik's works, including *Der Wettflug der Nationen* appeared on a revised version of the list.[11]

It was also difficult to find authors who were able to produce the kind of science fiction novel desired by the KPD elite in the tumult of post-war Germany. Walter Ulbricht along with other German returnees, who had spent the war in exile in Moscow's antifascist schools, brought the Stalin-cult to the SBZ. Their planned "Sovietization" of Germany maintained only a pretense of democracy. In the cultural sphere, this meant an orthodox adoption of Stalin's socialist realism. Authors took on the role of "engineers of the soul" (Stalin). Literature existed to underscore party policies, leaving little room for individual initiative or experimentation (Staritz 70–71).

Furthermore, any publication by German-controlled publishing houses required SMAD approval in the form of a license. Both political appropriateness and the availability of paper in a time of extreme shortage determined priority when granting a license. Despite a desire on the part of the German committee of publishers (*Kultureller Beirat*) to increase the availability of inexpensive, socialist literature for the masses, the Soviet control of paper rations kept this capability in the hand of SMAD ("Protokoll der internen Besprechung" 5).

11   Gustav Schröder claims that two editions of Dominik's *Wettflug* appeared in the Soviet Zone ("Zur Geschichte" 33). I have found no information to corroborate this claim and find it unlikely. Editions of this Dominik novel did appear in the western sectors with the Gebrüder Weiss Verlag and also are listed in the microfiche of the East German National Library.

Despite a similar licensing procedure in western zones, science fiction there returned to its pre-war boom levels almost immediately. In 1948, the Gebrüder Weiss Verlag reissued Dominik's *Atomgewicht 500* (Atomic Weight 500, 1935). At least twenty new science fiction titles appeared in the French, British, and American sectors between 1946 and 1947 and approximately eighty-four between 1948 and 1951. A number of these authors had been successful previously in Nazi Germany.[12] According to Nagl, the science fiction published in West Germany focused on the frustration with the national defeat of Germany. Readers remained uninterested at first in foreign science fiction, particularly in stories from Allied countries (*Science Fiction in Deutschland* 195–196).

In an effort to compete ideologically with these publications, SMAD brought out a highly selective and limited list of science fiction novels in its own SWA Verlag. Translated Russian novels by the popular and influential Ivan Efremov as well as Sergei Belyayev, Lasar Lagin, and Valentin Ivanov appeared both in this publishing house and in the German Verlag Volk und Welt. During this time, these writers wrote adventure science fiction set in a communist world of the near future. This future demonstrated the technological superiority and peaceful intentions of communism in which the Socialist Personality, or the ideal communist person, starred. These novels provided one model for East German writers of the fifties, who searched for a politically viable style for their prose.[13] Science fiction scholar Horst Heidtmann links the approbation of this genre to the

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12   Paul Alfred Müller, Kurt Walter Röcken, Fritz Mardicke, Paul Eugen Sieg, Erich Dolezahl and Axel Berger all continued to publish, many under numerous pseudonyms. See Nagl, *Science Fiction in Deutschland* 195–196. Interestingly, I could not find their names or their pseudonyms in the SBZ list of banned books. In addition, I could find no reference to their publication in the SBZ itself. Their works were also banned later in East Germany.

13   During this time Ivan Efremov's *Ten' minuvshego* (The Shadows of the Past, 1945, Soviet Sector 1946), Sergei Belyayev's *Desiataia planeta* (The Tenth Planet, 1945, Soviet Sector 1947), Lasar Lagin's *Patent AV* (1947) and Valentin Ivanov's *Energia podvlastna nam* (Energy is Our Servant, 1949) appeared (Simon and Spittel 21; Schröder 32). I have anglicized the spelling of these Russian names from the German spelling: Iwan Jefremov, S. Beljajew, Iwanow.

ideological parallels between the Soviet occupational authority and Russia´s own science fiction tradition, which can trace its roots back to "non-trivial traditions and tendencies that include a broad spectrum of humanistic and socialist thought" (*Utopische* 47).

Other Soviet science fiction of this era was more dystopian in nature. For example, Sergei Belyayev's *Desiataia planeta* (The Tenth Planet, 1945, Soviet Zone 1947) provides a contemporary look into the more technologically perfect society of the Solar System's tenth planet, Syalme.[14] The Syalmeans possess advanced architectural techniques, travel in air cars, and possess the ability to become invisible. They are, in many ways, identified as a communist society. Nonetheless, this enchanting society was not always so peaceful. They had fought their own world war three hundred years before against an aggressor race of ape-like beings. Transformed by successive "Führers," this race

> retained certain elements of their earlier appearance, but the keen, primitive instincts of the original thieves began to control their entire inner being. They ceased to be harmless; they became subhuman. (112)

These opponents attacked and succeeded in conquering and destroying everything and everyone they touched in an exceedingly violent fashion. Here, Belyayev's narrative takes a violent turn away from its similarities with contemporary Earth history. The Syalmen chose to annihilate their opponent. As one Syalme demonstrates to the visiting Russian professor: "Look, the [Syalmen] people are cleansing the air of these freaks" (115). Such violence on the part of communist societies remained taboo in East German science fiction.

Several American and British titles also appeared in the Soviet Zone. One such author was Jack London, who had many works published in the GDR. Of particular interest is his book *The Iron Heel* (Soviet Sector 1948), which predicted the development of a fascist America in much the same manner that fascism had taken over Germany (Heidtmann, *Utopische* 47). London's story fit into the SBZ's self-legitimation as "anti-fascist" and "anti-imperialist" precisely by

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14   To the best of my knowledge, this book does not exist in English translation.

54

drawing a connection between a "fascist" West and the United States.[15]

In an effort to provide a counterweight to this "late bourgeois" literature, SMAD also approved the publication of a number of early science fiction and utopian classics. Such classic Anglo-American literature included Thomas More's *Utopia* and Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, one of the GDR's first publications in 1949. In 1914, feminist and socialist activist Clara Zetkin translated this book as *Ein Rückblick aus dem Jahre 2000* as a protest against World War I. The East German editor included her introduction, believing it was still relevant at the end of World War II. Zetkin wrote:

> Although the depth and clarity of scientific socialism is missing from *Looking Backward*, the book is still rich in suggestions, critical and fruitful thoughts about the society of today and tomorrow. […] Today *Looking Backward* also has much to say to the working masses. […] Yes perhaps today more so than ever, where the world war also has torn away the last veil of cognition that the construction of a socialist society must be the work of the fighting proletariat (Zetkin 10–11).

Zetkin's own words provided the necessary justification for the book's publication in the early GDR and also provided post-humous legitimation of the East German socialist alternative.

The First German Science Fiction in the Soviet Sector

By 1948, as the Cold War began to heat up and the reunification of Germany seemed less likely, the newly founded Socialist Unity Party (SED) proclaimed its intention to establish the "foundations of socialism" in the Soviet Sector. At the party's first cultural congress in May 1948, it announced its intention to develop a close relationship between the worker and a "new culture." Similarly, all work in the

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15 The Malik Verlag, a publisher for the KPD, also published *The Iron Heel* in 1922 (Mallinckrodt 18).

sciences and arts would be created according to the "needs of the working class" (quoted in Mallickrodt 25.) In that same year, SMAD also turned the publishing houses over to the Germans. The Aufbau Verlag, Dietz Verlag, Verlag Neues Leben, and other existing publishers fell under control of the SED and its supporters ("Regelung der Tätigkeit von Verlagen" 1).

In an article printed in Leipzig's *Börsenblatt* in 1947, Hans Friedrich Lange spoke out in favor of resuscitating the efforts of the Malik Verlag and *Die Linkskurve* to publish socialist popular literature. He suggested establishing a prize-competition to encourage new and old writers in this regard (235). Whether this competition actually took place is uncertain. However, in 1949 the Verlag Neues Leben inaugurated its successful series *Das Neue Abenteuer* (New Adventure) and published eleven issues.[16] One year later the Verlag Vorwärts began the series *Geschichten, die das Leben schrieb* (Stories That Wrote Life*)*, which only existed for a short time. The former started up again in 1952 and would publish adventure, detective, and science fiction stories through 1990 (Neumann, *Bibliographie* 884–885).

Two science fiction novels also appeared in 1949 shortly before the founding of the German Democratic Republic (GDR).[17] One was Ludwig Turek's *Die goldene Kugel* (The Golden Sphere), a full-length novel set in the near future. The other, Fritz Enskat's *Gefangen am Gipfel der Welt. Im Nordmeer verschollen* (Imprisoned at the Top of the World. Lost in the North Sea), consisted of two short stories designed for young adults. Both appeared under license from the Soviet Military Administration.

Turek's novel used science fiction's interrogative space to address the immanent danger of nuclear war and educate the eastern reader about the alleged threat posed by western powers. His story set a precedent in content and form, because it represented the first

16   The Verlag Neues Leben originated as the Verlag für Jugendliteratur in July 1946 (Mallinckrodt 26).

17   According to the Neumann bibliography, Albert Sixtus' *Das Geheimnis des Riesenhügels. Ein Abenteuerbuch für die Jugend* originally appeared in Germany in 1941 and in the Soviet Zone in 1949. To date, I have been unable to find a copy of the 1949 edition.

56

science fiction novel that conformed to the directives of an evolving SED censorship apparatus. Consequently, the publication of this novel signaled that science fiction was a viable socialist literary form in East Germany. Since censor restrictions made the representation of Germany's present difficult, the majority of novels and films produced in the SBZ at this time were set in the Germany's past. Contrary to this general trend, Turek instead attempted to involve Germans in the creation of East Germany by illustrating his vision of the future that awaited them. Turek's novel is also unique in that it draws upon the writings of Kurd Lasswitz and is similar in its portrayal of the American capitalist to those of Hans Dominik.

Turek himself was active in the *Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterjugend* (Social Democratic Worker Youth) beginning in 1912 and later in the KPD during the Weimar Republic. His 1929 autobiography *Ein Prolet erzählt* (A Proletarian Narrates, 1929) remains a leading example of German communist *Arbeiterliteratur* in which the worker, rather than the literary intellectual, narrates his or her own life experience. Turek also co-wrote the screenplay to Slatan Dudow's film *Unser tägliche Brot* (Our Daily Bread, 1950) for DEFA.

The impending threat of a global nuclear war is the primary focus of *The Golden Sphere*. Within this novel, the status of aggressor nation was displaced from Germany onto West Germany and the United States. This particular rhetorical strategy became part of the foundational narrative used to establish the political legitimacy of the GDR. At the time Turek's novel appeared, however, the creation of two Germanies was not yet a certainty. Although the story is set in New York City, the narrative voice is neither American, nor East nor West German, but rather European. This figure identifies the cause of the war as the greed of the capitalist and military concerns, which control the United States. Such

> human children play with dangerous weapons and munition. In Europe, where one generally is fed up from the last time, those people, who upon first glance viewed the coming new massacre with hope for the improvement of their own position, are now quaking in their boots (10).

The identification of the capitalist as villain is a quality shared by both Dominik's science fiction and the socialist science fiction

from the Weimar Republic. In Dominik, the foreign (often Jewish) capitalist threatened German *völkisch* nationalism. In Becher's *Levisite*, both German and foreign capitalist forces enslaved the German worker and intended to reenlist him in yet another destructive world war. As many more readers in the SBZ were familiar with Dominik, Turek's novel attempted to redirect existing National Socialist prejudices regarding the foreign capitalist in favor of communism. Although the novel itself is not overly anti-semitic, it is likely that some readers linked its repeated connections between capitalism and novel's portrayal of the head of Bethlehem Steel in this manner.[18]

Thomas Fox observes East Germany's placement of responsibility for the Holocaust on the West "did not encourage much thinking about [it] in the GDR" (12). These policies had begun to crystallize by 1949. The erasure of German guilt and subsequent transformation into the upstanding, socialist victim was a highly problematic, yet common, strategy in a Soviet Zone that needed to recruit Germans to reconstruct a devastated country. In early East German science fiction, there was a distinct split between East and West Germany, the West as the warlike, fascist past and the East as the peaceful, communist future. Like select Dominik novels, Turek's narrator speaks as a European, yet any trace of a German voice has now disappeared. Rather than identify exclusively with Moscow, Turek's novel substitutes Germany with a Europe that is caught between two world powers – the Soviet Union and the United States.

The title *The Golden Sphere* refers to a space ship from Venus that lands in New York City in order to avert an impending global nuclear war. The reader, along with the novel's main character, journalist Bill Larsen of the *New York Herald Tribune*, discovers the nature and purpose of the space ship. Larsen witnesses the arrival of the Venusians and, increasingly, becomes a convinced representative of the message of peace brought by aliens. He watches their transformation of those responsible for the dangerous world political

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18   In actuality, Bethlehem Steel was named after Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in the United States and was founded in the 1863 by Asa Packer, Robert Sayre and John Fritz. The company would later become a major supplier of the U.S. Navy during World War II. See "Forging America: The Story of Bethlehem Steel."

58

situation, certain American capitalists and the country's defense minister, into adults with the minds of children. When the general director of Misanto Chemical, Richard Worlton, votes to "nuke" the golden sphere, he becomes green and infantile. In addition, the aliens broadcast the thoughts of the head of Bethlehem Steel, Robert Sheffield, and the head of Hearst Publishing, Fernand Allain, worldwide. This process reveals their complicity in the plans for a war that is inexorably associated with their greedy and criminal natures.

With the enemy neutralized, the Venusians appoint five Americans to act as their message bearers and orchestrate a peaceful revolution on Earth. Those selected include Bill Larsen and his female, Greek-American co-worker, Sinjossoglough or "Sin." At this point, author Upton Britten is revealed to be a communist writer, who was banned in the United States.[19] As the valued literary intellectual, his becomes the voice of the impending socialist revolution. American General Appels, who has seen the error of his militaristic ways, takes part. And finally, James Westerland enters the story as a miner and union member, imprisoned in Sing Sing for his participation in a failed strike.

In many ways, the aliens represent an idealized rendering of the Soviet Union. Turek's novel transforms the hostile Martians of H.G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds* (1898) into peace-loving Venusians. In a famous radio broadcast of this story by Orson Welles in 1938, American radio listeners panicked at what they believed was a real attack. Turek's visitors use their human emissaries to calm the panic-stricken. The Venusians destroy the aggressive factions and provide the world (particularly the Germans/Europeans) with the ability to carry out a communist revolution successfully. In *The Golden Sphere*, humans, not the Venusians, advocate for a communist revolution. Rather the Venusians represent a highly advanced society that has many values in common with a Marxist–Leninist utopia, including the emancipation of women. It is the redemptive nature of the Venusian technology, which they share with Earth that will bring about a new era.

19   This is a reference to author Upton Sinclair.

Interestingly, *The Golden Sphere* introduces the aliens in redemptive terms with Christian overtones. For instance, the masses that gather in front of the space ship are described at several points as "pilgrims" (42). Fernand Allain, the head of Hearst Publishing, is not only a capitalist, but also a blasphemer. In order to combat the mind-reading device of the Venusians, he turns to the Bible.

> Where is my father's Bible? It has lain unused by me for thirty years. Bring the Bible here! I will read and throw my own thoughts off course. Simply start here (134).

As he reads, he criticizes each passage. Yet, simultaneously, the scene grants not only the feeling of a higher judgment passed on Allain himself, but also Allain's realization of his impending loss of power. Additionally, the Venusians have God-like capabilities to interrupt all communication on Earth at once. They speak to the entire world in one commanding voice. Analogous religious references would later disappear from science fiction in East Germany, due to the official atheist stance of Marxism–Leninism. Here, they provide the promise of collective transcendence similar to that guaranteed by National Socialism, but now to those who are making the transition to the socialist cause.[20]

Unlike Becher's novel from 1931, post-war Germany partakes in a peaceful, international socialist revolution upon the arrival of the Venusians. Their society itself is not described in terms of class warfare, but rather in humanist terms. Their laws are based upon the concepts of honesty, reason, and equality and are, in the Venusian Ereaya's words, "the true laws of Nature, which are all encompassing" (107). If humanity adopts the new technology, the complete visibility of all individual thought will render war impossible. Protests as to the anti-democratic nature of such measures are rendered inconsequential as they come from the mouth of the American Defense Minister (135).

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20 God-building was not a new phenomenon to Marxism–Leninism, but rather existed among a number of the Russian avant garde movements in the early 20th century. Particularly during and immediately following the Russian revolution, intellectuals such as Mayakovsky and other Futurists imagined the creation of a New Jerusalem in Moscow. (Stites 101–123)

The Golden Sphere stresses that the individual benefits brought by the Venusian technology outweigh any loss of personal freedom.

With the introduction of new technology come several inter-textual references to Kurd Lasswitz' stories "Bis zum Nullpunkt des Seins" (To the Zero Point of Existence, 1871) and "Gegen das Welt-gesetz" (Against World Law, 1871). A central characteristic of "To the Zero Point of Existence" is the *Ododion* or *Geruchsklavier* (Scented Piano). The harmonious music coming from the scented piano engages its listener, not only with sound, but also with smell. The ever-playful Lasswitz included a similar instrument, the "brain organ" (*Gehirnorgel*) in his second story "Against World Law". The music emanating from the Venusian ship has a similar effect to Lasswitz' musical inventions. Its soothing, hypnotic qualities are emphasized at several points, particularly during a concert inside the ship itself. Much like Lasswitz' stories, the magical and mysterious qualities of music remain unexplained as opposed to the lengthy technical descriptions of Dominik and early GDR science fiction. Likewise, the inclusion of music and literature in *The Golden Sphere*, echo Lasswitz' emphasis of the role of critical literature to the development of humanistic values. The fine arts rarely found a place in early GDR science fiction.

In addition, the premise of Turek's novel resembles that of Lasswitz' *Two Planets*, but provides a more positive outlook. In *Two Planets*, two cultures come together, one alien and one human. However, the humans are unable to handle the advancements that have been shared with them. Conversely, the socialists in Turek's novel adopt the alien ways and incorporate them successfully into the Earth context. East German literary critic Hans Schlösser describes the manner in which Turek adapted Lasswitz.

> Ludwig Turek consciously referred to Lasswitz' "Two Planets" critically, which he relayed to this author in a conversation in October 1972. Lasswitz and Turek have their sense of humor, satire, and liberating laughter in common, despite the seriousness of their statements. Each in his own way and according to his own class standing, each corresponding to his own time period. (1)

61

Ironically, in this review, Schlösser uses Turek's reputation as a socialist writer to justify the rehabilitation of Lasswitz in the GDR in 1982.

Looking to the novel's limited reception, two positions on Turek's book become visible in an article that appeared in the *Bibliothekar* in 1950. This is one of the first references to science fiction in the GDR. The first librarian commented that *The Golden Sphere* filled a gap in available literature. The second librarian's reading articulated his opinion in ideological terms. Despite the postscript, the latter reviewer believed that the novel provided too passive an example. Instead, it relied on the outside force of an alien race to discover the "capitalist" danger and cause a planetary revolution. To lead to a reading in accordance with GDR goals, this librarian suggested that such literature needed to focus on the solution to problems in the contemporary world by socialist *human* beings ("Wir stellen" 46–47).

Interestingly, the objection did not refer to the fantastic alien presence nor was it concerned with the technical magic of the golden sphere. Rather the critique betrays the preoccupation with class conflict in a highly unstable, divided Germany. In what is labeled the novel's "necessary postscript," Turek explains the intended meaning of the "unreal" elements. He advises the reader to take an active role in the fight for peace and progress in post-war East Germany.

> After reading this book, do not set yourself down on the roof of your house and stare into space waiting for the "golden sphere." […] The only things that can fall from heaven unexpectedly as a result of such an unproductive dreamless "activity" are atom bombs (171).

Whether the censor required this postscript, as was so often the case in GDR science fiction, is uncertain. Turek touches on the perceived danger of escapism, so often a critique of science fiction. By defining distinctly between what was "real" and what was "fantasy," he attempts to clarify any assumed confusion and avoid any alternate, undesirable reading.

Enskat's *Imprisoned at the Top of the World. Lost in the North Sea*, consists of two short narratives published in one volume. The first relates the story of young Berthold Heinle, an apprentice at the

62

machine factory in Jena. He is about to embark on a brilliant career as an engineer, when he receives a mysterious SOS from his missing brother, Andreas Heinle. A leading engineer at the same firm, Andreas disappeared on a climbing expedition to Mount Everest over a year before. Thanks to the discovery of his brother's secret long-distance communication device, Berthold receives the message and accompanies the ensuing search and rescue attempt to the Himalayas. In the end, due to Berthold's technological ingenuity, he and his brother make it back to Germany safely.

The second story, *Lost in the North Sea*, includes three main protagonists. The first, Paul Gartz, accompanies his German mother in September 1943 on a risky sea voyage from the United States to visit his father in Moscow. On the way, the German navy attacks the ship. Paul ends up floating aimlessly for ten years in the artic ocean on a vessel abandoned during the attack. The second protagonist, Alexander Oskin, attends a school for young airplane mechanics and pilots in the North Siberian Taiga. He is fascinated with the unexplored territory beyond the artic circle and hopes to become a pilot in the Soviet coast guard. After he accomplishes this goal, he works together with a former schoolmate to develop an airplane capable of flying to the North Pole. The third character, American William West, wants to stay in Maine and study Physics. His father, a successful businessman, insists that William follow in his footsteps. In the end, William does go to New York City, but secretly pursues a degree in the natural sciences. He later accepts a position at an observatory in Denver, Colorado. A successful inventor, William creates a communication device, much like a shortwave radio, that can send messages very long distances. He invents a human homing signal that functions all over the world. Inevitably, William detects Paul's boat in the arctic in 1953. Paul is then rescued by Alexander's frosty airplane.

Enskat's stories are significant in that they continue the tradition of the *technischer Zukunftsroman*. He himself published *Marso der Zweite* (Marso the Second) in 1936 with the Fritz Mardicke Verlag.[21]

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21   Fritz Mardicke was a successful science fiction writer under the National Socialists and also published under the pseudonyms Wolfgang Marken and Ludwig Osten (Nagl, *Science Fiction in Deutschland* 196).

A second edition appeared in Berlin in 1941 under the name *Welt-raumschiff Unimos* (Spaceship Unimos). Although little survives of this novel, his later two stories are similar to Hans Dominik in style. Enskat's protagonists are industrious, stalwart youths with great talent and dedication to science and technology. They are not yet the model socialist personality, whose hard work originates with the brigade and whose rationale is the collective. Instead, like Dominik's main characters, these individuals develop their innate talents on their own initiative and through their own personal will. Unlike Dominik's protagonists, though, they are not nationalists nor are they openly racist.[22] Enskat's socialist project is not as overt Turek's. His stories suggest an author who is in the process of transisting from publication under a National Socialist censor to that of the censor in the SBZ. Enksat's figures are most interested in helping humanity reach a destiny of technological superiority, an element common to both ideologies. The establishment of socialism in the present is a secondary concern.

Both *Imprisoned at the Top of the World* and *Lost in the North Sea* share other similarities that indicate a transition from National Socialist science fiction to its communist counterpart. Many of Dominik's novels included the creation of one or two inventions to further the plot, but relied primarily on political and economic espionage to create tension. Enskat's two stories also employ timely technological innovation to advance the action, yet focus primarily on the personal successes of each individual. Enskat glorifies the communal feeling present amongst those on the Mount Everest expedition. However, such camaraderie is common in life/death situations. Although pu-blished in the SBZ, *Imprisoned at the Top of the World* equally draws on the collective of the German Volk. This is particularly the case due to the association of National Socialist culture with mountain settings. In addition, the hierarchy of the expedition remains intact. The Nepali chirpas are subordinate and in one scene also subhuman in relation to their German counterparts. Finally, Enskat's settings in distant areas of the globe, like the Himalayas and

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22   For more on Dominik's character types see William Fischer 203–213.

64

the North Pole, echo the travel adventures of Dominik, Karl May, and Jules Verne.

Officially, socialist realist science fiction was to establish a clear break with the past and outline the new Soviet-style future in the Soviet Zone. However, both examples of German science fiction from this period draw upon the existing science fiction tradition in Germany. They incorporate aspects of two of the most popular and well-known writers, Lasswitz and Dominik. In addition, they continue the mission of early communist science fiction of the Weimar Republic, yet in a very different time and place. Both Turek and Enskat's work represent a renewed interest in science fiction present in the Soviet Zone despite the long shadow of the genre's National Socialist history.