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Freedom and Plurality in Unity: The European Politics of *Der Monat*

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ABSTRACT

The German-language magazine *Der Monat* (1948–71) was one of the most impactful publications in post-war Germany. It promoted the re-orientation of the German people by offering political as well as philosophical essays and introduced international authors to its readers. In the context of the Cold War, part of the magazine's marketing strategy was to downplay how close its ties to the United States and American institutions in Germany were and to push its international self-image to the forefront. Thus, *Der Monat* presented itself as a forum for free and open discussions. But this forum was clearly only made up of pro-Western, anti-Communist voices. By analysing the American origins of the magazine, the interplay between German readers, and the international voices featured in *Der Monat* as well as the European politics of the editorial team and the way in which they were translated into editorial practices, this article aims to identify the concepts of 'freedom' and 'plurality' as central to *Der Monat's* self-image, and to expose why the magazine's opposition to the concept of 'unity' promoted by the Soviet Union can be seen as ironic.

KEYWORDS

Der Monat, Cold War, Congress for Cultural Freedom, Melvin J. Lasky, editorial practices, anti-Communist agenda, European unification

In the aftermath of the Second World War, allied forces in all zones of occupation began developing methods to support the ‘re-education’ of the German people. One of these methods was the establishment of newspapers and magazines, intended to put Germany’s recent past into perspective, denazify its population as well as educate them about other cultures. *Der Monat* (1948–71), published in the American zone of occupation, ranks among the longest running and most impactful of these magazines. As a product of American-German cooperation, the goals of *Der Monat* were in line with the general aim of re-orienting the German people but it also became an important intellectual weapon in the newly forming battlegrounds of the Cold War.

Despite its obvious American roots, the magazine’s subtitle introduced it as ‘an international magazine’, while the ideals and political hopes which *Der Monat* presented to its German readers largely concerned Europe. In short: *Der Monat* was a German-language magazine, led and funded by Americans (the American military government in Germany, the Ford Foundation, and the Congress for Cultural Freedom), with an international self-image and pro-Western-European messaging. The magazine’s main aim was to win German readers as allies in the fight against Communism, to connect them to a growing network of European intellectuals. This meant that *Der Monat* stood in opposition to the concept of ‘unity’ promoted by the Soviet Union, while aiming to unify Western Europe in similar ways. Throughout its existence, the magazine presented itself as a forum for free and open discussions, as an open window through which Germany was to gain access to the plethora of cultures and voices it had been cut off from during the last decade.¹ Ironically, this insistence on the values of freedom and plurality functioned as a cover for a largely unified message. The following article aims to analyse this contradiction by focusing on the American origins of the magazine and the political motivation behind its founding; by illustrating the relationship between the international voices represented in the pages of *Der Monat* and its predominantly German readership; and by showing how the editorial practices of the magazine were used to convey a message of (European) unification while simultaneously presenting *Der Monat* as an advocate of freedom and plurality.

American Origins

Der Monat was first published in October 1948 and ran under its original name with an almost unchanging concept and structure until 1971. The one-hundred-page magazine featured political and philosophical essays, contemporary literary works, and articles on the arts. It quickly built up a network of recurring contributors as well as a loyal base of recurring readers. The founding of the magazine and the role its founder and first editor-in-chief, Melvin J. Lasky, played in it, is a somewhat legendary tale. Lasky was an American journalist who came to Europe as a military historian. He documented

1 In the first official manifesto of the magazine, six years after the first issue was published, the editors talk about ‘[d]ie Aufgabe, gleich einem Fenster dem eingekapselten Deutschland den Blick nach außen freizugeben’ [‘the task of opening up the view to the outside world, like a window to an encapsulated Germany’] which ‘steht heute nicht mehr so stark im Vordergrund’ [‘is no longer as prominent today as it was’] when the magazine was founded; Melvin J. Lasky and Hellmut Jaesrich, ‘Zum Geleit’, *Der Monat*, 73 (October 1954), 3. All German quotations are translated by the author.

US Army operations during World War II.² After the war, Lasky remained in Berlin working, among other jobs, as a correspondent for the *New Leader* and *Partisan Review*. In October 1947, he attended the first German Writers' Conference in Berlin. The event, which was supposed to bring together German authors from all zones of occupation, resulted in heated discussions between the two sides of the impending Cold War.³ Lasky gained special notoriety for a speech in which he confronted the Soviet delegation and encouraged all writers to identify as rebels. This provocation resulted in the members of the Soviet Military Administration leaving the conference, with one Russian writer declaring in a statement: 'I heard the speech of the unknown writer Lasky. I am very pleased to finally see a living warmonger.'⁴

Shortly after this experience, Lasky put together two memos for the US Office of Military Government for Germany.⁵ In them, he shared his thoughts on how to win the Cold War by promoting conversations among European intellectuals, an idea that was to become the origin of *Der Monat* — according to Lasky.⁶ The larger background to his story is Operation 'Talk Back', a US Operation, introduced by military governor General Lucius Clay at a press conference on 28 October 1947, shortly after the Writers' Conference, the declared aim of which was to expose the contradictions between propaganda and reality in Communism. But whether the founding of *Der Monat* was Lasky's or Clay's idea, what remains undisputed is the fact that *Der Monat* was founded as well as funded by Americans. The magazine was published by the American military government in Germany (at first OMGUS, later HICOG) for six years, and after its privatization, in 1954, by the Ford Foundation.⁷ Later on, from 1958 until 1963, the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) donated large sums of money, around \$60,000

- 2 For more information on Lasky's life before coming to Germany, especially his intellectual upbringing, see Maren Roth, "'In einem Vorleben war ich Europäer.'" – Melvin J. Lasky als transatlantischer Mittler im kulturellen Kalten Krieg', *Jahrbuch für Historische Kommunismusforschung* (2014), 139–56; for more insights into Lasky during World War II, see Melvin J. Lasky, *The Diary of Lt. Melvin J. Lasky: Into Germany at the End of World War II*, ed. by Charlotte A. Lerg (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2023); for a general overview of Lasky's life, see Charlotte A. Lerg and Maren Roth, eds, *Cold War Politics: Melvin J. Lasky. New York – Berlin – London* (München: Lasky Center for Transatlantic Studies, 2010).
- 3 For more background on Lasky's attendance at the conference see Giles Scott-Smith, 'A Radical Democratic Political Offensive: Melvin Lasky, *Der Monat*, and the Congress for Cultural Freedom', *Journal of Comparative History*, 35.2 (April 2000), 263–80 (pp. 264–67); S. A. Longstaff, "'Missionary in a Dark Continent": *Der Monat* and Germany's Intellectual Regeneration, 1947–1959', *History of European Ideas*, 19.1–3 (1994), 93–99; for general information about the conference see Ursula Reinhold, Dieter Schlenstedt, and Horst Tanneberger, eds, *Erster Deutscher Schriftstellerkongreß. 4–8. Oktober 1947. Protokoll und Dokumente* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1997); this publication includes Lasky's speech as well as reactions from the other attendees, see pp. 295–301.
- 4 'Ich habe die Rede des unbekanntenen Schriftstellers Lasky gehört. Ich bin sehr erfreut, endlich einen lebenden Kriegstreiber zu Gesicht zu bekommen.' Quoted in Michael Hochgeschwender, *Freiheit in der Offensive? Der Kongreß für kulturelle Freiheit und die Deutschen* (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1998), p. 142.
- 5 Melvin J. Lasky, 'On the Need for a New Overt Publication, Effectively American-Oriented, on the Cultural Front', 7 December 1947; Melvin J. Lasky, 'Towards a Prospectus for the "American Review"', 9 December 1947, both quoted in Scott-Smith, 'A Radical Democratic Political Offensive', p. 268.
- 6 Official documents written by Lasky name him as the originator of the magazine, for example in a memorandum to the Ford Foundation written by Lasky in 1951: 'Its [*Der Monat*'s] establishment was first proposed to General Lucius Clay in 1948 by the undersigned.' Melvin J. Lasky, *Memorandum* (15 May 1951), accessed through *Der Monat* records, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, Box 73, Folder 2–3.
- 7 For more information on this transition and *Der Monat*'s financial struggles see Volker R. Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 215–18.

per year, to the magazine.⁸ Due to this financial support, *Der Monat* was sold at a surprisingly low cost.⁹

The CCF was founded in 1950 as an international anti-Communist lobby group whose close connection to the CIA was not revealed until 1966.¹⁰ Until then, the CCF had grown into a major network of intellectuals who spoke out against Communism, and had served as a guise through which the CIA funded magazines like the British *Encounter*, the French *Preuves* alongside the German *Der Monat* which served as a 'pathfinder' for the foundation of further CCF magazines.¹¹ Michael Josselson, Lasky's close contact and executive secretary of the CCF until 1967, was recruited by the CIA.¹² But whether this was the case for Lasky himself — who not only organized the first meeting of the Congress in Berlin, worked as editor for both *Der Monat* and *Encounter* (starting in 1958), and remained close to the heart of the CCF publications network — remains unclear to this day.¹³

The eventual revelation of the true source behind *Der Monat's* funding brings the political context of the magazine's existence to the foreground.¹⁴ A clear political motivation to win German readers as allies against Communism existed even before the CIA was in any way connected to the magazine. As Lasky himself writes in his pitch for the establishment of the magazine,

Der Monat has several objectives: (a) *Der Monat* will be a weapon against Communism and Nazism, and especially the Soviet attempt to exploit both of these totalitarian factions in the drive to power; and (b) *Der Monat* will be a constructive instrument of 'orientation' and 'education' in order to help Germany find its proper place in the Western system of America-European cooperation. It is felt, therefore, that the new magazine will prove to be both popular (among the readers) and valuable (for American policy).¹⁵

8 Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: The New Press, 2013, E-Book), Chapter 14.

9 See Hochgeschwender, *Freiheit in der Offensive?*, pp. 160–66. *Der Monat* was for a long time sold for only one Mark while magazines like *Karussell* or *Die Umschau* cost twice as much.

10 For a detailed analysis of the CCF and its relationship to the CIA, see Stonor Saunders; for more on the history of the CCF, see Giles Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the CIA and Post-War American Hegemony* (London, New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 83–112; Peter Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Struggle for the Mind of Postwar Europe* (New York: Free Press, 1989).

11 Giles Scott-Smith and Charlotte A. Lerg, 'Introduction: Journals of Freedom?', in *Campaigning Culture and the Global Cold War: The Journals of the Congress for Cultural Freedom*, ed. by Giles Scott-Smith and Charlotte A. Lerg (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2017), pp. 1–24 (p. 8).

12 Michael Hochgeschwender, 'The Intellectual as Propagandist: *Der Monat*, the Congress for Cultural Freedom, and the Process of Westernization in Germany', *The American Impact on Western Europe: Americanization and Westernization in Transatlantic Perspective. Conference at the German Historical Institute, 25–27 March 1999*, Washington, DC, p. 20; for more on Lasky's relationship to Josselson, see Stonor Saunders, Chapter 6.

13 For more on the discourse surrounding Lasky's connection to or knowledge of CIA operations see Hugh Wilford, 'Melvin J. Lasky und die CIA', in *Cold War Politics: Melvin J. Lasky. New York – Berlin – London*, ed. by Charlotte A. Lerg and Maren Roth (München: Lasky Center for Transatlantic Studies, 2010).

14 For more on the relationship between the Congress for Cultural Freedom and *Der Monat*, see Michael Hochgeschwender, 'Der Monat and the Congress for Cultural Freedom: The High Tide of the Intellectual Cold War, 1948–1971', in *Campaigning Culture and the Global Cold War: The Journals of the Congress for Cultural Freedom*, ed. by Giles Scott-Smith and Charlotte A. Lerg (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 71–89.

15 Melvin J. Lasky, *Memo: Prospectus for Der Monat, new American-sponsored magazine (German-language)* (20.06.1948), accessed through *Der Monat* records, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, Box 73, Folder 6–7.

As Lasky's pitch illustrates, *Der Monat* was founded as a mouthpiece for American messaging in the context of the Cold War; its central message being one of re-orientation and anti-Communism.¹⁶ But although the magazine's close connection to the United States and American institutions in Germany — which is not only evident in its finances but also in the magazine's contents — is never denied, the degree to which this connection influenced editorial decisions is downplayed in the magazine itself. Issue 73, for example, the first issue of the magazine after it ceased to be published by the American military government, opens with a preface that functions as the first official manifesto of the magazine. In it, the editors — a team of German journalists led by Lasky and his co-editor-in-chief Hellmut Jaesrich¹⁷ — underscore the fact that they have covered 'this distance [i.e. the last six years of publishing *Der Monat*], to an almost astounding degree unhindered and left to our own devices, as the publication of an occupying authority in Germany'.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the same manifesto also emphasizes that: 'From now on we will be entirely free and independent, beholden to no one but our own ideas, our convictions, our conscience.'¹⁹

Existing research into the publishing practices of the magazine shows that this claim, the assertion that the editorial team was 'left to their own devices', is valid — although the conclusions that can be drawn from this are twofold. Instead of determining the content of the magazine, employees of the New York Field Office mainly assisted the editors of *Der Monat* in gaining the rights to already published articles. On occasion, they also suggested reprinting individual articles from American journals, which might be of interest to the German readership — but these suggestions were non-binding and mostly disregarded by Lasky.²⁰ At the same time, while the absence of evidence of American institutions directly influencing editorial decisions allows for the conclusion that the editors were free to act as they pleased, it also suggests that their decisions were already in line with the political goals of their financial and institutional backers.²¹

Part of *Der Monat's* marketing strategy was to downplay how close the magazine's ties to America, especially the US government, truly were. This is exemplified in Lasky's appeal for funding to the Ford Foundation, another American organization, in which he explains the need for a privatization of the magazine in the following way:

It should be emphasized at this point that the reception which *Der Monat* has had in its three years was only possible because although it was an overt publication of the American Military Government and later High Commission it was never an 'official organ', never 'propaganda', never 'one-sidedly American.' The magazine was edited and published by the undersigned under a broad agreement of policy and direction to which he wholeheartedly agreed; this guaranteed the largest measure of editorial freedom and discretion; there has been no 'dictation', no 'interference.' And it is precisely this sense of independence and integrity about the journal which has won it the confidence of its readers. Under no other

16 For a more detailed contextualization of this messaging see Joachim Gmehling, *Totalitarismustheorien in der jungen BRD: Zur Kritik des Nationalsozialismus und des Sowjetkommunismus in der Zeitschrift Der Monat* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2022), pp. 174–84.

17 German journalist Hellmut Jaesrich (1908–89) is another important figure in the history of the magazine. He was co-editor-in-chief with Lasky and later Fritz René Allemann. He introduced many of the German contributors to the magazine and was influential in shaping the German side of the magazine's network; see Gmehling, p. 170.

18 'diese Wegstrecke [...] in geradezu verblüffendem Maße unbehindert und auf uns selbst gestellt, als die Publikation einer Besatzungsbehörde in Deutschland'. Lasky and Jaesrich.

19 'Von nun an werden wir ganz und gar frei und unabhängig sein, niemandem verpflichtet als unseren eigenen Ideen, unseren Überzeugungen, unserem Gewissen.' Lasky and Jaesrich, p. 3.

20 Hochgeschwender, *Freiheit in der Offensive?*, p. 161.

21 This secondary conclusion is also the one Joachim Gmehling draws, see Gmehling, p. 775.

circumstances would it have been so accepted in the European cultural community.²²

Looking at the history of the magazine, its financial situation, and the intentions of its editors leaves no doubt that *Der Monat* was a medium of re-orientation in post-war Germany and that its purpose was to function as a connection to ‘the West’ in a time when the Cold War drew new borders across Europe. Thus, *Der Monat* can be best understood as ‘ein Instrument qualitativ hochwertiger intellektueller Propaganda des Westens’ [‘an instrument of high-quality intellectual Western propaganda’].²³ Lasky, who saw the main appeal of the magazine in the fact that it wasn’t perceived as ‘a kind of “foreign body”²⁴ by its readers, that it wasn’t identified as American propaganda,²⁵ emphasizes the importance of *Der Monat* representing not an American but a ‘Western point of view’²⁶ in order for the magazine to become ‘a native and genuine part of the European community.’²⁷ J. Laughlin, a representative of the Ford Foundation who travelled through Germany in 1954 and interviewed German intellectuals on their reception of *Der Monat*, confirms that Lasky’s strategy succeeded. ‘Der Monat is considered international but not American’, Laughlin concludes in his report.²⁸

The magazine’s international content and practices was an additional reason why *Der Monat* was not seen as American by its German readers. As Lasky himself argues, compared to other European journals of the time, like *Frankfurter Hefte*, *Horizon*, *Les Temps Modernes*, and *Esprit*, *Der Monat* ‘has been something other than all of these in that it has been distinctively international. [...] The attempt has been systematically made not merely to widen intellectual horizons but to help create a new kind of international, larger cultural community.’²⁹ This attempt as well as the international feel of the magazine becomes obvious when focusing on the many ways in which *Der Monat* connected its German readers to an international network of Western thinkers.

German Readers, International Voices

Der Monat’s unchanging structure and consistent content adds to the impression that the editorial team was always very sure of the type of reader it tried to attract. As Lasky writes in a memorandum: ‘Der Monat is essentially addressed to the “makers of public opinion”, the “intelligentsia”.’³⁰ This focus on German intellectuals was part of *Der Monat*’s publishing strategy from the start. Lasky and Clay, and later Josselson and the CCF, wanted to connect the German educated middle class to their network of Western thinkers. Unsurprisingly, nearly all long-time contributors for *Der Monat* were well-known international writers, philosophers, and intellectuals, most of whom stood in close connection to the CCF, such as François Bondy, Arthur Koestler, or Irving Kristol. The visibility of these voices, especially in the early years of the magazine, highlights

22 Lasky, *Memorandum*.

23 Hochgeschwender, *Freiheit in der Offensive?*, p. 150.

24 Lasky, *Memorandum*.

25 The same argument was also made a year earlier by Lasky in a letter to the US Army’s Office of Public Affairs where he refused to publish an article because ‘it wouldn’t do the *Monat* any good for it would [give] it a propagandistic note, the absence of which has given the magazine its reputation’. Melvin J. Lasky, [untitled, letter to Ted Kaghan, Office of Public Affairs (US Army)] (27 September 1950), accessed through *Der Monat* records, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, Box 6, Folder 7.

26 Lasky, *Memo: Prospectus for Der Monat*.

27 Lasky, *Memorandum*.

28 J. Laughlin, [untitled, letter to Don Price, Shep Stone] (25.03.1954), accessed through *Der Monat* records, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, Box 73, Folder 2–3.

29 Lasky, *Memorandum*.

30 *Ibid.*

the fact that *Der Monat* started out with the intention of bringing international content to the German readership.

In early issues, seven texts out of an average of seventeen texts per issue were originally written in German, eight texts were on average translated from English, and two texts were on average translated from other languages such as Italian, Spanish, Russian, Polish, Hungarian, and many others, although French writers are, after British and American writers, the third most prominent group translated in *Der Monat*.³¹ Aside from the sheer amount of translation effort needed for each issue of the magazine, with over fifty pages (out of an average of 110 pages) of translated material per issue, these numbers illustrate the dominance of British and American material printed in the early *Monat*. In later years, out of an average of seventeen texts per issue, eleven texts were originally written in German, four texts were translated from English, and two texts from other languages. The British and American dominance of the early *Monat* was thus over the years replaced by more and more German contributions. This ‘Germanification’³² of the magazine was the result of direct instructions by Michael Josselson, head of the CCF, who admonished the editorial team of *Der Monat* in the late 1950s and early 1960s for not including enough German contributions. Even though Lasky and Jaesrich were at all times of the magazine’s existence surrounded by a group of established German journalists and writers in the editorial office of *Der Monat*, Josselson’s critique stemmed from his belief that the German contributors never truly regarded *Der Monat* as their own, due to the magazine’s international content. His instructions were an attempt to give them more of a sense of participation or even ownership over the magazine.³³

Parallel to the dominance of translated material in the early years of the magazine, the international feel of *Der Monat* was additionally highlighted by recurring features and segments in the structure of the magazine itself. A standard issue of *Der Monat* opens with a political or philosophical editorial that is either a longer essay written by a single author or a couple of shorter articles all on the same subject but written by different authors from (mostly) different countries. Following this editorial there are various articles or sometimes book chapters mostly about political topics; at least one, sometimes up to three of these shorter articles are part of a recurring correspondences section. These articles are written by contributors from around the globe and framed as letters, for example ‘A letter from Bali’ or ‘A letter from Paris’.

Following these letters, the middle of the magazine is usually the place where a single literary text or multiple works by a single author are brought to the reader’s attention. For example, in 1949, the first German translations of both *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell were published in full in *Der Monat*. Other issues contain short works or excerpts from the works of literary greats of the time such as William Faulkner, George Bernard Shaw, or André Gide. Many of the texts published

31 These figures were calculated as part of the *Spaces of Translation: European Magazine Culture, 1945–1965* project; the average was calculated by comparing the translated and non-translated material published in early issues of *Der Monat* (October 1948–May 1950) with that of later issues of the magazine (July 1957–February 1959).

32 Michael Josselson demands for *Der Monat* to be ‘eingedeutscht’ in one of his letters to the editorial team. M. Josselson, [untitled, letter to Hellmut Jaesrich] (1 September 1959), accessed through International Association for Cultural Freedom Records, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, Box 250, Folder 5. M. Josselson, [untitled, letter to F.R. Allemann and Hellmut Jaesrich] (5 May 1961), accessed through International Association for Cultural Freedom Records, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, Box 250, Folder 7.

33 See Josselson, [untitled, letter to Hellmut Jaesrich]; M. Josselson, [untitled, letter to F. R. Allemann] (7 March 1960), accessed through International Association for Cultural Freedom Records, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, Box 250, Folder 6.

in *Der Monat* would in previous years have been impossible to be published or read freely in Germany.³⁴ As such, *Der Monat* created a space where, after the strict censure of the Nazi regime, otherwise known international authors like Ernest Hemingway, Jean-Paul Sartre, or previously forbidden German authors could make their début in Germany.³⁵ The publishing of excerpts from international novels in *Der Monat* months or even years before official German translations were published became a common practice of the magazine and with it, for many German readers, *Der Monat* became the place where they first encountered international literary voices.

The middle section of the magazine with its focus on literature functions as a bridge towards the second half of *Der Monat* which is less about politics and philosophy than the arts. A standard issue of *Der Monat* contains either a section on visual arts, theatre, poetry, music, or film, in addition to a regular section on literature. Following this, the closing pages of the magazine contain a section called ‘notices’, part of which are on average at least two pages filled with ‘letters to the editor’, as well as information given by the editorial team on the authors published in each specific edition of *Der Monat* — although, interestingly enough, this section of the magazine usually only introduces authors who are new to the pages of the magazine; a practice which shows that the editors thought of their readership as regulars, readers to whom recurring contributors would already be familiar.³⁶

In a way, the readership of the magazine and its contents give information about each other: *Der Monat* was an instrument of Westernization and as such it was picked up by a German readership that most likely already aligned itself with Western values and most definitively opposed the Soviet alternative.³⁷ Thus, though the political content of the magazine was hardly a revelation to its readers but rather the confirmation of an already established world view, what was revelatory was the access to a wide array of international writers from around the globe that the magazine provided to German readers.

This plurality of voices published in *Der Monat* is one of the two aspects that are most important to the self-image of the magazine. It goes hand in hand with *Der Monat*’s self-identification as a forum, as a medium through which ideas can be exchanged freely and openly. Both ideals take centre stage when it comes to communicating the practices of the editorial team in the pages of the magazine. For example, a short, unofficial manifesto is placed directly after the table of contents and above the imprint from the first issue of the magazine, and for the next thirteen years. It announces the following:

Der Monat is an international journal of politics and intellectual life. The thoughts reflected in its columns do not in every case represent the views of the editors,

34 Hochgeschwender, ‘Der Monat and the Congress for Cultural Freedom’, p. 77.

35 For more on the importance of a magazine like *Der Monat* for the re-integration of emigrated German writers, see Marko Martin, “Eine Zeitschrift gegen das Vergessen”: *Bundesrepublikanische Traditionen und Umbrüche im Spiegel der Kulturzeitschrift Der Monat* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2003), pp. 40–41.

36 *Der Monat* could indeed rely on its regulars, however, circulation numbers for *Der Monat* aren’t easily reconstructed: the first issue of *Der Monat* published reportedly between 45,000 and 60,000 copies (Hellmut Jaesrich, [untitled] (10 July 1967), accessed through *Der Monat* records, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, Box 74, Folder 5–7); in 1951, Lasky estimates the readership of *Der Monat* to be between 50,000 to 60,000 readers, but does so on the basis of an average of 20,000 sold copies (Lasky, *Memorandum*); and in 1954 J. Laughlin reports a circulation of 16,000 to 17,000 copies to the Ford Foundation, with another 10,000 printed copies that are distributed for free ‘behind the Curtain in the East Zone’ (Laughlin, [untitled, letter to Don Price, Shep Stone]). For more on *Der Monat*’s circulation, see Birgit Bödeker, *Amerikanische Zeitschriften in deutscher Sprache, 1945–1952* (Frankfurt am Main.: Peter Lang, 1993), pp. 157–58.

37 For more on the context of *Der Monat*’s use as an instrument of Westernisation see Hochgeschwender, ‘The Intellectual as Propagandist’; Gmehling, pp. 705–13.

nor do the contributions of individual authors express any official position. *Der Monat* is intended to serve as a forum for open debate and discussion on the basis of free expression of opinion and intends to make the largest possible number of diverse voices from Germany and all parts of the world heard.³⁸

Moreover, in place of a programmatic explanation, the first issue of *Der Monat* starts out with a simple one-page introduction to its first series of articles. In this introduction, the editorial team announces that ‘with these first three essays, *Der Monat* aims — as it plans to do in the future — to bring together several contributions by different authors, some of them with widely divergent views, on a specific topic.’³⁹ Additionally, the new manifesto in issue seventy-three emphasizes once again the notion that ‘what we have always striven for is the exchange of thoughts across European national borders and the Atlantic’.⁴⁰ According to the editors, ‘the right measure, the balance, [...] cannot be gained on a narrow national platform in an age of world-spanning and world-disrupting problems. Our most precious possession, freedom of the mind, can only be preserved in common effort.’⁴¹

What statements like these make clear is that the editors of *Der Monat* viewed their work as part of a collective undertaking which they framed as a discussion among equals, open to all participants. ‘Freedom’ and ‘plurality’ are the key concepts at play here, because they stood in contrast to the Soviet Union’s rhetoric of ‘peace’ and ‘unity’, and they mirrored the goals for post-war US foreign policy, to spread ‘American internationalism [...] combined with [...] deep-seated anti-Communism’ in Western Europe.⁴² In other words, while ‘freedom of the mind’ is crowned to be the magazine’s ‘most precious possession’, this freedom only extends to those who already share its ideology.

In practice, freedom and plurality are translated into the magazine’s ideal of various voices chiming in. This can be seen in the international collection of contributors and sections like the correspondences from around the globe. Additionally, the sheer amount of translation visible in the magazine displays the diversity of its contents. Free speech is similarly displayed in the ‘letters to the editor’ section which frequently gives room to counterarguments to previously published articles, and features appeals to the readers as well as commentary boxes that encourage dissenting opinions to be shared. These features of *Der Monat* show awareness of or even highlight the fact that some opinions printed in the magazine might be controversial in nature and put the open character of the magazine’s discourse in the forefront. The ideal that is presented in all

38 ‘*Der Monat* ist eine internationale Zeitschrift für Politik und geistiges Leben. Die in seinen Spalten wiedergegebenen Gedanken entsprechen weder in jedem Falle der Ansicht der Redaktion, noch sind die Beiträge einzelner Autoren Ausdruck irgendeiner offiziellen Haltung. *Der Monat* soll als Forum einer offenen Aussprache und Auseinandersetzung auf der Grundlage freier Meinungsäußerung dienen und beabsichtigt, einer möglichst großen Zahl verschiedener Stimmen aus Deutschland und allen Teilen der Welt Gehör zu verschaffen.’ [Anon.], [without title], *Der Monat*, 1 (October 1948), 2.

39 ‘[m]it den drei ersten Aufsätzen dieses Heftes will *Der Monat* — wie das auch für die Zukunft geplant ist — mehrere Beiträge verschiedener, in ihren Ansichten zum Teil weit auseinandergelagerter Autoren zu einem bestimmten Thema zusammenfassen’. [Anon.], ‘Das Schicksal des Abendlandes. Drei Perspektiven’, *Der Monat*, 1 (October 1948), 3.

40 ‘[w]as wir immer erstrebt haben, ist der Austausch der Gedanken über die europäischen Nationalgrenzen und den Atlantik hinweg’. Lasky and Jaesrich.

41 ‘das rechte Maß, die Ausgewogenheit, [kann] [...] im Zeitalter weltumspannender und weltzerklüftender Probleme nicht auf enger nationaler Plattform gewonnen werden [...]. Unser kostbarster Besitz, die Freiheit des Geistes, kann nur in gemeinsamer Anstrengung, in unermüdlicher, wechselseitiger Durchdringung der Gedanken und Meinungen bewahrt werden.’ Lasky and Jaesrich.

42 For more detail on this, see Martin, p. 17; for more the conception of ‘freedom’ as a central characteristic of US identity and foreign policy after World War II, see Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture*, pp. 33–57; Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture*, p. 33.

of these statements made by the editorial team is the extension of the forum-concept to include readers as well as contributors. *Der Monat* is thus shown to function as a medium through which all readers are given the opportunity to engage with discussions held among Europe's most famous intellectuals. 'Wir stellen diesen Aufsatz jedoch zur Debatte' ['We are putting this essay up for debate'], a commentary box announces next to an article published in 1951, 'and are prepared to give space not only to the opposition of those directly attacked here, but to any reader's letter that has something substantial to add to the discussion of the issues raised here'.⁴³

Although it proclaims itself to be open to all kinds of discussion, *Der Monat* was, of course, never intended to be a forum for — literally — all voices: Communists were excluded from the discourse entirely, and conservative voices in Western Germany, mainly catholic voices, were not included either.⁴⁴ A liberal ideology shines through the pages of the magazine; and the forum of *Der Monat* is clearly made up of anti-Communist, liberal voices discussing among each other. Seen this way, the close contact to other Western countries, their literature and culture, which *Der Monat* offered its readers was not only encouraged in order to help the German people understand and overcome their recent past, it was also intended to win the German readership as allies against Communism. To claim them as lights in 'dem Netz von geistigen Signalposten, das die freie Welt bedeckt' ['the network of intellectual signal posts that cover the free world'].⁴⁵

Thus, what the ideals of plurality and freedom truly promote is an understanding of (Western) Europe, with its shared values of heterogeneity and individualism, standing in opposition to the Soviet threat of 'unity', seen as conformity and assimilation. In this context, the conversations between European intellectuals that take place in the pages of *Der Monat* are not only elements of the magazine's internationalism but also evidence of the magazine taking a stance for the unification of Western Europe which US foreign policy championed at the time.

European Unity

Until 1965, roughly half of the 'letters' published in the correspondences section of *Der Monat* were 'sent' from European cities or countries and concerned European issues. While these correspondences usually approach the singular issues of specific places in Europe from a personal perspective, the more analytical editorial at the beginning of each magazine is oftentimes concerned with the 'Matter of Europe'. In the first ten issues of the magazine alone, the editorial allows various contributors to comment on the fate of the Occident (*Der Monat*, 1 [October 1948]), the differences between West and East (*Der Monat*, 2 [November 1948]), Socialism (*Der Monat*, 5 [February 1949]), options for an Italy after Mussolini (*Der Monat*, 6 [March 1949]), and the fears and hopes when considering a German re-awakening (*Der Monat*, 8–9 [June 1949]). Issue four (January 1949) in particular, in which 'Wege zu einem neuen Europa' ['Ways to a New Europe'] are discussed by French philosopher and political economist Bertrand de Jouvenel, British economist and writer Barbara Ward, American historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Swiss diplomat Karl von Schumacher, Swiss journalist Manuel Gasser,

43 'und sind bereit, nicht nur den Widerspruch der hier unmittelbar Angegriffenen, sondern jeder Leserschrift Raum zu geben, die der Diskussion über die hier aufgeworfenen Fragen etwas Wesentliches hinzuzufügen hat'. [Anon.], 'Die verhinderten Hochverräter. Wege und Irrwege deutscher Memoirenliteratur', *Der Monat*, 29 (February 1951), p. 495.

44 For more on this see Hochgeschwender, 'Der Monat and the Congress for Cultural Freedom', pp. 79–80; Hochgeschwender, *Freiheit in der Offensive?*, p. 171.

45 Lasky and Jaesrich.

and German journalist and critic Walter Maria Guggenheimer, serves as an example of the internationalism of the magazine's editorial line, the magazine's political stance when it comes to Europe as well as the ways in which editorial interferences are used to promote this stance. Although the contributors are given free rein to voice their opinions on the topic, the editorial on 'Ways to a New Europe' shows how the framing of individual essays puts *Der Monat's* own agenda in the forefront.

This framing is subtle but unmistakable: the very first article of issue four, written by Bertrand de Jouvenel, is prefaced by a commentary box which the editors use to declare that 'his remarks printed here, like those of the other authors of this symposium, do not correspond to our view on every point. *Der Monat* does not share de Jouvenel's view that economic forces primarily determine the shape of the political situation.'⁴⁶ At the same time, the editors emphasize, 'the differentiation and clarification of all views on the need for a new and free society in the West is precisely the task of such a discussion.'⁴⁷ The appearance of a commentary box in this editorial underlines how important a free and open discussion of political issues is to the editors of *Der Monat*, while simultaneously disagreeing with one of the major points made by de Jouvenel's essay, thus framing his argument as debatable from the outset.

In his article, de Jouvenel argues that the 'katastrophale[r] Seelenzustand des heutigen Europa' ['catastrophic state of mind in Europe today'] is caused by each nation's individual (economic) withdrawal.⁴⁸ As such, he sees a return from the stage of contraction to expansion as Europe's main goal in the near future and, to his mind, the Marshall Plan will allow this reversal to happen.⁴⁹ De Jouvenel also argues that the (perceived) economic crisis in Europe is the root of Europe's 'sickness' and that any political ideologies are merely trimmings laid over this true cause for conflict: 'When there is no longer room for everyone, the struggle for the narrowly defined number of available places naturally becomes more and more bitter. Ideological slogans can always be found for this struggle.'⁵⁰ On this point, the editors of *Der Monat*, who were eager to fight Communism, disagree.

The second article in the editorial, written by Barbara Ward, shares de Jouvenel's diagnosis of a 'sick' Europe. But where de Jouvenel sees the ideology of Communism as a surface symptom, Ward warns that this 'sickness' can only take hold in a previously weakened body: 'Communism, like a contagious disease, first takes hold in the weakest parts of the body of society, where economic hardship, racial prejudice, injustice and hopelessness prevail, in order to feed on from these places. In a healthy social body it finds no starting points.'⁵¹ She therefore argues that the Western nations must express their will to cooperate politically and take the initiative, as the editorially chosen headline

46 '[s]eine hier abgedruckten Ausführungen entsprechen wie die der anderen Autoren dieses Symposiums nicht in jedem Punkt unserer Ansicht. Der Monat teilt nicht de Jouvenels Auffassung, daß wirtschaftliche Kräfte in erster Linie die Gestalt der politischen Situation bestimmen'. [Anon.], 'Wege zu einem neuen Europa', *Der Monat*, 4 (January 1949), 3.

47 'die Differenzierung und Klärung aller Anschauungen, die von der Notwendigkeit einer neuen und freien Gesellschaft des Westens ausgehen, ist ja gerade die Aufgabe einer solchen Diskussion'. [Anon.], 'Wege zu einem neuen Europa'.

48 Bertrand de Jouvenel, 'Expansion und Kontraktion', *Der Monat*, 4 (January 1949), 3–5 (p. 3).

49 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

50 'Wenn es nicht länger Platz für alle gibt, wird der Kampf um die engumgrenzte Anzahl der vorhandenen Plätze selbstverständlich immer erbitterter. Für diesen Kampf finden sich jederzeit ideologische Schlagworte.' Jouvenel, p. 4.

51 'Der Kommunismus setzt sich wie eine ansteckende Krankheit zuerst an den schwächsten Stellen im Körper der Gesellschaft fest, dort, wo wirtschaftliche Not, Rassenvorurteile, Ungerechtigkeit und Hoffnungslosigkeit herrschen, um sich von diesen Stellen aus weiterzufressen. In einem gesunden Gesellschaftskörper findet er keine Ansatzpunkte.' Barbara Ward, 'Die Initiative liegt bei uns', *Der Monat*, 4 (January 1949), 6–11 (p. 8).

of her article emphasizes, for the European body to be strengthened against the threat of Communism and the Soviet Union.⁵²

Following in the same vein, Arthur M. Schlesinger paints an active and altogether more positive picture of Europe in 1949 in his essay. He emphasizes the successes which the Marshall Plan has already shown to have as well as the hope it brought back to Europe.⁵³ The language he uses to illustrate his views on the Marshall Plan is especially enlightening:

It has [...] succeeded in awakening not only the will to recover but also the will to resist, without which recovery would be impossible in the face of Soviet Russia's ideological offensive. Two years ago, many Europeans regarded the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union as an 'imperialist conflict' which concerned European democracy only in so far as it had to avoid war at almost any cost. The Marshall Plan played a decisive role in destroying the illusion of European neutrality in this conflict.⁵⁴

Similar to Ward's argument, Schlesinger thus reinforces the agency of all European countries when it comes to taking sides in the Cold War. His appeal to an active Europe is further built upon in the fourth article of the editorial. Karl von Schumacher asks whether the Marshall Plan can save Europe and answers his own question by saying that 'man kann niemals nur von außen her gerettet werden' ['no one can ever be saved only from the outside'].⁵⁵ According to Schumacher, Europe can only be saved by European unification, and the authors of the final two essays in the editorial agree with him.⁵⁶

As an aside in his argumentation, Walter Maria Guggenheimer mentions that the belief in the Europe-creating power of supranational economic ties are completely incomprehensible to him⁵⁷ which is, again, subject to the editors' comments, saying that 'we cannot share W. M. Guggenheimer's fears that the closer economic integration of growing areas would stand in the way of an internal unification of Europe'.⁵⁸ Thus, the comment box at the beginning of the editorial criticizes both de Jouvenel's emphasis on the economic unification as well as Guggenheimer's fears concerning such a unification.

The five articles paint a surprisingly homogeneous picture of what the European future should look like. No one argues against a unified Europe. And no one argues for a union with European states behind the Iron Curtain. The Marshall Plan, whose central intent was to 'remove the obstacles to a fast-track European economic recovery',

52 Ward, pp. 10–11.

53 Arthur M. Schlesinger jun., 'Die transatlantische Gemeinschaft', *Der Monat*, 4 (January 1949), 11–19 (p. 15).

54 'Es ist [...] gelungen, nicht nur den Willen zur Genesung, sondern auch den Willen zum Widerstand wachzurufen, ohne den angesichts der ideologischen Offensive Sowjetrußlands eine Genesung unmöglich wäre. Vor zwei Jahren betrachteten viele Europäer die Auseinandersetzung zwischen den Vereinigten Staaten und der Sowjetunion als einen "imperialistischen Konflikt", der die europäische Demokratie nur insofern angehe, als sie um fast jeden Preis einen Krieg verhüten mußte. Der Marshall-Plan hat entscheidend dazu beigetragen, die Illusion einer europäischen Neutralität in diesem Konflikt zu zerstören.' Schlesinger, pp. 14–15.

55 Karl von Schumacher, 'Kann der Marshall-Plan Europa retten?', *Der Monat*, 4 (January 1949), 19–22 (p. 19).

56 Schumacher, p. 22; Manuel Gasser uses the unification of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg as an example which Europe as a whole should follow, see Manuel Gasser, 'Benelux als Beispiel', *Der Monat*, 4 (January 1949), 22–26 (p. 25); and Walter Maria Guggenheimer argues specifically for the unification of political power in Europe, see Walter Maria Guggenheimer, 'Die Deutschen in Europa', *Der Monat*, 4 (January 1949), 25–29 (p. 25).

57 Guggenheimer, p. 29.

58 '[wir] können [...] W.M. Guggenheimers Befürchtungen nicht teilen, daß der festere wirtschaftliche Zusammenschluß immer größerer Gebiete einer inneren Einigung Europas eher im Wege stehen würde'. [Anon.], 'Wege zu einem neuen Europa'. Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture*, p. 70.

is praised. In short, the message of this editorial is as unified as its authors wish Western Europe to be. At the same time, while the form of the editorial suggests a discussion through the presentation of seemingly differing points of view from which readers can draw their own conclusions, the framing of the editorial focuses the reader's attention from the outset. Both outliers in the editorial are criticized: economic unification is given less importance than the undisputed appeal to the agency of all European states and their political unification, as well as their alignment with 'the West'. At first glance, this might seem contrary to US policy since the Marshall Plan focused on bringing economic stability to post-war Europe. A closer look shows how the editorial, especially the articles by Barbara Ward and Arthur M. Schlesinger, heavily champions the 'clear logic' of the Marshall Plan: the ideal that 'by aiding the recovery of the West European economies, support for Communism would decline'.⁵⁹ Additionally, when it comes to the disagreement concerning the unification of economic power, the editorial commentary that opposes de Jouvenel also opposes the idea that the conflict with Soviet Russia could be about anything else than ideology. In turn, the editorial commentary that opposes Guggenheimer wipes away his concerns about economic interests standing in the way of European unification. Thus, both the differing ideology of 'the East' and the unity of 'the West' are further emphasized.

In the context of the Cold War, neither the advantages of a united Western Europe nor the disadvantages of Communism would have been new information to regular readers of *Der Monat* — a readership that had, for the most part, already chosen sides. *Der Monat* was a magazine that had from its inception been intended to serve as 'a constructive instrument to help stimulate intellectual and moral currents in a free Continent and to foster a democratic Western system of European-American cooperation'.⁶⁰ As such, it is unsurprising that the magazine quickly became a space in which fellow believers in the unity of Western Europe found confirmation of their ideas. Although the political intent of the magazine in working towards European unification seems more than obvious now, the readership of *Der Monat* never viewed it as an organ of American propaganda. So it stands to reason that the efforts made by Lasky and his team were successful. The editorial of issue four is a perfect example of the forum character of the magazine and its intent to create an atmosphere of diverse discourses working in conjunction with a political agenda to create a piece of writing that promotes the ideals of freedom and plurality without truly putting them into practice. The analysis of issue four thus highlights the ever-present irony at the heart of *Der Monat*'s editorial line: opposing the forced 'unity' promoted by the Soviet Union while using editorial interference to create a similarly united front in 'the West'.

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⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 38.

⁶⁰ Lasky, *Memorandum*.

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