Between Stasi and the promised Socialist Paradise

SF and fandom in the GDR
A Short History of the GDR
07.10.1949 – 03.10.1990

May 1952: Frontiere to FRG closed

17.06.1953: Uprising of workers, starting in East Berlin, suppressed by Soviet troops stationed in the GDR

November 1956: Uprising in Hungary

13.08.1961: Construction of the Berlin Wall and fortification of the inner-German border

1968: Prague Spring, in August suppressed by troops from USSR, Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria

21.09.1972: Basic Treaty between FRG and GDR (Permanent Representations in Bonn and East Berlin and transit agreement, among others)
A Short History of the GDR

07.10.1949 – 03.10.1990

1973: UNO membership for FRG and GDR

1975: Signature of the Helsinki CSCE Final Act

1979/80: Second Oil Crisis leads to accelerated economic decline

1982: GDR was threatened with insolvency, prevented by two West German billion-euro loans in 1983 and 1984

1987: GDR strictly rejects Gorbatschow's Glasnost and Perestroika

Autumn 1989: Large protest against falsified results of local elections in May and mass exodus of GDR citizens via Hungary

09.11.1989: Fall of the Berlin Wall
The Printing Permission Process

August 1951: Office for Literature and Publishing

Responsible for the allocation of the paper quota to publishers

Reviewing manuscripts to enhance the "quality of literature"

The permission to print a book had to be applied for each new edition. At least two expert opinions had to be submitted with the manuscript. An employee of the publishing house (usually the editor) prepared a "publisher's report", an outsider a so-called "external report". The expert opinions contained an assessment of the book's political statements and a recommendation for or against printing. The Office was not bound by the recommendation.

Approved printed works were given a licence number, which was then to be indicated in the imprint.
1949-58: SF for children/YA

Günther Krupkat (1905-1990)  
Print-run > 150,000
1949-58: Building Socialism

Eberhardt del’Antonio (1926-1997)
1959-71: The Space Race

Carlos Rasch
(1932 - )
1959-71: The Space Race

Signale – Ein Weltraumabenteuer
(DEFA/Zespoły Filmowe; GDR/PL 1971)
1959-71: The Space Race

Der schweigende Stern

UK/US title: *First Spaceship on Venus*

(GDR/PL 1960)
1959-71: The Space Race

Eolomea (GDR/USSR/BU 1972)
1959-71: The Space Race

Im Staub der Sterne (GDR 1976)
1972-80: Experiments + Satire
1972-80: Crime + SF

Gert Prokop (1932-1994)
1981-89: Ecology

Peter Lorenz
(1944-2009)
1981-89: Social Changes

Ursula K. LeGuin (1929-2018)

The Left Hand of Darkness (USA 1969/GDR 1979)

The Dispossessed (USA 1974/GDR 1987)
1981-89: Social Changes

Karlheinz + Angela Steinmüller (1950- / 1941-)
1981-89: SF for the class enemy

Johanna Braun

Günter Braun
1980-89: Lichtjahr / Light Year
Fandom in the GDR
GDR fanzine production

1967 - 1973:
13 Fanzines
87 issues

1974 - 08.11.1989:
20 Fanzines
136 issues

09.11.1989 - 03.10.1990:
8 Fanzines
21 issues
Fanzines in the GDR
SF Clubs in the GDR

Stanislaw-Lem-Klub Dresden

05.06.1969 founded as „interest community for scientific-fantastic literature“, 08/1970 renamed to SLK

02/1973 Author Rolf Krohn and RPK expelled from University

Fall 1973 new beginning

03/1977 dissolved
The first DDR-Con that never was
E.T. - The Extraterrestrial

Release dates:

USA: 10.06.1982

FRG: 09.12.1982

GDR: 29.04.1988