INTRODUCTION

In the first week of August 1977, Rudolf M. arrived at his local grocery store in the East German town of Rötha in the hopes of restocking his pantry with his usual brand of coffee, Mocca-Fix-Gold, only to discover no packages remained on the shelves. When he asked a clerk about their stock, the employee told him that production of Mocca- Fix-Gold and Kosta, another popular brand, had been discontinued and replaced by a new product, Kaffee-Mix. The revelation disturbed Rudolf because, like many East Germans, Rudolf was accustomed to periodic goods shortages, but the outright removal of a particular product was another matter entirely. When staff were unable to provide Rudolf with any further information, he returned home and decided to write an official petition letter (*Eingabe*) to the local authorities. Describing his exchange in the store, Rudolf insisted that not only he but also many other coffee drinkers were astounded by this information. The abrupt changes in coffee supply frustrated him, he explained, because "now there was finally a coffee that was practical and quick to brew, as well as being flavorful, and suddenly it disappears from the market."[1]

Rudolf's frustration in Rötha reflected similar experiences in stores across the country through the month of August as East Germans found their regular roasted coffee brands removed from circulation and replaced by Kaffee-Mix, a mixture of 51 percent roasted coffee and 49 percent "surrogate" products: chicory, sugar beet, and rye. Store staff throughout the country were unable to provide more clarity or explanation than they had for Rudolf except to say that the previously most popular brands were out of production indefinitely. These sudden changes caused mass confusion and upset across the country, inspiring thousands of avid coffee drinkers to write urgent complaint letters to industry and government officials over the following weeks. This public outcry sparked a nationwide "coffee crisis" that reached the highest levels of government, and staff in the country's food ministry scrambled to resolve the issue.

The direct cause of this coffee crisis, and the reason East German coffee drinkers like Rudolf found their coffee replaced, had occurred two years earlier in

Brazil. In July 1975, a massive black frost swept through most of Brazil's coffee-producing regions, killing nearly two-thirds of the country's coffee trees over the course of a single weekend.[2] World coffee prices quadrupled within weeks as global markets panicked over fears that existing coffee reserves would run out long before new trees could be planted and reach maturity—a process that would take up to five years. By the time Rudolf entered his shop in Rötha two years later, world prices remained twice as high as their pre-1975 levels, and East Germany was no longer able to afford new beans.

The unannounced replacement of their coffee with a strange new mixture served as a reminder to East Germans of the country's—and therefore their own—dependence on the world coffee market, a market dominated by an international quota system (which placed hard limits on the volume of coffee East Germany could purchase at the best of times) and susceptible to unpredictable changes in weather and climate conditions. Because the German Democratic Republic (GDR) had a very limited supply of hard currency (its own currency was nonconvertible, so it could not be traded on international markets), the country struggled to maintain a supply adequate for meeting the public demand. Yet the state's attempt to stretch the supply through adulteration only angered the population. Public rejection of the coffee measures left industry and government officials once again scrambling to find new sources of raw beans that the country still could not afford. East German trade officials therefore sought alternative trading partners in the developing world, turning to decolonized, socialist-leaning states who were willing to trade directly for coffee through barter. In Angola, Ethiopia, Laos, and particularly Vietnam, East Germany sought both immediate and longer-term solutions to its coffee problems; export markets for its own finished goods; and the opportunity to strengthen its own political and economic ties to the broader socialist world through the development and expansion of meaningful partnerships. While some of these partnerships were short-lived, others evolved over the next decade and had lasting effects on the global coffee market. East German assistance, for instance, helped Vietnam launch a coffee development project in the 1980s that led to Vietnam's rise to becoming the world's second largest producer of Robusta coffee beans in the early 1990s.

This book tells the story of how a particular commodity came to play a significant role in the everyday lives of East Germans; it explains how and why coffee—a simple, typical part of everyday modern life—triggered a nationwide crisis in 1977. Indeed, compared to the other major issues facing East Germany at the same time, such as a growing foreign debt crisis and the delayed onset of the second oil crisis, it seems that a coffee shortage ought to have been a much lower priority for the government, both politically and economically. Nonetheless, anxieties about this seemingly mundane food item spread throughout the public, industry, and government, leading to dramatic domestic and foreign interventions. This circumstance, this book argues, reveals two things: First, alongside

questions of adequate supply, certain expectations regarding cultural and social food practices, quality, and taste remained firmly entrenched in East German society to the extent that they influenced and helped determine government policy at home and abroad. Second, through its coffee agreements and projects in the developing world, the GDR played an active role in shaping the process of globalization in the second half of the twentieth century, and its contributions had effects lasting well beyond the fall of state socialism in Germany.

Coffee was an odd commodity for a socialist state to have committed its scarce energy and resources to providing for several reasons. Germany's climate does not allow for the domestic production of coffee, so coffee did not fit within the state's ambitions of an autarkic economy. Coffee is a fickle crop, highly susceptible to even slight changes in climate that render entire batches of beans useless for consumption. For a centrally controlled economy that operated on fixed, five-year forecasts and that possessed very limited supplies of hard currency, there was a great deal of financial risk in maintaining a supply of such an unreliable good that was only available through the international market. Coffee possesses minimal nutritional value, and East Germans consumed it primarily for comfort, pleasure, and as a stimulant. East Germany's limited industrial capacity to produce consumer goods, combined with its ideological fixation on eschewing luxuries and forms of ornamentalism, meant that early consumer production concentrated on staple goods and typically limited citizens' access to luxuries. Finally, as a colonial foodstuff historically imported through the exploitation of colonized lands and peoples, coffee had its roots in European elite and later bourgeois civility. This legacy fit uneasily into East German communists' commitment to anti-imperialism and their efforts to promote a modern, egalitarian socialist workers' utopia that rejected bourgeois sentimentalities. Yet from the 1950s onward, the government committed to providing coffee for the population because, despite these drawbacks, officials believed coffee had a role to play in strengthening the state's claims to political and cultural legitimacy.

This book's focus on a single foodstuff is a deliberate effort to demonstrate the connection between material culture and the GDR's global entanglements. Coffee's story in East Germany reflects a series of complex relationships, including patterns of sociability—as well as growing social tensions—between East Germans, state-civil relations, and East Germans' deepening connection to an increasingly globalizing world. Foods (and material objects generally) are not inherently value-free; eating and drinking are personal and social practices through which people form and express identities with the choices they make about what and how they eat. In turn, these identities inform and reinforce broader cultural values from which social relationships can be built.[3] Foods and foodways can also reveal the structures and flows of power—for instance, by examining how the imposition of national wartime rationing measures can lead to a renegotiation of public political power.[4] In East Germany, coffee came to

be associated with a host of social and political meanings and values through which East Germans could form and express their own identities and social relationships. The state likewise tried to impose its own meaning onto both coffee and everyday life—meanings that, as this book discusses, the population both internalized and contested.

The meanings that came to define and surround coffee in the GDR were not all new, nor even unique to East Germany; many were borrowed and transformed from earlier ideas about the beverage, dating back to its first appearance in Europe in the seventeenth century. In present-day Germany, coffee belongs to a category of foods known as *Genussmittel*—a term used to describe both stimulants and luxuries or delicacies. When it first appeared in Europe during the mid-sixteenth century, coffee was initially regarded as a strange, foreign substance fit only for use as a medicine, and its eventual identity as a vital element of everyday life was anything but preordained. Indeed, coffee's emergence within the culinary traditions of European consumer society was "less revolutionary, and more evolutionary," relying on people gradually adopting a taste for both the beverage and the changes in urban sociability taking place around them.[5] Coffee first appeared in Venetian markets as early as 1624, from there spreading to the Netherlands, England, France, and the Habsburg Empire by the mid-1660s. The German states—still a loose configuration of over three hundred independent kingdoms at the time—encountered coffee later than their neighbors, with the first recorded commercial shipments of the beverage occurring in 1669, forty-five years after those in Venice.[6] The first coffee houses appeared in German lands in the final decades of the seventeenth century, at roughly the same time as those in other European states.[7] Yet these sites were still sparse, and coffee remained an expensive drink in German territories, consumed only in noble houses, until the early eighteenth century.[8] Beginning in 1711, coffee was served at a coffee house in Leipzig, renamed Zum Arabischen Coffe Baum (At the Arabic Coffee Tree), which continues to serve guests fresh coffee to this day.[9] The drink was so popular that Johann Sebastian Bach chose coffee as the focus of his 1732 Coffee Cantata, a comedy in which a spoiled daughter declares to her father that any potential suitor would first have to "present [her] with coffee!" if he "wish[ed] to please [her]."[10]

Several factors contributed to Germans' slower adoption of coffee drinking. Generally, in most states, Germans drank beer or wine at public events during the eighteenth century.[11] Coffee's origins outside of Europe meant the beverage met with uncertainty and occasionally suspicion, which slowed the drink's expansion through the German states.[12] Politics, as well, created barriers to coffee drinking. By the mid-eighteenth century, German princes had gained considerable authority and power in their kingdoms, and coffee drinking's rise in prominence threatened their tax revenue, particularly in beer-producing states. Increasing the tax rate in Prussia only led to coffee smuggling. In response, Frederick the

Great imposed a ban in 1777 on the sale, trade, or brewing of coffee in all states under the Prussian crown's control, even deploying "coffee sniffers" to investigate suspected coffee smugglers. Frederick's ban failed to curb coffee drinking, however, as people found better ways to hide their beans, and the ban was lifted by 1780.[13] The imposition of these very prohibitions, sparked by a concern over taxation revenue and coffee's potential disruption of the beer economy, demonstrate the extent to which people had "naturalized their experiences with coffee." Furthermore, not only did the prohibitions fail to slow coffee consumption; by restricting the beverage, the state authorities drew more attention to it, increasing its novelty and desirability, ultimately opening the way for its gradual spread into new classes of people. Because coffee remained too expensive for most people to afford, the introduction of coffee surrogates helped facilitate coffee's adoption by the lower classes.[14] Coffee's popularity continued to grow in Germany, though consumption often differed greatly between regions and class. By the turn of the nineteenth century, coffee was more common in northern German regions, but generally limited to Sunday brunches or entertaining guests, rather than part of a daily routine, whereas coffee featured regularly in servants' daily rations in the southern states of Westphalia, Hesse, and Saxony. Most farmers, however, still drank mostly tea and ate porridge with their morning meals.[15] Even so, regardless of region, coffee remained a drink consumed primarily for socialization and conversation—for relaxation—within bourgeois circles and had not yet made its way to the common people.

The industrial revolution facilitated coffee's emergence in the everyday lives of the working class, in particular as a drink that could increase sobriety and alertness in urban workforces.[16] As larger populations migrated into cities, women—at least, women in the upper classes, with leisure time—started meeting in private groups for coffee, and while these casual meetings came to be known as *Kaffeeklatsch* ("coffee gossip") by male detractors, they also offered women a socially acceptable means to discuss politics as they were prohibited by custom from participating in similar discussions in public houses.[17] Through the industrial revolution, coffee finally became more accessible to the broader public as factories began to offer coffee in their canteens in an effort to keep workers alert, stave off hunger, and encourage sobriety on the factory floor.[18] Yet workers still typically relied on the far less expensive ersatz or *Malzkaffee* (a sweetened form of chicory substitute in Germany), produced by the Kathreiner Malzkaffee roaster in Magdeburg as early as 1908.[19] Coffee brands with higher caffeine content, or those offering richer flavors, remained expensive and a symbol of social status—or a very important occasion, like a holiday or family celebration.[20] By the twentieth century, coffee was an established part of everyday life.

In part, it was precisely coffee's association with the everyday that provided the impulse for the East German government's early financial and political investments in coffee drinking. East German communists claimed that through socialism—

the combined effects of a command economy and international solidarity—coffee had been made more accessible for everyday workers and less exploitative of producers, thereby becoming successfully disentangled from its past association with bourgeois elite culture and colonialism. I argue that state planners deployed these claims as a means to legitimate both the East German state and society by suggesting that drinking coffee in the present linked East Germans to an older, well-established European cultural activity. At the same time, making coffee more available could not necessarily disassociate it from notions of relaxation and leisure, which could seem anathema to a state fixated on an ideology of productivist labor. Whether among aristocratic elites' afternoon coffee circles, or inside the early coffee houses, coffee was historically something one *paused to enjoy*, something intended to stimulate socialization and discussion. Even when coffee entered the worker canteens of factories, it was consumed primarily during formal breaks *from* work. Coffee's story in the GDR is interesting precisely because the official imagery and rhetoric concerning both its substance and the cultural practices related to its consumption, in fact, encouraged its association with relaxation and leisure—its use as a stimulant for productive work appeared more often as a secondary, if useful, benefit. In engaging in similar practices, East German citizens partook in and perpetuated a European culture and identity that remained palpable but was now supposedly bereft of its more troubling legacies. Coffee's "emancipation" from its past—and its association with leisure—served to reinforce the state's claims that it was improving living standards and meeting the consumer expectations of its population.

Additionally, coffee's scarcity in Germany for the first few decades of the twentieth century—brought about by two world wars, political and economic strife, the Great Depression, and strict rationing policies by various governments—also proved useful for the ambitions of East Germany's Socialist Unity Party (SED). East German planners believed that the return of this beverage and its related cultural practices would not only give the population a sense of stability but would strengthen the government's message of socialism's capacity to deliver a high quality of life—a vital goal in the GDR's broader Cold War struggle with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). At its Fifth Party Conference in July 1958, the SED issued a series of sweeping policy changes that saw the official end to postwar rationing and a new concentration on consumer goods production through the Seven Year Plan (1958–1965). At that conference, party chairman Walter Ulbricht declared that the "main economic task" of the GDR was now to overtake West German per capita consumption by 1961.[21] Living standards generally improved throughout the 1960s as the supply of staple goods like bread and meat were more widely and consistently available, but alongside these developments, coffee also became increasingly visible, both through advertisements and imagery in print media, and as the state's efforts to improve the supply of roasted coffee blends intensified during the decade. When the SED changed

leadership in 1971, the new party chairman, Erich Honecker, declared the new "principal task" of socialism and heralded the GDR's supposed entry into a new phase of "real existing socialism." During the 1970s, government policies prioritized meeting the consumer needs of the population over industrial production while avoiding any perceived abandonment of Marxist-Leninist principles and criticism of consumption.[22] Meanwhile, East Germans' increased access to coffee over the previous two decades reinforced expectations of its continued availability, especially in light of real existing socialism. Culturally, coffee had ceased to be considered a luxury good and now occupied a space alongside other staples of everyday life for most East Germans. By the 1970s, coffee drinking had become part of an official discourse about a modern, socialist "living culture," promoted as a foodstuff to be enjoyed alone or with peers and as a symbol of one's participation in a modern society, one in which socialism had allegedly achieved social equalization and unity.[23] Coffee drinking, in other words, was not only compatible with a modern socialist utopia but, in fact, aided in its construction.

If East Germans were to be successfully convinced of this vision of a socially equal, modern utopia, however, they would require regular and consistent evidence of socialism's alleged benefits, especially access to the desirable foodstuffs they had been promised. By committing to supplying the population with coffee and encouraging its consumption for enjoyment, the state created a set of expectations that politicized the beverage in the eyes of the public. The state's capacity to meet these expectations was always challenged by both the limits of the planned economy as well as the constraints imposed by an ideological fixation on currency.[24] The government's inability to maintain a steady supply of consumer goods challenged its political legitimacy at several key points in its history (for instance, as early as the 1953 uprising, during which—among calls for free elections and civil liberties—the population demanded the reversal of a 40-percent hike in consumer prices and investments into consumer goods production).[25] By the 1970s, many shoppers had grown accustomed to frequent shortages and a lack of variety in consumer goods (such as limited size variation in clothing); nonetheless, the coffee crisis of 1977 sparked particular, acute, and immediate reactions from East Germans across the country, which reflected anger and frustration at a state that—even more than thirty-five years after World War II—seemed unable to maintain a supply of what many considered such a staple of everyday life.

Yet coffee's importance lay in more than simply its availability on store shelves.[26] In an environment in which East Germans could—and inevitably would—compare their own material lives to those of West Germans *and* one another, coffee led to a crisis of *both* economics *and* culture. East Germans understood that their material living standards did not compare with those of West Germans, a point of contention to which consumers pointed during the coffee crisis when they complained about the adulteration of "their" coffee despite

similar actions not taking place in the West. The coffee crisis arose out of fears about supply shortages, yet it became a national matter "of the utmost political importance" because of coffee's association with notions of quality and perceptions of social inequality, which the crisis exacerbated.[27] As the public's reaction to the changes in coffee supply demonstrated, planners neglected the extent to which consumers' perceptions of value prioritized quality. East Germans expected more than merely the ability to drink a cup of coffee every day; they demanded a coffee that consistently met their flavor expectations; they would not tolerate a product whose taste did not appeal to them. Furthermore, the crisis highlighted growing social inequalities that by 1977 were becoming increasingly apparent to most East Germans. Although their complaints mostly targeted officials in government, industry, or retail, consumers' concerns about coffee often reflected personal anxieties about their relative social position and perceived inequalities that—under state socialism, they had been told—were not supposed to exist. With the most common retail brands of coffee either adulterated or removed from store shelves, the only places one could find alternative coffees were specialty stores like Delikat, Exquisit, or Intershop. These retailers either charged prices far beyond those of "normal" retailers, or they required payment in hard currency—that is, convertible foreign currency, which until 1974 had been illegal for East Germans to possess—placing these brands out of reach for most East Germans.[28] Many felt that a reduction in the quality of "their" coffee (that is, the coffee they could consistently afford to purchase) forced them to compete with wealthier citizens over perceptively better tasting coffee, which belied the state's claims to social equality under socialism.

Despite media portrayals of coffee drinking as a "German" activity, the beverage itself originated in far-away lands and was never truly German; coffee thus tied the GDR to the world market and defied the regime's attempts to limit its reliance on the capitalist West. In many ways, the Cold War determined the rigid structures of power in which East Germany could maneuver and created the very domestic crises it faced. As well, East and West Germany's political rivalry came to embody a microcosm of the global ideological war being fought between the two superpowers: the Soviet Union and the United States. When West Germany introduced the Hallstein Doctrine in 1955, it attempted to isolate East Germany from the international community by claiming the sole right to represent Germans on German soil and threatening to cease diplomatic and trade relations with any nation (save the Soviet Union) that recognized East Germany.[29] Until the two German states signed the Basic Treaty in 1972, which nullified Hallstein by granting East Germany official recognition, the GDR's options for trade partners were extremely limited, leaving East Germany to spend most of its diplomatic efforts seeking—though not receiving—international recognition.

This book considers East Germany's foreign policy goals on their own terms, and what the nation's pursuit of those goals reveals about how the GDR saw itself

in the world, as well as how it contributed to the processes of globalization. The GDR's success or failure in foreign policy did not begin and end with Hallstein and the Basic Treaty; the GDR pursued other, specific goals by fostering meaningful relationships with countries around the world, including cultural and educational exchanges, trade agreements, and even long-term development projects that had lasting effects on global systems of exchange. The coffee agreements discussed here illustrate that, in spite of challenges, the GDR was ultimately able to find alternative sources and develop lasting partnerships. The example of coffee and the trade agreements it spurred suggests the need to move beyond binary interpretations of Cold War relations, in which relationships between East Germany and its partners in the developing world are understood primarily in terms of their role within a larger geopolitical struggle between capitalism and socialism. Certainly, East Germany's involvement in the developing world formed part of a broader exercise that sought political and ideological partners who could be brought onto (or encouraged to continue on) the path to socialism in an attempt to build an international socialist movement. Yet the work here suggests there was often more at play in the GDR's foreign endeavors than merely bringing additional countries into the global communist fold.

To this end, this book joins a growing body of literature in seeking to challenge an interpretation of Cold War relations that is still dominated by high-level politics and geostrategic interests. The metanarrative of global bipolarity has traditionally emphasized the global contest of power balances. This is limiting and actually presents a false understanding of the relationship between the superpowers and "middle" or marginalized actors. Instead, interpretations of the Cold War could benefit greatly from considering the conflict as occurring within the context of increasing economic, political, and, indeed, cultural globalization. The politics that determined and delimited the GDR's options for securing coffee sources were the byproduct of superpower geopolitics inasmuch as both capitalist and socialist camps competed for allies and trade partners in the developing world broadly, and the international bodies controlling the coffee market (such as the International Coffee Organization, or ICO) were themselves Cold War enterprises. Competition with the West also certainly lay at the center of why the East German state worked so hard to provide its population with coffee. However, the politics that sent East German diplomats and technical specialists to the developing world to bring back Angolan, Ethiopian, Laotian, and Vietnamese coffee were also deeply domestic. East Germany's competition in a cultural war with the West hardly constituted its sole ambition in international affairs, and its trade agreements with Angola, Ethiopia, Laos, and Vietnam demonstrate the GDR's capacity to cultivate bilateral agreements to resolve domestic issues.

Decoupling the GDR's foreign relations from a strictly bipolar interpretation permits a more nuanced examination of the individual goals, successes, challenges, and outcomes of East Germany's engagement with the developing

world. What the East Germans considered a success or failure in international diplomacy could often have less to do with the international balance of power than it did with pursuing these more finite sets of ambitions in specific regions.[30] Hoenik Kwon also argues against a uniform characterization of the Cold War, noting that "the bipolarized human community of the twentieth century experienced political bifurcation in radically different ways across societies" that defy a single narrative. The Cold War was "a globally staged but locally diverse regime of ideas and practices."[31] Put another way, while humanity experienced and lived the Cold War in a global moment, this experience was not universal or consistent.[32]

In its search for additional coffee sources, the GDR approached countries with socialist governments (or those with socialist leanings) that either already produced coffee, such as Angola and Ethiopia, or possessed the climate necessary to cultivate it, such as Laos and Vietnam. Whether the GDR had existing relations with the given country or forged brand new relationships with them, East Germany claimed its proposed trade deals would benefit all parties mutually. The East Germans believed that a shared ideology would foster a desire for international solidary among its partners, and that each country would be willing to barter coffee in exchange for GDR finished goods to fill gaps in their local economies; this second assumption stemmed from a goal of finding export markets for East German goods, which the GDR found challenging by this time. In reality, the coffee agreements required a great deal of difficult negotiation between the partners and were guided as much—if not more—by practical considerations as by a commitment to a shared ideology. The East German technological specialists sent to assist in the trade projects in each country brought with them a set of beliefs and assumptions about science and technology, and socialism's ability to harness both effectively—beliefs that often guided their perceptions of their hosts and the nature of these trade and development projects but that did not always match the realities they faced on the ground.

The GDR found that its trade partners had their own interests as well and were not always willing to accept its terms of exchange, leaving coffee-starved East Germany little choice but to capitulate. In other cases, implementing long-term projects posed several practical challenges, many of which originated in certain assumptions among East German technical experts about the supposed superiority of European scientific agricultural practices, which did not match local circumstances. Some of these challenges derived from the view among some East German officials that the GDR was the senior partner in these arrangements, believing that East Germany's position as an advanced industrial nation gave the GDR not only the ability but also the ideological, moral, and political imperatives to guide "less developed" nations toward development along socialist lines. At times, this paternalistic attitude prompted coffee-producing trading nations to call the GDR's claims of solidarity with the socialist world into question. Thus, although coffee can help reinsert the GDR into a global history of

the twentieth century, scholars must take care to not overly "romantici[ze] East German rhetoric of anti-imperialist solidarity."[33] Despite these challenges, East Germany and its partners were able to find ways to cooperate in the short or long term, which brought coffee to East Germans and had direct effects on the local economies or political situations of its trade partners.

The relations between socialist and nonaligned nations during the Cold War should be examined in ways that acknowledge and try to understand their complexity, including the confluence of competing political and economic interests, cultural and social differences, and preconceptions of the various parties. This book grapples with a central duality of East German foreign relations. On the one hand, the GDR's entanglement with the global economy was primarily defined as a struggle to work within the constraints of the capitalist global market when the country lacked a convertible currency.[34] In this sense, the government sought alternative sources of coffee to shield itself from the effect of capitalist globalization. On the other hand, these coffee projects also provided a means for East Germany to circumvent the global capitalist system—either finding or *creating* new sources of coffee across the world to fulfill the needs of domestic consumption, thereby securing greater political stability. The coffee projects in Angola, Ethiopia, Laos, and Vietnam constituted an attempt to disentangle the GDR from that framework by creating socialist alternatives to capitalist globalization.

Forming partnerships in the developing world served far more than an economic end; these relationships formed an important part of the SED's attempts to improve the GDR's image on the global stage, as well as to convince East Germans of their vital role in an international community. Coffee provided an opportunity for collaboration between these countries, demonstrating that relatively marginalized nations found ways to maneuver the complicated geopolitical and economic circumstances brought about by both decolonization and the global Cold War conflict. The coffee projects in Laos and Vietnam could also help stabilize the SED's domestic political legitimacy. Public messaging in East Germany promoted the coffee agreements with Angola, Ethiopia, Laos, and Vietnam as strong symbols of international solidarity among socialist nations and the GDR's lasting commitment to the principle of mutual benefit in its dealings with these nations. Demonstrating solidarity with the developing world could provide a counterweight to the incongruities of consumer supply by showcasing the GDR's capacity to guide "young" nations and take a role in shaping the course of socialist development in the coffee-producing countries. East Germans formed their own conceptions of the global divisions of the Cold War world and, furthermore, the GDR had its own ambitions, self-image, and approach to what constituted "socialism."

The book is organized in a manner that reflects both specific themes but also follows a general chronology. Chapter one begins by examining the culture of shortages within the Soviet Occupation Zone and the GDR, showing the lengths

to which East Germans proved willing to go to obtain this highly desirable good. State officials in the newly formed GDR saw peoples' reliance on the black market as a challenge to their political authority and legitimacy. Finding a way to supply coffee to the population—even during a time when this task would prove difficult—was a way to demonstrate the new regime's capacity to stabilize the economy and daily life. When food supplies stabilized and rationing ended in 1958, the regime undertook an extensive reconstruction of its coffee roasting industry, specifically to introduce and increase the supply of "East" German coffee. However, the GDR still relied on an inconsistent world market for raw coffee, and the chapter discusses some of the structural barriers East Germany faced in securing beans—notably the signing of an International Coffee Agreement (ICA) and the founding of the ICO in 1963.

The second chapter explores the messages and visions that comprised official portrayals of coffee as an important part of a comfortable, modern life in a socialist state. In the GDR, images and articles in state-run periodicals blended traditions of hospitality with modern socialist values, drawing on a "usable past" to promote a bright socialist future. These images fostered and encouraged East Germans' perceptions not only of what they should come to expect from socialism but of what was expected of them, drawing on what Katherine Pence and Paul Betts call a "patriotic vernacular" of German culture and tradition.[35] The greater emphasis on consumer socialism in the 1970s reflected a "social contract" between the state and citizens—a bargain struck by a government that increasingly understood the intimate ties between its political legitimacy and meeting the consumer demands of its population.[36] When the regime publicly committed to maintaining a constant supply of desired consumer goods under its 1971 policy of "real existing socialism," it further cemented the perceived links between the supply, quality, and fair distribution of coffee and the SED's political stability.

Chapter three traces the effects of the severe Brazilian frost of 1975 on the price of coffee worldwide, and the East German coffee industry's attempts to stretch supply through the latter half of 1977. Industry leaders, bureaucrats, and political officials each viewed the shortage as a serious issue with far-reaching political ramifications, but it took some time before the government was aligned on a solution. It was clear that state administrators recognized the importance of coffee in helping avoid public panic as East Germans faced growing anxieties about broader economic crises in the late 1970s. Even at the highest levels of government, officials were unwilling to force the public to go without coffee altogether and committed to stretching their supply as far as possible in the hopes that the world price situation would abate in time to permit a return to regular trade by the following year. Yet efforts to maintain a sufficient supply ultimately sacrificed taste and quality over availability. As chapter three argues, to understand both East Germans' vehement reaction and the regime's response, it was not merely a question of sufficient supply but rather one of quality that prompted

East Germans like Rudolf to express their outrage over changes to what they considered "their" coffee.

Chapters four and five explore the GDR's attempts to secure coffee from decolonized countries in the developing world. The GDR attempted to use the coffee deals to showcase its own achievements as a modern state and thereby assume a leading role in guiding developing nations toward constructing a socialist modernity. In Angola and Ethiopia, the GDR provided weapons for coffee, while contracts with Laos and Vietnam led to long-term development projects to "modernize" each country's coffee industry. Coffee provided the parties on both sides of these agreements with a means to address their own specific concerns, assigning a degree of agency to both parties that is largely absent in current historiographical analyses of smaller nations during the Cold War. The GDR invested heavily in these developing countries' coffee industries, sending technical equipment along with agricultural and technical experts to help these countries meet East Germans' import needs. The GDR's lack of hard currency meant it approached these agreements with a considerable amount of pragmatism and self-interest but also required compromise and collaboration with its partners.

While East German society experienced a number of important shifts over its forty-year existence, many cultural traditions remained in place, particularly with regard to food and eating practices, highlighting continuities in East German society with the broader German past. Coffee shows that in the GDR, despite the government's attempts to foster a new set of cultural values based on a commitment to the collective, ideas regarding individual sociability remained largely tied to interpersonal relationships and expectations regarding social behavior that stretched back decades before the GDR's founding. Coffee highlights the regime's willingness to draw upon traditions when convenient—to link its visions of socialist modernity with themes and practices familiar to Germans. Indeed, the official messages in advertising and policy regarding coffee aimed precisely at encouraging Germans to recognize how, despite all the changes around them, the simple pleasures in life had not disappeared. East Germans could still enjoy a warm cup of coffee in the same ways to which they were accustomed while state planners worked to ensure that East German coffee possessed a consistent smell, taste, and appearance—effectively reinforcing the public's association of particular labels with specific tastes and encouraging their expectations that those aromas and flavors would remain consistent over time. In other words, continuities not only remained in place but were in fact part of the ideological, political, and cultural fabric that made up East German society: coffee was political *and* personal. The state's inability to maintain that consistency over time—and, indeed, its deliberate adulteration of that quality during the coffee crisis of 1977—contributed to growing public concern about the viability of the socialist project. If the regime could not provide so basic an item as coffee, how could it claim

to uphold, much less speak of improving, living standards for its people, which formed the primary basis upon which the success of socialism's legitimacy rested?

Brewing Socialism qualifies and complicates our understanding of the importance of East German consumer culture not only for the regime's own political and social stability but also for East Germans' own self-consciousness within a globalizing economy. To East Germans within the government, industry, and the general public, questions of personal taste mattered, memories of the past mattered, and international reputation mattered. Coffee proved an important catalyst for the GDR's activities in the developing world, but this engagement stemmed from more than merely the need to acquire a particular good: it was East Germans' own personal taste preferences, mixed with state planners' misconceptions and misjudgments of these taste preferences, that sparked this need in the first place.[37]

Although the trade deals themselves abruptly ended with the GDR's collapse, they nonetheless represent large-scale development projects that, beyond bringing coffee into the GDR, contributed to East Germans' understanding of the GDR's place in the world, its international reputation, and East Germany's own self-image. Because some of these coffee development projects in fact led to broader economic and social change in the host countries that expanded after 1990, coffee helps remind us of East Germany's role in shaping global economic developments, as well as highlighting its lingering legacy, particularly in those countries in which it invested so heavily.

Notes

1. Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv [SAPMO-BArch] BArchB, DY 30/25310, Bericht an Genossen Hermann Pöschel: Leicht-, Lebensmittel- und Bezirksgeleitete Industrie. 19.08.77, Anlage 1, *Eingaben*, 2.
2. Stefan Wolle, *Die heile Welt der Diktatur: Alltag und Herrschaft in der DDR 1971–1989* (Munich: Econ&List, 1998), 171.
3. Marsha Richins, "Special Possessions and the Expression of Material Values," *Journal of Consumer Research* 21, no. 3 (1994): 522–33; John Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Christine Du Bois and Sidney Mintz, "The Anthropology of Food and Eating," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31 (2002): 99–119; Yonatan Mendel and Ronald Ranta, "Consuming Palestine: Palestine and Palestinians in Israeli Food Culture," *Ethnicities* 14, no. 3 (2014): 412–35, 414; Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin, 1985), 13; Melissa Caldwell, ed., *Food & Everyday Life in the Postsocialist World* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009), 3. Some scholars have also considered the role of food in the formation of national identity, arguing that food is often used by national movements "as a means of asserting the uniqueness of their nation while, at the same time, placing it on par with other

nations, which, it is perceived, have unique food cultures," (Atsuko Ichijo and Ronald Ranta, *Food, National Identity and Nationalism: From Everyday to Global Politics* [New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016], 4). More broadly, Arjun Appadurai explored the meanings assigned to commodities through cultural understandings of a given society (e.g., politics) to complicate the idea that a commodity's value is determined solely through the process of exchange. See Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 3–63, especially 20–24 and 56–57.

 4. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*; Belinda Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Alice Autumn Weinreb, *Modern Hungers: Food and Power in Twentieth-Century Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

 5. Brian Cowen, *The Social Life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffeehouse* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 2.

 6. Jonathan Morris, *Coffee: A Global History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2019), 66.

 7. Bremen's first coffee house opened in 1673, for instance, following ones in Amsterdam (1665) and Paris (1671), and just ahead of cafés in Venice (1683) and Vienna (1685). See Morris, *Coffee*, 66.

 8. Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Tastes of Paradise: A Social History of Spices, Stimulants and Intoxicants*. Trans. David Jacobson (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 79. See also Günter Wiegelmann, "Das Eindringen des Kaffees in die Werktags- und Festmahlzeiten," in *Alltags- und Festspeisen in Mitteleuropa*, ed. Günter Wiegelmann and Barbara Krug-Richter, 157–75 (Münster: Waxmann, 2006), 166.

 9. Hans-Joachim Schulze, ill. Frank Wahle, *Ey! Wie schmeckt der Coffee süße: Johann Sebastian Bachs Kaffee-Kantate in ihrer Zeit* (Leipzig: Verlag für die Frau, 1987), 3.

10. Quoted in Mark Pendergrast, *Uncommon Grounds: The History of Coffee and How it Transformed the World* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 33.

11. Schulze, *Ey! Wie schmeckt der Coffee süße*, 6.

12. Ibid., 8.

13. Wiegelmann, "Eindringen," 167.

14. Ibid., 167.

15. Ibid., 171.

16. Britta Zietemann, "Germany," in *Coffee: A Comprehensive Guide to the Bean, the Beverage, and the Industry*, ed. Robert W. Thurston, Jonathan Morris, and Shawn Steiman (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 201.

17. Joel Shapira, David Shapira, and Karl Shapira, *The Book of Coffee & Tea*, 2nd ed. (New York: St Martin's Press, 1982), 23.

18. Pendergrast, *Uncommon Grounds*, 38.

19. Monika Sigmund, *Genuss als Politikum: Kaffeekonsum in beiden deutschen Staaten* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2014), 87. On chicory's use as a substitute, see Karl Hartl, *Wie? Wann? Wo?—Wie das Alltägliche zum Alltäglichen wurde* (Berlin: Verlag Neues Leben, 1949), 58.

20. During the early twentieth century, argues Schivelbusch, "the family that drank genuine 'bean coffee' assumed higher status than those who drank ersatz coffee" prior to the 1950s; see Schivelbusch, *Tastes of Paradise*, 79.

21. Eli Rubin, *Synthetic Socialism: Plastics and Dictatorship in the German Democratic Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 33.

22. Jonathan Zatlin, *The Currency of Socialism: Money and Political Culture in East Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 66–69.

23. While the topic of consumer socialism will be discussed further in chapter two, a sample of relevant discussions can be found in Ina Merkel, *Utopie und Bedürfnis. Die Geschichte der Konsumerkultur in der DDR* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1999); Katherine Pence and Paul Betts, eds.,

Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008); Rubin, *Synthetic Socialism*; Zatlin, *Currency of Socialism*.

24. Zatlin, *Currency of Socialism*, 3.

25. Gary Bruce, *Resistance with the People: Repression and Resistance in Eastern Germany 1945–1955* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005); Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); Christian F. Ostermann, *Uprising in East Germany 1953: The Cold War, the German Question, and the First Major Upheaval behind the Iron Curtain* (New York: Central European University Press, 2001); and Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk, Armin Mitter, and Stefan Wolle, eds, *Der Tag X—17. Juni 1953: Die 'Innere Staatsgründung' der DDR als Ergebnis der Krise von 1952/1954* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 1995).

26. Merkel, *Utopie und Bedürfnis*; Mark Landsman, *Dictatorship and Demand: East Germany Between Productivism and Consumerism, 1948–1961* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); Sigmund, *Genuss als Politikum*.

27. SAPMO-BArchB, DY 3023/1218, Albert Norden to Honecker, 28.6.1977, 111.

28. Zatlin, *Currency of Socialism*, 252.

29. Helga Haftendorn, *Coming of Age: German Foreign Policy Since 1945* (Toronto: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 126; William Glenn Gray, *Germany's Cold War: The Global Campaign to Isolate East Germany, 1949–1969* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

30. Oscar Sanchez-Sibony makes this point regarding the Soviet Union, arguing convincingly that scholars need to look beyond the global contest of power to understand the USSR's foreign ambitions, which could more often be motivated by specific regional, economic, and political interests than they were by the Soviets' struggle against the United States or the capitalist West more broadly. See Oscar Sanchez-Sibony, *Red Globalization: The Political Economy of the Soviet Cold War from Stalin to Khruschchev* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014). Sanchez-Sibony is not alone in this regard. Recent works have begun to ask similar questions. See, for example, Tobias Rupprecht's study of cultural exchange between the Soviet Union and Latin America in the 1950s and 1960s from the perspective of the Latin Americans: Tobias Rupprecht, *Soviet Internationalism after Stalin: Interaction and Exchange between the USSR and Latin America during the Cold War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015). Elizabeth Bishop argues that Soviet intents and plans for development policies cannot be taken at face value but must be understood by examining the "back channels" of cultural exchange between the Soviets and their partners. See Elizabeth Bishop, "Assuan 1959: Sowjetische Entwicklungspolitik—die Perspektive der 'Gender-History,'" in *Die Sowjetunion und die Dritte Welt: UdSSR, Staatssozialismus und Antikolonialismus im Kalten Krieg 1945–1991*, ed. Andreas Hilger, 67–81 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2010). On economic relations between the Soviets and the developing world, see Sara Lorenzini, "Comecon and the South in the Years of Détente: A Study on East-South Economic Relations," *European Review of History: Revue Européenne D'histoire* 21, no. 2 (2014): 183–99.

31. Hoenik Kwon, *The Other Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 6, 32.

32. In a similar vein, Young-Sun Hong's comparative study of East and West German humanitarian projects shows that "local events" were not merely a side stage for the proxy wars of the global cold war. Rather, many local events "signify something beyond [themselves]," and are "capable of mediating between the global logic of superpower rivalry and local conflicts, which are implicated in this rivalry, but which cannot be reduced to it." Her work calls for scholars to "situate the space of German history—and that of Eastern Europe more generally—on a much larger global canvas." See Young-Sun Hong, *Cold War Germany, the Third World, and the Global Humanitarian Regime* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 319.

33. Hong, *Cold War Germany*, 320.

34. Zatlin, *Currency of Socialism*, 167.

35. Pence and Betts, *Socialist Modern*, 14.
36. Paulina Bren and Mary Neuburger, eds., *Communism Unwrapped: Consumption in Cold War Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 12.
37. I use the term "developing world" in this context, a contemporary term deployed by East German state officials both in private correspondence and in public messaging. The term is, of course, loaded and implies a set of problematic assumptions that have historically been used to categorize nations according to comparative levels of (capitalist) economic development, often in an attempt to distinguish between "modern" and "not quite modern" countries. In so doing, this approach tends to reinforce and reproduce settler colonial narratives that place nations into an arbitrary global hierarchy rather than study them on their own terms. My use of the term in this book is intended to merely reflect the language used by contemporaries, who, as the book argues, also reproduced some of these same narratives, whether intended or not.