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METROPOL

Gleb J. Albert

Antikommunismus als Bindeglied. Computerspiel-Piraten auf beiden Seiten des Eisernen Vorhangs am Ende des Kalten Krieges

Anti-Communism as a Link: Computer Game Pirates on Both Sides of the Iron Curtain at the End of the Cold War

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Abstract

This essay focuses on the role of ideology and politics in an under-researched 1980s youth culture: the »crackers«, a transnational subculture active in a number of Western countries and consisting of male teenagers who competed with each other in removing copy protection from commercial computer games. Even though the crackers presented themselves as largely apolitical, a prominent trait of their discourses and self-presentation was a hyperbolic anticommunism, fuelled by contemporary popular culture. The essay analyses the anticommunist discourse among these young computer fans on the basis of previously untapped digital sources, follows its evolution throughout the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, and contrasts it with the subculture's reception of a different contemporary political phenomenon – the rise of neo-Nazi movements all over Europe. The article shows that while the Western crackers' anticommunism could serve as a common ground to connect and collaborate with East European teenage computer fans during and after the fall of Communism, the former's weak understanding of politics made them susceptible to problematic political tendencies in post-Communist societies.

Über den Autor

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