



**The Children From Station 19  
In Search of the Victims of a Custody Psychiatry**  
Die Kinder von Station 19  
Auf der Suche nach den Opfern einer Verwahrpsychiatrie

Comments from the Jury Group:

*“A strong entry. Shocking and depressing investigation with a stark and compelling opening.”*

*“Set in the past, the story ends in our time, where these victims have a future.”*

*“A very moving piece, empowered with editorial skills. Embracing the radio medium.”*

*“Excellent production and research with a silver lining in the end.”*

*“Great timing as we talk more about how we treat the mentally ill and a beautiful ending.”*

Everywhere in the former GDR, thousands of mentally ill and mentally handicapped people lived in inhumane conditions in custody stations.

In 1990 the author got to know the children's ward in Altscherbitz as an assistant. While searching for the children of that time, she came across a wall of silence. Leipzig psychiatry has been famous for its socio-therapeutic work methods since the early 1970s and has also enjoyed international recognition. But most psychiatric patients lived in so-called custodians [Verwahrstationen]. The conditions were disastrous and characterised by shortages. These stations were closed in the early 1990s. Altscherbitz discharged almost 600 patients. Most of them had spent most of their lives here by that time. Marie von Kuck illuminates a chapter of the turnaround 1990 that has hardly been discussed until today. Three quarters of all patients in the psychiatric clinics of the GDR were without a treatment diagnosis, so they were treated as sick, even though they were disabled. In the wards they lived a bleak existence. Many came to the facilities as small children, where they remained largely without support. Some of them still suffer from the consequences of deprivation to this day. The author has researched for five years. Only one nurse was ready to talk about the time. Many who are still on duty today were not allowed to give an interview. The author was lied to, the patients files were lost. When they showed up, however, she first had to go to the Ministry of Social Affairs to get an insight into the clinic's files. Many of those employed at the time are still unaware that injustice was committed in which they were involved. Nevertheless, the author found several children from Station 19 and she tells the life stories of three of them.

**Congratulations to:**

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