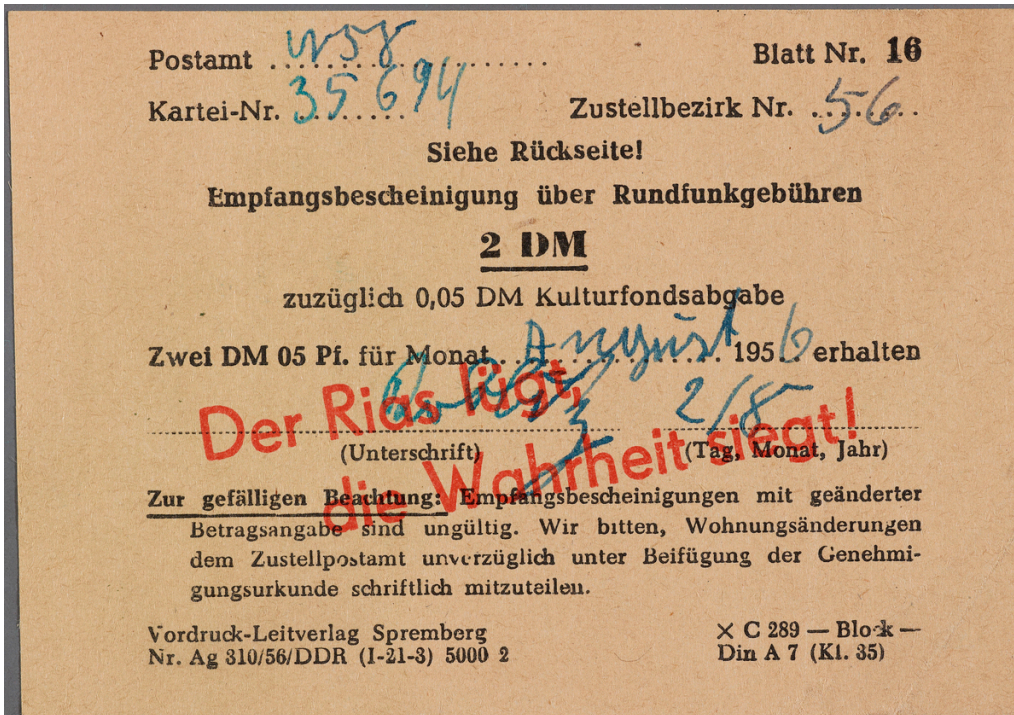


# “Air Sovereignty” or Control of the Radio (1956)

## Abstract

Who had the “air sovereignty” to broadcast and reach the population was a matter of great significance in the competition between the two German states and their respective systems. The RIAS [*Rundfunk im amerikanischen Sektor*], which translates as Radio in the American Sector, was a West Berlin radio station founded by the American military administration. Between 1946 and 1993, it broadcast two radio programs. The GDR government criticized RIAS as a Western propaganda tool. Pictured below is an East German receipt reflecting payment of the necessary fees to obtain a license to listen to the radio. (It is still customary in Germany for citizens to pay mandatory fees in support of public broadcasting.) The receipt, which was marked with its own message (“RIAS lies, truth wins out!”), served as a physical reminder of Western radio’s perceived lack of integrity.

## Source



Postamt WS8 ..... Blatt Nr. **16**  
 Kartei-Nr. 35694 ..... Zustellbezirk Nr. 56 ..  
 Siehe Rückseite!

**Empfangsbescheinigung über Rundfunkgebühren**  
**2 DM**  
 zuzüglich 0,05 DM Kulturfondsabgabe

Zwei DM 05 Pf. für Monat August 1956 erhalten  
Der Rias lügt! 2/8  
 (Unterschrift) (Tag, Monat, Jahr)

**Zur gefälligen Beachtung:** Empfangsbescheinigungen mit geänderter Betragsangabe sind ungültig. Wir bitten, Wohnungsänderungen dem Zustellpostamt unverzüglich unter Beifügung der Genehmigungsurkunde schriftlich mitzuteilen.

Vordruck-Leitverlag Spremberg Nr. Ag 310/56/DDR (I-21-3) 5000 2

× C 289 — Block —  
 Din A 7 (Kl. 35)

Source: DHM, Inv.-Nr. DG 87/85. 1956. See also: Franziska Kuschel, *Schwarz Hörer, Schwarzseher und heimliche Leser. Die DDR und die Westmedien*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2016, p. 57.

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Intersections, <<https://germanhistory-intersections.org/en/germanness/ghis:image-90>> [July 03, 2025].