Tikhomirov, Alexey. "The 'visual occupation regime' in post-war East Germany, 1945–61." *Visual Histories of Occupation: A Transcultural Dialogue*. Ed. Jeremy E. Taylor. London,: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. 27–52. *Bloomsbury Collections*. Web. 26 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781350167513.ch-001>>.

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The 'visual occupation regime' in post-war East Germany, 1945–61

Alexey Tikhomirov

Introduction

The Third Reich's unconditional surrender on 8 May 1945 led to the creation of four occupation zones on German territory. The Allies – the Soviet Union, the United States, the UK and France – aimed to re-educate their former enemy. Establishing respective monopolies on public space, the media and channels of communication was essential to the victors' efforts to demilitarize, denazify and democratize the Germans. To achieve these goals, all five senses were important, as the occupying powers strove to remake public and private spaces. However, sight (and hence visibility) was a crucial sense in each occupation regime's endeavour to realize power by controlling bodies, managing emotions and transmitting ideology into the 'hearts and minds' of the population. In the Americanization that went on in the western occupation zones and the Sovietization introduced in the eastern zone, 'visual occupation regimes' were created to re-programme ways of seeing and introduce new practices of observation grounded in two antagonistic systems: those of the United States and the Soviet Union. These regimes aimed to create a visual 'frontline' of the Cold War and distinguish the capitalist world from the socialist world¹ (Figure 1.1). The result was the establishment of what we might call 'visual occupation regimes', with their own images and aesthetics, rules governing observation and recognition, and practices of seeing and interpreting the world. In short, a visual occupation regime constitutes a web of meanings that has the power to create solidarities, form subjectivities and provide stability for political orders.

Recent attention to historically determined practices of seeing and observing is rooted in the 'visual turn' and 'sensory turn' in the Humanities.² Analysis of visibility is driven by the dominant place of sight in the hierarchy of the senses, which itself is biologically conditioned but also has its own history.³ Since the Renaissance, the common belief that what is visible constitutes authentic facts – or *truths*, and genuine testimony in legal disputes – and the Reformation's increasingly politicized practices of allowed and taboo seeing suggest an intimate connection between visibility and both the realization of power and the (de)legitimization of political orders. This visibility–power nexus is especially evident in the state- and nation-building efforts

Figure 1.1 GDR Poster: 'Working day of two worlds: two ways, two worlds – we have decided, German-Soviet friendship means prosperity and peace,' 1950. Bildarchiv im Bundesarchiv, Signature: Plak 100-041-026. (See Plate 4.)

of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and is an essential part of the 'visual histories of occupation'.⁴ Despite this, the visual dimension of conducting, justifying and living under occupation rule remains largely absent from a good deal of historical scholarship.⁵

By examining the organization, surveillance and perceptions of communist visuality in public spaces in this chapter, I will analyse visuality's role in proclaiming, legitimating and negotiating the occupation in the Soviet zone in Germany. I will do this by drawing on archival sources, including reports found in files from the Social Unity Party of Germany (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands – SED) and the Soviet Military Administration in Germany (SMAD), and sources from the Eastern Bureau of the Social Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei – SPD), as well as observations recorded in memoirs and other published accounts.⁶ Moscow's reprogramming of East German seeing practices was designed to Sovietize space, time and, above all, subjects themselves. Initially, the positive images of the Soviet Union promulgated by the 'occupiers' were important because erasing all pre-war negative attitudes towards the Soviet Union from German minds was a crucial task for the SMAD. Before 1945, what most Germans knew about the Soviets came from Nazi propaganda, which warned of the 'Judeo-Bolshevik threat' and the dangers of pan-Slavism to Western civilization⁷ (Figure 1.2). This knowledge had to be banished and replaced with representations of a harmonious socialist world in which concepts of racial inequality were irrelevant. Using visuality to bring East Germans into the post-war Soviet empire was another key component of the Soviet occupation project. The emergence of a common space of visuality made it possible to centralize, homogenize and synchronize the Eastern bloc. This allowed East Germans to join the bloc of socialist states, to announce the creation of an 'antifascist, democratic state' and to share the global Soviet mission of 'preserving peace throughout the world', especially as the Cold War intensified in the spring of 1946.

In particular, post-war visuality created a space of subjectivization within which ordinary East Germans had to learn not only how to 'speak Bolshevik' but also how to see, recognize and observe the world like Soviets.⁸ East Germans were objects of observation: Soviet surveillance institutions monitored them, noting their ability to see and interpret Sovietized reality in the approved fashion. However, East Germans were also active observers, seeing socialist reality and learning to react 'correctly' to Soviet films, exhibitions, posters and what they saw on trips to the Soviet Union (Figure 1.3). In this way, ordinary people mastered a 'space of agency' and became producers of the Soviet symbolic order. Children and adults remade themselves into Sovietized subjects by generating their own meanings for life in the Soviet zone of occupation. As Jonathan Crary, Galina Orlova and Aleksei Golubev have shown, an observer-position with a precisely focused way of seeing reality is a historical construct for realizing power over the subject. It is also a means of forming subjectivities by visually determining the ideological prism through which the world is interpreted, and the borders separating the visible and the hidden are strictly defined.⁹

I understand the 'visual occupation regime' to be the strategies and tactics deployed by the SMAD and the SED for visualizing the political in public space, with the cooperation of a set of state and party institutions, mass organizations and individual

Figure 1.2 Nazi poster stating 'Victory or Bolshevism', urging German citizens to persevere after the call for a 'total war', February 1943. Bildarchiv im Bundesarchiv, Signature: Plak 003-029-043. (See Plate 5.)

Figure 1.3 Visitors at an exhibition on the Soviet Union's achievements in developing socialism, held at a Berlin publishing house during German-Soviet friendship month, 14 December 1950. Photographer: T. Rudolph. Bildarchiv im Bundesarchiv, Signature: Bild 183-08934-0004.

intermediaries. However, a visual occupation regime could also be described as the underlying capacity to generate visual power itself and to produce new meanings of the Soviet occupation for the defeated nation. This system of public symbols and iconography transmitted ideological content to the population via images, involved them in party-state rituals and mobilized them emotionally during propaganda campaigns. The stability of the visual order was ensured by the occupation authorities' ability to endorse certain practices of seeing and observing. For this reason, the visual occupation regime embodied a disciplinary system whose regeneration was ensured by both official encouragement of the correct way of seeing and the simultaneously making taboo of undesirable ways of looking at Sovietized reality, that is, introducing 'symbolic blindness' to disturbing topics, experiences and memories. As I will show, the ways in which the visual occupation regime was administered reveal official efforts to reconfigure the Nazi past, explain the difficulties of the present and provide an orientation towards a 'bright future'.

Before the defeat: Visuality and the agony of the 'national community'

During the final months of the Second World War, the visibility of the Third Reich underwent a dynamic reconfiguration. The mass concealment, destruction and

burning of Nazi symbols showed that many ordinary Germans actively participated in delegitimizing the Third Reich. Purging public space was also a spontaneous, prophylactic measure intended to forestall violence from the Allied armies. Just before the surrender, the Nazi visual order became a security threat. To avoid the rage of the 'liberators', portraits of the Führer were covered up with neutral landscapes or pictures of flowers.¹⁰ Everywhere, copies of *Mein Kampf*, portraits of Hitler or photographs of relatives in military uniform were hidden in attics or basements.¹¹ In general, hiding artefacts which indicated that one once belonged to the 'national community' was widespread. Like many other people, for example, one former judge burnt his copy of *Mein Kampf* and his party card in the kitchen rather than on the street in front of his house because he was afraid people would see him, and because he did not want to retain evidence of Nazi Party membership.¹² Former soldiers put on civilian clothes, and hid, buried or burnt their uniforms to get rid of signs of active support for the Third Reich. These acts of spontaneous behaviour indicated the growing loss of visual legitimacy for the Nazi regime.

Insofar as modern dictatorships of the twentieth century were primarily regimes of visual power, decreasing the Third Reich's visibility in public and private spaces signified the weakening of its dominance.¹³ Likewise, the strengths (or weaknesses) of political orders matched the intensity with which they saturated public arenas with the visual artefacts of power. Under the Soviet occupation regime, visibility played an especially important role in proclaiming, justifying and challenging the legitimacy of Soviet supremacy because the 'occupiers' and the 'occupied' spoke different languages, came from different cultures and saw each other as sworn enemies. As a result, in practical terms, visibility became the only common mode of communication. Therefore, visibility was central to acceptance of the occupation, but also to expressing opposition, resolving conflicts and mitigating feelings of rage and vengeance.

For Soviet soldiers, the sight of Nazi artefacts justified violence towards individuals and local communities. They interpreted Nazi insignia – on flags, badges, official documents, posters and party cards – that they saw when they raided German homes as proof that people were Nazis.¹⁴ The owners of these materials were categorized as Hitler's accomplices; they were considered 'enemy elements' who could be imprisoned in special NKVD-MVD camps or sent to the Soviet Union for compulsory labour.¹⁵ Visual artefacts of the Third Reich often incited vandalism and looting during which Red Army soldiers destroyed homes, smashed up furniture and stole possessions.¹⁶ Finally, these highly charged objects provoked violence, often against women, as a means of taking vengeance on the enemy.¹⁷ According to numerous memoirs, women crying for help, children shouting, the sight of fire and blood, and the smell of burning and decomposing bodies were the main features of the sensory experience during the war's final months.

Despite the obvious inevitability of defeat, violations of the Third Reich's prevailing visual order were still harshly penalized. Nazi terrorist organizations fought to restore the Third Reich's public symbolism. Distinguished by ideological fanaticism and personal loyalty to Hitler, these groups saw themselves as the last stronghold of the 'national community'. They defended Nazi visibility as a matter of national honour and were ready to ruthlessly punish fellow citizens for harbouring defeatist sentiments.

Members of the underground Werwolf organization demanded that people take down white flags and restore Nazi posters to previously visible positions, threatening to shoot people on the spot for non-compliance.¹⁸ In one such case, a homeowner who had written on his door 'We are not Nazis! We welcome the liberators!' was captured by members of the Volkssturm (Nazi militia) and hanged from a tree.¹⁹ This example demonstrates how individuals who refused to demonstrate loyalty to the 'national community' risked severe punishment from the military police or SS detachments. The bodies of such people who had been hanged were left in public places, with placards around their necks bearing derogatory inscriptions which described them as 'deserters', 'traitors' or 'saboteurs' because they had refused to join the Volkssturm.²⁰

The Red Army's offensive and Germany's capitulation on 8 May 1945 led to the practice of putting up white and red flags on buildings, signifying that the inhabitants were reconciled to defeat and recognized the Soviet Union as the victor.²¹ 'White flags wherever you looked. They were hung from apartment windows in cities and villages, in factories and administrative buildings. Over many days, weeks even, they defined the picture in Germany in the spring of 1945,' wrote Stefan Dörnberg (later to become a historian and politician in the German Democratic Republic (GDR)) in his memoirs.²² White became a marker of loyalty. People thought buildings with white flags would not be set on fire and people wearing white armbands would not be shot.²³ Refugees from East Prussia draped red and white flags over their carts as they made their way to the 'homeland', so that they would not anger divisions of Allied soldiers.²⁴ Refugees themselves used white armbands to ensure their own safety.²⁵ In settlements taken by the Red Army, men held out white handkerchiefs as they went to the Soviets to surrender in the hope that they could remain with their families.²⁶ At the same time, this palette of colours helped orient the local population and displaced people. Houses displaying red flags were considered dangerous since people assumed that Red Army soldiers or the Soviet military administration must be quartered there. Many people gave these buildings a wide berth. On the other hand, refugees saw houses without flags as safe places to rest, seek help or spend the night.²⁷

After the victory: Visual (dis)order after the end of the war

After the capture of Berlin, Red Army soldiers wrote letters home describing themselves as 'winners' who were now in the 'den of the fascist predator'.²⁸ They celebrated Europe's liberation from Nazism in public spaces and made it clear that they were 'masters of the situation'.²⁹ The first Soviet posters on the streets proclaimed that the 'court of history' had been convened. They provided visual justification for the acts of violence that the soldiers of the liberating forces were perpetrating on civilians. This violence was the outcome of wartime propaganda inciting Soviet citizens to hate the Germans. This propaganda also told soldiers that they had a 'moral duty' to avenge the suffering of their families and the destruction of their motherland, reminding them of the well-known Russian saying that 'whoever comes to us with a sword will perish by this sword'³⁰ (Figure 1.4).

Figure 1.4 Red Army soldiers celebrating victory, early May 1945. Bildarchiv im Bundesarchiv, Signature: Bild 183-E0406-0022-018.

Immediately after the end of war, the Allies began to purge public space in Germany of the symbols of the Third Reich and to publicly shame Germans for Nazi crimes³¹ (Figure 1.5). In the summer of 1945, shops, schools, administrative buildings and streets throughout all the occupation zones were cleansed of 'fascist signs'.³² The new authorities confiscated and destroyed portraits of Nazi leaders, as well as pictures featuring swastikas, the 'party's eagle' and soldiers in uniform.³³ Maps of the Third Reich and books with Nazi content were seized from libraries.³⁴ Cinemas could no longer rent Nazi propaganda films.³⁵ There was even a proposal to gather a complete collection of Nazi literature and seal this in locked storage spaces. A directive issued by the Allied Control Council on 13 May 1946 ordered the removal of former monuments and emblems as a first step towards this end.³⁶

During the first month following the surrender of the Third Reich, a new visual hierarchy of the victors and the defeated was established. Posters featuring images of Soviet leaders, and others bearing 'Comrade Josef Stalin's Statement about Germany and the German People' were put up across the zone³⁷ (Figure 1.6). These acquainted the population with a new image of Stalin as the victor on whose will the future of the German people would henceforth depend. Significant efforts were made to popularize the outcomes of the Potsdam Conference. For example, more than 1 million copies of propaganda material were printed in Saxony alone. This included 513,000 copies of excerpts from the Berlin Conference resolutions; 10,000 copies of a poster with the complete text; and 500,000 copies of Stalin's pronouncements about 'the Germans and

Figure 1.5 Banner in the US sector in Berlin (Neukölln), which reads 'That was the reorganization of Europe. 4.5 million antifascists were brutally murdered in Auschwitz alone! That is why Nazism should be eliminated, root and branch,' summer 1945. Photographer: Kurt Ochlich. Bildarchiv im Bundesarchiv, Signature: Bild 183-2005-0901-517.

Germany.³⁸ In Thuringia alone, the SMAD printed 320,000 posters with extracts from the Potsdam resolutions.³⁹

The initial strategy of occupying the public sphere with the visual signs of victory meant that every available empty space – on streets and bridges, in parks, houses and administrative buildings – was used. From the summer of 1945 onwards, propaganda artefacts were exhibited in shop windows to give the population a positive image of the Soviet authorities and present information about the 'actual political situation'. The newspaper *Tägliche Rundschau*, as well as posters and portraits of socialist leaders, began to be displayed in cities, towns and villages across the Soviet zone.⁴⁰ These propaganda artefacts were usually put up by representatives of different political parties to get their visual 'party line' into public space. To avoid competition between the SPD and the Liberal Democrats (Liberal-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands – LDP), the SMAD rapidly organized communist visual agitation, demanding that local government organs seize the public domain by putting visual representations of the occupying power wherever possible. Sometimes this visual onslaught provoked fights between SED members and people belonging to other parties. One such incident took place on 6 September 1946 in the Weimar district when SED members who had been sent to put up posters ran into a group from the LDP who were on the same mission (and who were pasting their posters on top of communist propaganda).⁴¹

Figure 1.6 A poster with Stalin's declaration of 23 February 1942 on the streets of Berlin in the summer of 1945: 'The experience of history says that the Hitlers come and go, but the German people, the German state remains.' Bildarchiv im Bundesarchiv, Signature: Bild 183-R89842.

The population's iconoclastic reactions – damaging the occupying power's official iconography in public places – were a means of expressing criticism and erecting symbolic barriers to the transfer of Soviet ideology to East Germany. For example, in August 1945, six posters with excerpts from the Potsdam Conference resolutions to which anti-Soviet slogans had been added were sent to the SMAD administration in

Brandenburg. Written in ink, in German, the following messages appeared on these posters:

1. He who lied once will no longer be believed.
2. It is all rubbish.
3. You know how to talk.
4. I will teach you culture (Stalin).
5. Why do they steal?
6. What kind of a woman do they take without asking?⁴²

On two propaganda kiosks with posters about 'Marshal Stalin on the Germans and Germany', the word 'Stalin' was crossed out and 'Hitler' written in its place. On a poster with the message 'The Hitlers come and go but the German people, the German state remains,' someone wrote 'If this continues for a few more years, nothing will remain of the German people.'⁴³ Fear of the Red Army reinvigorated memories formed by Nazi propaganda about the Soviet Union as a 'dangerous and wild, culturally backward and Asiatic country' that threatened Germany with pan-Slavism, world proletarian revolution and the worldwide 'Jewish conspiracy'.

Along with iconoclastic acts, frightening rumours were also spread. These concerned secret agreements that the Allies had supposedly made during the Potsdam Conference: a German army could not be created for the next seventy-five years; the consumption of alcohol would be banned and marriages would not be allowed to take place for two years; the country would be occupied for twenty years and prisoners of war would not be released for thirty-five years.⁴⁴ As a result, during the Nuremberg trials, angry comments such as 'Better death than slavery', 'Russia is the paradise of murderers, thieves, and criminals' and 'Stalin and Molotov should go to Nuremberg, they are the main criminals, scum, and abusers of girls'⁴⁵ were scrawled on buildings in Brandenburg Province.

Strong anti-Polish sentiment was also expressed when the new German border along the Oder-Neisse line was created. Shortly after the 'New Poland' exhibit opened at the Leipzig Trade Fair in 1947, for example, the organizers had to remove the visitors' book because it had become a 'collection of chauvinistic expressions vilifying Poland and celebrating the Germans' "civilizing mission" in a Slavic country. In one entry, Silesia was called a 'German province and German blood'; the writer saw the territorial transfer of land to the Poles as the destruction of the 'German order' and 'polluting a pure territory'.⁴⁶

For the visual occupation regime, red became the key colour. People with 'powerful' red armbands, be they soldiers or civilians, were recognized in public spaces as representatives of the new authority.⁴⁷ Memoirs describe how public spaces were filled with different shades of red during the Red Army's advance. In cities and villages, posters and banners whose preponderant colour was red were put up with increasing frequency.⁴⁸ In the popular perception, red was associated with distrust and suspicion of the occupying forces in the first post-war years. After peace was concluded, red posters summoned German men to register at the Soviet military commandant's office; in most cases these men were usually deported to the Soviet

Union for forced labour.⁴⁹ As a result, red was connected with the destruction of the family and the home, the death of close relatives and experiences of violence. In a sermon given by a member of the Jehovah's Witnesses, red was identified with the apocalypse: the red flag was called the 'scarlet cloth which causes unhappiness and discord for humankind', and the SMAD regime was likened to a Satan appearing 'on earth like a large, fiery red dragon'.⁵⁰ Fear of being sent to the Soviet Union was so closely associated with the colour that when Red Army patrols wearing red armbands on their sleeves appeared at a restaurant in the town of Gotha, customers panicked and fled immediately.⁵¹

Brown – the colour of the Third Reich – was contrasted with red, the marker of the Soviet order, and in the post-war years came to signify resistance to the occupiers. Writing with a brown pencil on a toilet stall, an anonymous commenter declared that 'if Ivan tramples [us], we will be brown again'.⁵² On the one hand, iconoclastic gestures in public, even in intimate places, were automatically addressed to representatives of the occupying powers. On the other hand, they addressed German society, calling for solidarity and national unity in the struggle against the Soviet 'occupiers'. Thus, anti-Soviet leaflets pointing out the similarity between the Nazi and Bolshevik regimes, signed by a group called 'the Brown Shirts', were pasted on lampposts on Karl Marx Square in Leipzig.⁵³ On an official appeal of the anti-fascist bloc, someone scribbled the word 'hunger' in red ink. Across the Soviet zone, Stalin was called the 'red dictator of starvation'.⁵⁴ Sometimes swastikas were painted on roads and sidewalks with red or brown paint.⁵⁵ People made frequent insulting references to communists as 'red dogs' or 'red swine', and on looking at a Soviet flag someone asked, 'Why are they hanging up this red rag near the city administration?'⁵⁶

Affirming the visual occupation regime: Institutions, media and actors

The policy of Sovietizing public space began when the Soviet red flag was planted on the Reichstag in Berlin. But the visual occupation regime developed in the context of a broader standardization of the channels and spaces of communication. The SMAD Propaganda Department was the key agency: it oversaw the editorial board of the newspaper *Tägliche Rundschau*, as well as radio stations and the House of German-Soviet Friendship in Berlin. It was also responsible for censoring radio programmes, magazine and newspaper articles, theatre productions and films. According to one report sent to Moscow, as of December 1946 the Propaganda Department controlled thirty-seven newspapers, five radio stations and fifty-two magazines.⁵⁷ From the autumn of 1948, the SMAD moved towards an explicit policy of banning periodical publications produced in the West or those published without a Soviet licence.⁵⁸ Efforts to remove alternative information altogether led to a purge of places where various kinds of information sources were available, including bookstores, kiosks, hairdressers' salons and public libraries; putting kiosks, buffets and restaurants at train stations under observation; and creating groups of police to observe post offices, railway stations and areas where vehicles traversed the occupied zones.

The visual occupation regime did not end with the formation of the GDR on 7 October 1949. The GDR's political elite began to influence the redesign of public space. The SED worked – with the SMAD and through its own party-state institutions and mass organizations, as well as schools, universities and study circles – to Sovietize the new country. It prioritized the redesign of public space, initially focusing on removing every symbol with militaristic, fascist or 'anti-democratic' content. In a 17 January 1950 decree, the Politburo of the SED recommended that the Ministry of Internal Affairs carry out a second inspection of place names, memorials and national *lieux de mémoire*.⁵⁹ The leaders of imperial Germany were included in the list of cult figures who became taboo after the war because their names had been integrated into narratives that had legitimized the Third Reich. As a result, representatives of the Soviet military administration removed posters with portraits of Frederick the Great and Bismarck from the Tauber printing house's 'Paper and Time' exhibit at the Leipzig Trade Fair.⁶⁰ To construct the East Germans' new political topography, in April and May 1951 alone, some 159 street signs with 'Prussian' street names were removed in East Berlin.⁶¹ These streets were renamed in honour of the leaders of socialist and communist movements.⁶² Monuments celebrating monarchs, important imperial figures or imperial events were blown up, dismantled or replaced with memorials to fallen Soviet soldiers in an attempt to bring Moscow's cult of the Second World War to the GDR.⁶³

Homogenization and centralization of the visual occupation regime took place in conjunction with preparations to celebrate Stalin's seventieth birthday. In October and November 1949, the GDR, like other socialist countries, asked Moscow for informational materials and visual artefacts devoted to Stalin's life and deeds. To satisfy this demand, Soviet information organs developed a plan for sending out materials that had been approved by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CC CPSU).⁶⁴ Each photograph sent abroad received its own 'passport' on which an editor stamped the time period for which its visa was valid (i.e. how long the original image could be reproduced in an Eastern bloc country). Thus, photographs connected with the life and deeds of Lenin and Stalin, photographs illustrating historic and revolutionary themes, and photographs of party congresses were certified for one year in 1952.⁶⁵ Soviet censors also monitored the incorrect placement of images of Lenin and Stalin in foreign publications, which was seen as a reflection of 'political carelessness, [and] lack of principles'.⁶⁶

Although Moscow held the reins, the Germans came up with many initiatives for designing the occupation regime's visual space. In August 1949, the SED Politburo made an official request for texts, pictures and busts of Stalin from the Soviet Union.⁶⁷ Exhibitions such as 'On the Life and Deeds of Comrade Stalin', which narrated the 'leader's' biography and the advantages of the Soviet model of development, were in high demand.⁶⁸ The CC CPSU and the Foreign Affairs Ministry agreed on every list of materials to be sent out.⁶⁹ These materials would be used as templates for subsequent replication in East Germany.⁷⁰ Soviet cultural production had to be sent to the GDR at an accelerated pace because there was little normative knowledge about Stalin, who was known to the Germans primarily in Nazi terms as the enemy. For this reason, Moscow continued to control all visual production involving Stalin, even after the materials

arrived in Berlin, by means of a special representative of the All-Soviet Society for Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries (VOKS).⁷¹

Just before the Soviet leader's birthday on 21 December 1949, and in response to urgent requests from the Society for German-Soviet Friendship, VOKS hastened to send articles, collections of photographs, portraits, posters, sheet music and recordings of songs about Stalin.⁷² In accordance with a resolution of the Society for German-Soviet Friendship, 5,000 copies of the 'Stalin Exhibition' (which took the form of twelve enormous illustrated sheets) and 10,000 copies of Stalin's portrait were printed (Figure 1.7). All the Houses of German-Soviet Friendship, clubs and enterprises were told to have busts of Stalin ready.⁷³ Visual materials were set up at the back of the stage at ceremonial meetings in which speeches about Stalin's biography were featured and at showings of Soviet films.⁷⁴ Graphic materials were also important in designing 'red corners' in which the Soviet leader's life story as well as the Soviet Union's accomplishments in industry, science and technology were visualized. At the House of German-Soviet Friendship in Berlin, an exhibit of reproductions from the Tretyakov Gallery was designed. The handover of these pictures was staged as a solemn act, presenting Soviet visual production to the German people in the presence of Soviet and GDR bosses.⁷⁵

With the escalation of the Cold War, Moscow ordered the SMAD to step up political propaganda in East Germany.⁷⁶ Although numerous reports noted the 'absence of

Figure 1.7 Exhibition about Stalin at a conference of state delegates held in the House of Workers in Halle, early December 1949. Photographer: Günther Paalzow. Bildarchiv im Bundesarchiv, Signature: Bild 183-2004-0603-500.

systematic, centralized control over visual agitation' during the early period of the Soviet occupation,⁷⁷ the policy of intensified Sovietization in the late 1940s fundamentally changed the situation. From February 1947 onwards, political posters for visual agitation could be printed only if the SMAD issued a special licence.⁷⁸ For the thirtieth anniversary of the October Revolution in 1947, the SMAD adopted a resolution demanding meticulous oversight of all noticeboards and political information kiosks since they were often not used for the intended purposes, instead becoming places to disseminate anti-Soviet comments and leaflets.⁷⁹ Centres for political information were created in 1950. These were the 'Portrait of the Street' information kiosks with the latest newspapers, which were located on the main streets and squares of cities throughout the GDR. Well-organized centres of political information now replaced posters chaotically hung on the walls of buildings, fences and bridges. The GDR's Information Service was in charge of designing and monitoring these information points. Visual agitation was especially important in areas on the border with West Germany, as well as along expressways and major highways. In these regions, official iconography visualized the border between the two opposing systems on the Cold War's ideological frontline.

The establishment of a planned socialist economy, including a centrally organized system to produce and sell propaganda artefacts (usually in response to orders from the Party), intensified the saturation of public spaces with the symbols of power. A catalogue of objects with political symbolism was published in 1949. This offered consumers an assortment of busts, bas reliefs, posters, portraits, postcards and badges with images of the 'leaders of the workers' movement'.⁸⁰ As a rule, these objects were produced on East German soil, using Soviet models, and then distributed with monitoring from above to mass organizations, party organs, the army, schools and universities. Attempts to organize retail sales of propaganda products were unsuccessful, however, because consumer demand for such items was virtually non-existent. Thus, the owner of a small store in Leipzig selling various kinds of pictures admitted that hardly anyone was interested in portraits of Stalin, Lenin, Marx or Wilhelm Pieck (the first president of the GDR). The employees of the SMAD, however, were some of the most enthusiastic buyers of 'pictures that were artistically kitschy'.⁸¹

The emergence of the visual occupation regime was stimulated by the affect management of Sovietized German subjectivity by introducing the language and practices of shame about Nazi crimes as well as pride in belonging to the 'camp of history's victors'. These emotions from the official register of feelings were seen as symbolic resources for negotiating 'friendship' with the Soviets. Emotional rhetoric allowed the East Germans using it to become active observers and producers of Soviet discourse, avoiding the position of being passive spectators while showing their political conversion from 'enemies' to 'friends' of the Soviet Union. For example, after visiting the Museum of the Defence of Leningrad with an East German delegation, Otto Grotewohl (the first prime minister of the GDR) expressed repentance on everyone's behalf, writing in the visitors' book: 'We leave here in shock, here we have seen how Germany's name was covered in shame and dishonour'.⁸² Even more noteworthy was the way other members of the delegation described their impressions of moving from shame to pride: 'Going through the museum, we experienced not only burning shame

for the deeds of our compatriots who tormented this eternal city, but also measureless pride in the Soviet people who held high the light of reason and justice in the midst of darkness and grief.⁷⁸³

Deploying these symbolic resources also involved making public representations of 'shaming acts'. For example, one TASS (Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union) photograph of 23 September 1955 visualized the staging of a public display of remorse in the presence of Soviet leaders. It showed the GDR's highest party-state authorities – Ulbricht, Grotewohl, Otto Nuschke and Lothar Bolz – standing in silence with sombre, conscience-stricken faces after laying a wreath in the village of Petrishchevo at a monument honouring Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, a partisan who had been murdered by the Nazis. Dramatizing shame for the Nazis' crimes was designed to mobilize the self-Sovietization of the East Germans, offering them a chance to delete the 'brown past' from their biographies, by looking at the Soviet Union in the right (i.e. political) way. Like the words and acts of the political elite, schoolchildren's paintings produced for school drawing contests offered similar proof of political conversion. They showed that the 'correct' gaze had been formed by illustrating a before-and-after contrast: each drawing depicted the Third Reich's militarism as well as the post-war, peace-loving 'bridges of trust' and 'columns of friendship' joining Moscow and Berlin.⁸⁴ On the one hand, such symbolic politics reinforced identification with a discourse about the Soviet Union as the 'guarantor of peace throughout the world'. On the other, these images made the expression of traumatic German experiences of rape, deportations and territorial schism after the end of the war taboo, and drove such expressions underground.

'Excesses' and mistakes in creating the visual occupation regime

Efforts to visually redesign public space ran into several organizational complications, especially when it came to the failure to get rid of old or worn-out posters, which 'spoil the appearance of cities and villages'.⁸⁵ In 1952, Party inspection reports noted that kiosks, which were supposed to display official posters, were empty, in poor condition or were not being used for their designated purpose. For example, theatre companies, cinemas, opera companies and sports teams all used these kiosks to put up announcements for their own events.⁸⁶ Visual agitation was not very effective because there were 'not enough posters', 'officials worked unsystematically', and there were 'delays in delivering posters by certain dates'. For example, most of the posters issued for Stalin's birthday in December 1951 did not arrive at Saxony's Propaganda Department until early January 1952 and were therefore not publicly displayed because they were no longer relevant.⁸⁷ Another problem was that thousands of copies of posters of the leaders were treated in ways which denigrated the symbols of power. For example, after ceremonial marches and rallies during the Third World Youth and Student Games in August 1951 in East Berlin, portraits of Eastern bloc leaders were seen in the personality cult's forbidden zone: 'thrown away without a glance in the gutters', 'muddled', and 'heaped up in a side street'.⁸⁸

The expansion of the party-state propaganda's reach facilitated the Sovietization of public space. The Information Service's Agitation Department issued periodic

bulletins entitled 'Advice for Visual Agitation' which gave practical guidance on creating slogans; explained how to prepare banners and where to place them; and discussed how to design public spaces such as cafeterias, shops, reading rooms, the vestibules of administrative buildings, train stations and the facades of apartment blocks. In January 1951, the Information Service's Department of Planning and Peace Propaganda in Chemnitz ordered that every public waiting room be supplied with posters, slogans, party newspapers and literature in order to 'appeal to and persuade a large part of the population to engage in progressive, democratic state building', and also to create a '*visual* atmosphere of love for the best friend of the German people, the great Stalin'.⁸⁹ Places targeted for such appeals included hospital admissions departments and polyclinics, the reception rooms of public premises, municipal offices, and kindergartens and schools, that is, public places where groups of people spanning the entire spectrum of age, gender and profession were likely to go.⁹⁰

This policy of intensively saturating public space with the symbols of Soviet power resulted in some 'excesses'. Thus, during one inspection, staff members of the SMAD's Information Bureau themselves compared the military commandant's offices with trade fair exhibition halls and kindergartens. Reports mentioned the excessive use of garlands, portraits, five-pointed red Soviet stars, flags and banners, which the population referred to as 'political kitsch', a 'farce' and a 'circus'.⁹¹ Discussions of propaganda work in East Germany recommended that propagandists combat the 'sectarian ideas' which were responsible for the disproportionate number of red flags and unauthorized changes to street names to honour the leaders of the German Communist Party (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands – KPD).⁹²

The Soviets themselves even had to acknowledge the crude character of agitation work. In July 1946, G. M. Bespalov, the head of the SMAD's Information Bureau, wrote to Moscow:

Our propaganda is too intrusive, it is served up too openly and hits you over the head ... we must turn away from this style of irrefutable statements and crude bragging and learn how [to create] more subtle and clever propaganda that acquaints the reader with the advantages of our social system in ways that he doesn't notice.⁹³

These 'excesses' showed the Soviets that their propaganda was not compatible with East Germans' experience and memories. Mayors of cities and villages alike told the SMAD that propaganda posters and slogans did not match German realities.⁹⁴ Hoping to improve the situation, the SED official Anton Ackermann met with Bespalov in November 1946. During their conversation, Ackermann complained that the German power organs had no autonomy because of the 'SMAD's unceasing custodial interference in the SED's affairs'. 'For example', Ackermann said:

Why do SMAD representatives look over SED leaflets and posters when these young and inexperienced officers, although they have the best intentions, nonetheless cannot judge these matters with the same competence as old, experienced workers from the German Communist Party? Meanwhile, everywhere SED leaflets and

posters are painstakingly examined, corrected and, in many cases, this only makes things worse.⁹⁵

Despite such complaints, Soviet control over public space and the SMAD staff's arbitrariness continued. For example, a certain Captain Belkin, the SMAD political commissar in the Dippoldiswalde region in Saxony, insisted that SED candidates running for seats in the local organs of government be photographed on the eve of the elections in 1949. The first photographs taken, however, were all deemed to be inappropriate, and new posters with full-length images of the candidates had to be created because, in his opinion, the portraits taken earlier did not correspond to the 'Soviet model'.⁹⁶

Iconoclasm and the limits of self-Sovietization

Although the political elites and some people engaged in self-Sovietization, other sectors of the population offered some resistance to the visual occupation regime, as political reports and summaries of the population's moods indicate. Documents noted that acts of iconoclasm took place primarily 'during the evening hours', 'when twilight falls', or 'in the dark of the night'. Every day at sunset, a political revolution of sorts took place. With the onset of darkness, the occupying powers lost their monopoly on the vigorous surveillance of public space. Sensing that the fetters on its autonomy had been loosened, society took the initiative and committed political acts in those zones of social life that, by day, demanded strictly regulated behaviour. Thus, night was a transitional zone, a borderland where actors could leave the public spheres of party and state and enter an anonymous sphere of political activity. At dawn, the regime took back the reins of power, removing all traces of popular violence from the streets and squares. These acts reveal the limits of the East Germans' self-Sovietization, as well as how emotionally charged the visual symbols of power could be.

The competition between day and night, a reflection of the political conflict between the occupation regime and society, showed itself in the Saxon town of Strehla, where the Ernst Thälmann cult was proclaimed with posters bearing the image of this pre-war leader of the German Communist Party.⁹⁷ These posters were put up during the day and torn down at night. In Glauchau, anti-Stalin and anti-Soviet graffiti was scrawled on the walls of the town's main factory during the night before the May Day parade. At dawn, police patrols wiped away all visual traces of social indignation in a space that, a few hours later, would become an arena for staging a society of collective consensus.⁹⁸ Likewise, official propaganda messages on the Day of Liberation were changed during the night in Friedersdorf. Wreaths that had been laid at Soviet obelisks were discovered the following morning on the graves of German soldiers.⁹⁹

Iconoclastic practices took place in different locales during daylight hours and at night. By day it was possible to voice opinions freely, without risk of persecution, inside certain intimate niches of public space. Thus, during a Soviet inspection of the Lindner rolling stock factory in Ammendorf in October 1948, antigovernment graffiti was

discovered in the toilets.¹⁰⁰ In 1953, just after Stalin's death, a campaign of spontaneous iconoclasm unfolded on the walls of the toilet stalls at another enterprise in Thuringia. Portraits of leaders were removed from prominent locations in the building and taken into the toilet stalls, where they were adorned with drawings of gallows and animal body parts as well as crude anti-Soviet and anti-government graffiti.¹⁰¹ Such displacements of the symbols of power from the 'sacral zone' to 'dirty places' disrupted the official system of public symbolism. To reduce the communicative potential of the toilets, the factory's management had to issue numerous orders about repainting them every week.

Like the dates chosen for iconoclastic acts – party-state holidays, propaganda campaigns and leaders' birthdays – the places where such acts took place intensified their political tone. Defacing portraits and damaging busts of the leaders in 'peace corners' and the rooms dedicated to the leaders in factories, schools, mass organizations, and party and state institutions were automatically considered political acts, instances of 'destruction of the social order' carried out by 'domestic and foreign enemies'. Thus, one night, in the 'peace corner' of a factory in Teltow, a deerstalker cap was placed on a bust of Stalin.¹⁰² With its earflaps and peaked brim, the cap made the bust of Stalin look silly rather than imposing. Another incident took place in Leuna, on the eve of the Day of the October Revolution. During the night of 2–3 November 1951, a bust of Stalin was abducted from the peace corner at the Walter Ulbricht factory. On the following day, the bust – having been smeared with dirt – was put near the factory directors' offices by unknown persons. A sign had been hung around its neck that read, 'You are as worthless as W. Pieck.'¹⁰³

The most widespread forms of covert and anonymous iconoclasm ranged from taking down and ripping up posters, banners and insignia to breaking shop windows displaying leaders' portraits.¹⁰⁴ Yet damage inflicted on visual images – and specifically on the facial features of political leaders – constituted the most serious insult to the regime. This was because defiling such images made the regime 'lose face'. Indeed, this was the first thing the security organs noticed. For example, the SPD's Eastern Bureau reported that on the eve of Stalin's birthday, portraits of the Soviet leader were smeared with mud and ink, and the eyes and mouth were gouged out.¹⁰⁵ Portraits of Thälmann taken down in Lugau were discovered the next day with the eyes gouged out and the nose and mouth ripped out.¹⁰⁶

Adding drawings or text was similar to crossing out whatever was printed on images bearing the personality cult's iconography. Such alterations demonstrated the regime's loss of authority in the population's eyes, and were intended to show publicly that it was possible to change the official meaning of propaganda. For example, on 7 January 1946, a copy of an issue of the *Thüringer Volkszeitung* which included a portrait of Pieck was put in the editorial staff's mailbox. Pieck's nose had been coloured red and, immediately after the slogan published with the portrait, 'W. Pieck – son of the people', a question mark had been added. The inscription that followed – 'The same kind of lies the Nazis told'¹⁰⁷ – thematized the problem of trusting the East German leadership, whose methods of ideological work evoked associations with Goebbels's Ministry of Propaganda. In Brandenburg, someone used the text of a poster with one of Stalin's key slogans – 'The Hitlers come and go, but the German people, the German state

remains' – to sum up the results of the Soviet occupation regime in East Germany.¹⁰⁸ An appeal to the civilian population was added to the poster's official text:

To the German people of the eastern zone! Stalin said 'The Hitlers come and go, but the German people remain!' But what has really happened? Three years of robbery and theft! Three years of famine and death! Three years of assaults on our girls and women! Three years of lies about the people's democracy! Let's drive out the ones who besmirch culture!!!¹⁰⁹

Similar reinterpretations of propaganda usually included the drawing of gallows or a guillotine on portraits of leaders.¹¹⁰ A call to exercise popular justice vis-à-vis the East German leadership was recorded on the eve of celebrations of the centenary of the 1848 Revolution, which was one of the SED's first attempts to present a new picture of the past linked to the traditions of a democratic popular movement.¹¹¹ On a notice board in the city of Bernau someone scrawled the following in chalk: 'In honour of the holiday hang the slaves of the Russians – Pieck, Seidewitz [the prime minister of Saxony] and Grotewohl – by their feet. Heil Hitler!'¹¹² The semantics of the deprivation of honour included symbolically reducing leaders to animals. This was done by adding text making offensive comparisons of the leaders with animals or drawing animal body parts on their images. Thus, in October 1950, in the border town of Faulungen, insults were written on an SED election campaign poster: 'Pieck is a fat pig.'¹¹³ And at dawn a swastika was discovered scrawled on a building in Potsdam. Underneath it was a message supposedly signed by the Werwolf organization: 'We are here again. If the Americans come, we will hang the red dogs.'¹¹⁴ Thus, official representations of the personality cult were transformed; sacred images became profane and dirty in the widespread practice of dishonouring and insulting the SED regime.

Overt forms of iconoclasm, however, were much rarer. These were distinguished by broad public participation in official rituals and the adoption of more aggressive modes of communication with the regime. The June 1953 uprising was the high point of public violence directed against symbols of the dictatorship. Portraits, pictures, busts and books written by communist leaders were damaged or completely destroyed first.¹¹⁵ In the insurgents' hands, personality cult objects were no longer symbols of power. Instead, they were used to mete out physical violence on SED supporters. For example, in the town of Eisleben, the insurgents jammed a portrait of Stalin onto the head of a Soviet soldier who attempted to defend the leader's image.¹¹⁶ Likewise, when the mayor of Ludwigsdorf refused to give up his authority, a portrait of Pieck was stuck onto his head.¹¹⁷ Public rituals of violence changed people's usual roles and positions, transforming representatives of the regime into victims, while simultaneously giving members of the public the roles of judge and executioner. After seizing Party and administrative buildings and wreaking havoc on them, insurgents carried the regime's insignia – flags, emblems, posters, portraits and banners – to nearby central squares and streets, heaped them in piles and set fire to them while crowds watched.

The appearance of such overt, conflict-laden tensions in public spaces forced the regime to resort to removing the symbols of power from these spaces. This was especially true during crises. Faced with the threat of popular unrest, the state had to

temporarily remove portraits, posters and banners from places where large crowds gathered. Thus, during the 1953 uprising, the administration took down images of Pieck, Ulbricht and Grotewohl in train-station waiting rooms in Bitterfeld and Dessau to avoid provoking unrest.¹¹⁸ As a result of the iconoclastic acts that took place in June 1953, the regime became more sensitive to the effects of saturating public places with the symbols of power. It started to work on crisis management in public space. The regime's representatives finally realized that although the symbols of power were a means of proclaiming a political order, these symbols also had the potential to overthrow the regime. In an instant, they could become targets of popular iconoclasm and could be transformed into desirable objects for rituals of violence.

Conclusion

The Soviet occupation regime formally ended when the GDR was founded in October 1949. However, as my analysis has shown, visibility remained an effective way to maintain Soviet influence on East German politics and a channel for further Sovietization. Nikita Khrushchev's February 1956 secret speech 'On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences' was a turning point in Soviet control over visibility in the GDR and the other socialist states. Only in the wake of harsh criticism of Stalin were the socialist countries for the first time allowed to use their own judgement in designing May Day demonstration columns with portraits of the leaders of the labour and communist movements, without instructions from 'Soviet friends'.¹¹⁹ The CPSU's Twenty-Second Congress continued the policy of purging public spaces of Stalinist representations in 1961. During the night of 31 October–1 November Stalin's body was removed from the Mausoleum and buried at the Kremlin wall. This gesture became the signal for the Politburo of the SED to undertake a decisive restructuring of the visual occupation regime on the periphery of the post-war Soviet empire. The SED's new source of legitimacy became propaganda focused on German heroes of the anti-Nazi resistance and national leaders of the communist movement; the GDR political elite simultaneously preserved the imperial hierarchy with Moscow as the empire's centre by reviving the Lenin cult. De-Stalinization did not mean a complete de-Sovietization of public space or the destruction of the visual occupation regime.

My analysis draws attention to the sensory dimension of the Sovietization of East Germany. It gives sight pride of place as the key sense in the formation of Sovietized German subjectivity and the affirmation of the Soviet occupation regime through administering visibility in public and even private spaces.¹²⁰ Since the organs of sight ensure knowledge of the world and a connection with one's environment, establishing a monopoly over the human body and politicizing sight (as well the other senses, which were politicized perhaps to a lesser extent) were the key goals of the occupying forces. The sense organs became the central transmitters of the ideological. Thanks to the hierarchy of sense organs, visibility/sight was transformed into the primary mode of the everyday experience of occupation through which the political was successfully organized, programmed and documented. All of this may seem quite obvious, but scholars still need to do much more to acknowledge – as the contributors

to this volume do – the unconscious visual dimension that lies at the heart of so many occupation regimes.

Notes

- 1 Cora Sol Goldstein, *Capturing the German Eye: American Visual Propaganda in Occupied Germany* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Alexey Tikhomirov, 'The Stalin Cult between Center and Periphery: Structures of the Cult Community in the Empire of Socialism, 1949–1956: The Case of the GDR', in *Der Führer im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Benno Ennker and Heidi Hein-Kircher (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 2010), 297–321.
- 2 Doris Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns: Neuorientierungen in den Kulturwissenschaften* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2006).
- 3 Constance Classen, ed., *A Cultural History of the Senses*, 6 vols (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).
- 4 For example, Cecilia Cristellon, *Marriage, the Church, and Its Judges in Renaissance Venice, 1420–1545* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 89–90; Robert W. Scribner, ed., *Bilder und Bildersturm im Spätmittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002); Ronald G. Asch and Dagmar Freist, ed., *Staatsbildung als kultureller Prozess: Strukturwandel und Legitimation von Herrschaft in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2005); Alexey Tikhomirov, 'Popular Justice and Iconoclasm in Post-war East Germany: Premodern Rites of Violence in the (De) Legitimation of Modern States', in *Popular Justice in Europe (19th–20th Centuries)*, ed. Émile Delivré, E. Berger and M. Loehnig (Bologna and Berlin: Il Mulino and Duncker & Humblot, 2017), 173–90.
- 5 In recent publications it is also a missing point. See Camilo Erlichman and Christopher Knowles, ed., *Transforming Occupation in the Western Zones of Germany: Politics, Everyday Life and Social Interactions, 1945–55* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018); Tatjana Tönsmeier, 'Besatzung als europäische Erfahrungs- und Gesellschaftsgeschichte: Der Holocaust im Kontext des Zweiten Weltkrieges', in *Der Holocaust: Ergebnisse und neue Fragen der Forschung*, ed. Frank Bajohr and Andrea Löw (Frankfurt: Fischer, 2015), 281–98.
- 6 Alexey Tikhomirov, 'Luchshii drug nemetskogo naroda': Kul't Stalina v Vostochnoi Germanii (1945–1961 gg.) (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2014), 11–15.
- 7 Martin Pase, *Stalin im Blitzlicht der Presse und Karikatur* (Dresden: F. Müller, 1941); Christian Windecke, *Der rote Zar: Genosse Stalins Weg zur Macht* (Leipzig: Quelle und Meyer, 1932).
- 8 Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
- 9 Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001); Galina Orlova, '"Karty dlia slepykh": Politika i politizatsiia zreniia v stalinskuiu epokhu', in *Vizual'naia antropologiya: Rezhimy vidimosti pri sotsializme*, ed. E. R. Iarskaia-Smirnova (Moscow: Variant, 2009), 57–104; Aleksei Golubev, 'Zapadnyi nabludatel' i zapadnyi vzgliad v afektivnom menedzhmente sovetskoi sub'ektivnosti', in *Posle Stalina: Pozdnesovetskaya sub'ektivnost' (1953–1985 gg.)*, ed. Anatolii Pinski (St Petersburg: EUSPB, 2018), 219–54.

- 10 Tobias Ronge, *Das Bild des Herrschers in Malerei und Grafik des Nationalsozialismus: Eine Untersuchung zur Ikonografie von Führer- und Funktionärsbildern im Dritten Reich* (Münster: Lit, 2010), 335.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (hereafter GARF), R-7317, op. 10, d. 29, l. 259.
- 13 Jörg Baberowski, 'Was sind Repräsentationen sozialer Ordnung im Wandel? Anmerkungen zu einer Geschichte interkultureller Begegnung', in *Arbeit an der Geschichte: Wie viel Theorie braucht die Geschichtswissenschaft?*, ed. Jörg Baberowski (Frankfurt: Campus, 2009), 8–18, esp. 10.
- 14 *Die Vertreibung der deutschen Bevölkerung aus den Gebieten östlich der Oder-Neisse*, vol. 2 (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1984), 228.
- 15 Between May 1945 and May 1949, some 41,907 German citizens (35 per cent of all Germans in the camps) died in special NKVD-MVD camps in Germany. See N. V. Petrov, *Stalin i organy NKVD-MGB v sovetizatsii stran Tsentral'noi i Vostochnoi Evropy* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2011), 58.
- 16 GARF, R-7317, op. 10, d. 29, l. 259.
- 17 *Die Vertreibung der deutschen Bevölkerung aus den Gebieten östlich der Oder-Neisse*, vol. 1, part 1 (Bonn: Bundesministerium für Vertriebene, Flüchtlinge und Kriegsgeschädigte, 1954), 396.
- 18 Sven Keller, *Volksgemeinschaft am Ende: Gesellschaft und Gewalt 1944/45* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2013), 187, 408. The death penalty awaited anyone who refused to maintain the ritual order of the 'national community': whoever did not want to raise his/her hand in the traditional Nazi salute, saying 'Heil Hitler!', was called a 'traitor' and threatened with immediate execution. See *Volksgemeinschaft am Ende*, 411.
- 19 Ibid., 143.
- 20 *Die Vertreibung der deutschen Bevölkerung*, vol. 1, part 1, 285.
- 21 Wolfgang Leonhard, *Die Revolution entlässt ihre Kinder*, 23rd edn. (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 2006), 429–30.
- 22 Stefan Dörnberg, *Befreiung 1945: Ein Augenzeugenbericht* (Berlin: Dietz, 1985), 100.
- 23 *Die Vertreibung der deutschen Bevölkerung*, vol. 1, part 1, 464.
- 24 Ibid., 448–9.
- 25 Ibid., 264–5.
- 26 Ibid., 270, 444, 473.
- 27 Ibid., 278.
- 28 The soldiers' rhetoric was a response to Stalin's order of 1 May 1944, which enjoined them to 'follow the wounded German beast and kill it in its own den'. See Elke Scherstjanoi, ed., *Rotarmisten schreiben aus Deutschland: Briefe von der Front (1945) und historischen Analysen* (Munich: Saur, 2004), 3, as well as the letters written by soldiers on 26, 44 and 182.
- 29 Scherstjanoi, *Rotarmisten schreiben aus Deutschland*, 144.
- 30 Ibid., 213. This phrase is attributed to Alexander Nevsky, Prince of Novgorod, whose cult became widespread during the 'Great Patriotic War'. See Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, *Aleksandr Nevskij: Heiliger – Fürst – Nationalheld: Eine Erinnerungsfigur im russischen kulturellen Gedächtnis (1263–2000)* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2004).
- 31 Peter Reichel, 'Berlin nach 1945: Eine Erinnerungslandschaft zwischen Gedächtnis-Verlust und Gedächtnis-Inszenierung', in *Architektur als politische Kultur: Philosophia Practica*, ed. Hermann Hipp and Ernst Seidl (Berlin: Reimer, 1996), 273–96.

- 32 For example, GARF, f. R-7077, op. 1, d. 246, l. 10–11 (1945); GARF, f. R-7133, op. 1, d. 271, l. 3 (1945).
- 33 Ronge, *Das Bild des Herrschers in Malerei*, 337–8.
- 34 GARF, f. R-7077, op. 1, d. 171, l. 2 (1945).
- 35 GARF, f. R-7077, op. 1, d. 172, l. 12 (1945).
- 36 Johanna Sanger, *Heldenkult und Heimatliebe: Strassen- und Ehrennamen im offiziellen Gedachtnis der DDR* (Berlin: Links, 2006), 78.
- 37 GARF, f. R-7184, op. 1, d. 46, l. 26.
- 38 GARF, f. R-7212, op. 1, d. 55, l. 17.
- 39 Ibid., l. 25.
- 40 GARF, f. R-7077, op. 1, d. 173, l. 192 (1946).
- 41 Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (hereafter RGASPI), f. 17, op. 128, d. 157, l. 62 (1946).
- 42 GARF, f. R-7212, op. 1, d. 238, l. 260.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 GARF, f. R-7077, op. 1, d. 27, l. 49–50.
- 45 GARF, f. R-7071, op. 1, d. 212, l. 226; f. R-7077, op. 1, d. 192, l. 236.
- 46 GARF, f. R-7212, op. 1, d. 202, l. 9–12.
- 47 Scherstjanoi, *Rotarmisten schreiben aus Deutschland*, 157.
- 48 Stefan Aust and Stephan Burgdorff, ed., *Die Flucht; Uber die Vertreibung der Deutschen aus dem Osten* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2011), 90.
- 49 *Die Vertreibung der deutschen Bevolkerung*, vol. 2, 35, 73.
- 50 GARF, f. R-7313, op. 3, d. 4, l. 136–8 (1949).
- 51 GARF, f. R-7184, op. 1, d. 56, l. 16.
- 52 GARF, f. R-7133, op. 1, d. 280, l. 34 (1948).
- 53 GARF, f. R-7133, op. 1, d. 187, l. 16 (1946).
- 54 GARF, f. R-7184, op. 1, d. 163, l. 125.
- 55 GARF, f. R-7212, op. 1, d. 218, l. 49.
- 56 GARF, f. R-7212, op. 1, d. 202, l. 359 (1948).
- 57 Bernd Bonvech (Bonwetsch), Gennadii Bordiugov and Norman Neimark (Naimark), eds., *SVAG: Upravlenie propagandy (informatsii) i S. I. Tiul'panov: Sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow: Rossiia Molodaia, 1994), 195.
- 58 For 1948, N. P. Timofeeva and Ian Foittsik (Jan Foitzik) eds., *Politika SVAG v oblasti kul'tury, nauki i obrazovniia: tseli, metody, rezultaty, 1945–1949: Sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2006), 271–3.
- 59 Sanger, *Heldenkult und Heimatliebe*, 91.
- 60 GARF, f. R-7212, op. 1, d. 255, l. 320.
- 61 Maoz Azaryahu, 'Zuruck zur Vergangenheit? Die Straennamen Ost-Berlins 1990–1994', in *Denkmalsturz: Zur Konfliktgeschichte politischer Symbolik*, ed. Winfried Speitkamp (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1997), 137–54.
- 62 Sanger, *Heldenkult und Heimatliebe*, 76–9; Maoz Azaryahu, *Von Wilhelmplatz zu Thalmannplatz: Politische Symbole im offentlichen Leben der DDR* (Gerlingen: Bleicher, 1991), 59–76.
- 63 Regina Scheer, 'Geschutzte Leere: Ein Recherchebericht uber politische Denkmaler in Brandenburg', in *Vielstimmiges Schweigen: Neue Studien zum DDR-Antifaschismus*, ed. Annette Leo and Peter Reif-Spirek (Berlin: Metropol, 2001), 127–51.
- 64 GARF, f. R-8581, op. 2, d. 261, l. 33; GARF, f. R-8581, op. 2, d. 229, l. 98.
- 65 GARF, f. R-8581, op. 2, d. 628, l. 111–12 (1952).
- 66 GARF, f. R-8581, op. 2, d. 322, l. 37–8 (1951).

- 67 On exporting the Stalin cult from the Soviet Union to East Germany, see Tikhomirov, *'Luchshii drug nemetskogo naroda'*, 123–38.
- 68 RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 108, l. 12.
- 69 Arkhiv vnesheinei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii (hereafter AVPRF), f. 742, op. 32, pa. 1115, d. 800, l. 76.
- 70 Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (hereafter SAPMO-BArch), DY 30/IV 2/2/37 (1949).
- 71 Anne Hartmann and Wolfram Eggeling, *Sowjetische Präsenz im kulturellen Leben der SBZ und frühen DDR 1945–1953* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1998), 261.
- 72 GARF, f. 5283, op. 16, d. 142, l. 4 (1949); AVPRF, f. 742, op. 32, pa. 1115, d. 800, l. 76–81.
- 73 GARF, f. R-7133, op. 1, d. 281, l. 367.
- 74 Ibid.
- 75 For 1947, see Timofeeva and Foittsik, *Politika SVAG v oblasti kul'tury*, 691–4.
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