

she was interested to juxtapose the memories of three generations of town's inhabitants: its builders in the 1950s, the participants in Solidarity strikes in the 1980s, and the post-1989 generation.

In fact, the range of her book is much broader. At first Pozniak reconstructs diverse and sometimes contradictory practices of memory in Nowa Huta. She argues that they served as representations both of party-state repression and of resistance to it; representations that remained in the post-1989 mainstream, national politics of history. Nowa Huta's elderly residents are not full of positive recollections of the building of the town in the 1950s, nor of praise for the socialist urban design. They are, however, content with its green and leisure areas, and with the walking-distance availability of basic city infrastructure. Pozniak shows some commemorative attempts to reconcile these divergent attitudes to the past. She explains that from a community point of view, different narratives form a shared language of "contrary themes" (121). According to Pozniak, Nowa Huta is able to create memory niches, trying to comfort everyone, and perhaps in this way it is shyly "opening up for a more nuanced consideration of Poland's postwar history" (122).

If there is one key concept that captures the work of memory in Nowa Huta, that concept is unequivocally the complexity of its socialist past. Even though the majority of those who positively evaluated Nowa Huta as a place of work and life were in their eighties, members of this generation were also critical of some aspects of socialism. Members of the 1980s generation, often having been involved with Solidarity, voiced not only stories of repression and confrontation but also evaluated positively such elements of socialist welfare as stable employment. As to the members of the youngest generation, although they often claim lack of interest in history, their sense of belonging, education or career plans are often informed by Nowa Huta's past.

In a similar vein, Pozniak moves to the economic heart of Nowa Huta, its steelworks, to discuss the steelmakers' memories of work and their views on socialist and capitalist economies. Not unlike in other sociological studies of post-industrial Poland, Pozniak's interlocutors showed an overall high degree of acceptance not only of post-1989 technological development, but also of the cost associated with it: the privatization and selling of the steelworks to foreign industrial company Mittal, in line with the neoliberal project more broadly understood. Nevertheless, they were bitter about the new rules of the economic game, which caused the loss of many jobs while also downgrading their local expertise.

Although the book pays a bit too much lip service to memory studies literature, it successfully highlights the salience of locality in mediating between personal experiences and public history. Its major achievement lies in capturing both economic and identity changes in concrete space, and it should be of interest to urban scholars, anthropologists and sociologists not only working on eastern Europe but also to those attentive to local transformations generated by the global shift to neoliberalism and post-Fordism.

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Proletarischer Mythos und realer Sozialismus: Die Kampfgruppen der Arbeiterklasse der DDR. By Tilmann Siebeneichner. Vol. 55, Zeithistorische Studien für Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung. Potsdam. Cologne: Böhlau, 2014. 579 pp. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Illustrations. Maps. €64.90, hard bound.

The June 17, 1953, uprising exposed a basic contradiction in East Germany: the people, including many class-conscious workers, rebelled against the Socialist Unity

Party (SED), which claimed to represent the people. Cities such as Halle, site of radical communist militias in the 1920s, and Magdeburg, a fortress of the republican and heavily social democratic *Reichsbanner* militia, are the focal points of the present study: sites with significant histories of radical working class action where workers used slogans from the 1920s against their new bosses. Bertolt Brecht sarcastically suggested that in such a case the government should dissolve the current people and elect a new one.

Tilmann Siebeneichner describes how the government attempted to do just that, by creating new workers' militias in late 1953, made up of politically trustworthy workers given the task of defending the "people's enterprises" and machine tractor stations. The SED attempted to tap into real traditions and an idealized myth of a self-organizing, self-defending proletarian militia. But the militias also were a vehicle to promote the party's official image of the enemy. They were to be both expressions of the workers' will and tools for channeling and controlling the people. This contradiction between autonomy and control characterized the militias from the republic's start to finish.

Siebeneichner deepens the already known story of the militias in the GDR in two major ways, both related to the contradiction between autonomy and control. First, he investigates the cultural logic of civil war underlying the militias. The SED presumed the constant possibility that an emergency would require direct action, over and above existing law; the militias were the embodiment of this latent state of emergency. They were prepared for violence, in the permanent state of potential civil war that justified the state-socialist dictatorship. Autonomous worker organizations, however, had challenged the dictatorship and the party in 1953. The party therefore took great pains to make sure that the militias understood who the proper enemy was. It stressed the purportedly fascist and imperialist designs of the west, especially the Federal Republic of Germany, particularly during the construction of the Berlin Wall. It never fully succeeded in creating a clear image of the enemy. Challenges came from fellow citizens: East Berliners asked in 1961, for example, why the militias, supposedly guarding against incursions from the west, faced the east with their guns. Militia members themselves had ever more contact with relatives or friends from West Germany over the 1980s: were these the enemies? Siebeneichner even finds a small strand of thinking, especially in the 1950s, that rejected militarism *per se*. The peaceful protests of 1989 renounced the language of civil war: who was the enemy now? In October 1989, citizens shamed militia members who acted against peaceful demonstrators. On the level of culture, the party's demand for ideological control ran up against the people's own spontaneous ability to reason.

Second, Siebeneichner interrogates internal reports to describe what militia members themselves made of their militias. He finds repeated examples of how citizens actually used these institutions: to gain access to guns or to play war games, to get away from work and family, and again and again simply to drink beer. More seriously, he finds that from the beginning to the end of the GDR only some of the militia members showed up for military exercises, especially when real violence against fellow citizens seemed possible: fourteen hours after the call to mobilize during the Berlin Wall crisis, for example, fewer than a third of the members had appeared. East Germans, in other words, appropriated and used the militias for their own aims, which helps to explain why, until the very end, the state did not give the militias full access to their weapons.

Siebeneichner succeeds in casting a new light on militias in the GDR, and connecting them to the larger narratives and basic contradictions of the GDR. At times I wished that he had cited fewer cultural theorists, but then in more detail: a systematic use of Georges Sorel on myth and violence throughout the book, for example, rather than invoking a whole list of thinkers, often very briefly. But on the positive side, his

bibliography provides an excellent list of the basic works on East German history in both German and English.

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Medienlenkung in der DDR. By Anke Fiedler. *Zeithistorische Studien*, 52. Böhlau Verlag: Cologne, 2014. 494 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Plates. Photographs. €59.90, hard bound.

Without doubt, the history of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) has been one of the most well-researched fields of the German past since the post-communist wave of “Aufarbeitung” (reappraisal) in the 1990s and 2000s. When it comes to the history of mass media in the socialist state, however, the status of research was and still is low by comparison. There were only a few exceptions that—most of the time—were influenced by approaches informed by totalitarianism theories that therefore described the GDR media as a tool of political-ideological propaganda.

Anke Fiedler’s monograph stands in this tradition but differs from it as well. On the one hand, she deals with the system of propaganda guidelines and censorship as the privileged research topics in this field, while on the other she challenges common understandings of dominant terms and concepts of propaganda research and the history of political thought. Scholars’ common imprecision with definitions and implicit orientations towards liberal-democratic benchmarks are justifiably criticized. Fiedler bases her analysis, however, on a model of corporate communication, and treats the communication policy of the GDR as “political public relations activities” (37). In this way, she at least avoids the pejorative connotations of the term propaganda.

Earlier works dealing with this topic, for example by Günter Holzweißig or Jürgen Wilke, were either based on a fragmented base of sources or different aspects only partially discussed, for instance the daily instructions (*Argumentationshinweise*) given by the Communist Party to the media. In contrast, Fiedler’s book is characterized by a broad approach that covers all relevant institutions through the entire period from 1945 until the collapse of the GDR in 1990. The variety of sources is similarly broad: besides extensive file inventories mainly of the propaganda bureaucracy, the author gathered many interviews with former protagonists (mainly journalists). The combination of archival sources and the outcomes of the interviews create a more diverse image of the political instructions to the media in the GDR than can be found in earlier research on the topic.

Readers expecting a general revision of research results in the light of Fiedler’s prickly rhetoric against former studies and approaches in her introduction might be disappointed: she more or less agrees with former studies as a whole. She stresses, for example, findings about efficient and strong political control of the media by the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED). In particular, she deals with the “core” of media control, that is, news control and post-censorship that were adjusted after analyzing the western media and the general mood of the citizens (479) and the lack of freedom in political publishing. Fiedler emphasizes the importance of institutional changes more than other scholars, however, who had suggested that the structure of media control in the GDR had more or less remained the same between the 1960s and 1980s. In fact, power struggles and changes in political priorities gave rise to serious changes of responsibilities and the importance of institutions and individuals. While the criticism of publications was at the center of media policies under Walter Ulbricht, a gradual system of pre-censorship was developed un-