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978-0-521-11177-5 - *Inventing a Socialist Nation: Heimat and the Politics of Everyday Life in the GDR, 1945–1990*

Jan Palmowski

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INVENTING A SOCIALIST NATION

Twenty years after the collapse of the German Democratic Republic, historians still struggle to explain how an apparently stable state imploded with such vehemence. This is the first book to show how ‘national’ identity was invented in the GDR and how citizens engaged with it. Jan Palmowski argues that it was hard for individuals to identify with the GDR amid the threat of Stasi informants and with the accelerating urban and environmental decay of the 1970s and 1980s. Since socialism contradicted its own ideals of community, identity and environmental care, citizens developed rival meanings of nationhood and identity. They learned to mask their growing distance from socialism beneath regular public assertions of socialist belonging. This stabilized the party’s rule until 1989. However, when the revolution came, the alternative identifications citizens had developed for decades allowed them to abandon their ‘nation’, the GDR, with remarkable ease.

JAN PALMOWSKI is Professor of Modern and Contemporary History and Head of the School of Arts and Humanities at King’s College London. His previous publications include *Urban Liberalism in Imperial Germany: Frankfurt am Main, 1866–1914* (1999) and *Citizenship and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Germany* (as co-editor, with Geoff Eley, 2008).

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JAN PALMOWSKI

King's College London



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To Alf Lüdtke, Sue Matthew and Heather Williams

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Abbreviations

AIM	archivierter IM-Vorgang (archived file of an unofficial informant)
AOP	archivierter operativer Vorgang
AOPK	archivierte operative Personenkontrolle (an investigation into the life of an individual)
ARD	Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Community of the Public Broadcasting Services in West Germany - First TV Channel of the FRG)
BArch-SAPMO	Bundesarchiv – Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR
BDV	Bund Deutscher Volksbühnen (League of German Folk Theatres)
BStU	Die Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen DDR (Federal Commission for the Records of the state security services of the former German Democratic Republic)
BV	Bezirksverwaltung (district administration)
DEFA	Deutsche Film Aktiengesellschaft (German Film Corporation)
DFF	Deutscher Fernsehfunk (German Television Broadcasting House, renamed GDR TV in 1972)
DM	Deutsche Mark (West German currency unit, 1948–2001)
DRA	Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv Babelsberg
<i>FP</i>	<i>Freie Presse</i>
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany)
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GDR TV	Fernsehen der DDR (cf. DFF)

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GHI	geheimer Hauptinformer (secret/unofficial informer)
<i>GHZ</i>	<i>Gothaer Heimatzeitung</i>
GNU	Gesellschaft für Natur- und Heimatfreunde (Society for the Friends of Nature and the Environment)
HA	Hauptabteilung
HStD	Heimatstube Dabel
IG	Interessengemeinschaft
IM	Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter (Unofficial or covert informer for the state security services, the Stasi)
<i>JbVkJg</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für Volkskunde und Kulturgeschichte</i>
'Join in!'	'Mach mit! – schöner unsere Städte und Gemeinden' (Join in! – more beautiful our towns and communities)
KA	Kreisarchiv (County Archive)
KD	Kreisdienststelle (County Office)
LHA	Landeshauptarchiv (State Central Archives)
M	Mark (East German currency unit from 1968)
MDN	(Deutsche) Mark der Deutschen Notenbank (East German currency unit, 1948–67)
Mark	Mark Brandenburg: the historical centre of Brandenburg, derived from the Margravate of Brandenburg. In the GDR, its territory extended from east of Magdeburg to the Polish border, including the northern half of Potsdam and Frankfurt districts
NAW	Nationales Aufbauwerk (National Reconstruction Effort)
<i>NBI</i>	<i>Neue Berliner Illustrierte</i>
NDR	Norddeutscher Rundfunk (North German Broadcasting Station)
NF	Nationale Front (National Front, the umbrella organization for all mass organizations)
NL	Nachlaß (private papers)
RdG	Rat der Gemeinde (Village Council)
RdK	Rat des Kreises (County Council)
StA	Stadtarchiv
Stasi	Staatssicherheit (State Security Services)
SVZ	<i>Schweriner Volkszeitung</i>
ThHStAWe	Thüringisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Weimar
ThStA	Thüringisches Staatsarchiv Altenburg
ZDF	Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (Second German Television Station)

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