VISIONS OF PRISONS

WARS, WALLS, AND WATCHING

MICHAEL WELCH

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Michael Welch

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To
The People of Post-Conflict

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PREFACE

The photograph featured on the cover of this volume allows us to look from an observation platform on a former Western sector into a former Soviet sector of Berlin. Although it appears authentic, it is a reconstruction, assembled in a space where the Berlin Wall once stood. It is there, on Bernauer Strasse, that many daring and dramatic escapes unfolded. From this vantage point, tourists gaze at a watchtower where guards kept an eye on the death strip, a narrow mote of barbed wire and blockades carefully designed to prevent escape, and the state, like an all-powerful deity, projected its omniscience. For the benefit of visitors armed with cameras, mobile phones, and a keen curiosity about the remnants of the Cold War, a placard introduces the fortification as a memorial to the "endlessness of the Wall that encircled West Berlin."

The Berlin Wall is inseparable from the memories it triggers. I myself hold a few such recollections, albeit somewhat vicariously. In the 1980s, my artist friend James (a pseudonym) and I were enlisted into the culture wars of New York City to be fought in defense of art against censorship and other right-wing assaults on women, gays, and people of color. For my part, it provided the foundation for a book titled *Flag Burning: Moral Panic and the Criminalization of Protest*. For James, it opened international doors for his artwork. Soon thereafter, he was invited to Berlin to paint the Wall as cultural resistance to the Cold War. Upon receiving his instructions from fellow artists, James was warned to be vigilant because the East Berlin authorities were scooping up activists who dared to defile *their* barrier from the evil West. Sure enough, while immersed in a creative painting session, James realized he was being watched, and therefore, made a run for it. Sometime later, he obtained a visitor's pass to tour East Berlin across from the American sector. While milling about, he was approached by a few unpleasant police

officers who showed him a polaroid of him decorating the Wall. The evidence was clear, and James was hustled off to detention for several hours before being scolded and sent back to the West.

The story of James captures many of the ideas contained in this book, which explores how prisons feed continuous loops of wars, walls, and watching, a phenomenon I refer to as "*visions of prisons.*" To extract the political and cultural meaning of those ideas and their undercurrents, I will share with you my recent analyses of Berlin, a city finally unwalled. Additionally, we shall delve into a pair of cities in Northern Ireland, Belfast and Derry, whose recent histories of conflict are inscribed on their urban landscapes, which retain noticeable residue, including partitions that attract worldwide tourists and street artists who canvas those remnants with colorful messages about oppression and injustice. For readers familiar with my previous work, this undertaking should be viewed as the third leg of a trilogy connecting *The Bastille Effect: Transforming Sites of Political Imprisonment* (2022) and *Escape to Prison: Penal Tourism and the Pull of Punishment* (2015). Along the way, research on relevant sites, namely barriers, exhibitions, and museums, allow us to form critical interpretations of societies contoured along penal power and punitive imaginations.

Given the scope of my international research, I have had the good fortune to have resided in an array of societies and cultures. London was my home base while commuting to Belfast and Derry to conduct fieldwork. There, I served as a visiting professor at the Mannheim Centre for Criminology in the Department of Social Policy at the London School of Economics. For that opportunity, I am grateful to Tim Newburn. Lucinda Platt, Coretta Phillips, Mike Shiner, Johann Koehler, Leo Cheliotis, and Damian Roberts. The International Student House in London deserves special mention for providing accommodations for me since 2005. In Berlin, where the other side of the comparative analysis was developed, my work benefitted from having fashionable flats suitable for writing. Thanks to Monika and Wolfgang in Schoneberg as well as Michael and Christopher in Kreuzberg.

My writer's retreat for this book continued at the University of Sydney (Australia) where I was a visiting professor in the Law School and the Institute of Criminology. Many thanks to Murray Lee, Allan McCay, Carolyn McKay, Saskia Hufnagel, Liam Shaw, and Emma Petherbridge. Another round of applause for Murray Lee, who served as my official sponsor and immigration liaison. As my landlord, Murray also invited me to live in the world-class Susan Street Studios, where music and mirth filled the nights. Nicole, Eddie,

and Cheeky added to the cultural ambience of my stay. Onward to Tokyo, where my writer's retreat was relocated, thanks to Australian immigration services. To take full advantage of that culture, I rented another flat (a.k.a. Red Line Studios) with more music and mirth—plus sushi. Thanks to my other landlords, Tracey and Ash, for offering posh accommodations.

The final draft of this manuscript benefited from a team of anonymous reviewers who provided the guiding light, especially Reviewer 2, my North Star. As always, the University of California Press deserves credit for keeping my writing on a steady course. Enormous thanks to Maura Roessner, Sam Warren, and Nora Becker, as well as Francisco Reinking and Richard Feit, copyeditor. Closer to home, the Rutgers University Sabbatical Program provided release time for this long-term and long-distance project. Finally, the Welch Clann is always appreciated for sending me Irish luck to wherever I might be—Cheers!

Throughout the book, readers will notice numerous quotes are included from my fieldwork in Berlin, Leipzig, Belfast, and Derry/Londonderry in 2023, 2022, and 2019. That material is drawn from various posters and placards on display at the many sites studied herein.

MW
Hoboken, New Jersey
USA
1 May 2025

PART ONE

The Big Picture

ONE

Surveil and Punish

ALTHOUGH MICHEL FOUCAULT'S *Discipline and Punish* remains a touchstone in scholarly debate over penal power (Alford, 2000; Garland, 1990), it is not without its limitations and criticisms. Foucault himself wondered about the accuracy of the original French title *Surveiller et punir*, and both he and his translator, Alan Sheridan, struggled to locate smooth transitions, in part because the verb "*surveiller*" has no adequate equivalent in English. As Sheridan conceded, that linguistic strain proved stubborn:

> Our noun "surveillance" has an altogether too restricted and technical use. Jeremy Bentham used the term "inspect"—which Foucault translates as "*surveiller*"—but the range of connotations does not correspond. "Supervise" is perhaps the closest of all, but again the word has different associations. "Observe" is rather too neutral, though Foucault is aware of the aggression involved in any one-sided observation. In the end, Foucault suggested *Discipline and Punish*, which relates closely to the book's structure. (Foucault, 1979, translator's note, n.p.)

Given the subject matter of this project, perhaps it is fitting that we consider a return to Foucault's original French title, *Surveiller et punir*, despite its inherent tension with an English translation. As we shall see throughout, to surveil can refer to an array of optical phenomena, including to inspect as well as to supervise and to observe.

To grasp Foucault's interest in the term "surveil," let us suggest as a heuristic model the tower, since it allows guards to inspect, supervise, and of course, observe. What we might imagine is not just any ordinary tower but specifically the Tower of London. That institution, historically and in its current incarnation as a tourist destination, offers myriad lessons on the meaning of political conflict, physical partitions, and visual control. In promoting

FIGURE 1. The White Tower. Located inside the Tower of London is the White Tower, built ca. 1100. The fortress projects a sense of power and royal authority. © retrowelch 2026

itself, the Tower of London boasts that it once served as a daunting fortress, a royal residence, and a state prison. The iconic site acts to perform "intriguing stories, dramatic events, and vibrant characters to millions of visitors" from around the globe each year (Borman, 2015, back cover). Situated in the center of the compound, the White Tower commands respect. It was the tallest building in London when it was completed in the late 11th century. "If you stand at the foot of the mighty White Tower and look upwards it is still possible to understand that formidable power that this ancient castle keep was built to convey. . . . Local people must have watched the building rise from behind a forest of scaffolding poles with a mixture of awe and dread. . . . This tower was like nothing they had ever seen" (Kilby & Murphy, 2020, p. 23). To maximize its capacity for surveillance, each of the four corners is fitted with observation posts (figure 1).

Herein, we incorporate the Tower of London to decipher how similar structures in Northern Ireland and the former East Germany have shaped modern society, particularly during intense social conflict. As the title suggests, this book advances a unique view into the embedded residue of wars, walls, and watching. Special focus is directed at the various ways

those remnants—material as well as cultural—reflect what I term "*visions of prisons*" that imagine certain people being kept inside a designated social space while keeping others out. Accordingly, critical thought delves into the enduring meaning of containment and surveillance. The partitioned cities of Northern Ireland during the Troubles and a divided Berlin amid the Cold War hold particular analytical interest. Tourists travel to cities such as Belfast, Derry, and Berlin in search of answers to puzzling questions about urban barriers and their meanings and their legacies. The peace walls of Belfast, the city walls lording over the Bogside section of Derry, and the remaining stretches of the Berlin Wall fuel a fascination with political culture. There, open-air galleries remind us of the ambitious efforts to *surveil* people, thus perpetuating an economy of watching and being watched.

THE ECONOMY OF WATCHING AND BEING WATCHED

For sociologists and likeminded thinkers, visualizations activate our interest in the complexities of modern life. In *Visions of Social Control*, Stan Cohen delves into the "organized ways in which society responds to behavior and people it regards as deviant, problematic, worrying, threatening, troublesome or undesirable in some way or another" (1985, p. 1). Similarly, the collection of writings in *Theorizing Surveillance: The Panopticon and Beyond* situates the outer reaches of vision and how those maneuvers have become so normalized that we don't often notice them (Lyon, 2006; Welch, 2007). With even greater concerns over the perils of surveillance, *The Soft Cage*, by Christian Parenti, traces the evolution from slave passes to the war on terror. Altogether, each of these authors points to a persistent fixture of society that theorist Guy Debord (1967) regards as an economy of looks and looking. Debord's *The Society of Spectacle* presents us with a host of concepts surrounding the conditions—and production—of modernity, including the culmination of separation and the commodity of spectacle.

Whereas it is easy for scholars to talk incessantly about the implications of watching and being watched, this book hones in on comparable case studies from Northern Ireland in the aftermath of the Troubles and from Berlin, even though it is no longer girded by its infamous wall. As tourist attractions, those sites testify to the prominence of surveillance and containment best characterized as *visions of prisons*. My observations and interpretations prompt us to consider how we think about what we see. At the onset, it is

useful to consider the dual meanings of the term "vision," pointing both to the physical act of seeing and to how we imagine and form impressions. Visions thus carries us through the experience of witnessing residue of the recent past left behind by conflict and violence.

This approach to *visions of prisons* draws on the Foucauldian proposition regarding the birth of the prison that gradually emerged as an instructive institution to serve as a laboratory for the refinement of surveillance. Through the diffusion of knowledge, those lessons have the potential to be injected into the social body at large, including communities, cities, and states under complex governmental systems (Newburn & Sparks, 2004). Two forms of political culture lay the foundation for this study: British ambitions imposed on the Irish in Northern Ireland and the Soviet regime and its mandate to restrict the movement of the citizenry in East Germany. In both instances, those populations had been managed by the authorities as subjects within a society steeped in social control, whether it be colonial or totalitarian. Taking such a comparative approach provides the groundwork for theorizing about containment and surveillance as patterned by wars, walls, and watching.

SIGHTINGS, SITES, AND SITEDNESS

Phenomenology points to the unique ways we absorb the world around us. As we experience our social surroundings, we frequently hold onto memories of place—real or imagined. Those particular sites are rife with meaning, or what we should call sitedness. Moreover, actually *being there* reinforces recollections, thoughts, and emotions. In the pages to follow, we explore various places in Berlin and Northern Ireland and related sites in London that not only resonate sitedness but also have been repurposed as storytelling institutions. As in previous examinations on the subject, those sites, as well as artefacts contained within them, have undergone a cultural transformation from *use value* in their previous incarnation to *signifying value* in their afterlife (Welch, 2022, 2015). Whereas those sites often reflect tragic traces of social conflict, we ought not lump them into a category of "dark tourism" and its fascination with the macabre (Lennon & Foley, 2010). On the contrary, many of the places discussed herein are committed to constructive narratives, and in doing so, they ascribe to themes of ascent that enlighten visitors as they witness hardship (Smith, 1999). *Being there* and *being moved* are not only personal experiences but also collective ones that embrace a larger sense of humanity.

In Derry, for example, tourists converge on the very site of the Free Derry movement scarred by Bloody Sunday. In its place, the Museum of Free Derry tells the "people's story" about civil rights, the battle of the Bogside, and internment without trial during the Troubles. With the museum brochure as navigational aid, visitors are led to visualize the people's story through images and artefacts that deliver potent testimony of "the working class community who endured oppression and rose up against it." It is there in 1972 that 14 unarmed demonstrators were fatally shot by the British Army in the streets surrounding the museum. The tour guide mentions that a 17-year-old lad was so close to gunfire that cement dust sprayed into his hair as bullets punctured the walls of the building. To mark the spot, the guide points to the hallway of the exhibit that now occupies the street where young victims were killed. The exhibition, mobilized by themes of ascent, is dedicated to "all people who have struggled and suffered for civil rights everywhere."

The sectarian divide in Derry is displayed for public view. Surrounded by the city walls and a short stroll from the Bogside, tourists are encouraged to enter the Siege Museum, where curators outline the historical events of 1688–89 when the Apprentice Boys barred the gate, thereby protecting the city from invasion from the advancing brigade of King James II, the last Catholic monarch of Britain. The collection of objects pays homage to the Orange Order, whose Protestant Unionist heritage connects its proud membership in the United Kingdom. Adjacent to the museum is the Apprentice Boys Memorial Hall, which rests safely behind iron mesh installed as protection from paint bombs hurled from the Bogside below the city walls (Albiston, 2020).

The Museum of Free Derry and the Siege Museum tell different stories about separate communities that still reside side by side in the same city. Residents of the Bogside, like other Nationalist neighborhoods, identify as Irish Catholics and favor a unification of the Republic of Ireland to the south of the border that partitions the island. On the other side of the city walls, residents of the Fountain, an estate in Derry/Londonderry, observe their own heritage as British Protestants loyal to the Crown. Especially during the Troubles, those rival communities reached flashpoints of violence so intense that the British Army was deployed to dampen the tension (McCann, 2018; O'Dochartaigh, 1997; Prince & Warner, 2019). On the walls along the Fountain, local residents express their own urban strain sparked by the Troubles. Of course, visiting—hence *being there*—greatly enhances the meaning of our experience of these places and their sitedness (figure 2, figure 3).

FIGURE 2. Bogside murals. In the Bogside neighborhood of Derry (Northern Ireland), murals depict the violence of Troubles. © retrowelch 2026

FIGURE 3. The Fountain mural. In the Fountain neighborhood of Derry, or Londonderry (Northern Ireland), murals express a continued sense of urban strife caused by the Troubles. © retrowelch 2026

The museum, alongside related exhibits, historical sites, and memorials, serves as a significant *medium* by which we can comprehend and analyze *visions of prisons* as shaped by wars, walls, and watching. The genesis of this project begins with two previous books; together, they form a trilogy. In *Escape to Prison: Penal Tourism and the Pull of Punishment* (2015), my international research focused on ten prisons on six continents, from Alcatraz to Robbin Island. Due to their grim subject matter, those former carceral sites tend to invert the Disneyland experience, becoming the antithesis of the "happiest place on earth." *Escape to Prison* explores the complex interplay between culture and punishment and deciphers narratives on surveillance, colonial control, and the extraction of convict labor via the perspectives of Durkheim and Foucault.

In the next installment, *The Bastille Effect: Transforming Sites of Political Imprisonment* (2022), my fieldwork delved into the unique ways that former sites of confinement are transformed both physically and culturally, even incorporating purifying rituals to cleanse them of their profane past so they can attain a new place identity as memorials to those who suffered and those who died in state custody. *The Bastille Effect* captures the lingering imagination of political imprisonment romanticized by the French Revolution and sets them in contradistinction to the severe pain and loss that are deeply embedded in carceral sites. In due course, once transformed into memorials, those sites perform inspiring allegories of human rights that contour collective memory in post-conflict societies.

For this task, I returned to Northern Ireland in 2022 to reexamine the remnants of wars, walls, and watching that reflect the larger techniques of social control, surveillance, and containment in Belfast and Derry. To establish a comparable foundation for comparative analysis, I expanded my research to include Berlin, where I did field work for three months in 2019 and another three months in 2023. Whereas the Berlin Wall figures prominently in my interpretation of *visions of prisons*, it also offers an analytical device for understanding other walled societies in Northern Ireland, revealing not only stark similarities but also complex nuances shaped by ethnopolitical segregation that persists today. Given their relevance to the Troubles in Northern Ireland and the Cold War behind the Iron Curtain, former carceral sites, related museums and exhibitions, and the open-air galleries of Belfast, Derry, and Berlin constitute the basis for my primary research. To

contextualize my discoveries, I rely on the vast secondary literature investigating the unconventional wars in Northern Ireland up to the Good Friday Agreement (1998) and in Germany that dissolved with fall of the Berlin Wall (1989). Still, my research tool of choice is the camera. I have collected thousands of photographs over the years whose images capture the sharp residue of sociopolitical conflict and drive my journey into the visual world of sociology, criminology, and political history.

Drawing on Foucault's interest in the evolution of penology, I rely on my photographs to perform a narrative on the unholy trinity of wars, walls, and watching. Altogether, they give birth to *visions of prisons* that imagine certain people being kept and observed inside a designated social space. The thrust of the thesis goes something like this: the initial title of Foucault's book *Surveil and Punish*—rather than *Discipline and Punish*—constitutes a better approach to understanding penality and social control. Up to now, the standard English-language title, *Discipline and Punish*, has (unintentionally) deprived us of a clearer interpretation of Foucault's thinking. As illustrated throughout this volume, the comparative case-studies of Belfast, Derry, and Berlin offer new insights into the exercise of power associated with surveillance and containment. In doing so, they bring us closer to Foucault's original formula. Still, this book reaches beyond Foucault to incorporate an ever-expanding field of Foucauldian thought. Such scholarship is decidedly dynamic, allowing us to work and rework Foucault's ideas and propositions. More to the point of this project, Foucauldian theory enables our case studies in Northern Ireland and Germany to make conceptual contact, especially since surveillance and containment are activated by more generalized patterns of power.

VISUALIZING MUSEUMS—AND WORLDVIEWS

Escape to Prison delves into prison museums as institutions that create—and re-create—meaning not only for visitors but also for a society surrounded by a particular nation situated within a larger social world. Along the way, it interprets collections on display that produce a "*museum effect*"—an interplay between objects, images, and space (Casey, 2003; Williams, 2007). That *museum effect* is channeled through visualization, since what we see is processed into a deeper sense of consciousness imbued by emotion, both good and bad. As we gaze at artefacts and pictures, we experience a curatorial space

activated by semiophores, items prized for their capacity to generate meaning (Pomian, 1990). Again, our visualization of the museum takes us through a cultural transformation in which objects depart from their use value in their previous incarnation and enter an afterlife sustained by signifying value. Moreover, experiencing a museum is effective when it establishes itself as being authentic and trustworthy, thereby validating the story it seeks to tell. Put another way, the museum with all its visual dynamics serves to confirm and verify the world around us.

Tony Bennett, in *The Birth of the Museum*, contributes tremendously to our understanding of the museum by delivering a concise Foucauldian approach that parallels the genealogy of the museum with that of the prison. From their inception, both the museum and the prison projected cultural significance by being located in the center of the city. Their visual presence embodied a power to "show and tell" the virtues of society (Prior, 2002). As is the case in *Escape to Prison* and *The Bastille Effect*, this book explores not only museums but also prison museums that convey a particular revelation and worldview. Consider the Stasi Prison Museum in Berlin. As we step inside its massive gates, the world of totalitarianism—and its *visions of prisons*—is on grand display. Touring the penal compound, we move further into a dystopian ecosystem, becoming eye witnesses to a labyrinth of underground isolation cells known as the "submarine." The cold, dark space elicits fear as visitors gasp and head for the safety of the exit; indeed, here an authentic performance of the museum effect is in full expression. It is easy to write off the Stasi Prison Museum as another example of "dark tourism" (Lennon & Foley, 2010). However, such neglect would miss an opportunity to decipher a shifting political world. The Stasi Prison in its previous incarnation was, of course, a hellish place. In its afterlife as a museum, its signifying value offers relief with themes of ascent as we learn how a totalitarian nightmare crumbled under its own weight and was then replaced with democratic reforms.

Peggy Levitt (2015) is correct in telling us that museums put a nation and the world on display. Still, with all of its legitimate narrative on a new and unified Germany, the Stasi Prison Museum, like so many similar sites around the city, has remade its identity as a memorial. "Today, former political prisoners and historians guide visitors around Berlin-Hohenschonhausen Memorial to commemorate the injustice committed in this place . . . as well as the Stasi's arbitrary approach to imprisonment for different inmates." Just as *Escape to Prison* and *The Bastille Effect* rely on historical architecture to examine collective memory in such societies as post-Apartheid South Africa and the

post-dictatorships in Argentina and Chile, this study also takes us to see the remnants of conflict in Germany and Northern Ireland. With that goal in mind, this work also emulates *Memorial Museums*, in which Paul Williams (2007) maps out cultural spaces that promote peace, tolerance, and the avoidance of future violence.

Correspondingly, our journey benefits from lessons in Nicholas Mirzoeff's *How to See the World*. In that compact book, Mirzoeff presents us with a toolkit for thinking about visual culture. Among his thoughts is the recognition that "seeing is actually a system of sensory feedback from the whole body, not just the eyes" (2016, p. 13). This venture, too, reminds us that visualizing the museum, the memorial, and the mural as well as the exterior and interior of former prisons involves a system of sensory feedback. Those sites trigger emotional registers—positive and negative—toward *visions of prisons*, on the one hand, and sociopolitical shifts, on the other. *How to See the World* contributes depth to this study as Mirzoeff delivers the chapter "The World of War," in which he notes that war in the West emerged as an art that incorporates a new visual skill. "The task of the general was to 'visualize' the battlefield as whole, even though he could not see it. He had to add his imagination, insight, and intuition to whatever he and his subordinates could see for themselves" (2016, p. 98). Herein we will learn that surveillance, especially in the context of war, is incomplete, thereby prompting the authorities to imagine motives of those people they are watching. Whether it was the Stasi suspecting that certain individuals were planning to bolt to West Berlin or the British intelligence agents thinking that a run-of-the-mill Irish Catholic was somehow aiding the Irish Republican Army, those speculations were initially grounded in visualizations. And in the case of world of war, there were plenty of mistakes, or in military parlance, collateral damage. In East Berlin, much like in Belfast and Derry, there was no shortage of innocent people surveilled and punished through expanding carceral sites: simply put, more *visions of prisons*.

Visualizing—and visual thinking—is not the sole domain of media scholars. Criminologists also have embraced those methods of inquiry to help us make sense of the world of crime and the state's response to it, or as Stan Cohen (1985) coined it, "visions of social control." Since that moment in the visual development of social control, other criminologists have issued important insights into transgressions and the official efforts to clamp down on perceived offenders. In a landmark publication, Michelle Brown and Eamonn Carrabine launched a special volume of *Theoretical Criminology*

titled "Visual Culture and the Iconography of Crime and Punishment" (2014). In the introductory essay, one of our great luminaries, Nicole Rafter, points to a void in conventional criminology that lacks visualization and pleads, on behalf of all of us, for "a criminology that will explain the meaning of [these] images and also tell me why I want to look at them" (2014, p. 128). Toward that end, Rafter and an emerging collective of criminologists have launched a visual criminology that examines not just crime but also the "ways in which all things visual interact with crime and criminal justice, inventing and shaping one another" (2014, p. 129; see also Brown, 2009; Carrabine, 2012; Schept, 2014). Rafter goes on to remind us that Foucault paved the way for visual thinking by unpacking the significance of panopticism, providing criminologists "new ways to conceptualize the history and technologies of their field in visual terms" that throw critical light onto "social arrangements, including hierarchies of power" (p. 131). As we shall contemplate throughout, surveillance remains among those hierarchies of power. More to the point of *visions of prisons*, watching is intensified by two interlocking entities: wars and walls.

VIEWING—AND UNDERSTANDING—WALLED SOCIETIES

Walled States, Waning Sovereignty, by Wendy Brown, echoes all the anxieties—and perceived comfort—of walling societies, as those structures "mark and enforce an inside/outside distinction—a boundary between 'us' and 'them' and between friend and enemy—appears as precisely the opposite when grasped as part of a complex of eroding lines between the police and the military, subject and *patria*, vigilante and state, law and lawlessness" (2022, p. 37). Whereas the fall of the Berlin Wall seems to mark an end of an era of walled societies, Brown notes that more than 50 nation-state walls have been built since that momentous event in 1989. Somewhat ironically, although the Good Friday Agreement that put a halt to political violence in Northern Ireland, there are even more walls (or peace lines) now separating disparate communities in Belfast than there were in 1998 (McAtackney & McGuire, 2020). Therefore, walling societies is becoming more prevalent, particularly in the Middle East and along the US-Mexico border (Bishara, 2020; Dear, 2020; Sennett, 1994). Brown asks us to consider the concept of enclosure in how we see and understand physical barriers. It is fitting that she points to the history of English colonization of Ireland, given that the common phrase

"beyond the pale" refers a white wooden fence marking the territory that was not under direct control of the English authorities in Ireland. The fence allowed people to see precisely where civilization ended, and land "beyond the pale" was considered "uncivilized," inhabited by "uncivilized" people. And because the English colonizers portrayed the Irish as uncivilized, violence against them was justified in defense of the original colonial conquest (Elkins, 2022; Lynch, 2019).

While viewing and understanding walls, it is important to recognize their emotive impact on people spanning from fear to security. As Brown notes, walls convey moods and feelings. Likewise, Edward Said (1979) characterizes that phenomenon as "imaginative geography" that constitutes a mental organization of space that produces identities through partitions, thus becoming psychic boundaries generative of cultural and political mentalities. It is not surprising therefore that in Belfast, the "peace lines" standing 30-feet high provide generous canvas space for sectarian graffiti—Republican Irish and Unionist British. Anthropologist Mary Douglas (1966) also reminds us that the psychic nature of boundaries is driven by anxieties over purity and danger. Hence, "the protection of danger onto the alien both draws on and fuels the fantasy of containment for which walls are the ultimate icon" (Brown, 2022, p. 129). As we shall see during our discussion of the Troubles and the early history of Derry (Londonderry), worries of being "under siege" activate a "siege mentality," prompting communities to hunker down in the face of threat and invasion into one's territory.

Likewise, in *Belfast: Segregation, Violence and the City*, Peter Shirlow and Brendan Murtagh explore the physical and psychic dimensions of sectarianism. They explain that segregation, reinforced by walling, shapes the local nature of politics governing territorial control and resistance and prevails over the politics of shared interests. "The politics of politicised identities, which are linked to notions of 'besiegement,' cultural dissipation and fear is crucial in interpreting the link between space and social, cultural and production" (2006, p. 23). Despite the dividends of the peace process and the Good Friday Agreement, tension persists, due in part to physical and mental constructions that create mistrust between communities who identify as either Unionist/Loyalist or Republican/Nationalist—or as "us" and "them." Shirlow and Murtagh insist that the control of place is a weapon in the politicization of communities; moreover, segregation is the laboratory that breeds sectarianism (McAtackney, 2020).

As we summarize the chapters to follow, we shall remain mindful of the significance of walled societies and the mindsets they produce. Furthermore, that is how we will see—and understand—walls, partitions, and borders.

LOOKING BRIEFLY INTO THE REST OF THE BOOK

Suggesting some guidance as to where we are going both geographically and conceptually, let us point to the major destinations of this journey. In addition to the Tower of London, there is much to learn about wars, walls, and watching at other cultural venues located in London, including the Museum of London, the Imperial War Museum, and the National Army Museum. Touring the Troubles in Northern Ireland has become a growing phenomenon for those still searching for clues into the sectarian conflict. In response to that interest, cities in Northern Ireland have reemerged as open-air galleries where street art narrates historical events. In Belfast, the peace walls separating the Catholic/Republican and Protestant/Loyalist communities stand as stark reminders of a difficult past that is still recovering from political and social conflict. The Ulster Museum, Irish Republican History Museum, and Roddy McCorley's Club contain massive collections of artefacts and images of the Troubles. For a more focused experience on political imprisonment during that period, a tour of the former Crumlin Road Gaol does not disappoint. And for some closure, Milltown Cemetery offers visitors deep reflection on the turmoil.

In Derry, a long walk around the rim of the city walls speaks to the impressive durability of its history. Located below the walls in the Bogside are remnants of the Free Derry campaign, highlighted by the Museum of Free Derry. Other smaller exhibits dedicated to the Troubles can be seen at the Museum of Resistance, the Irish Republican Prisoners Welfare Association, and the Ex-Prisoners Outreach Programme (for Irish Republican ex-POWs and ex-combatants). For those seeking the other side of the story on sectarianism, the Siege Museum (and the adjoining Apprentice Boys Memorial Hall) located inside the walls is informative and insightful. For visitors determined to further their knowledge on the significance of Derry architecture, the Tower Museum offers a bird's-eye view of the emergence of fortressed societies constructed along lines of power and vigilance.

Berlin, of course, has no shortage of cultural sites that refuse to dilute messages on recent conflict. This portion of the study on wars, walls, and

watching concentrates on rise of the Cold War coupled with the Berlin Wall and the Stasi, the secret police charged with enforcing the containment of East Germans. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, numerous places have been transformed into intriguing destinations, particularly for those with a keen interest in the harsh mechanisms of social control. Remnants of the wall rest at key locations, including a section now known as the East Side Gallery, where visual artists arrive to express their ideas through paint and prose. Along that stretch, the Wall Museum condenses a series of complicated moments defining the partition. In the former French sector, along Bernauer Strasse, Gedenkstatte Berliner Mauer (and museum) orients us to the divide between East and West Berlin. Often dismissed as a tourist trap, the section around Checkpoint Charlie sponsors several meaningful exhibits. The impressive Asisi *Panorama* succeeds in delivering a unique visualization of life behind the wall. Elsewhere, other worthwhile stops offer a view from above—reenacting a form of "wall-veillance." Toward that end, a former watchtower has been repurposed as a museum that deciphers the brutality of the Cold War. It is also a memorial dedicated to Gunter Litfin, the first fugitive gunned down in an attempt to flee to West Berlin. By paying homage to Litfin, curators carefully arranged objects and images inside the watchtower while also encouraging us to climb to the top level, where we can visualize the death strip that had become a deadly no-man's land.

Central to this exploratory effort is the Stasi Museum and Archives, which once served as the Ministry for State Security (or secret police) and the Stasi Prison (Gedenkstatte, Berlin—Hohenschonhausen) where those suspected of planning an escape from East Germany were confined and interrogated. These remnants of the Cold War provide extensive documentation on the ambitions of Soviet-style control. Similarly, the Deutsches Spionage Museum, or German Spy Museum, blends the practical with the liminal, thereby enhancing our appreciation of spy craft shaped by competing political ideologies. Altogether, these sites greatly facilitate interpretations triggered by watching, walls, and wars.

Let us now consider the direction of each chapter in an effort to explain where we are going and why.

Expanding our view of the big picture, the next chapter tackles the geopolitics of boundaries. For our purposes, the Tower of London is the embodiment of royal and military strength. That "tower of power" serves as a heuristic device to interpret similar forms and functions of other fortressed societies, most notably Belfast, Derry, and Berlin. Discussion relies on a set

of concepts that distinguish *premodern* architecture, such as the Tower of London, from more *modern* structures, including the peace walls of Belfast that have been reinforced by rationality and technology. It should be noted again that there are more peace walls in Belfast now than in 1998, when the Good Friday Agreement formally put an end to the low-level war: hence, a reminder of the sitedness of sectarian tensions that persist in a post-Troubles society. By comparison, the Berlin Wall is characterized as a *postmodern* spectacle. Its infrastructure was engineered to restrict the movement of people. More to the point, reliance of death strips and shoot-to-kill tactics simply cannot correct the inherent contractions of a totalitarian state that claims to be democratic (Scott, 1998). As we shall see, the barricaded no-go areas of Free Derry speak to the various connotations of containment. Residents of the Bogside during the Free Derry campaign often wondered whether the British Army positioned around the perimeter of the no-go sections were there to protect their community or contain it, since soldiers seemed to aim their weapons at the people inside that restricted zone (McAtackney & McGuire, 2020; McCann, 2018).

The big picture continues into chapter 3 with a survey of the various permutations of punitive containment. Discussion begins with the methods of surveillance developed by the Stasi in East Germany as it patrolled the population with dystopian control. Transgressors were tracked down, interrogated, and incarcerated within a network of Stasi prisons where people—and their thoughts—were plunged into darkness. As a parallel construct in Northern Ireland, punitive containment was animated by matters of both security and colonialism. The Crumlin Road Gaol, in Belfast, allows visitors "safe contact" with a British apparatus of confinement as it maneuvered to contain the movements of paramilitaries during the Troubles. That system of control reached beyond the prison and onto entire communities, most notably the Irish Catholic enclaves where strict curfews were imposed—a "*vision of prison*" if there ever was one

Part 2 turns is focus from the big picture to the minute details of *visions of prisons*. In chapter 4, we examine the meanings of things by employing a sociology of objects. Just as certain places have certain identities, so do artefacts (Smith, 1999). In her revealing book *Stasiland: Stories from Behind the Berlin Wall*, Anna Funder introduces us to a curious character. Heinz Koch was a retired Stasi officer who brought home a decorative plate—an award conferred to his unit—only to be investigated by the Working Group of Plate Re-Procurement. The enforcement team, including a district

attorney, summoned Koch to headquarters for questioning because the plate was determined to be state property. Koch defied the inquiry by hiding the plate behind a sink pipe, calling the entire incident "my little private revenge" on the Stasi, which had imposed unreasonable travel restrictions on him (Funder, 2002, p. 178). Apparently, just as containment has many connotations, so do things. Koch beat the system by keeping the trophy in his personal archive of East Germany, the contents of which gained even greater cultural significance when the wall fell and the Stasi was disbanded. In various collections devoted to the memory of the Troubles, eclectic objects and images also earn a special afterlife in museums in Belfast, Derry, and London (e.g., the Imperial War Museum, the National Army Museum).

Other minute details are explored in chapter 5, where components of intelligence gathering in Northern Ireland and East Germany are laid bare, allowing us to understand the formation of knowledge and techniques of surveillance and the power they possess. Massive investments in security systems during the Troubles and the Cold War dwarf the subjects under suspicion. Foucault's published lectures at the College of France in the 1970s further guide our analysis, particularly with respect to discipline, security, and the technologies of power. Those manifestations of power emerge in what Foucault describes as multiplicities, or social spaces where discipline and security are exercised, including the prisons, the schools, and the military. In a series of examples, small wars, imperial policing, and low-intensity operations in Northern Ireland are compared to the ambitions of the Stasi in East Germany.

Part 3 maps the trajectories of surveillance and the extent of monitoring not only of behavior but also of thoughts deemed questionable by the state. The conceptual approach follows the lessons of panopticism as taught by Foucault, Bentham, and a host of scholars who excavate the meaning of visual control. Chapter 6 explores the contours of vertical-veillance, whereby the watching takes a top-down direction, subjecting people to the whims of the authorities. It is here that we untangle the dual meanings of the term "*practice*." To practice can mean both rehearsing and actually doing. Together, they are interlocking routines that become increasingly tighter since the more watchers watch, the more they improve their methods of visual control. In Northern Ireland, for instance, British intelligence agents benefitted from their practices in other colonial campaigns, including Yemen, Malaysia, and Kenya.

Lateral-veillance, the topic of chapter 7, is a horizontal trajectory of surveillance that has many permutations. Both the Cold War and the Troubles

fueled the cross-monitoring of parallel and rival espionage systems. Such panoptic power is interpreted further through the lens of Foucault (1978), who considers the problems of space situated within the confines of security, territory, and population. The exploits of Cold Warriors are unveiled, particularly with respect to the Berlin Tunnel, by the Americans, who built the tunnel to spy on their East German counterparts. By doing so, they exercised *power underground*—marking another Foucauldian invention (Alford, 2000).

As we shall contemplate in chapter 8, surveillance is often a bidirectional phenomenon during which the subjects of inspection, ironically, gaze back at the authorities who inspect them, prompting the state to adjust tactics to maintain their projection of power (Welch, 2011a, 2011b). Taking full advantage of the strands of Foucauldian thought, we examine the reversibility of panopticism and introduce war as an analyzer of power. Along the way, critical attention is paid to such developments as reconnaissance, spectaculars, and the panoptic sniper.

The last pair of chapters make contact with the rough edges of containment and surveillance. Chapter 9 scans the mental states not only of those under surveillance but of the state as it attempts to discern the psyche of their targets. Unsurprisingly, vigilance, fear, and paranoia abound in an economy of pervasive gazing. To contextualize those emotive registers, we scan the secondary literature on conflicted memory in tandem with Foucault's notion of counter-memory that confronts the dominant vision of the past. Both concepts allow us to reconsider the underpinnings of power-knowledge in the aftermath of the Troubles and the Cold War.

The final chapter goes further by interpreting dystopia and how communities defy state oppression in both Northern Ireland and East Germany. Not to be missed is another thread of Foucault's, his meditations on the significance of the carceral city with all its tiny theatres of punishment (see Cohen, 1985). Indeed, death strips and ghost (subway) stations in East Berlin point to a dystopian *vision of prison*. In *Battleground Berlin: CIA vs KGB in the Cold War*, former agents recall that in the winter of 1961, with its freezing temperatures, Christmas was

> hardly a festive occasion for Berliners on either side of the Wall as the holiday season was painful reminder that they were cut off from friends and relatives. Nevertheless, as a gesture of solidarity with the people of East Berlin, West Berliners celebrated the holidays by erecting Christmas trees along the Western side of the Wall (Murphy et al., 1997, p. 395).

Defying dystopia during the Troubles has been dissected by an array of critical thinkers who examine the politics of boredom and the power of transgressions as they mobilize the punk movement that took pride in rejecting sectarianism and segregation (Legg, 2018; Long, 2020; Roulston, 2022).

In sum, post-conflict societies in Northern Ireland and the former East Germany expose their legacies of colonialism and totalitarianism in ways that speak to *visions of prisons* contoured by wars, walls, and watching. Nowadays, visitors are greeted with unique moments to witness these social and cultural transformations in which sites, exhibitions, and museums emerge as storytelling institutions constructed around political legacies. With themes of ascent, however, they embrace an optimism that challenges oppressive forms of social control. In the chapters ahead, specific developments in Belfast, Derry, and Berlin refine our cross-cultural exercise while thinking further afield about a world contoured by surveillance and containment.

Setting forth on this exploration, we shall remain mindful that a return to Foucault's original title of *Surveil and Punish*, rather than *Discipline and Punish*, presents us with a fresh opportunity to interpret surveillance and containment as twinned phenomena predicated on visual control. As we rely on a comparative study of the Cold War and the Troubles, greater insights into conflict and post-conflict will help us understand the significance of what Stan Cohen calls "*visions of social control*." Toward that end, this book is drawn into the intellectual tasks of conceptualizing and theorizing by applying the thoughts and ideas of Foucault along with a supporting cast of Foucauldian scholars. This final installment of a trilogy avoids straying from its predecessors, *Escape to Prison: Penal Tourism and the Pull of Punishment* (2015) and *The Bastille Effect: Transforming Sites of Political Imprisonment* (2022), thereby opening even more space to appreciate the significance of the visual.

TWO

Geopolitics of Boundaries

AS WE BEGIN THIS COMPARATIVE LOOK into the major cities of Northern Ireland vis-à-vis Berlin, a few thoughts on the significance of islands is as good place to start as any. Ireland is worth noting because like all islands, it enjoys a natural boundary with the sea. In 1921, as part of a complicated treaty ending the War of Independence, the heavily gerrymandered partition separating the North and South became a defining feature of Anglo-Irish geopolitics. Against the will of both Nationalists and Unionists, the British inflicted Ireland with a brand of crude surgery, thereby drawing a border along lines of a crass ethno-sectarian head count. That highly selective demographic maneuver devised a six-county state. By doing so, it ensured that the North would privilege the Protestant majority, even establishing a Parliament for the Protestant people (Lynch, 2019; MacDonagh, 1983). The border, during the Troubles, would go on to shape the conflict in more than a few ways. In the collective consciousness, the partition reinforced the view of a British occupation in the North that separates the native Irish from their extended Catholic clans in the South. At the height of the sectarian violence, Irish paramilitaries exploited the border by crossing into the Republic to elude British soldiers. The 1998 Good Friday Agreement reset the otherwise complicated landscape as British checkpoints and other military installations were removed, creating a sense that the border didn't really exist. Political events have political consequences. As of 2016, Brexit has again reconfigured the relations between the North and the South, placing border issues squarely back on the table.

In Germany, the construction of the Berlin Wall signified a series of the unforgiving events in the Cold War. In a city already ravaged by the Second World War, the Soviet-style regime in 1961 wrapped barbed wire around East Berlin as families scrambled to stay together. The wall was soon fortified by

massive concrete slabs. And if that message wasn't clear enough, soldiers were instructed to shoot to kill anyone fleeing to the West. Those realizations not only further isolated the people stranded in East Berlin but also compounded feelings of alienation in the other occupied sectors of the city. Encircled by the wall, West Berliners were also disheartened with their "islander" status (Murphy et al., 1997, p. 101). Cultural theorist Juri Lotman offers insight into these predicaments in Berlin and Northern Ireland by recognizing that boundaries are predicated on an inherent duality, since they both separate and unite people on both sides of the divide. Along the way, separation produces a complex social atmosphere in which inhabitants gravitate toward the *cosmos*, or security, while remaining weary of the impending *chaos*, or danger (Lotman, 2000, 2004; Welch, 2019).

In *Walling in and Walling out: Why Are We Building New Barriers to Divide Us?*, Laura McAtackney and Randall McGuire (2020a) ponder vexing ideas on partition, many of which speak to the geopolitics of boundaries. They remind us that walls have emerged at both the macro and micro levels of society. In the aggregate, states use barricades to militarize the edges of state territory enforced by watchtowers and armed patrols. On a smaller scale, cities erect similar fortifications that segregate neighborhoods into ethno-political and religious enclaves. Unlike the macro-level boundary, such as the Iron Curtain that secures a vast, seemingly anonymous, frontier, micro barriers make greater contact with people, prompting perceptions of otherness driven by suspicion, fear, and anxiety. As mentioned previously, these partitions often remain ambiguous, raising questions over who is walled in and who is walled out. Those connotations of containment are central to this project since they activate *visions of prisons* contoured along efforts to surveil, inspect, and observe. In effect, material walls are hardened by the psychology of watching. As we move forward to explore the geopolitics of boundaries, let's consider a brief historical account of walls, particularly since there are multiple manifestations of the great divide underpinned by the complex messages and meanings they emit.

GEOMETRIC POWER

To begin this segment on the geometry of power, we remain mindful that prisons are institutions that rely on various shapes to determine degrees of surveillance. The panopticon, of course, expresses the ultimate form of optical ambition. With its circular design, subjects receive a smooth and

constant inspection; correspondingly, surveillance serves to legitimize power and its various offshoots of authority. Penal architecture, at a higher level of abstraction, has the potential to be replicated at the wider scale of society, as Foucault famously suggests. It is with these notions of power that we consider the importance of historical antecedents, thus allowing us to decipher further key developments in Northern Ireland and Berlin while engulfed in social and political conflict.

McGuire wastes no time insisting that today, every newly built wall references a history of walls. Although they are not all the same, walls are constructed as a reaction to perceived threat and a yearning for security. Contemporary partitions perform the ancient function of keeping out the outsiders—the "barbarians"—while stealthily surveying its own citizens (McGuire, 2020, p. 27). However, by the 19th century, cities around the globe began dismantling their walls, and those that have survived have become tantalizing attractions for a touristic heritage. Just ask people who have visited the Berlin Wall, the city walls of Derry, or the peace walls of Belfast. Before discussing those sites, we go back again to London.

The walls of London reside largely in the imagination, except for fragments displayed at the Tower of London and various museums. Those cultural institutions are didactic as they perform the ritual of talking about the past. "Fifty years after the construction of the first city wall," curators at the Museum of London explain, "the city's defences were again reorganized, perhaps to protect London against increased Saxon raids." A barrier stretching a significant length of the Thames was extended by a new riverside wall that enclosed the northern settlement and expanded in stages between 240 and 360 CE. During that period, more than 22 semicircular towers stood at the eastern defensive wall; later, platforms for catapult machines further militarized the city. A contemporary aerial photograph of London is highlighted by a line tracing the precise locations of the walls. That visualization helps us visualize the geometry of power as it once materialized the compact urban landscape (Borman, 2015).

To reiterate, the underlying logic for the construction of urban defenses was to fortify the city and guard against a threat of invading forces. With tall curtain walls fitted with watchtowers, an omniscient deity secures the city, allowing rulers to observe its population more readily (De La Croix, 1978; Tracy, 2000). The militarization of city space was shaped by changes in siege equipment as new combat tactics were countered by the frequent geometric redesign and rebuilding of city walls (McGuire, 2020). Likewise, its exercise

of power was reconfigured and refined. To get ahead of the curve and around the emerging technologies of warfare, European monarchs ordered the installation of rampart systems and low, pointed, triangular-shaped bastions. For centuries, those star forts or artillery fortresses would become the standard optical geometry of the city for bastions that benefitted by having no blind spots (Pollack, 2010). Over time, in Northern Ireland and East Germany, walls, partitions, and barriers would be modified to adapt to emerging political tensions, as we shall see.

WALLING OF (LONDON) DERRY

In Derry, the city walls, built in 1613–19, forged an urban architecture with a collective need for defense. The city's four original gates were rebuilt in the 18th and 19th centuries, and three additional portals were opened thereafter. The Ferryquay Gate possesses special significance, since it is there that the Apprentice Boys barred the entrance in the wake of the Great Siege of 1688–89. By design, the Siege Museum tells that story in great detail, and by doing so, a shift in local vocabulary hints at a different heritage. Placards remind tourists that they are visiting *Londonderry*, a traditional name of the city favored by Unionists and Loyalists. As the title of the museum suggests, the siege and the Apprentice Boys take center stage. The brochure explains that in "1689, the people of Londonderry refused to surrender to the army of James II [Britain's last Catholic monarch]. The siege was relieved after 105 days when ships reached the city with food and supplies." Given that the walls were not breached, Londonderry became known proudly by Unionists as the Maiden City. As a run-up to the Great Siege, however, curators also bring attention to the "forgotten" Siege of 1649, which first recorded the "use of cannon in anger in the city." In response, the parliamentary garrison, in 1653, strengthened the fortifications in Londonderry, featuring a citadel around the cathedral. An antique map outlining the city walls shows a grid-like design inspired by classical urban planning; today, that geometric shape continues to encompass the city center.

In 2019, Derry celebrated 400 years of the city walls that demarcated "a place suited to both commerce and defence." Nowadays, the walls ornament a uniquely organized city space. With various points of view, visitors are encouraged to walk the circumference atop of the walls; the experience is authenticated by the fact that they are the only city walls in Ireland that have

FIGURE 4. The city walls of Derry. The city walls of Derry, armed with cannons, invite visitors to witness the power of a fortress. © retrowelch 2026

survived history intact. That geometry of power is enhanced by the presence of several bastions, impressively militarized by huge cannons that defended Derry in the 17th century (figure 4).

Inside the Siege Museum, the geopolitics of boundaries are reflected in descriptions of "Londonderry and its walls: A plantation city," thereby adding

greater historical depth to the material and political divide that still simmers. "During the Plantation of Ulster in the early 17th century, loyal Protestant subjects from Scotland and England were offered land in the province to develop and populate the region." The companies of the City of London served as catalysts for those developments by investing in the new county in northwest Ulster that would bear their name: Londonderry. Emerging as a major market town, the port attracted merchants and craftsmen as ships lined the bustling quay, where manufactured goods and agricultural produce were imported. So as to emphasize the social and cultural significance of its urban fortifications, a large display boasts "The Walls of Londonderry." A richly detailed illustration of the city draws attention to local landmarks, most notably the Grand Parade, the Walker Memorial Plinth, the Apprentice Boys Memorial Hall, and the First Derry Presbyterian Church.

Curators at the Siege Museum use a large placard to explain the birth of Northern Ireland as it stems from the Government of Ireland Act (1920) and the establishment of its parliament, opened by King George V in 1921. The newly formed British entity was "born in the hearts of the majority of its people and was logical outcome of their opposition to Home Rule for Ireland. They feared it would bring economic disadvantage, higher taxation, cultural separation from the United Kingdom and the British Empire, and religious discrimination." An impending civil war was thwarted by the First World War, and major political differences were resolved by the compromise of partition, bringing home rule for both parts of Ireland. The museum uses the words of their political opponents to express their commitment to self-determination for Unionists in Ulster and their membership in the United Kingdom. Fr. Michael O'Flanagan, who would become vice president of Sinn Fein, announced in 1916, "The Unionists of Ulster have never transferred their love and allegiance to Ireland. They may be Irelanders, using Ireland as a geographic term, but they are not Irishmen in the national sense. . . . The centre of their patriotic enthusiasm is London whereas the centre of ours is Dublin."

It should be noted that for some visitors familiar with the Troubles, entering the Siege Museum can be a bit jarring, especially as it boasts sectarian symbols and slogans committed to Loyalism to the United Kingdom and its separation from the South of Ireland. Those messages ought not be dismissed, since they serve as key semiotic windows into the ethnic divide in Northern Ireland. Indeed, the geopolitics of boundaries are interspersed into an array of themes contained in an exhibit titled *Security to Peace*. It explains

that in 1969, 400 soldiers of the First Battalion of the Prince of Wales Own Yorkshire Regiment crossed the Foyle River into the city center where they began to patrol the 17th-century city walls. The museum documents the military's response to the Troubles with photographs of sandbags and observations posts on the bastions alongside newly installed metal gates. Military personnel carried out searches of pedestrians and vehicles as they queued to enter the walled city. A stark image shows the Masonic Army base in the gardens of former Bishop's Palace overlooking the Bogside. As the Troubles intensified, the walled city underwent greater fortification, especially as the Provisional IRA launched a series bombing campaigns. In the last four days of November alone, nine of those bombs exploded in the city center. Transitioning from *Security to Peace*, curators explain that as the Troubles came to an end, the esplanade on the top of the walls was gradually reopened to the public, and almost all of the 20th-century military observation posts were removed. "The City Walls are once again Londonderry's ornament, a place of promenades, parades and spectacle."

Despite a seemingly upbeat tone, the legacy of the Troubles hangs over the galleries of the Siege Museum. Curators apparently decided not to ignore the obvious, as a poster reads "Conflict Londonderry's darkest days." A grim photograph captures the devastation of the Battle of the Bogside (1969) as rioters pummel the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) with stones, bottles, and petrol bombs. A lengthy caption explains the significance of the low-level war:

> The causes of the conflict in Northern Ireland are complex and stretch back hundreds of years, however nationality is a key issue. Historically, the overwhelming majority of the Protestant Unionist Loyalist community has wished to remain part of the United Kingdom whilst the overwhelming majority of the Catholic Republican and Nationalist community has wished to have an all-Ireland Republic.

Adding to the tensions, the RUC became a lightning rod for anger over the annual Apprentice Boys parade, which Irish Catholics view as an affront to their communities. With over 3,700 deaths during the Troubles, the ethno-political divide has created permanent ruptures in the city, including "the reluctant exodus of around 18,000 Protestants from the West Bank of the River Foyle, where they had lived in harmony with their Roman Catholic neighbours for generations, to the Waterside area. . . . Many Apprentice Boys lost their lives in the conflict and their names are displayed in the Book of

Reflection." In the giftshop, miniature souvenir walls representing the Fountain are stenciled with the blunt message "Londonderry West Bank Loyalists Still Under Siege—No Surrender" (Siege Museum, n.d.).

As we segue to the memory of those residing in nearby Bogside—and Free Derry—we remain mindful of the lessons of Juri Lotman (2000, 2004), who observed that boundaries both unite and separate, thereby intensifying their geopolitics (see Welch, 2019).

BARRICADING FREE DERRY

Whereas the Troubles spread through both Belfast and Derry, the nature of each city shaped its political violence. Belfast remains a fragmented ethnoreligious mosaic, with more pronounced communal tensions and segregation than in Derry. Derry, with its higher proportion of Irish Catholics, is a Nationalist city known for its civil rights campaigns (McCann, 2018; Prince & Warner, 2019). Derry's contemporary history can be witnessed by visiting its city center. Perched high on the city walls, one can gaze down into the Bogside section of Derry. In that Irish Catholic enclave, residents still grapple with the lingering memories of the Troubles. The decades-long turmoil was embodied in the Free Derry Movement, no-go areas, and the Battle of the Bogside. Of course, Bloody Sunday is hugely significant, since it sparked another wave of Republican paramilitary violence aimed at the British Army, the RUC, and members of armed Loyalist groups. It needs to be emphasized that the majority of the IRA's victims were innocent people who were not involved in the conflict or attached to any of the armed groups (McKitrick et al., 2001). Almost with a sense of pilgrimage, tourists exit the gates of the walled city and step down into the Bogside. The Museum of Free Derry chronicles the history of the area where those living inside the city walls were provided safety, security, and power. Conversely, the Bogside, a dried out marshland, was a designated space for Irish Catholics as they were barred from living within the fortified city, leaving them "powerless, dispossessed, and oppressed." From the beginning, the relationship between "the Bogside and walled city was antagonistic" (figure 5).

The main stretch of the Bogside features the People's Gallery, an open-air space where local stories are told through huge murals depicting momentous events and visits are signposted with detailed events that continue to shape the collective consciousness. As a cue to the ethnic identity

FIGURE 5. The Bogside. From the city walls of Derry, visitors can view the Bogside section.
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of the vicinity, the text is written not only in English but also in the Irish language. "A Guide to Free Derry" features a sizeable map displayed on the footpath. It is dotted with key sites and brief descriptions and guide us as we navigate the neighborhood. In January 1969, Free Derry was established when "barricades were erected during the rioting that followed the attacks on the Peoples' Democracy march from Belfast to Derry and the phrase 'You are Now Entering Free Derry' was painted on a gable wall at the end of Lecky Road." The no-go section was partitioned by a series of barriers that went up and down over a short period of time. Then, in August 1969, amid the Battle of the Bogside, the barricades were again constructed, keeping the RUC and the British Army at bay. The introduction of internment (detention without trial) prompted another round of barriers. "For the next eleven months Free Derry effectively seceded from British control." The wall is the remains of a gable house that was later demolished but had survived many attempts by the British Army and the RUC to damage or destroy it. Free Derry Corner endures today as a "defining symbol of the civil rights era and is an internationally recognized symbol of resistance to state injustice." While the front of the wall has been altered on just a few

FIGURE 6. Free Derry Corner. The historic Free Derry Corner attracts visitors from around the world. In the distance, one can see the city walls towering over the Bogside. © retrowelch 2026

occasions, the back has become an evolving notice board for an array of political and social campaigns (figure 6).

The Museum of Free Derry, located on the very spot of Bloody Sunday, delves into the Troubles and historical role of the Bogside in the larger struggle against the RUC and the British Army. Curators inform us that the slogan "You Are Now Entering Free Derry" was inspired by sit-in protests at the University of California at Berkeley (McCann, 2018, p. 27). While the barricades repelled the police, Radio Free Derry broadcasted pirated programs for the residents of Derry. In April 1969, the RUC's fatal attack of Sammy Devenny in his home "pushed the Bogside to the edge." On August 12 of that year, thousands of Apprentice Boys marched passed the Bogside, where residents seethed with anxiety and discontent, prompting stone throwing.

Police, backed by Loyalists, pushed the protestors away. "Unlike during previous incursions, Bogsiders were ready. Existing barricades were strengthened and new ones erected. Stockpiles of petrol bombs and stones were brought forward." For three days and two nights, leaders of the Battle of the Bogside successfully defended the barricades, and the exhausted police, who had fired more than 1,000 gas canisters, returned to the city center. With the RUC in retreat, the British Army was deployed. Eventually, the barricades

were replaced by symbolic white lines that British commanders respected by keeping soldiers on the other side of the divide. The Battle of the Bogside is commemorated by a mural of the Petrol Bomber Boy.

Free Derry ended as a geopolitical entity on July 30, 1972, when the British government launched Operation Motorman, a massive military invasion of the no-go areas. More than 5,000 British soldiers, supported by tanks and armored vehicles, smashed their way into the homes of Bogside residents while bulldozers destroyed the barricades. So that those events would not be lost in the local memory, the Bogside artists in 2001 unveiled a starkly graphic painting titled *Motorman*. A placard explains that the "artists chose the image of a soldier battering down a door to express the sheer ferocity of the onslaught. With its contrasting light and shadow, the mural becomes a power statement against war" (see figure 2).

Outside the Museum of Free Derry, the geopolitics of boundaries abound as tourists stop at other sites listed on the "Guide to Free Derry." At the intersection of William Street and Rossville, the Aggro Corner stands as a reminder of scenes of regular rioting—"aggravation"—between local teens and the British Army. On the grounds of the old Essex factory, Bligh's Lane Army Base, informally known as Fort Essex, was an RUC barracks installed as an answer to the complaint from Unionists that there were no RUC presence in the Free Derry area. "In actual fact there were one or two 'symbolic' RUC officers guarded by a few hundred soldiers." Elsewhere, the Piggery Ridge also functioned as an British Army base in a section of the no-go area after Operation Motorman cleared it in 1972. The unit was forced to close in the late 1970s due constant attacks by the IRA.

Finally, one more geopolitical dimension of boundaries is worth noting. While in the Bogside, one can see a major football stadium in a nearby section known as the Brandywell. The venue is the home of Derry City Football Club. In 1972, the team was forced to vacate the Northern Ireland football league because other clubs refused to play in the Brandywell. So they relocated to the League of Ireland, becoming one of only two clubs in Europe to play in different jurisdictions. Even with a formal end to the Troubles, the Derry City Football Club is the only senior team "in the world where police are not present during home games." Today, the area around the Free Derry contains edgier statements that echo the enduring tension with the border to the South of Ireland. One, in bold lettering, demands, "STOP EXTRADITION of Sean Walsh: Family Man,

55 Years of Age, Life Long Republican From Cork, Facing Extradition to the Occupied Six Counties."

PACIFYING BELFAST

While the peace walls express the most recent incarnation of geopolitical boundaries in Belfast, the city offers a glimpse into its history of urban stratification. In the city center, a modest posting marks the spot where the gates guided the "goings of rich and poor" through a labyrinth of passageways that retain their authenticity. Among those entries is the one named after Thomas Pottinger who belongs to a "story of empire made and remade: enterprise, power and colonial trade." As a prosperous family, the Pottingers were "well-placed to exploit the colonial opportunities across the globe," and Thomas joined that tradition by relocating to the island in the 1660s to establish an ambitious mercantile business with "*far and distant parts*." A vintage photograph shows the entrance to Pottinger's Court looking toward High Street in 1901. There, visitors are able to visually connect with the past and present of that particular place, and to encourage further exploration, a map identifies other nearby entries.

Apart from that seemingly quaint item of interest, it is the current recollections of the Troubles that still dominates one's awareness of Belfast. The Ulster Museum takes that period of conflict seriously. The title of an exhibit *The Troubles and Beyond* is superimposed onto a large image of an early version of the peace walls that cuts right through a community to insulate it from its neighbors, a stark reminder of geopolitics of barriers. Curators faced the difficult task of summarizing that era of Northern Ireland by recognizing that widespread trauma touched almost everyone who lived here. "Inevitably, the interpretation of these events is contested in terms of their significance, meaning, and responsibility. While we have a shared past, we do not have a shared memory."

The year 1969 ushered in a renewed wave of sectarian tension, and the museum relies on that date to note that in Belfast, gunfire was involved for the first time. In July and August, 10 people were killed, 154 were shot, and more than 300 were victims of CS (tear) gas. West Belfast was devastated, and nearly the entire block of Bombay Street was destroyed. "In Belfast alone, 1,820 families fled their homes, and 'peace walls' were erected separating Catholic and Protestant neighborhoods." Soon, local volunteers joined the effort to reconstruct Bombay Street; some families returned to live only to vacate later. Although the attack on Bombay Street gains much of the historical

attention, other Nationalist communities in Belfast were destroyed, including Conway Street, Percy Street, Kashmir Road, Hooker Street, and Brookfield Street (Prince & Warner, 2019; Shirlow & Murtagh, 2006). Despite the presence of the peace wall, attacks against the Catholic enclave persisted, and the geopolitics of boundaries deepened. Upon their deployment, security forces were issued highly detailed city maps identifying which sections were Protestant, Catholic, and mixed. Compounding matters in 1972, direct rule returned to Westminster (London), and governing decisions over Northern Ireland were determined by British parliamentarians alongside their advisors. As a historical note, the communal violence, forced displacement, and installation of the peace walls can be traced as far back as 1870s during the Holy War in Belfast. Thus, in the collective consciousness, the wave of violence in 1969 can be understood as a periodic episode rather than a starting point of the more recent Troubles (Boyd, 1972).

Sectarian violence eventually spread across the border. In 1974, 33 people were killed and 250 were injured when the Ulster Volunteer Force exploded car bombs in Dublin and Monaghan. To illustrate the growing threat of bombings in Belfast, the museum displays a security map developed by Division of the Department of the Environment roads service that imposes traffic regulations and restrictions in the city center. With color-coded sections, "security barriers are marked and different levels of control zone are indicated showing the extent to which cars were not to be left unattended." The following grids were strictly enforced by security forces, suggesting degrees of threat and danger:

CONTROL ZONE (Yellow)
No Vehicle May Be Left Unattended
Mon–Sat 8am–6pm

CONTROL ZONE (Red)
No Vehicle May Be Left Unattended
At Any Time

RESTRICTED ZONE (Red XX)
Access Only For Delivery Vehicles Etc.
At Points Indicated Thus

SECURITY BARRIERS (Blue)

PEDESTRIAN PAVE PRECINCT (Red XXX)

Access FOR Delivery Vehicles Only

From 6:00pm–11:00am

So that visitors at the museum appreciate the seriousness of car bombs and the need for security zones, the collection includes an "under vehicle improvised explosive device" on loan courtesy of the Explosive Ordinance Disposal division. The caption explains that throughout the Troubles, such booby traps were attached under vehicles and detonated by a distant operator. The bomb is painted black to conceal it and contains round magnets to hold it firmly under the chassis.

The Ulster Museum narrates multiple meanings of the peace walls; still, there is no substitute for touring the walls firsthand as they are easily accessed on both sides of the divide. Beginning in the Protestant/Loyalist community, one is greeted by a tall metal gate stretching across the street into the neighboring Catholic/Republic section. The separation is more than metaphorical since the gate is closed and locked (Welch, 2022, p. 39). To enter the other side of the wall, one must taxi around the bend and travel for more than a mile, where another gate is open—or shut, depending on whether there is any suspicious activity. Propped up on a pole, a surveillance camera keeps an eye on both sides of the walls as police in a local station monitor the situation. Vandalism and occasional rioting have remained part of the urban residue of the Troubles, especially during the marching season each July. During periods of relative calm, tourists mill about taking photographs of the walls covered with sectarian graffiti; their sense of amazement is apparent, as nowhere in Western Europe resembles this corner of the United Kingdom. Among the popular destinations is the office of Sinn Fein, the largest Republican party. There, a mural of Bobby Sands commemorates his life and death as a hunger striker in 1981. His smiling face is complemented by poetic words: "Our revenge will be the laughter of our children." Nearby, the International Wall draws attention to political conflict elsewhere with murals dedicated to African Americans, Basque Separatists, Palestinians, South Africans, and other disenfranchised people (Welch, 2019).

The International Wall stretches from the Catholic/Republican side across a security gate and into the Protestant/Loyalist area where tourists are welcome to witness more murals that reflect a decidedly different set of geopolitics. Unsurprisingly, British emblems replace Irish Nationalist slogans. The Battle of Britain is celebrated in a huge painting with images of the

Royal Air Force and a portrait of Winston Churchill. Imperial campaigns in Africa are recognized as important moments in the British military, including the Second Boer War (1899–1902). Soldiers who served—and perished—in the First World War, most notably the Battle of the Somme (1916), are remembered in a series of narrated panels. In a slight shift in tone away from war and militancy, the messaging becomes a bit more conciliatory as one gets closer to the security gate separating these two communities. Even with a Union Jack embedded in a promotional sign, the West Belfast Athletic & Cultural Society reaches across the sectarian divide, stating, "Breaking down barriers through sport and cultural exchange." It adds: "Please respect this artwork." On the opposite side of the gateway, similar sentiments of social harmony deliver a quote from Kahlil Gibran: "In understanding, all walls shall fall down." With these public pronouncements, the geopolitics around the peace walls appear less polarizing, particularly in a post-Troubles Belfast.

To contextualize further the geopolitics of boundaries, other scholars also weigh in on issues shaping the peace walls of Belfast. In her study "Segregation Walls and Public Memory," Laura McAtackney takes an archaeological approach to examining the material world of Belfast to reveal the subtle manifestation of marginalization in urban settings. Among other concerns, she attends to the intersections of gender and class as shaped by "conflict and memory in the 'post-conflict' but still divided city of Belfast" (2020, p. 63). In its present form, the constellation of peace walls contains 88 individual sections spanning the city, creating a grid of micro-communities that display signifiers, including flags and murals, to reflect their political and religious identity. In control of those micro-communities are former members of paramilitaries who design and place memorials in their neighborhoods, Indeed, much of the decoration of the peace walls reflects the role of male paramilitaries, thereby exercising a geopolitical power to material space—and memory. By doing so, memorial-scapes tend to exclude those who were not engaged in the conflict, those who even opposed the violence, namely women and children. Even today, the "enduring presence of separation walls facilitates and propagates this practice" (McAtackney, 2020, p. 67). Such segregation is more than material; it is also psychic. With that "psychology of spatial confinement," local residents living on their side of the peace wall tend to feel a sense of suspicion toward those on the *other side* (Reid, 2005, p. 489; Shirlow & Murtagh, 2006). As we segue to the geopolitics of boundaries in Berlin, it is important to reiterate the thoughts posted in the Ulster Museum. For those who endured the Troubles across the sectarian divide, "we have a shared past, we do not have a shared memory" (see Boal, 2002).

As is often the case when people visit Berlin, it is the wall they want to see—and experience—even though that imposing monolith fell in 1989. To piece together the wall, at least in their imagination, tourists purchase maps in an effort to make sense of it all. Yes, maps. There is no shortage of tourist maps outlining the Berlin Wall, and their varied meanings are worth mentioning, since they direct us to different geopolitical points of view. As Reece Jones, in *Walling in and Walling out*, cautions, a map does not merely represent a preexisting reality but rather a human idea, and the way we respond to those jagged lines is a cognitive as well as a phenomenological process. "Our mind takes the information collected on the map and converts it into the world, at least in our minds" (Jones, 2020, p. 199; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Whereas maps of the city walls of Derry and the peace walls of Belfast offer visual connections to physical barriers that still exist, the Berlin Wall has to be mentally reconstructed and relies on its fragments to focus our attention on something that no longer stands in its totality.

Toward that end, maps of the Berlin Wall are useful, as they help us navigate around a massive and complicated urban space. Reading maps of the Berlin Wall is not easy, because the convoluted logic of the barrier rests on the connotations of containment. That ambiguity makes it difficult to comfortably comprehend the wall. On the flipside of one tourist map, the narration delves into questions over who is contained and who isn't. In bold letters, "Divided Germany—Divided Berlin" warns not to confuse the two. The wall ran not only through the city but also completely around West Berlin. "It is actually a paradox, but the East Berliners were the ones who were 'free,' since it was the West Berliners who were actually walled in. They were the ones inside the wall in the middle of East Germany, just like on a completely separated island. Reproducing feelings of spatial and political isolation, West Berliners intent on traveling had to transit through the complex territory of East Germany, waiting to cross borders with required documents to be carefully inspected by the gate keepers.

Serving as a tour guide of sorts, another map attempts to explains the rationale for what East German officials designated as the "anti-fascist protection wall" (McWilliams, 2020, p. 112). The border between East Germany and the West was installed to prevent more of its population from fleeing. Before 1961, it was possible to leave East Germany and enter West Berlin, where one could fly to West Germany over the Iron Curtain. To shut off that route, the wall was built to close the last "window onto the world." From

that perspective, East German citizens were kept behind the wall to keep those people in and "not to keep the enemy out. What an illusion, to try to force people into a happier future." Hence, the ambiguity of boundaries abound, compounding the connotations of containment that refuse to depict accurately who is walled in and who is walled out.

Fragments of the wall scattered around Berlin ground our comprehension of the geopolitics of separation. At Potsdamer Platz, a bustling part of the city center, more information—and insight—into the wall is posted. A large placard precisely explains that

> the word "wall" does not describe the full extent of the barrier which cut Berlin into two halves from 1961 to 1989. The Berlin Wall was, in fact, a wide corridor between two walls. One wall marked as the actual border on the west side of the corridor, while a second wall closed off the corridor to the east. The death strip, which included a narrow sentry path for border guards of the GDR, lay in between.

For nearly 30 years, West Berlin was encircled by a secured barrier totaling 160 kilometers in length. Of those, 45 kilometers divided West Berlin from its East Berlin counterpart. Another 115 kilometers stretched across a border separating West Berlin from the neighboring state of Brandenburg. This posting reminds us that the remains of the wall are repurposed to activate memory, as more than 100 sites commemorating the victims are formally recognized.

With that objective, the Berlin Senate launched its "Wall Concept" as a collective remembrance with art projects and memorial plaques, thereby promoting the city as an open-air gallery. Among its recommendations are the East Side Gallery and Bernauer Strasse. Shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall, international artists gathered to create a colorful series of murals. What emerged was the East Side Gallery, becoming the longest open-air gallery. In 1991, the artwork was shielded by a legislative monument act, protecting that segment of the wall from further demolition, decay, and destruction. A mural titled *Curriculum Vitae* is dedicated to those who died while attempting to flee to the West. Beginning with the year 1961, the artist chronologically tracks the deaths up to the year 1989. With a sense of geopolitics, the rendering is captioned "Escape is a mighty method to destabilise dominion. . . . Gratitude to the killed and surviving refugees."

The historical site at Bernauer Strasse also attracts attention due to its political and cultural significance. It is there that on August 13, 1961, the neighborhood "become a symbol of Berlin's division" (Berlin Wall

Memorial). A controversial form of containment was instituted with the facades of the apartment buildings on the East side of the street creating a boundary between a split city. With desperation, families leaped from windows to escape to the West (Berlin Wall Memorial). In what would be witnessed as the most daring defections, Conrad Schumann, a 19-year-old East German Border Police sergeant, jumped over the barbed wire and bolted to safety on August 15, 1961. The dramatic event was captured by photographers. As an iconic image, Schumann's escape retains immense cultural purchase, reproduced in posters, postcards, and murals (Wyden, 1989, pp. 221–223).

Drawing on her interests in materiality and metaphor, Anna McWilliams has studied the Berlin Wall as a symbol of the Cold War, an ambiguous conflict with no battlefields. In doing so, she allows us to appreciate the geopolitics of boundaries. By design, the wall became conspicuously militarized. Its L-shaped concrete slabs, three and half meters tall, were reinforced with death strips complete with watchtower search lights, ditches, anti-vehicle obstacles, trip flares, and dog runs. The barrier cut through 192 streets, and crossings were stationed at 13 posts. West Berlin, consequently, became a fort; however, as a major difference from a typical fort, it was "the surrounding area—the East, not West Berlin itself—that had constructed the fortification" (McWilliams, 2020, p. 113; Rottman, 2008). As a metaphor for a divided Europe in the post–WWII era, the wall had taken a tangible form, thereby restricting the movement of people and controlling their lives. Furthering the idea of containment—and its connotations—the wall was perceived by those trapped in the East as a huge prison with security zones and surveillance systems. The entire apparatus of repression was regulated by spies who kept track of the populace; it is estimated that there was at least one Stasi agent or informant for every six citizens (Bruce, 2010; Childs & Popplewell, 1996; Funder, 2003). Indeed, *visions of prisons* coupled by wars, walls, and watching, is a practical interpretation of this phenomenon, not unlike the urban space in Derry and Belfast during the Troubles.

CONCLUSION

In Berlin, the previously mentioned observation platform on Bernauer Strasse offers visitors a clear vision of the geopolitics of boundaries (see the preface and cover of this book). Although the death strip and its watchtower are reconstructions, they serve as reminders of the physical partitions between

the former Eastern and Western sectors of the city alongside their ideological divisions. Still, there is something phenomenological about elevated views of urban space; with a bird's-eye perspective, we can imagine historical events occurring in certain places. In Derry, located just behind the city walls, the Tower Museum resides inside a replica of 16th-century tower house. Making our way to the rooftop, we are oriented to key sites by way of maps and markers. Facing northeast, we overlook the River Foyle. A caption on the sign informs us that the Foyle Bridge was constructed on the site of the 1688 blockade that was broken by a local ship, *Mountjoy*, in 1689, ending the siege. When the bridge was opened in 1984, it was longest in Ireland. To our left, the northwestern landscape includes the Bogside, a dried marshland that was originally part of the River Foyle. Curators of the Tower Museum inform us, again, that particular area, outside the city walls, is better known as the site of the Battle of the Bogside. From that vantage point, it is easy to appreciate the connotations of containment, since the Bogside, most notably during the Troubles, provided refuge to local Catholic residents but also seem like an open-air prison surrounded by British soldiers (McCann, 2018; Prince & Warner, 2019).

In Belfast, the peace walls also speak to the geopolitics of boundaries compounded by a similar ambiguity, since it is often difficult to determine which community is walled in and which community is walled out (McAtackney, 2020). Black-taxi tours give tourists a close-up look at those divisions. Still, some drivers go to great lengths to connect the historical dots that reinforce a sense of separation between members of the Catholic and Protestant enclaves. In *Black Taxis*, a revealing 2016 documentary, a tour guide discusses not only the ethnic and religious differences but also the subterranean ones. Passing by a cemetery, he says that the Protestants are buried on one side of the plot and the Catholics on the other. More to the point of eternal divisions, the driver adds that more recently, a historian discovered that there was a wall beneath the surface of the cemetery that further separated those people of different Christian faiths—even after death. "An extreme example of Apartheid," he murmurs. In the next chapter, "Punitive Containment," we will remain mindful of the role of the Troubles in Northern Ireland and the Cold War in Berlin as they contour urban space and institutional incarceration bound by various levels of surveillance.

THREE

Punitive Containment

THE TOWER OF LONDON, as a performative site, directs visitors around a massive compound, and in doing so, guides them through key historical moments. Among the many themes unfolding for us to absorb is the notion of punitive containment. "Imprisonment in the Tower," printed on a large sign, invites us to "explore the fascinating stories of prisoners and the graffiti they left behind." Upon entering just one of the several corners of confinement, more details inform us that for 900 years, right up to the 20th century, the Tower of London was used to hold those who threatened the state. Though it was not built as a prison, it emerged as a secure location to detain and interrogate captives as "those in power encouraged dark legends of the Tower as a notorious place of torture, pain, and executions."

Controversies surrounding British diplomat Sir Roger Casement add to the intrigue of the tower and its unique type of containment. Casement had earned a reputation for early ground-breaking reports on human rights abuse in the Belgian Congo and Peru. On display at the tower, a portrait of him with the caption reads, "The British government arrested Casement for trying to gain German support for Irish independence during the First World War." The plot thickens as we learn that the government leaked Casement's diaries chronicling his homosexual private life. "Casement was discredited, convicted of treason and hanged at Pentonville Prison." Today, Casement's photograph can be seen in other collections commemorating the Irish Republican movement in Belfast and Derry, a reminder that danger and punitive containment awaits those who resist the state. In this chapter, we take a closer look at such confinement as it emerged in East Berlin under the Stasi, the secret police of East Germany during the Cold War. As a parallel incursion into social control, we also explore the manifestations of

British control in Northern Ireland amid the Troubles. As we shall see, entire populations, communities, and individuals have been subjected to complex forms repression.

IMAGINING THE STASI

The Ministry for State Security (MfS), or Stasi, was a secret police agency modeled after the Soviet KGB. In 1950, as the Cold War intensified, the Stasi assumed additional duties, namely intelligence gathering and criminal investigations. With those administrative powers, the Stasi branded itself as the "shield and sword" of the sole East German party, the Socialist Unity Party (SED). By design, it set out to dampen any political opposition by placing millions of its citizens under blanket surveillance. Over time, it increased operations by employing more than 91,000 official agents alongside more than 189,000 unofficial informants, most of whom were ordinary civilians recruited to spy on friends, family, and neighbors. That network of scrutiny also reached over the Iron Curtain by relying on another 3,000 informants in West Germany. Months after the Berlin Wall fell, the Stasi headquarters was stormed by thousands of East Germans who sought to prevent the destruction of evidence of surveillance. Nowadays, the best way to imagine the sheer size and scope of the Stasi apparatus is to tour the former headquarters, the archives located next door, and the nearby Stasi Prison. That experiential trifecta serves to ground our comprehension of the remnants of wars, walls, and watching embodied in a larger *vision of prison* in which a whole society is put under visual and even auditory observation, especially since a system of videotaping was coupled with wiretaps (Bruce, 2010; Childs & Popplewell, 1996).

The Stasi Museum, housed in the former Berlin headquarters of the Ministry of State Security, speaks to the enormity of the control apparatus that included 8,000 employees on this campus alone. The imposing building has opened its doors to flocks of eager visitors, who have access to five floors loaded with objects, images, and text explaining the Stasi's mission, leadership, methods, perpetrators, and final demise. In the foyer of this fortress-like bureaucratic machine, a poster introduces us to the "State Security in the SED Dictatorship" by noting that after World War II, the German Communists under the direction of the Soviets built a dictatorial regime with the SED as its center of operations. "The rulers created a system of power based on

FIGURE 7. The prison van. At the Stasi Museum in Berlin, a prison van gives visitors a sense of the operations of the secret police. © retrowelch 2026

force, threats, rewards and privilege. Individuals were taught to conform, comply and, whenever possible, to contribute. . . . The MfS was responsible for protecting the 'workers' and peasants' state' and securing the SED dictatorship." Across the hallway, a memorial plaque—Gedenktafel—recalls "the 'silent' terror that the MfS carried out through psychological harassment." Due to its historical and emotional significance, the former headquarters is managed by the Memorial Sites Concept of the Federal Commissioner for Culture and Media.

Expanding its punitive containment, the Stasi operated 17 remand prisons. For moving detainees around Berlin, specially designed vans were fitted with five interior cells where handcuffed captives were confined in dark compartments. For the benefit of tourists at the Stasi Museum, a Barkas B 1000 prison transport vehicle is conspicuously parked in the foyer. The side door remains open to allow us to imagine what it would have been like to be snatched by the secret police (figure 7).

In some instances, the vehicles were camouflaged as delivery vans for bakeries or fish shops with the slogan "A dish with fresher fish," suggesting

that the Stasi harbored contempt for its political targets. The Stasi Prison, designated as Gedenkstatte Berlin-Hohenschonhausen, has become a major hub for those interested in exploring the truly inhumane elements of the East German dictatorship. While in operation, the Stasi Prison defied its existence as maps of East Berlin contained a blank spot where the institution once stood. Approaching the Stasi Prison today can be an eerie encounter, as postings remind us that in its previous incarnation, the entire premises surrounding the prison were a "restricted area." A dreary photograph mounted on the footpath depicts a desolate neighborhood. In an effort to correct the historical record, a map is dotted with the many units serving the prison apparatus, such as the hospital, vehicles services, and printing works. Of course, the Intelligence Department and the Computer Headquarters of Foreign Espionage Department speak to the role that watching played in the campaign to contain and control. Likewise, the complex of buildings also housed the Technical Operations Division of the Stasi, which manufactured equipment for the surveillance of the population, including listening devices, miniature cameras, and letter-opening machines. Another placard on the street explains that the Stasi maintained secret dossiers and compiled compromising material, forgeries, and handwriting specimens of people seen as "politically undesirable." Some of that propaganda was engineered against politicians and state employees in the Federal Republic of West German.

The perimeter of the Stasi Prison was manned by guards in watch towers overlooking the interior as well as the exterior of the institution flooded by light from a row of goose-neck lamps. Once inside the Stasi Prison—coined the Centre of Communist Repression—we realize how aggressively the Stasi carried out its punitive containment within a labyrinth of 60 cells punctured with spy holes so that the guards could monitor prisoner behavior. Elsewhere in the Stasi Prison, captives were assigned mundane—albeit repressive—routines, working as locksmiths, carpenters, painters, and other trades within a wider system of forced labor. Construction sites also relied on prisoners, who were compelled to build a three-story unit for investigative custody. A replica model of the penal institution surrounded by administrative offices suggests that the compound functioned as a small bustling city, populated by more than 20,000 prisoners.

Many of the guided tours at the Stasi Prison are conducted by those who were once confined there, adding a personal perspective to an otherwise mechanical regime. Among their suspected offenses were political resistance,

planning an escape to the West, or simply being a Jehovah's Witness. The ritual of "the arrest" is explained:

> Usually the arrest came totally unexpected. Special forces from the MfS department VIII appeared in civilian clothes at the suspect's workplace or at his front door. Sometimes they picked him straight from the street. . . . The prisoner did not know where he was being taken. . . . Prisoners were driven into this garage sluice. Guards closed the heavy iron gate and switched on bright neon lights. They pushed them into the building via the small set of stairs.

The dreaded U-boat (or submarine) is available to visitors who step down into the subterranean, bunker-like cells in the basement of the former canteen. "The damp and cold cells were equipped with a wooden bed and a bucket serving as a lavatory. A light bulb was burning 24 hours a day. Interrogations were usually held at night in an atmosphere of physical and psychological violence." Such psycho-terror was administered through a combination of techniques—sleep deprivation, forced standing, solitary confinement, beatings, and water torture. Severe disorientation was inflicted by total isolation as victims were unaware of their own whereabouts. The signing of a confession was imminent, making the entire ordeal nothing less than Kafkaesque.

Visitors are invited to peer into a series of rooms within the interrogation center of the Stasi Prison. One in particular has the seemingly mundane title "Writing Room," but text describing its purpose delves into the depths of suspicion. "To sound out the prisoners, the MfS systematically used cell spies—so-called cell informers. They wrote their reports in these rooms." In all, there were eight writing rooms, also called "conspiracy rooms," monitored under a strictly secret directive. By "sounding out" other prisoners, the cell spies pried into the personal lives of their targets then reported their findings to the Stasi. In return, the informants earned privileges such as better food, extra visiting, even early release. As a safeguard, interrogators were also scrutinized, since they were unaware who the informers actually were. "This meant that the spies not only spied on their fellow prisoners but also served to control the work of the interrogators." An atmosphere of mistrust prevailed, and by 1985 there was one cell spy for every five prisoners.

Focus swings from the informers to the interrogators, allowing us to understand the more sinister nature of watching. Specially trained interrogators belonging to the Central Investigative Department reported directly to the Stasi minister, Erich Mielke, who supervised nearly 500 staff by 1989.

Victims later described how they were humiliated by ruthless interrogators, many of whom would be promoted to senior positions in the Stasi. An elaborate training program for interrogators was established at a college in Potsdam where they learned deceptive techniques to induce confessions. As they progressed through the educational process, some of the interrogators wrote dissertations based on their experiences, offering other agents a stock of knowledge to expand their control of the population. One particular unit, Line IX, performed over 90,000 investigations of suspected refugees planning to escape to the West, and nearly each of those inquiries resulted in a criminal sentence. After the Berlin Wall fell, the Stasi dissolved. However, only a few interrogators were brought to justice, none were imprisoned, and some went on to work as lawyers. Currently, the Stasi Prison has been repurposed as a memorial and historical site, where more than 450,000 visitors have toured annually. Its cultural mission is "to take a critical look at the methods and consequences of political persecution and suppression in the communist dictatorship" (Stasi Prison brochure, n.d.).

SHAPING BRITISH CONTROL

Whereas the Tower of London provides us with an architectural template for interpreting the significance of *visions of prisons* contoured by wars, walls, and watching, there are other institutions worthy of our attention. The Millbank Penitentiary, also in London, operated as the largest prison in Europe throughout most of the 19th century. Its hexagonal shape spawned six petal-like wings designed to improve security. The symmetrical—snowflake—floor plan awed members of Parliament. Millbank's unique form, however, was ultimately defeated by its failure as a prison, and its idealistic experiment was abandoned, consigning the project to a long line of unfulfilled promises of penal reform. Even so, before being demolished, Millbank held prisoners bound for Australia (Evans, 1982; Bender, 1984). In its place, the museum known as Tate Britain emerged as a premier art gallery. Just opposite the building on the Thames River, two original bollards used to hold the transportation ships are easily seen (Curtis, 2013). Those physical remnants are joined by more conceptual reflections given that many types of punitive containment have a particular geometry intended to facilitate the management of prisoners. Following *The Bastille Effect: Transforming Sites of Political Imprisonment*, we once again consider the importance of architecture in the larger expression

of confinement, including the panoptic atriums featured in the Kilmainham Gaol and the Crumlin Road Gaol as well as the H-blocks comprising the Maze prison. Altogether, those distinctive shapes of British control figure prominently in the incarceration of political prisoners and prisoners of war. As we shall come to understand, the sequence of premodern followed by modern institutions does not mean that progression always leads to progress; on the contrary, many of those prisons over time were often undermined by their own design.

In Dublin, the Kilmainham Gaol has survived as a persistent symbol of British colonization and control in Ireland. This place of punitive containment "held within its walls most of the key personalities involved in the struggle for Irish independence" (Kilmainham Gaol, n.d.). When Kilmainham opened in 1796, it was one the most modern prisons in the country. Despite becoming a seemingly progressive institution, early on it served as a debtors' prison, where convicts huddled around a single candle for light. By the 1860s, the Victorians revolutionized its architecture with a spectacular atrium—a glass canopy—in the east wing that allowed shafts of sunlight to illuminate the interior:

> The Victorian age was the great age of prison design and construction. The Victorians had real faith in the power of prisons to conform offenders, and regarded prison architecture and design as a critical part of the process. In no age before or since have so many new prisons been built. As late as the 1970s, over forty percent of prisons in use in Great Britain and Ireland had been built during Victoria's reign. (Cooke, 2014, p. 11; and see Welch, 2022)

Victorian prison design, as a recognizable form of confinement, relied on several interlocking penal principles, chief among them was observation. The doors of each of the cells faced a single vaulted space and were fitted with a spyhole, thereby placing the prisoner under constant watch. Blending architecture with a sense of the deity, Victorians embraced "a faith in the spiritually reforming powers of light: each cell window was set just below the ceiling, directing the prisoner's gaze upwards toward a patch of sky" (Cook, 2014, p. 11; see also Johnston, 2000). Inverting that strategy, Victorians considered the deprivation of light to be one of its most potent expressions of punishment, as Kilmainham was built with a basement where prisoners could be held in solitary confinement. Only a small vent in the wall allowed a sliver of light to pierce the darkness. Further exercising their disciplinary authority, guards could reduce the space to complete gloom by sliding a cover over the

gap. Whereas Kilmainham is remembered for its Victorian architecture, its role in controlling the Irish resistance against the state is paramount, particularly the rebellions in 1798, 1803, and 1848, followed by the 1916 Rising, the War of Independence (1919–21), and the Civil War (1922–24). Those events contribute the Kilmainham's fame as the Bastille of Ireland and a monument to Irish nationalism that receives thousands of visitor from around the world. Kilmainham represents a classic example of visual and colonial power materializing in its panoptic atrium, forcefully imposing surveillance and punishment onto its prisoners—a *vision of prisons*, indeed (O'Dwyer, 2010; Welch, 2022).

The Victorians, and their campaign to expand their penal landscape, would surface elsewhere in Ireland, this time in Belfast. There, the Crumlin Road Gaol, a former prison now open to the public, celebrates its commitment to British penology. "Victorian prison reformers believed that solitary confinement, religious instruction and hard labour were the best way to combat the criminal spirit." Prisoners were assigned to individual cells and kept from interacting with other convicts. Even in the exercise yard, they wore caps pulled down over their faces to conceal their identities: such anonymity was also enforced by silence. In 1841, esteemed architect and engineer Sir Charles Lanyon began constructing his vision of Victorian design based on Pentonville Prison in London. Much like Kilmainham, the Crum boasts an impressive central atrium known as the circle. With its several tiers, guards monitored the prison population from above. Its tall, cathedral-like windows speak to the power of an omniscient deity that lords over its subjects (McConville, 1995; Welch, 2022) (figure 8).

Much like its Dublin counterpart, Kilmainham, the Crumlin Road Gaol is recognized for its political prisoners confined to restrict their resistance against the British state. Even before the more recent Troubles, the Crum was instrumental in clamping down on both Republican and Loyalist agitators, including Fenian John Griffith in the wake of the 1867 Rising and Orangeman William Johnston, arrested for leading a march in defiance of the 1868 Party Processions Act. In response to the 1916 Rising, British authorities imprisoned key Republicans of the Sinn Fein party. Eamon de Valera, who would be elected president of the Irish Republic, was held at the Crum for breaching an order barring him from entering Northern Ireland in 1924. Major figures during the Troubles also served time at the Crum, including Loyalists Ian Paisley, Gusty Spence, and Peter Robinson, as well as Republicans Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, all of whom, at least for a time, were awarded special category status (a version of prisoner of war

FIGURE 8. Atrium of the Crum. In Belfast, the central Atrium of the Crumlin Road Gaol impresses visitors. © retrowelch 2026

status; see McEvoy, 2001). Once inside the institution, visitors gain more insight into the role of the Crum during that turmoil as a poster reminds visitors that the introduction of internment in 1971 brought a sudden and dramatic increase in the prison population. The institution was originally designed to hold prisoners in single-occupancy cells, with a total capacity for

320 inmates. During the Troubles, the number of those held at the Crum soared to 1,400, often with three prisoners per cell. Compounding the cramped conditions of confinement, cells were built without sanitation, and old-fashioned chamber pots were still in use (Greg, 2013).

The intersection of wars, walls, and watching is witnessed around the Crum with respect to the Sangers, a security measure that called for the installation five watchtowers around the corners of the property. A sign branded "Crumlin Road Gaol Experience" explains to us that "initially staffed by prison officers, they would later be replaced by British Army personnel, the main reason being army personnel would be armed, rather than unarmed prison officers. The Army would be responsible for the security of the perimeter of the Gaol, while prison staff controlled the insider of the prison walls." Curators invite us to inspect a Sanger—"Look up to see this observation tower where prison staff stood watch over the Crumlin Road, the only one remaining of the five that were initially built." Nearby, a massive helicopter is parked for visitors to learn about the role of the Royal Air Force (RAF) in the Troubles. Standing 15 feet high and 65 feet long, the Wessex XR 529 ECHO, with an airspeed of 120 mph, was once an "iconic feature of the skyline in Northern Ireland," furthering the military's aerial watch over cities and rural areas. As another remnant of the low-level war, the decommissioned vehicle is placed next to the Sanger to "give insight into the happenings during the conflict . . . and the story which the British Army and RAF played both at the Gaol and in the wider community during The Troubles period." Adding to the militarization of the Crum amid the Troubles, other military vehicles and armored Land Rovers are situated around the compound for visitors to inspect and photograph (Holland & Phoenix, 1996; Taylor, 2001).

Touring the Crumlin Road Gaol, visitors can witness more than its Victorian design, since over time, engineers modified the institution to keep up with the problems caused by the Troubles. For instance, the tunnel connecting the prison with the courthouse across the street offers us subterranean experience. There, we learn that officers would transport prisoners underground for their court appearances. Pointing to the vaulted ceiling, the guide tells us that it had been reinforced to minimize damage in the event of an IRA bombing. Elsewhere at the Crum, the walls surrounding the exercise yard were retrofitted with extra barriers to prevent prison escapes. Large numbers stenciled along the interior walls are remnants a coding system by which guards could quickly report an emergency occurring in a specific area. A poster informs us that the Gaol's security had developed throughout

history with officers serving as the principle alarm system. "The more modern era brought some more modern systems, which included an electronic alarm system in each wing, security cameras, search areas and a system of controlled movement of prisoners." As a departure from the original intent of the enlightened Victorians, punitive containment became a major function of the Crum before it closed toward the end of the Troubles in 1996.

The Armagh Gaol, like other Victorian designs, draws on notions of panopticism to enhance visibility. At the Irish Republican History Museum in Belfast, a copy of a 1868 blueprint illustrates a central hub with several tiers fanning out in different directions. A separate exercise yard employs a circular diagram in which prisoners contained in individual compartments could be supervised by a single guard from a fixed position. To help us visualize its geometry, specific features of the layout are identified by letters corresponding to the floor plan: *E* for entrance, *H* for hospital, *O* for office. References to the Victorian value of labor and morality manifest in the sheds for stonebreakers and cells for drunkards. As mechanistic as the architecture appears on paper and in photographs, its function, especially during the Troubles,speaks to the confinement of women members of the paramilitaries. Gender dynamics contextualize the strategy to contain—incarcerate—the Republican movement as Armagh (and Maghaberry) became key penal destinations for women. Inside, female prisoners were subjected to beatings, strip searches, sexual threats, and sexual violence, and in 1980, three prisoners engaged in a hunger strike as a ritualistic form of self-sacrifice (Feldman, 1991). As discussed in the *Bastille Effect*, in the Armagh Women's Prison, Mairead Farrell and 30 other Republican prisoners organized a "dirty protest." In solidarity with the male prisoners who launched their own "dirty protest" at the Maze and Maghaberry, the Armagh prisoners smeared their menstrual blood across the cell walls (Coogan, 2002). A poster on display at the museum speaks to the spirit of resistance and solidarity among the women and their male counterparts incarcerated elsewhere in Northern Ireland, proclaiming, "Some bonds can never be broken" (Welch, 2022). Armagh, alongside other penal sites under British control, would transit through various elements of the profane and ultimately be remembered as sacred places within a larger political consciousness (Olley, 2007; Purbrick, 2004).

The Irish Republican History Museum is dedicated to the memory of Eileen Hickey, a commanding officer of an IRA women's unit. Portraits of Hickey are scattered around the museum, thereby "personizing" the space. Hickey's original intake card to Armagh authenticates her

incarceration: "date of committal, 3 January 1973; sentence, 9 years; date of birth, 3 September, 1948; religion, R. C. [Roman Catholic]." Similarly, a first-hand account of Hickey's captivity is posted near a mock prison cell. Her words suggest a strong sense of solidarity among fellow prisoners subjected to a "very strict and harsh regime. . . . The women tried to help them as best they could, mostly by 'fishing'. This was done by lowering a line containing contraband such as cigarettes, sweets etc., from a cell window on 'B 2' to the windows directly below." In 1986, the Armagh Prison was shuttered, but remnants of the institution have an afterlife in the museum, including parts of the "alarm system from the circle" that resonate the meaning of secured containment (see Welch, 2019).

Other controversial places of confinement during the Troubles are the cages and the H-Blocks at the Maze Prison (often referred to as Long Kesh). In "The Architecture of Containment," Louise Purbrick outlines the physical dimensions of those institutions that constitute "an attempt by the British government to create an architectural solution to the armed conflict in Northern Ireland" (2004, p. 3). It is estimated that as many as 25,000 persons were imprisoned during the 30 years of social and political upheaval. In a scramble to expand prison capacity, authorities repurposed a disused RAF military base in 1971. Its compound dotted with Nissen huts (modest dormitory units) was used as detention space during a campaign of internment without trial (mostly Catholic Nationalists) as well as for persons convicted in the courts. That shift in imprisonment came to reflect a *vision of prison* as sectarian politics deepened. Its crude structure of huts surrounded by fencing became known as the cages that were eventually replaced by the ultra-modern H-blocks. Again, politics entered the penal calculus given that the British strategy to stem the Republic movement involved "criminalizing" prisoners and terminate their de facto status as "special category prisoners." In terms political symbolism, the Nissen huts project the aesthetics of "prisoners of war", while by contrast, the new H-blocks depicted paramilitary prisoners as "common criminals" (McEvoy, 2001; Campbell et al., 1998). At the Irish Republican History Museum, small replicas of the cages are on display for us to examine. Undermining a sense of containment, IRA prisoners communicated between the caged units by way of semaphore flags. However, in an effort to disrupt the signaling,

> the Brits then started building phase walls to cut up the camp into more secure pieces and block the field of view of the semaphore signalers [IRA

> intelligence officers]. But as usual the Brits got their calculations wrong and built a metre too short and the signalers with simple use of a table on the hut roof were able to communicate over the phase walls. (see Adams, 1997)

The Maze, opened in 1976, "was built as a modern fortress with high walls and watchtowers surrounding eight identical cell blocks, each in the shape of an H. These 'H-Blocks' became synonymous with the political conflict in Northern Ireland, and the Maze became one of its most potent symbols" (Purbrick, 2009, p. 3). The H-blocks stood behind a 17-foot-high concrete perimeter wall stretching two and half miles. Thirty-foot Army guard towers provided extra surveillance. The compound was wrapped in so much wire that the entire facade looks completely gray. Metal cables with plastic spheres suspended from them were installed to prevent aircraft landings, thus aborting escape attempts. Each H-block contains 96 individual cells divided into four wings of 24. The symmetrical structure is single-story with a flat roof and fitted with square concrete window frames. It was recognized as the most secured prison in Western Europe, a prison within a prison within a military base. Repetition, according to Purbrick, is a feature of control systems: "The duplication of physical structures, (walls, cells, blocks) produces a predictable environment allowing security to be planned out and then constantly repeated" (2009, p. 4). The Hennessy Report linked the conflict inside the Maze with low-level war outside, charactering the population as unique since it consisted almost entirely of prisoners convicted of terrorist-related offenses, "united in their determination to be treated as political prisoners, resisting prison discipline, even if it means starving themselves to death, and retaining para-military structure and allegiance" during their captivity (Hennessy Report, 1984: 59, 63). Prison officers were employed under hazardous duty so dangerous that they were issued handguns for protection; between 1974 and 1993, 29 prison service employees were killed by paramilitaries (McEvoy, 2001).

The Maze, much like the Crumlin Road Gaol, was built with the showers, toilets, and urinals located at the top of the wing. That architectural decision would play into the hands of the paramilitary prisoners engaged in institutional resistance. Operating under a new regime of management, newly admitted prisoners to the Maze were required to wear a government-issued uniform. Members of the IRA refused, opting instead to cover themselves with a blanket. The blanket protest was followed by the dirty protest in which prisoners refused to endure a gauntlet of beatings on their way to the washrooms. Rather, they defecated in their cells and smeared feces on the walls.

The next phase of protest culminated in the hunger strike. In 1981, Bobby Sands and nine other Republican prisoners starved to death. The Maze, for all its modern designs could not contain prisoner defiance (Campbell et al., 1998; Feldman, 1991).

The 1998 Good Friday Agreement formally ended the period known as the Troubles, and in compliance with a key provision of the treaty, all prisoners were released from the Maze (and other prisons). While Irish Republicans campaigned to preserve the Maze as a symbol of their resistance to British occupation of Northern Ireland, Unionist politicians embarked on a plan to gradually demolish it. Gender politics did not dissolve in the process, given that the visitors block was the first unit to be destroyed. Although the Maze served as a male prison, the visitors block was the only part of the prison where women's experiences unfolded. For women and their families, the visitors block became a highly emotional space, as they spent restricted moments with their partners, albeit under close observation by the guards. While the medical unit, remembered as a place where the hunger strikers died emerged as a contested memorial space, the story of women in the visitors block recedes into the background. That "herstory" at the H blocks, without much deliberation, seems to be written out of the larger narrative and collective consciousness of the site (McAtackney, 2014; Wylie, 2009).

DECONSTRUCTING IRISH SPACE

Another crucial moment in the Troubles resonating in the collective consciousness is the Falls Road Curfew in Belfast. There, in 1970, the British placed an entire community under punitive containment. What began as a routine door-to-door weapons search escalated into a large-scale riot with extensive damage and the death of four civilians. On July 3, Lt. General Sir Ian Freeland decided that the area had to be pacified and that to doing so, his soldiers should enter it by force. The process of deconstructing space speaks not only to the perception of colonial occupation but also to the extent to which coercive tactics would be exercised on the Irish Catholic people. For 35 hours, residents were ordered to remain in their homes or face arrest and detention. At the conclusion of Operation Banner 2, the Army reportedly confiscated 29 rifles, 3 submachine guns, 8 shotguns, 32 revolvers, 19 automatic pistols, 24, 973 rounds of ball ammunition, and 621 shotgun cartridges. Toward that end, more than 3,000 soldiers were deployed, firing

1,452 rounds ammunition; they also launched 218 CS (tear) gas grenades alongside 1,355 CS gas cartridges. Observers noted that the standard NATO 7.62 mm rifle, used by the Army, was a battlefield weapon whose high muzzle velocity made it unsuitable for urban firefights because it scatters dangerous ricochets into the immediate environment (Campbell & Connolly, 2003). More than 300 (mostly Catholic) men were arrested. In response to the curfew, the IRA's momentum surged, with a boom in support and recruitment among the alienated youth ready for guerilla warfare. The IRA declared that their resistance was the "biggest and most sustained battle between the forces of British imperialism and the Irish Republican Army since Dublin in 1916" (*United Irishman*, August, 1970, pp. 1, 4; O'Dochartaigh, 1997; Walsh, 2013).

With an eye on the *visions of prisons* that contained an entire part of the city, the Falls Road Curfew entered a complicated chronology, marking the end of the honeymoon period between local Catholics and the British Army. In August 1969, when the British military initially arrived to quell the sectarian violence, those residing inside the Catholic enclaves were grateful to the Army for protecting them from Protestant rioters. Conveniently, the British commanders were quick to assert that in their role as noble "peacemakers," they were caught between two "warring communities." However, after the killing of five Protestants by Republican paramilitaries in 1970, the Army was ordered by the Unionist government to crack down on Catholic sections, especially the Lower Falls. In the realm of political consciousness, the curfew is understood as particularly oppressive for people stuck within its punitive restrictions. Moreover, the crackdown validated the Republican platform, insisting that the British Army was not a savior; rather, its visible presence was the very root of the Troubles. In its wake, the curfew left Belfast in a state of persistent segregation and suspicion (Shirlow & Murtagh, 2006; Taylor, 2001).

In *Belfast and Derry in Revolt*, Prince and Warner remind us that the curfew is still "ritually remembered and commemorated" (2019, p. 199; see also O' Fearghail, 1970). At the Irish Republican History Museum, those events are captured in a photo album commemorating a local defense against the military's incursion into their community. Stark photographs allow us to witness—second-hand—the intimidating presence of the British Army. One shows a young man, spread-eagled, leaning on the front of a row house being guarded by two armed soldiers. Other images focus on heavily armored vehicles patrolling the Falls Road section of West Belfast, while another picture documents the extensive damage of ransacked homes. A local

resident is quoted as saying that at dusk, a helicopter hovered low over the neighborhood as a voice warned that the curfew had been officially imposed. Even a British soldier conceded that the volume of CS gas saturating the vicinity affected everyone, including children as young as three years of age (Taylor, 2001).

Serious questions were raised over the legality of the military operation aimed at a civilian population, prompting the Army to retract the use of the term "curfew" and then calling it a "very close restriction" (Campbell & Connolly, 2003). In reference to a colonial intervention, reporter Peter Taylor noted that General Freeland employed a "military style used in Aden to control the recalcitrant residents of the Crater district: the curfew. . . . One soldier [told Taylor] it was like the British Raj on a tiger hunt" (2001, p. 50; see also Elkins, 2022). On display at the museum, a statement by former IRA commander Brendan Hughes summarizes the significance of the Falls Road Curfew as one of the most momentous events of local history. Twenty-five years ago,

> the British threw everything they had at the people of the Falls in an attempt to destroy Nationalist opposition. . . . They never understood the nature of the people and underestimated their strength of character. . . . The message sent out from the Falls in 1970 was that there would be no going back to second class citizenship, an Irish democracy free from British interference with peace and justice for all was the only way forward.

Recall in the previous chapter on the geopolitics of boundaries, the barricades of Free Derry were set up to insulate the no-go areas, barring entry of the RUC and the British Army into the Bogside. Turning to additional commentary, a deconstruction of Irish space is laid bare. In *War and an Irish Town*, Eamonn McCann, a local social justice activist, describes first-hand the Troubles as they unfolded in Derry. He chronicles the Derry Citizens Defence Association (DCDA) formed to protect the Bogside within the strained efforts to preserve the peace and the civil rights campaign. The DCDA began reorganizing the Bogside, in part with the use of maps that identified 41 entrances into the section. Those sites would be fortified with various barricade materials. Pirated messages broadcasted by Radio Free Derry encouraged residents to defend the barriers and "join your vigilante patrols" to keep watch over the neighborhoods. A steady stream of updates was delivered via duplicated leaflets titled the "Barricade Bulletin." Adding more militant tones to the protection of the Bogside, Bernadette Devlin,

armed with a megaphone, went on a "bit about British Imperialism, Cyprus, and Aden." When the police and the Army fired CS gas, the Bogsiders were prepared with "buckets of water and vinegar stationed all over the battle zone" (McCann, 2018, pp. 80, 86; see Dooley, 1998).

Alluding to the connotations of containment, McCann summarizes the developments in the Bogside and Free Derry:

> Army relations with the youth of the area, however, were to deteriorate very quickly. From the outset there were two opposing interpretations to be put on the fact that the army had encircled us. One was that they were protecting us from attack, the other that they were containing us, both to prevent us attacking anyone else (for example, the police barracks) and to control who and what came and went. (2018, p. 91)

With music events and rallying speeches, the entire situation took on a festive atmosphere. Politicians from the Irish Republic and Great Britain stood in front of the barricades for a photo op with a local resident identified as a Bogside defender. Some MPs were daring enough to raise a clenched fist salute for the cameras. Still, rioting by an emerging generation of "kamikaze children whose sport" was to throw stones at the Army became routine. On Saturdays, "the riot became a regular thing. It was known as 'the matinee,'" and people would do their shopping in the morning and get back home before the volley of projectiles filled the air. Armored military vehicles would appear alongside soldiers firing rubber bullets and tear gas. Then the "snatch squad" was released, chasing rioters who, with their knowledge of where to hide, would evade the authorities. In what would later emerge as "recreational rioting"—which continues today in Derry and Belfast—teens would withdraw, regroup, and return to their violence (McCann, 2018, p. 105; O'Dochartaigh, 1997; Shirlow & Murtagh, 2006).

CONCLUSION

In Belfast, an intriguing remnant of war, walls, and watching is preserved at the Sunflower Bar. Like so many other pubs in Belfast during the Troubles, the Sunflower was fitted with a cage and a security camera at the entrance. Patrons were required to step into the fenced box, which locked them into a compartment where the bartender could inspect them. If the bartender—an omniscient deity of sorts—deemed him or her respectable, the person being

FIGURE 9. Cage at Sunflower Bar. At the Sunflower Bar (Belfast), a cage that was installed during the Troubles remains a symbol of past political violence. © retrowelch 2026

observed would be allowed the enter the establishment. If not, the suspected intruder would be detained inside the cage while the police were dispatched. Punitive containment appears to be the underlying paradigm for that type of caging, thereby emulating a *vision of prison* in which certain people are kept in a designated area (Roulston, 2022, p. 93) (figure 9).

In this chapter, critical attention is directed at the various permutations of punitive containment. While imagining the Stasi, we learned how the secret police implemented a range of techniques for blanket surveillance, through which thousands of civilians were placed under suspicion. In addition to carrying out arrests, detention, and interrogation, the Stasi relied on emerging forms of technology. The Technical Operations Division manufactured such equipment as listening devices, miniature cameras, and letter-opening machines "so that it could observe the population as closely as possible, and conduct espionage." Those tactics were not mere expressions of benign social regulation; on the contrary, many of the Stasi methods constituted psycho-terror aimed at intimidating East Berliners into conformity under an authoritarian regime. A sense that the Stasi was everywhere was reinforced by a vast network of spies and informants who kept watch over seemingly mundane activities such as work and recreation, thereby perpetuating a deeper consciousness of control (Ash, 1997; Funder, 2002).

British control over its population also emulated degrees of panopticism within punitive containment, especially with innovations in carceral architecture. Victorians realized that geometric shapes could enhance visibility and control through the construction of impressive atriums at the Kilmainham prison, the Crumlin Road Gaol, and the Armagh Gaol. Adapting to the later Troubles, institutional redesigns at the Crum reflected the increasing reliance on militarism found in the Sanger watchtowers. Soon, the Long Kesh cages and the ultra-modern H-blocks at the Maze would bolster the British commitment to a long war against the IRA. Republican paramilitaries resisted a perceived colonial occupation and its prison apparatus, prompting British military and political figures to change tactics and eventually concede to a peace process. While the residue of the Troubles is evident in Belfast and Derry, most notably at the peace walls and murals, testimony of residents reminds us of what it was like to live under the conditions of punitive containment. Those vivid memories are also accessible in key works on those post-conflict communities (Campbell et al., 1998; McAtackney, 2020; McGlinchey, 2019).

In part 2, we look at the significance of minute details, the meanings of things, and the inner insights of intelligence, altogether informing our interpretation of *visions of prisons*.

PART TWO

Minute Details

FOUR

Meanings of Things

AS WE TRANSIT FROM THE BIG PICTURE to the minute details deposited in the various remnants of wars, walls, and watching, we turn again to the cultural transformation of objects. Both *Escape to Prison* and *The Bastille Effect* explain that things tend to acquire additional meaning by passing through a process by which their use value in their previous incarnation is superseded by signifying value in their current form (Welch, 2015, 2022). In this case, they embody messages about social and political conflict as well as containment and surveillance. Recall that the Ulster Museum explores the Troubles by realizing that even though people on both sides of the divide share a common past, they do not hold a shared memory. Among the galleries examining that phenomenon is the one curated by Tom Hartley, aptly named A Collector's Story. Hartley, a deeply political person, was a Sinn Fein councilor and lord mayor of Belfast. He is also a local historian and collector of artefacts related to the Troubles, archiving such items as badges, posters, and other ephemera so that they could be preserved for the future. By projecting the meanings of things, he tells his story and the wider history of the North of Ireland through the lens of his experiences. As Hartley observes, "I suspect just about everything can tell a story. That can range from a plaque from Armagh Gaol to an address label taken from a package sent to Gerry Adams with the address in Irish from Westminster [London]. That label indicates change. So sometimes the very simple things can tell you very profound things."

Without dismissing the tragedies of the Troubles, Hartley's exhibit offers an upbeat recollection of the path toward the peace process in Northern Ireland as he maximizes a *museum effect* with themes of hope and ascent. Still, the scholarly literature on what Crooke and Maguire

(2020) call "heritage of after conflict" contains deep reflections on the past as it intersects with the present. Similarly, in *Making Peace with the Past? Memory, Trauma and the Irish Troubles*, Graham Dawson begins by realizing that "historians and cultural analysts do not operate in a free space outside of the histories and cultures we seek to understand" (2007, p. xvi). Inspired by theorist Stuart Hall, Dawson concedes that authors write from a particular location and perspective by occupying certain positions and inhabiting subjectivities that are shaped by their "own histories and cultural transformations" (p. xvi). From the onset of his project on memory and trauma, Dawson offers a confession of sorts. He reveals that his connections to Ireland were formed by complex pattern of cross-generational identities. "I was born of a marriage between an English, Anglican raised atheist, and an Irish Catholic" (p. xvi). And being "half-Irish," as he puts it, means that Dawson had to deal with the tension of his Englishness. *Making Peace with the Past?*, like so many other contributions to field of heritage studies, strives to tell stories from both sides of a sociopolitical conflict (Ashplant et al., 2015; Roulston, 2022). It is commonly understood that all memory work is selective, with certain events remembered in a certain way, depending on one's perspective (Hopkins, 2013). Unlike in Berlin, where the fall of the wall is generally hailed as a great and universal triumph over totalitarianism, memory of the Troubles has the nagging elements of "a war by other means," whereby the overt violence has dissolved into a cultural war over blame, victimhood, and culpability (McDowell & Braniff, 2014, p. 38).

While contemplating the meanings of things, we shall remain mindful that objects have context and much of that context is cultural as well as political. Moving forward, we continue our conceptualization of *visions of prisons* by scanning developments in Northern Ireland during the Troubles and in Germany gripped by the Cold War. Special attention is turned to technology and the things used to conduct surveillance whether by the British military and intelligence agencies or the Stasi and those assisting the secret police in East Germany. Toward that end, discussion begins with some thoughts on what we might call a sociology of objects. To reiterate, just as places resonate meaning—such as former prisons—so do objects in ways that tell stories, as subjective as they might be. In the course of things, minute details relate to each other within a larger spectrum of the big picture encompassing social and political turmoil.

The Bastille Effect, with all its attention to sites of political imprisonment, is a study on the sociology of place (Welch, 2022). Likewise, this book offers a similar critique of the elementary forms of place. Borrowing from the work of sociologist Philip Smith (1999) allows us to appreciate the cultural transformation of social space. In particular, Smith throws critical light on place/space identities maintained by rituals and narratives produced by human actions. There are four—and only four—elementary forms of place, Smith insists: sacred (promotes purity and the transcendental), profane (perpetuates evil and pollution), mundane (maintains the ordinary and everyday life), and liminal (dissolves into the alternative and ludicrous). Shaped by their inherent dynamics, those forms of place are fluid and tend to change their meanings according to an array of social circumstances, thereby revealing the consequences of the iconography of "space." Much like the symbolic status of places, objects also have the potential to embody semiotic meaning well after they are retired from their useful purpose. Those developments open a dialogue about conversion. Writing in the *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*, Nicholas Allen (2017) explains that rebellion in Ireland leaves deep impressions in the cultural imagery as well as the historical landscape. As noted previously, the walls of Derry and the peace walls in Belfast testify to the significance of social conflict. While they can easily be regarded as places, they are also objects—material culture—staring us in the face (Levitt, 2015; Welch, 2015).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Irish Republican History Museum, in Belfast, serves both as exhibition space to showcase the chronology of the Nationalist movement in Ireland and as a memorial to Eileen Hickey, a commanding officer in the IRA and former prisoner in the Armagh Gaol. As expected, the museum has amassed an enormous volume of socioreligious items, such as Celtic crosses and photographs of prison chaplains. As an example of how the mundane can be transformed into the sacred, a patch of ordinary leather is treated and expertly stitched to cover a Gaelic Bible. At the hands of Jimmy Quinn, a POW at the Long Kesh prison, the ordinary material transcends the mundane and enters the realm of the spiritual. Similar cultural transformations can be witnessed at other sites visited by those drawn into the stories of the Irish struggle. Also in Belfast, Roddy McCorley's Club features a pub and meeting room for former Irish

Volunteers who were imprisoned during the Troubles. The venue is open to members of the public interested in viewing its vast collection of artefacts. A footpath leading us to the club is tree lined. To be sure, those trees are no longer mundane remnants of a forest; rather, they have been transformed into the sacred as each one of them is dedicated with a plaque bearing the name of an Irish hunger striker, most notably "Bobby Sands, Died 5th May 1981, Aged 27 Years, After 66 Days on Hunger Strike," to which is added a blessing engraved in the Irish language.

Of course, Milltown Cemetery welcomes the faithful to visit the burial plots of the Catholic members of the Belfast community, including former prisoners, hunger strikers, and other IRA volunteers killed on active duty during the Troubles. As a sacred place hosting sacred items, such as monuments, it is also a place of painful memory. As journalist Peter Taylor describes the violent incident in 1988, a gunman attacked a funeral ceremony in broad daylight: "A horrified nation watched live killings on television as Loyalist paramilitary Michael Stone single-handedly launched a grenade and gun attack on the funeral at Milltown Cemetery of three IRA Volunteers, Mairead Farrell, Sean Savage, and Danny McCann who had been shot dead in Gibraltar by the SAS" (1999, p. 201). Among the mourners, three died and more than 60 were wounded. It is widely believed that Stone's targets were Republican leaders Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, an act of revenge for the Remembrance Day massacre carried out by the IRA at Enniskillen where 10 Protestants civilians and a police offer were killed (Taylor, 1999).

Just as the Milltown Cemetery is a sacred place with sacred objects as well as a place of profane violence, because of the actions of Michael Stone, there are other sacred places with distressing memories. In one of the staunchly Loyalist communities, a unique memorial was erected by the Bayardo Somme Association (without funding from any statutory body). The seemingly sacred place jars visitors with graphic pictures of victims of political violence. Curiously, profane items appear to pollute the memorial with postings that read "The Legacy of Sinn Fein / IRA in Northern Ireland," listing a host of alleged crimes: mass murder, mayhem, mutilation, rape, robbery, drugs, child abuse, kangaroo courts, pedophilia. Large photographs of the IRA bombing of London's Canary Wharf in 1996 is juxtaposed with the 2015 ISIS attack in Paris. The caption contends, "ISIS Terrorists slaughtered 130 innocent people during a series of coordinated merciless terror attacks in Paris on Friday 13th November 2015—IRA—Sinn Fein—ISIS—No Difference." Incidentally, the Canary Wharf bombing (also known as the London Docklands bombing

or South Quay bombing) was carried out by the IRA with a massive payload of explosives weighing 3,000 pounds, including Semtex. Although the IRA issued a warning 90 minutes ahead of the attack, the area was not fully evacuated; as a result, two victims were killed and more than 100 were injured. The blast inflicted an estimated 150 British pounds worth of damage. The bombing—condemned by the British, Irish, and American governments—interrupted the already complicated peace negotiations, further prolonging the Troubles (Geraghty, 2000).

More minute details of war, namely the Troubles, are contained in the collection of Tom Hartley. Those things speak to a sociology of objects and their elementary forms of meaning. Consider, for example, a poster advertising a theatrical production titled *Bin Lids*, featuring an illustration of women banging lids of trashcans against the pavement. In its previous incarnation, the poster represents the mundane, an ordinary object used to promote a stage play in Belfast. Once placed behind glass, framed, and displayed in a gallery in the Ulster Museum, the poster takes on a special—even sacred—afterlife, especially since it is surrounded by other objects collected by Hartley. Still, there is even more meaning attached to the poster since the clashing of bin lids was a rebellious ritual performed by women in Republican communities to serve as a warning signal to the IRA that the British Army was approaching to conduct house raids (Feldman, 1991). Strategically situated near the poster in the same gallery is an actual bin lid on display; as a form of cultural transformation, its surface is decorated to give even more visual power. The bin lid was painted by Jane Donaldson and Ciaran Kearney in 1994. Around the rim of the lid is a quote from Bobby Sands, who had written the passage in his diary on his 11th day of his hunger strike in 1981. It reads, "Let me say, at risk of seeming ridiculous, that the true revolutionary is guided by feelings of great love." At the center of this piece of art is an iconic image of Che Guevara (whose family was also Irish). As curators tell us, the Che painting represents the zeitgeist of the late 1960s with respect to "revolutionary politics during a time of profound social change."

In Berlin, a sociology of objects benefits from the immense collection of surveillance equipment on display at the German Spy Museum, locally known as the Deutsches Spionage Museum. Scattered throughout its arcades are numerous cameras placed within display cases. In reference to the elementary form of things and their transformations, the cameras represent mundane objects used for monitoring citizens of East Germany; at the same time, they are also profane things that violate privacy and arouse suspicion.

Once those cameras are moved from their "natural habitat" of the world of watching and into the Spy Museum, their use value—monitoring people—is replaced by signifying value that conveys a narrative about totalitarian states obsessed with the need to know everything. Some of the cameras in the collection tap into our more sensual attractions to spy craft. Consider, for instance, the bra camera—boasting an erotic shade of red. The 1986 Stasi replica is accompanied by a brief video of an intimate encounter. The meaning of surveillance takes on a decidedly dangerous tone with a camera named the fotosniper fitted with a long-range lens attached to a pistol with a shoulder support to improve its aim.

The Spy Museum offers a range of didactic placards explaining the use value of the surveillance equipment. Moreover, the overall mundane and profane identity of the objects are embedded within a liminal space of the museum since curators promote the visit as being interactive, family oriented, and kid friendly. Even adults are drawn into such adventures as the Lazer Maze, the Detection of Listening Bugs, and Cracking the Safe. Tourists queue to have their photos taken at a poster of James Bond featuring the classic opening of the movie with Agent 007 pointing his gun into the audience. As liminal—and entertaining—as the space can be, it is still seriously symbolic of how modern life has become immersed in an economy of watching and being watched. Ominous messages are posted around the museum, including a 2009 quote from Google CEO Eric Schmidt: "If you have something that you don't want anyone to know, maybe you shouldn't be doing it in the first place." The warning serves as a cautionary tale that is difficult to ignore in a society of mass communication and pervasive social media (Debord, 1967).

BRIT SHOW OF FORCE

The meanings of things are also embodied in the afterlives of objects pertaining to the Troubles. Among those themes is a show of force issued by the British military. At the National Army Museum in London, the role of the British soldiers in Northern Ireland is presented in scholarly tones; still, remnants of the conflict are displayed alongside artwork intended to register a more reflective mood. Curators introduce us to the controversial nature of the Troubles: "At times of heightened conflict, civilians routinely encountered an array of vehicles and firearms. The patrols looked menacing to some,

FIGURE 10. Humber "Pig" vehicle. At the National Army Museum (London), the Humber Pig carried British soldiers on patrol in the cities of Northern Ireland during the Troubles. © retrowelch 2026

but for others they were a reassuring presence. At times people were faced with paramilitaries from all sides of a divided community and British soldiers too. Many witnessed death and destruction." That narrative, however, is overshadowed by the conspicuous presence of a Humber Pig truck that even in its afterlife as an artefact in the museum projects a powerful show of force. Those general-purpose vehicles were retrofitted with additional armor as they roamed the treacherous streets of Belfast and Derry. The bonnet's snout-like shape along with its sheer weight led to its nickname, Pig. The one pictured here was equipped with a water cannon to be used on civilians (figure 10).

The gallery contains other reminders of Brit force during the Troubles. Display cases hold self-loading rifles, machine guns, pistols, and even billy clubs for crowd control. The visual significance of that low-level war is enhanced by addressing noticeable methods of surveillance and the connotations of containment. In one of the many paintings exhibited, an Army observation post, titled *Peace Giant*, by artist John Keane, could represent a symbol of defense, but many in the Nationalist community view such watchtowers as a provocation and a sign of British occupation and oppression. Once

again, *visions of prisons* come easily to mind (Wylie, 2007). As a condition of the Good Friday Agreement (1998), the British demilitarized its operations, and the long process of regaining social stability has endured. Still, curators reflect on the current conditions of a post-conflict society. By way of a film projector, curious statements about wars and walls are rotated around the collection of objects, such as the following: "Is the absence of violence the same as peace?" and "There are more peace walls dividing clashing communities today than there were in 1998."

Memory of the Troubles, alongside a British show of force, is recalled at the Irish Republican History Museum in Belfast. Some of the objects on display are quite mundane, such as a British Army flak jacket. But since it is situated next to a British riot shield, both items speak to the hostile and volatile environments of Northern Ireland. Rubber and plastic bullets, on the one hand, suggest military restraint, since compared to live rounds, they seem less dangerous. Nonetheless, in Belfast and elsewhere, the reliance on those munitions by the British armed forces had proven lethal. Placed inside a display, those profane objects are absorbed into a performance of memorialization. A poster reminds viewers that those bullets killed 17 people, including children. A series of pamphlets, titled *Troops Out: Self Determination for the Irish People as a Whole*, features a picture of Stephen McConomy, a boy killed by a plastic bullet. On the cover of the pamphlet is a photograph of a "plastic bullet—actual size." By showing the full-scale bullet (a cylinder 10 cm long and 38 mm in diameter, weighing 135 grams), one sees how large and lethal those weapons really are, especially since they are often fired at close range. Images of other victims confirm blunt-force trauma, including a fractured skull, brain damage, loss of an eye. Activists in both Nationalist and Loyalist communities had called for a ban on plastic bullets, noting that in 1991 alone, more than 29,000 rounds had been fired. As a eulogy of sorts, a long list of names with the circumstances under which they were killed by plastic bullets authenticates their lethality and the demands to have them banned. Fundamental issues of justice were breached; according to a document in the museum's collection, despite multiple incidents of use of lethal force, no soldiers have been prosecuted. For innocent civilians, the perilousness of the streets of Belfast and beyond has been compounded not only by a British firepower but also by a sense of impunity that would otherwise hold perpetrators accountable for their unjust actions.

Remnants of war, walls, and watching—alongside a British show of force—are also remembered at the Museum of Free Derry. To capture the

sheer violence of Bloody Sunday, a collection of objects offers a study of the meanings of things. Among the items on display is the jacket worn by Michael McDaid when he was killed. A jagged tear under the right shoulder is an exit hole from the bullet. To provide greater visual context, a photograph shows McDaid walking just seconds before he was shot dead by either Corporal P or Lance Corporal J (whose names were concealed in the investigation). The image clearly indicates that McDaid posed no threat to the soldiers when he was killed. The jacket is placed behind a large glass that allows visitors "safe contact" with state violence; by way of semiotics, the exit hole in the jacket seems to puncture our consciousness about claims that the British military was providing security. Nearby, a pile of empty shell casings signify the barrage of firepower. A caption reads, "The British Army fired 108 high velocity bullets at unarmed marchers on Bloody Sunday."

To memorialize the victims of Bloody Sunday, artist Greag Mac a' tSaor, was commissioned to design the *Fourteen Silenced Bells for Derry*. Those ordinary objects gain noticeable sacred quality as the artist interprets their meaning. He notes that the main purpose of a bell is to make noise to warn of danger, express our joy, and give voice to our anguish. "Silencing a bell has long been regarded as a serious transgression. In early Irish text *Buile Suibhne*, Sweeney is cursed for throwing Saint Ronan's bell into the lake." Rather than erecting a large monument, Mac a' tSaor prefers to work on a "more intimate scale to keep the individual identities of the fourteen people who died in view." Beyond the symbolic representations of Bloody Sunday, a photograph preserves the solemn moment in St. Mary's Church when a row of caskets were assembled for mourners to pay their respects to the deceased. The Museum of Free Derry and its collection of material culture seems to neutralize the British show of force, appealing to a higher—transcendent—sensibility. After years of inquiry, British prime minister David Cameron, in 2010, issued an official British government apology, concluding that the events were "unjustified and unjustifiable. It was wrong."

Returning to the National Army Museum, the British show of force is carefully explored in Germany during the Cold War. With the Iron Curtain dividing East and West Germany and the Berlin Wall separating East and West Berlin, the occupation of British troops produced unusual manifestations of watching and being watched. "Those places all had their own reputations, and created their own stories, myths and legends . . . but the greatest of all was that of Wolfgang Meier," whose fleet of catering vans would follow British troops on training missions in West Germany.

Even though British soldiers enjoyed his menu (which included fish and chips), Meier was met with suspicion; some joked that he was a KGB spy. Regardless, Meier "remains a fixture of the British Army's cultural memory in Germany." Not far behind, the IRA posed a serious threat to the British military in West Germany. "Despite the Cold War and the looming threat of the Soviets across the border, another enemy intruded more and more into the domestic and professional lives of British soldiers, their families, and even that of their German neighbors." To exact revenge on the British occupying Northern Ireland, the IRA launched its European campaign to target the British Army in Germany, constituting what we later will discuss as a form of *countersurveillance*. In the 1970s, the IRA put the British stationed in Germany in real danger with bombings and shootings. Curators explain the context of the IRA threat:

> The British community developed a lifestyle of constant vigilance. They were encouraged in this by posters and leaflets. They were also issued with handheld mirrors to sweep under their cars to check for bombs. To better protect them, the distinctive British military number plates on their cars were removed and replaced with civilian ones to try and disguise them. This vigilance was well-founded; the IRA threat remained constant, and for many was more serious than that posed by the Soviets.

As an example of this dynamic of being watchful, a list of instructions were printed on a poster titled "Beat the Terrorist: Don't Be a Victim, Don't Let Terrorists Know You're a Soldier." British military personnel were warned not to wear a uniform off duty, not to have a military sticker on their car, and not to print their rank in their checkbooks or on personal mail. It concludes with some deadly advice—"Switch on to Security, Stay Alert—Stay Alive!" (see Taylor, 2001).

British military occupation of West Berlin was shaped by the various dimensions of wars, walls, and watching; in doing so, soldiers correctly realized that they themselves were being contained and surveilled by the Soviets. The museum adds greater detail about that atmosphere through an exhibit, *Walls and Wire*. It reminds us that British forces were quite vulnerable while deep in the Soviet zone of East Germany. The Berlin Wall, measuring nearly 100 miles around the Western sectors and fortified with wire and watchtowers, created a new world "complete with new rituals, duties, threats, and opportunities." In the Charlottenburg district of West Berlin, the British Army instituted a training area to prepare for a potential Soviet attack in

the event that the Cold War turned hot. The more than 3,100 British troops stationed there were considered an "island in a Soviet sea." Still, for a British soldier, being based in West Berlin was a badge of honor, literally and figuratively. A formation patch worn on their uniform was believed to be inspired by a sense of being contained, symbolically expressed by a black circle surrounded by a red ring.

STORMING THE STASI

As discussed previously, the Stasi imposed blanket surveillance on the citizens of East Germany with a complex network of official and unofficial informants, keeping tabs on the behavior and thoughts of its targets. The apparatus of monitoring was so extensive that the Stasi coalesced into an omniscient deity as it strived to know everything about everybody. Operating under the euphemism the Firm, the Stasi "bumped up" against the people whose lives were simply conventional and not in any way suspicious. "It would not be an exaggeration to state that every East German citizen has a 'Stasi story,' either personally or that of a close acquaintance. Some of the brushes with the secret police were mild, some were harrowing, but all of them reveal a life that was anything but 'ordinary'" (Bruce, 2010, p. 145). Many of those stories are conveyed in things on display at the Stasi Museum and Archives and the former Stasi Prison in Berlin. The meanings of those things speak to disturbing nature of containment and surveillance. Revelations of those horrors surfaced after the fall of the Berlin in 1989 and the subsequent storming of the Stasi headquarters as state personnel raced to destroy as much evidence of their deeds as possible before the premises were secured by local activists.

Scattered throughout the Stasi Museum are objects that no longer retain their use value as instruments of surveillance; however, in their afterlives, they possess the capacity to evoke the meaning of state repression. Mundane things were converted into profane devices deployed to invade privacy, such as the watering can in a person's garden in whose spout a camera was installed. Similarly, other mundane objects were selected to join the surveillance apparatus as Stasi agents inserted photo gadgets into shopping bags, car doors, and neckties. Telephone communication and mail were also subject to continuous monitoring. Agents picked the locks of homes and apartments, then installed bugs and wiretaps that would record conversations. Technicians kept track of those recordings by way of audio cassettes,

which became part of a biographical dossier on the person in question. The Stasi developed an obsession with the minute details of other people's lives. A poster tell us that "hotels were typically used for these operations since it was relatively easy to set up equipment in them. Some hotels even had a permanently-installed cameras with the help of unofficial collaborators on the hotel staff, the MfS made certain that the 'target subject' was given the specially prepared room." Beyond the written word, curators deploy objects to convey the deep meaning of surveillance by recreating the walls of a hotel room and mounting an actual French movie camera, the Beaulieu R16. The long lens of the camera was inserted into a hole drilled into the wall. A one-millimeter opening was large enough to film the room next door. An angled mirror allowed the camera operator to adjust the view to scan the activity in the room. Visitors in the museum are encouraged to gaze at each end of the camera to gain a point of view, thereby confirming the invasive spectrum of watching and being watched.

By the 1980s, the Stasi had grown particularly worried about the youth culture in East Germany, most notably heavy metal music fans and punk rockers who authorities believed had been corrupted by the West. Among the curious items at the Stasi Museum that explore those "social ills" is a life-size mug shot of a punk sporting a mohawk haircut, a black leather jacket, and Doc Marten boots. Next to the photograph is a jar containing some mysterious fabric. The meanings of those things are explained in the protocol of the secret police. First, the punk is arrested and brought into custody where he is photographed. Then, the punk is seated for an interrogation, and the stool is covered in cloth designed to absorb his body odor. The fabric is then stored and identified with the punk's personal details. "In the late 1980s, the MfS set up a scent archive. It openly and secretly obtained smell samples of suspects. Specially trained dogs could recognize the suspect's smell on objects and in places" (figure 11).

Located next to the Stasi Museum, a huge collection of objects inside the archives is open to the public, thereby revealing state secrets and their methods of information gathering. Upon entering the exhibition space, we are introduced to the persona of Erich Mielke, the last Stasi minister, who spread the surveillance tentacles into all areas of society. The brochure of the archives adds intrigue to the visit by offering us "access to secrecy." The collection of items is staggering: a total of 111 kilometers of records on archival shelves, around 41 million index cards, over 1.8 million photographs, and about 30,000 film and audio documents. In the lobby, artists

FIGURE 11. Punk. At the Stasi Museum (Berlin), a mugshot of a punk is included in the collection to explain the surveillance methods of the youth culture.© retrowelch 2026

have assembled stylized piles of paper files, conceived as a symbol of what the Stasi evidence left behind. Archivists have preserved an extensive card index system for visitors to view; still, that evidence goes beyond its signifying value and has important practical use value as researchers continue to organized and decipher the files. Computer software has been designed to

put together documents that had been ripped apart before the storming of the Stasi headquarters.

Persons who have had a Stasi file compiled about their lives are allowed to read the minute details of their biography, thereby gaining "access to secrecy." Timothy Garton Ash, in a book titled *The File: A Personal History*, retrospectively describes his own experience with the Stasi. While a graduate student at Oxford, Ash set out to study the divided city of Berlin during the Cold War. As Ash traveled between the glamour of West Berlin to the danger of East Berlin, the Stasi carefully tracked his movements, reporting on suspicious meetings, intellectual encounters, and love affairs. Much of the narrative is punctuated by misleading interpretations and half-truths. Upon learning that he actually had a Stasi file, Ash returned to Berlin and made an appointment with the archives. When the woman clerk met with Ash in the archives, she remarked "You have a very interesting file." Wrapped in a buff-colored binder, the dossier, two inches thick, bears the official stamp of the MfS. Beneath that insignia is a handwritten name, "Romeo." Ash asks the meaning of "Romeo." The clerk explains, "That was your code name," and she giggles (Ash, 1997, p. 2). The file on Ash, as his book suggests, is no laughing matter. In detail it demonstrates the extent to which the surveillance agents invaded his privacy and concocted embarrassing interpretations of events. *The File* could be mistaken for a dystopian novel by Graham Greene or George Orwell, but the Stasi story surrounding Ash actually occurred. Contemporary literary giants took notice; spymaster author John Le Carre depicts Ash's story as "a chilling portrait of treachery and compromise that will not let me go" (Ash, 1997, dust cover). The file on Ash, as a product of state repression, still possesses potent cultural meaning. "It's like a parody of German thoroughness. One extreme follows another. Probably no dictatorship in modern history has had such an extensive and fanatically thorough secret police as East Germany did" (Ash, 1997, p. 21). Commending the archivists who guarded the Stasi file to keep from being destroyed, Ash adds, "No democracy in modern history has done more to expose the legacy of the preceding dictatorship than the new Germany has" (p. 21).

An elaborate display in the archives returns to the theme of the punks. In particular, what the Stasi was interested in investigating was a homemade magazine—or zine—titled *Reminder of a Youth Movement Punk*. That *thing* has multiple meanings, as the exhibit explains. The suspect attached to the zine was Gilbert Radulovic: codenamed the "Schreiber" (the writer). What follows is his story, his zine, and his persecution by the Stasi.

In the early 1980s, Radulovic became interested in the "non-conformist attitude of the emerging punk scene in East Berlin." He recorded interviews with the punks and produced an illustrated booklet for private use. That *thing*—in the form of a zine—contained a photograph of a punk posing in front of wall scrawled with graffiti reading "No-one does what he should—everybody does what they want." That message is accompanied by a drawing of notorious punk rocker Johnny Rotten of the Sex Pistols. A large reproduction of the photo is posted in the gallery, thereby capturing the meaning of nonconformity for us to absorb. The Schreiber wanted to share his writing with friends in the West. His mother, a pensioner, was allowed to travel to West Germany, and Radulovic asked her to deliver eight envelopes with copies of the zine. At the border, on January 17, 1985, customs officers discovered the material and deemed it "subversive writing against the GDR." The evidence was confiscated, and his mother confessed that her son was the author. "As a result, the machinery of the Stasi was set into motion again."

The next chapter in the story of the "writer" involves Operation Schreiber as the Stasi initiated surveillance. Department 3 of the Main Department XVII—an Orwellian bureaucratic unit—took on the case, as it was responsible for the "protection of the national economy." The department mounted an investigation into the Schreiber's personal background, including his work at the heating system construction plant where he worked. The zine, as one thing, led to another thing, a "central persons index card F16." As the story goes, the index card was assigned a registration number to catalogue the details of Radulovic: full name, date of birth, address, and occupation. The Stasi opened a picture report on the Schreiber and had him followed and covertly photographed. The surveillance operation provided the "initial operational indications" that Radulovic was guilty of the attempted "illegal establishment of contact," treated as a serious political crime East Germany. In order to "examine" the suspect, he was apprehended at his workplace and taken to a detention center. There, he was asked "to clarify a matter," another euphemism for an interrogation over alleged criminal acts. The exhibit includes a video of an interview with Radulovic taken in 2018. The film, titled "*. . . to clarify a matter*," affords us an opportunity to delve further into the bizarre story of the Schreiber. After the first interrogation and the subsequent "confession" that he was in fact the author of punk booklet, Radulovic was arrested, and criminal proceedings for political crimes began. For these "subversive intentions," he was taken into pretrial detention on the grounds that Radulovic had written texts that could "harm the interests of the GDR

. . . for the purpose of dissemination in foreign countries." In accordance with GDR criminal code, the evidence justified handing down a custodial sentence in excess of two years and two months. For the Stasi, the case was recorded as "successful," and Radulovic was transported to Cottbus Prison to serve his sentence. His mugshots are posted in the Stasi Archives, thereby documenting his processing into the machinery of containment.

As the story of the Schreiber concludes, curators include another *thing*—a typewriter. During the preliminary investigations, the Stasi conducted a house search and confiscated his typewriter as evidence. On display behind protective glass is a typewriter; however, to add another layer of intrigue, we are informed that it is not the same typewriter but one of the same make. The original typewriter used by Radulovic remains missing, and "its whereabouts are still unknown today." Nearby, the actual zine with the picture of the punk is also displayed. Those things, together with a narrative, allow us to connect the dots as they outline the story of the Schreiber—made possible by the storming of the Stasi. As a final reminder of the beginning of the end of the East German surveillance state, a photograph shows a message painted on the wall of the headquarters: "Enough spying—out now" (Welch, 2023, 2019).

CONCLUSION

As discussed throughout this chapter, the meanings of things—informed by a sociology of objects—provide a foundation to interpret *visions of prisons* alongside wars, walls, and watching. The various collections and exhibitions of artefacts testify to the power of a cultural process whereby selected items are transformed from their use value to a signifying value for visitors to absorb, whether in the Museum of Free Derry or the Stasi Museum. As storytelling institutions, those sites allow us to better understand the underlying circumstances of the Troubles and the Cold War. In London, the Imperial War Museum captures both scenarios. A gallery titled "War on the Doorstep: 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland, 1969–1998" explains that for the British Army, it was the longest continuous deployment in its military history. Photographs punctuate the danger facing soldiers as they hide behind riot shields with tear gas swirling around the streets of Belfast. In the background, busses are in flames, and masked teenagers are seen throwing rocks at the British security forces. On display, a robotic vehicle for bomb removal sits in plain view, yet another reminder of the risks of

explosives. Beyond those profane themes of war, the museum partakes in the transcendent. After the Good Friday Agreement, politicians on both sides of the bloody conflict agreed to form a government with Reverend Ian Paisley, a staunch Unionist, as first minister, with Nationalist Martin McGuinness as deputy first minister. Formerly fierce rivals, Paisley and McGuinness are shown together sharing a laugh in a portrait that signals a new beginning for a war-torn society.

Curators at the Imperial War Museum offer us remnants of the British role in the Cold War. A slab of the Berlin Wall stands next to an ominous sign once posted in West Berlin: "Warning. End of British Sector. You Are Forbidden to Proceed Beyond This Point." Much like the National Army Museum, the exhibit moves us through the stages of reconciliation, even "working with enemy" as the British Army mends the wounds of the German defeat in World War II in efforts to build a united Germany. Back in Berlin, visitors at the Stasi Museum conclude their tour with a glimpse into just how intrusively the Stasi had penetrated society. A photograph confirms the infiltration of a Stasi spy, Gunter Guillaume, into the West German government as he is seen standing next to German chancellor Willy Brandt in 1972. On the other side of the cultural spectrum, a large picture of Tatjana Besson shows her playing bass guitar in a concert with her band, facetiously called Die Firma (the firm). The caption reveals to us that Besson worked as a Stasi informant under the code name "Kim." Altogether, these objects and images narrate the complexities of conflict, containment, and surveillance, thereby reproducing the meanings of things. To reiterate, those objects underwent significant transformation in the realm of culture. Moreover, the societies they represent also changed fundamentally as the British military vacated the Troubles in the Northern Ireland and the Cold War dissolved in Germany.

The chapter began with an observation by Sara McDowell and Maire Braniff, who regard the post-conflict heritage in Northern Ireland as "a war by other means" (2014, p. 38). In the absence of widespread violence, it seems that a cultural war, of sorts, has surfaced in the context of museums and related historical sites. Each of the exhibitions studied in this book, of course, offers a particular perspective—and worldview. The Museum of Free Derry and the Siege Museum issue stark differences that shape their narrative of the Troubles, whether it be Nationalist or Unionist, respectively. The Ulster Museum in Belfast carefully attempts to ride a middle ground by respectfully recognizing that a shared history is not the same as a having a common memory. Sectarianism figures prominently in "commemorating the conflict

in the New Northern Ireland" in which cultural forces are subject to partisan biases as they "blur the lines" in ways that treat victimhood as a hierarchy (McDowell and Braniff, 2014, p. 55). The meaning of things—tangible representations of conflict—selected to be displayed in the many museums and memorials in the "New Northern Ireland" at times deliver polarizing messages suggesting that "our" pain is (somehow) worse than "their" pain (Crooke and Maguire, 2018; Misztal, 2003).

FIVE

Meanings of Order

AT THE STASI MUSEUM IN BERLIN, visitors with an interest in learning more about the reach of surveillance are greeted with a poster carrying a blunt message: "Das MfS Weiss Alles"—the MfS knows everything. As mentioned in previous chapters, the Stasi aspired to become an omniscient deity. As an ever-present god, the Stasi lorded over the East German people in an effort to acquire even the minute details of their personal lives. That central tenet of totalitarian control is repeated throughout much of the tour at the former Stasi headquarters. "*Nicht allein in der leitung*"—not alone on the phone—was a reminder that surveillance went beyond visual monitoring and penetrated the realm of the audio. Department 26 was tasked with Measure A for telephone surveillance; accordingly, it aligned itself with the German postal service and unofficial collaborators who were employed in the mail rooms. Upon receiving the recorded conversations of a "target subject," transcriptions were prepared and entered into the files of the surveilled. A large photograph shows a Stasi technician—a modern Wizard of Oz of sorts—maneuvering a massive switchboard alongside several reel-to-reel tape-recording machines. Among the objects on display is a rack of index cards that the Stasi consulted to determine which data storage could be accessed to retrieve documents. As an omniscient deity, the Stasi sought to create the "transparent being" by which the secret police had unlimited access to information about those residing within East Germany, including personnel and health files, tax assessments, insurance policies, and bank statements. "Everything was of interest to the MfS, which made each person transparent."

In previous examinations of the geopolitics of boundaries and punitive containment, we took aim at the big picture so as to provide a macrosociological perspective on *visions of prisons*. Continuing our discussion of

minute details, critical attention is turned to micro-sociological aspects of social control, and the ways they shape wars, walls, and watching. Drawing further on the work of Foucault (2007), matters of discipline, security, and the technologies of power are dissected, paving the way for a look into British military intervention in Northern Ireland. Likewise, the role of the Stasi in the Cold War also allows us to comprehend more fully the intricacies of discipline imposed on the East German people. Among the themes considered here is Foucault's concept of multiplicities, which involves not only identifying an objective for discipline and security but also opening up some social space where those forms of power can be exercised whether it be the prison, the school, or the military. All along, a particular formation of society is being shaped through various meanings of order. As we shall see, those fundamental demographic shifts in Northern Ireland and East Germany are maintained via small but significant expressions.

DISCIPLINE, SECURITY, AND TECHNOLOGIES OF POWER

In a series of lectures at the renowned College de France in Paris, Foucault grappled with conceptual underpinnings of the mechanisms attached to discipline vis-à-vis security. Discipline, Foucault tells us, functions to isolate space; in doing so, it concentrates and focuses while also enclosing. The overarching purpose is to circumscribe space so that power as can operate fully without limit. In that sense, power through the exercising of discipline is protectionist. Drawing on analogies of physics, Foucault characterizes discipline as centripetal. By contrast, security is centrifugal since it expands while incorporating various forms of knowledge, including psychology and the many tendencies people—as well as systems—think and behave. Security involves organizing and thus allowing the development of ever-widening circuits and their offshoots. Discipline differs from security insofar as it regulates everything so that nothing escapes. "Not only does it not allow things to run their course, its principle is that things, the smallest things must not be abandoned to themselves" (Foucault, 2007, p. 45). With respect to legality, discipline divides everything into a code of the permitted and the forbidden, rather than what is obligatory. "Basically, what the law says is, don't do this, don't do that, stop doing that, and so on" (p. 46). In the larger scheme of things, discipline strives toward order which is achieved when everything that is prohibited has in fact been prevented.

Such a legal code, from the perspective of Foucault, is a negative construction (Garland, 1990).

By delving into security, Foucault examines its various manifestations. In one lecture, he notes that security, for advocates of market economics, is best when it is left alone within a commercial environment committed to laissez-faire. With that principle in mind, security is critiqued as a paradox, particularly from a welfarist perspective. As Foucault explains, security as a "natural" system permits "prices to rise, allowing scarcity to develop, and letting people go hungry so as to prevent something else from happening, namely the introduction of the general scourge of scarcity" (2007, p. 45; Harcourt, 2011). In another interpretation of security, Foucault postulates that security enables the old armatures of law and discipline to function more smoothly. Altogether, those technologies—ways of doing things—merge as mechanisms of social control, "as in the case of the penal system" (p. 10). And that meaning of security underpins the thrust of Foucault's lecture series *Security, Territory, Population*, in which he deciphers the nuances of governance within social space. As a brief summary, Foucault concludes, "We can say that sovereignty is exercised within the borders of a territory, discipline is exercised on the bodies of individuals, and security is exercised over the whole population" (p. 11).

After Foucault lays out that conceptual framework, he then concedes: "Territorial borders, individual bodies, and a whole population, yes . . . but this is not the point and I don't think it holds together" (2007, p. 11). That style of thinking out loud is typical of the way he unpacks ideas to sort out their minute details. Foucault commonly detects missing links, and in this situation, he approaches the problem of multiplicities as they relate to sovereignty and discipline. More specifically, the multiplicities of subjects—or people—catches his interest. Foucault does not stop there. Rather, he adds that even though discipline is exercised on bodies, there must exist a multiplicity, an objective, a result, an end game. The prison, the school, the military are forms of social space where penal discipline, student discipline, and soldier discipline are organized and managed within a particular multiplicity. Foucault stiches together his summation in the following manner: "So sovereignty and discipline, as well as security can only be concerned with multiplicities" (p. 12).

Seeking safe ground to illustrate these concepts, Foucault introduces the 17th-century town with its legal and administrative entities, demarcating that social space from other spaces of territory. The town, by comparison, was

more economically and socially mixed than the nondescript countryside. The "town was typically confined within a tight, walled space, which had much more than just a military function" (2007, p. 12). Indeed, such architecture was designed to facilitate trade and commerce as well as the general circulation of goods and people within its walls, all of which became more complex within the shifting urban demography of the 18th century. The significance of surveillance, correspondingly, emerges in the 18th-century town, since "the suppression of city walls made necessary by economic development meant that one could no longer close towns in the evening or closely supervise daily comings and goings" (p. 18). The insecurity of towns was compounded by an influx of floating populations: beggars, delinquents, criminals, and other "questionable" people coming from other places. "In other words, it was a matter of organizing circulation, eliminating its dangerous elements, making a division between good and bad circulation" (p. 18). The ultimate goal, of course, is to establish what Foucault calls the "disciplinary town" as the perfect embodiment of social order (Harcourt, 2008; Welch, 2008, 2010).

As we refine our conceptual approach to *visions of prisons*, a bit more material on Foucault proves useful. David Garland (1990) offers many signposts as we navigate the technologies of power and their mode of operation. The emergence of the prison allows us to explore the details by which domination—and repressive forms of governance—is achieved, thereby socially constructing individuals in the modern world. Over time, corporal and capital punishment yielded to milder techniques of regulative penality that widened into other manifestations of social control, including inspection, surveillance, and discipline. "In Foucault's account the prison is conceived as epitomizing these wider social forms—not because it is a 'typical' institution but rather because it is the place where modern techniques of control are revealed in their unbridled operation" (Garland, 1990, p. 134). In sum, the machinery of incarceration and the knowledge on which it is based underpins modern expressions of power and control. Knowledge, for Foucault, is a catchall concept that points to the "know-how" guiding the technologies of power. The more that is known about a human object, the more controllable it becomes. Garland reminds us that the term "power knowledge" is conceptual shorthand for highlighting the intersection of these dynamics. For the purposes of this study, the technologies of power alongside discipline and security should be interpreted within particular social spaces that Foucault (2007) characterizes as multiplicities (Gordon, 1980). Moving forward, British security in Northern Ireland during the Troubles and Stasi

discipline in East Berlin and East Germany within the Cold War operate under unique circumstances with finite goals, or multiplicities.

SMALL WARS, IMPERIAL POLICING, AND LOW-INTENSITY OPERATIONS

Techniques of security, to reiterate, operate within what Foucault (2007) calls the multiplicity, a social space where power can be exercised. Along the way, meanings are produced that characterize a particular sense of order, even if it appears to be in disarray. Mark McGovern, through his *Counterinsurgency and Collusion in Northern Ireland*, lends support to the notion of multiplicities during the Troubles. In tracing the longer lineage of British counterinsurgency, he points to the influential "warrior scholarship" of three Army officers who planned and conducted numerous operations within "irregular warfare." Charles Callwell, Charles Gwynn, and Frank Kitson each published a work describing their military strategies: *Small Wars* (Callwell, 1963), *Imperial Policing* (Gwynn, 1939), and *Low Intensity Operations* (Kitson, 1971) (see Mumford & Reis, 2014). At the height of late Victorian imperial adventures, in 1896, Major General Callwell issued what was to become the first installment of the "warrior" writings by providing a standard text on counterinsurgency for the British Army up to the World War II. Callwell's reputation "as the foremost expert on colonial warfare" was, therefore, firmly established (McGovern, 2019, p. 12).

In *Small Wars*, Callwell does not mention Ireland, but McGovern (2019) detects threads of Irish connections. Such "small wars" involve imperial and colonial wars, and Callwell's lessons were primarily directed at a British Army operating as an "imperial police force" (1963, pp. 21–22). Here, McGovern suggests that the absence of specific references to Ireland is even more conspicuous. That "imperial police force" is justified as a "moral force of civilization" that fights against "lesser races" and savage enemies" (1963, pp. 25, 80). Unlike conventional war, in "small wars," colonial campaigns targeted "savages and guerillas" to inject a fear of the Empire (p. 80). Recall that the phrase "beyond the pale" was used to describe a white wooden fence marking the edge of the English-controlled territory in Ireland that separated the "civilized" British domain and the "uncivilized" Irish world. Callwell envisions "small wars" as an "exemplary force" or "performative of power" whose mission is to deliver an "end view" in which the enemy

will kept from rising up again (Khalili, 2013, p. 28; Whittingham, 2012, p. 28). That particular term, "end view," is strikingly similar to what Foucault (2017) identifies as an "end game" within the context of a multiplicity where power is exercised. Drawing attention to the significance of the Callwell's "end view," McGovern explains, "The state should use whatever exemplary violence was needed to have the 'moral effect' of instilling the fear necessary to achieve the desired political outcome" (2019, p. 13).

Gwynn's *Imperial Policing* presents added guidance to the military, purporting that it should act as an "aid to civil power" (1939, p. 14). Any force employed, however, ought to be restricted to minimal tactics. Counterinsurgency campaigns within the theatres of colonialism must have the appearance of legitimacy under the rule of law. That "aid to civil power," McGovern (2019) notes, would be framed within a legal and constitutional order. Echoing the logic of Jeremy Bentham, McGovern characterizes Gwynn's thinking as ultimately utilitarian: "The 'minimum force' commitment was based on a calculation of the degree of force of force needed to meet desired ends. Here was a 'necessity principle' not objectively founded but subjectively formed in the political decisions to preserve the existing order" (2019, p. 14). Again, these visions of order, maintained by *imperial policing*, are framed precisely into what Foucault (2017) depicts as multiplicities which interlock social space, power, and end games.

Frank Kitson rounds out the "warrior" literature on counterinsurgency with his *Low Intensity Operations* (1971; see also Kitson, 1960), especially since he moves beyond his experiences in other colonial hot spots, such as Kenya, Oman, Cyprus, and directly into the conflict in Northern Ireland. There, he commanded the 39 Brigade between 1970 and 1972 with overall responsibility for British troops in Belfast. Kitson's approach to counterinsurgency would draw extensively on lessons learned from pacifying other uprisings against the Empire (Newsinger, 2002). Still, the situation in Northern Ireland, a nation within the United Kingdom was entirely different from the faraway places that had distinct Victorian-era legacies of uprisings. Paradoxically, Kitson's strategies, albeit developed from a military stock of knowledge that had been accumulating, especially since the end of World War II, surprised even his top military advisors. In *Brits: The War Against the IRA*, journalist Peter Taylor delves into the experiential aspects of the Troubles, particularly from the perspective of British soldiers stationed there. Their interviews shed light on the complexity of a multiplicity and its shifting rationales for its operations. Jamie, a senior officer based in Northern Ireland, told Taylor that "the Army's experience in 1969 was a complete

mixture—a combination of internal security and counter-revolutionary warfare which had been developed after the Second World War in the context of the withdrawal from empire." In addition to Kenya, Oman, Cyprus, the British Army was intervening in other conflicts in Brunei, the Far East, as well as Aden. Taylor asked Jamie, "Do you think that Army realized that it was dealing with a similar situation when it was deployed in Northern Ireland?" Jamie replied that at the time, the soldiers probably did not see Northern Ireland as a counter-revolution warfare situation but rather as an internal security situation. "I think everyone was pretty amazed at finding themselves on the streets of the United Kingdom" (Taylor, 2001, p. 30; see Elkins, 2022).

Kitson's "experiment" in Northern Ireland stressed the importance of intelligence, propaganda, and cover operations. However, the post-1945 imperative to, at least, appear to comply with international law and human rights would continue to have a drag effect on Kitson's missions, since its tactics would be criticized as operating outside the orbit of legality (McGovern, 2019; Urwin, 2016). Determined to eradicate what Kitson saw as a Republican insurgency in Northern Ireland, he instructed the military to "get the job done." Once again, McGovern connects the dots of utilitarian logic driving British counterinsurgency and practice in which the "'ethics' of governing the deployment of coercive state violence were premised on the calculating the state's own self-identified need" (2019, p. 18). Above all, Kitson's *visions of prisons* would be contoured around surveillance and containment via "effective intelligence" and the "necessary adaption" of the administration of arrest, interrogation, and imprisonment (1971, p. 69; Cormac, 2018). As an end game, that complex multiplicity would become increasingly repressive and punitive within a defined social space. Counterinsurgency operations, such as mass roundups and detention without trial, were aimed at the minority population of Northern Ireland, most notably Irish Catholics and other supporters of the Republican movement (see Geraghty, 2000).

Lessons from *Small Wars, Imperial Policing*, and *Low Intensity Operations* would emerge in the Troubles, and not without considerable blowback as the IRA hunkered down. The most obvious consequence was a prolonged sociopolitical conflict. Thus, the long war paralleled the intelligence war that unfolded in phases. From the late 1960s to the mid-1970s, the British counterintelligence strategy embraced "militarization." Next, a period of "criminalization," lasting until the early 1990s, would yield to "accommodation" as the peace process set in. Soon after the British Army arrived, it had to

make sense of the ethno-political conflict. Building physical barriers to contain the violence was one of its enduring tactics. Ironically, those partitions became known as the "peace lines" separating the Catholic/Republican/Nationalist community from their Protestant/Loyalist/Unionist neighbors. "The Army's strategy was for the peace line to go up and the barricades that had sprung up to come down. It was erected like an Irish Berlin Wall but not all the barricades were dismantled since Nationalists argued that they need them for their own protection." (Taylor, 2001, pp. 42–43). The Army, at that time, did not regard the IRA as the enemy but rather as an ally defending the Nationalists from Loyalist attacks. Sectarian animosity spiked during the marching season when Loyalist crowds paraded into Nationalist areas, sparking violent exchanges of rocks and bottles. Taylor reminds us that "no amount of mollification by British politicians and the British Army could make them go away. The 'Brits' became prisoners of the problem they had created by plantation and partition. Marching dragged the Army in" (2001, p. 43). Consequently, the meanings of order—and internal security—became increasingly more complicated (McCann, 2018; Prince & Warner, 2019).

As chaos spread, the Army scrambled to restore order, thereby imposing the infamous curfew, a military tactic that the British had employed in the Crater district in Aden. As previously described as punitive containment, house-to-house searches were carried out by soldiers, who desecrated family homes while claiming to be looking for weapons. Taylor points out that a show of British force might not have seemed out of place in the Crater but was glaringly wrong in the United Kingdom. The damage done was irreparable, leaving women and children to fend for themselves among the ruins of their communities. In the aftermath, a young British officer conceded that he viewed the curfew with sadness and regret. The romance was over; the divorce was set. "Unwittingly, the 'Brits' had handed the IRA an issue that it could exploit to justify its actions against soldiers no longer depicted as saviors but as the 'forces of occupation.' Bullets and bombs replaced tea and cakes" (Taylor, 2001, p. 51; see also Feldman, 1991). Hence, the military order enjoyed during the "honeymoon" dissolved into disorder paving the way to the "divorce."

The "war" model contained in "militarization" proved counterproductive, since the repression produced an escalation in state violence within a multiplicity in which its victims were predominately Catholic/Nationalist civilians. In turn, resistance against the British "occupation" deepened in what commentators viewed as Britain's "last colony." In a shift in tactics, "criminalization" would serve to normalize the containment. "The ideological battle would be

fought on the terrain of 'criminalizing' and depoliticizing the opposition . . . while the use of force was increasingly calibrated by this overarching political logic" (McGovern, 2019, p. 37). Casting opposition and resistance as "criminal," the counterinsurgency units planned covert operations, such as targeted assassinations and shoot-to-kill policies. Of course, supporters of British security measures would fiercely deny that its agents had vacated the rule of law and hid behind the shadows of lethal force (Cory, 2004; Rolston, 1991; Urwin, 2016).

STASI DISCIPLINE IN THE COLD WAR

To repeat, Foucault insists that whereas security is a centrifugal force, discipline is centripetal. Although the previous section outlined the challenges of security in Northern Ireland, here we consider another form of multiplicity as it emerges in East Germany, where the Stasi attempts to impose discipline on a mass scale. Once again, discipline regulates everything so that nothing escapes—even down to the most minute detail. The endgame for the Stasi was total control for a totalitarian state. Up to now, we have been exploring Berlin in search of remnants and reminders of the East German regime. Leipzig, known as the City of Heroes, is remembered for its role in the 1989 Peaceful Revolution that mobilized East Germans to confront the authorities in ways that dismantled the Iron Curtain and the Berlin Wall, paving the road to unification with the West. The city serves as an open-air museum with an exhibition, *Sites of the Peaceful Revolution*, in which 20 places commemorate important events that eventually brought down the dictatorship regime. The pillars with information panels posted around Leipzig were made from expanded metal from the former border fortifications. "This idea is based on forms of cultural memory which are found at many locations of significant experiences, where people hang flyers, labels, flowers, candles or other objects on fences to give voice to their feelings." St. Nicholas's Church, for example, is where citizens demanded the release of political prisoners. Other destinations attracting visitors is the Stasi Museum, known as the Round Corner due to its circular façade. Much like their Berliner counterparts, activists occupied that office of state security. Currently inside, the Leipzig Citizen's Committee narrates that particular branch of the Stasi. "The working of this secret service apparatus, which penetrated into the most private aspects of people's lives, sowed mistrust among neighbors, and violated the most elementary human rights, is the subject of our documentation of this authentic location."

FIGURE 12. Honecker portrait. At the Forum of Contemporary History in Leipzig (Germany), a portrait of Erich Honecker symbolizes the omnipresence of the head of the totalitarian state. © retrowelch 2026

Cultural memory also is activated at Leipzig's Forum of Contemporary History that details the city's campaign for a new—democratic—society. Throughout that space, exhibitions throw critical light on the East German dictatorship and the various multiplicities in which discipline is exercised. Again, the notion of an omniscient deity captures the dynamic of social control whereby an ever-present authority figure imposes surveillance over the population. In the Forum of Contemporary History, curators post a portrait of Erich Honecker, secretary general of the SED Central Committee and chairman of the State Council since 1976, "and hence the most powerful man in the GDR." A caption simply reads: "Omnipresent." Throughout East Germany, a formal picture of Honecker is hung conspicuously in nearly every office; indeed, that workplace served as a multiplicity where discipline was exercised. Visitors at the forum receive a brief explanation of that aspect of totalitarianism. "Party orders and fulfilment of the plan are always on the minds of company and combine directors too. They are the decisive link between the government and the workers" (figure 12).

Nearby, a similar gallery in the forum examines another multiplicity where discipline is achieved, namely, the classroom of an elementary school. The title of the exhibit is *Education and Training*, and here we are informed that the ruling political party, the SED, used every opportunity to indoctrinate children. Among the lessons learned is that "the 'struggle for peace' is omnipresent" so that students develop a positive image of the People's Army. "Ideological and military references are found in the textbooks on nearly every subject. . . . Anyone straying from the prescribed path is put under pressure in school and work training." Unsurprisingly, the apparatus of discipline and surveillance concentrated on students who might wander from the party line. "In order to identify youth or keep an eye on the youth scene, the secret police repeatedly tries to recruit students as informants. There are teachers who suggest suitable candidates to the Stasi. The pressure on teachers and students is enormous." Foucault demonstrates how discipline expands into several areas of education and social development. At the forum, we also learn that even school sports are connected to the military. "Exercises include tossing sports equipment similar in form and weight to hand grenades." Harassment is commonly aimed at teenagers who refuse to participate in such militarized sports and parents who exempt their children from military training are considered politically unreliable.

As another reminder of how state discipline was infused within the population, a prison van, similar to the one displayed at the Stasi Museum in Berlin, is on display at the forum. The vehicle containing prison compartments was designed to deliver "enemies of the state" to one of several detention centers scattered throughout the country. Once inside the van, "the detainees are left alone with their fears"; they are meant to become completely disoriented. . . . [Eventually] they are imprisoned for many months or years for escape attempts or public protests. Adding to a sense of state-wide discipline, an exhibit on surveillance features cameras and listening devices used by the secret police as it spied on "hostile-negative forces" such as churches, homes, and offices.

An art installation in the forum takes aim at the enormity of state surveillance in East Germany. Stefan Roloff recreates what he calls "an all-German living room." The comforts of home are surrounded by windows that rotate video sequences taken in 1984 border patrols along the Berlin Wall. "Images of border guards and watchtowers contrast sharply with the petit-bourgeois paradise." Roloff titles his artwork *Life in the Death Strip*. Clearly, a dystopian *vision of prisons* emerges as a theme surrounding the Cold War, the Berlin Wall, and the continuous watching of people (figure 13).

FIGURE 13. Living room. In Leipzig (Germany), artist Stefan Roloff's installation *Life in the Death Strip* is a critique on surveillance. © retrowelch 2026

With a similar flair for irony, East German artist Cornelia Schleime turned her own Stasi files into art in 1993. Upon reading her file, she was shocked by the frequently degrading remarks made by her close friend who served as a Stasi informant which led to her art being barred from public exhibition. Schleime is shown in a photograph posing in front of a portrait of Secretary General Erich Honecker, "the most powerful man in the GDR." She cracks a smile and raises a glass in a sarcastic gesture of saying "Cheers!"

BRITISH (IN)SECURITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Returning to Foucault's notion of security and the significance of circulation underscore the manner by which the British military regulated the movement of people in Northern Ireland, particularly as it sought to reduce potentially dangerous situations. By focusing on the Troubles, the National Army Museum reflects on the techniques of security and the various meanings they produce within a particular multiplicity. "At times of heightened conflict, civilians routinely encountered an array of vehicles and firearms.

The patrols looked menacing to some, but for others they were a reassuring presence." Queuing is a fundamental part of managing modern life in what Tim Newburn and Andrew Ward (2022) describe as "orderly Britain." However, forming a queue in a city in Northern Ireland during the conflict takes on different connotations that are often narrated by the state. A photograph on display shows a lengthy queue of residents passing through a gated checkpoint coupled with a picture of a bombed building as it lays in ruins. The message reads, "Inconvenience can be this [a bomb blast] or this [a long queue]. . . . Your safety is our concern." Curators identify the message for exactly what it is: "A propaganda poster promoting Army security measures."

At the Ulster Museum, the special skills required for car inspection are illustrated by way of a vehicle search card displayed in a glass case. The instructional card was created by the security forces to advise their personnel how to conduct a systematic search for booby-trapped devices hidden in cars. With the fine detail, the anatomy of a vehicle is broken down into five areas: inside boot (trunk), interior, engine compartment, outside, underneath. Those areas are then dissected into more than 15 subareas, including the spare wheel well, under wheel arches, behind radiator, grille, headlamps, air filter, and so on. Soldiers are trained to examine any large box sections of the vehicle as well as any double skin surface such as the upholstery of the seats. In bold red lettering, the search card reads "Systematic Search Is Essential"—an ominous reminder of just how dangerous traffic circulation can be.

As a multiplicity, the streets of Northern Ireland pose hazards not only for the British soldiers but also for civilians. Therefore, security measures incorporate the role of civilians in the watching over their immediate environment. A poster at the Ulster Museum superimposes a picture of a group of pedestrians with an individual marked in red. The captions warns, "A firebomber could be anyone in a crowd—if you see anything suspicious—dial 999." In the face of those perilous situations, British officers initiated greater security measures with the assistance of new technologies, namely military robotics. The National Army Museum and the Imperial War Museum dwell on the use of bomb disposal vehicles known as "wheel-barrows." In those galleries, visitors are informed that the British Army increased its reliance on remote-controlled robots to enter "places that are too dangerous or inaccessible for people." Additionally, those technologies aided "disaster recovery and the search through rubble for survivors." Even with those security measures, the British Army faced unusual hazards, since they were trained to fight conventional wars on a battlefield and not prepared for the challenging task of

patrolling the streets in Northern Ireland. "The enemy was unseen, little different from the people they know in their home towns." Indeed, the meaning of that particular multiplicity speaks to the unique circumstances in which security is exercised, striving for an end-game of public safety. Still, the security challenges facing British soldiers was complex, especially along lines of sectarianism. The Ulster Museum posts a remnant of the Troubles in the form of a "Belfast town plan" issued to security forces in 1969 that is color coded to distinguish Protestant, Catholic, and mixed sections of the community.

The circumstances, situations, and multiplicities that compounded security in Northern Ireland changed dramatically with each major crisis. A series of posters in the Ulster Museum chronicle the flow of tragedies through four decades. For instance, "1972 was a turbulent year in Northern Ireland. In fact, it was the worst year of the Troubles by its most distressing measure—loss of life. 496 people were killed as a result of the conflict." Curators summarize some to those moments in 1972. On January 30, known as Bloody Sunday, 13 unarmed civilians were shot dead in Derry as British paratroopers opened fire on a banned civil rights march (a 14th victim died later). Later that summer, the IRA detonated 26 bombs in just over one hour in Belfast on July 21. On that Bloody Friday, nine people died and 130 were injured. "Warnings had been given, but because of the number of bombs and the scale of the operation, these were simply insufficient to avoid awful casualties" (English, 2012, p. 158; see Geraghty, 2000).

While some speculated that Bloody Friday was a retaliatory spectacle for Bloody Sunday, it was actually in response to a failed truce between the Republican paramilitaries and the British government in 1972. Compounding matters, the British Army violently prevented Republicans from moving Catholic families into vacated Protestant homes in Lenadoon, sparking a fierce gun battle. Hence, Blood Friday marked a moment when the IRA upped the ante and show the British that it had become a formidable force. It should be noted that the IRA did launch a retaliatory strike for Bloody Sunday by attacking the Parachute Regiment Headquarters in Aldershot, England, in April 1972, "killing five female workers, at the base, a gardener, and a Catholic Army priest" (English, 2012, p. 175).

In response to Bloody Friday, the British military launched Operation Motorman on July 31 in an effort to dismantle the so-called no-go areas of Belfast and Derry. Those sections, such as Free Derry, had restricted the movement and circulation of British soldiers, thereby creating a unique multiplicity that curtailed its exercise of security. By adding more troops

and armored vehicles, the British Army broke through barricades to regain control of those communities, and as a result, another multiplicity was formed to implement security. Any sense of order, however, was shattered that same day when Republican paramilitaries exploded three car bombs in Claudy, a small village of 1,000 in County Derry. Nine people were killed, and 50 were injured. Amid the confusion, "police moved people away from a suspicious vehicle, unwittingly directing them towards the location of a third bomb." Offering visual evidence of those attacks, the poster includes a series of photographs—triggering an emotional register of shock among visitors (see Taylor, 2001).

POETIC ORDER IN EAST GERMANY

With a very different sense of order—and its multiple meanings—the Stasi embarked on an ambitious project that embraced poetics. Recent revelations of that unusual layer of surveillance is the subject of Philip Oltermann's book *The Stasi Poetry Circle: The Creative Writing Class that Tried to Win the Cold War*. Beginning in 1982, secret police agents convinced themselves that poets were encoding their work with embedded messages to subvert the East German regime. To counter that putative threat, the Stasi set out to train their own writers, thereby weaponizing poetry in a battle against the class enemy. Oltermann's investigation into those efforts reveal how a collective of soldiers and border guards attended monthly meetings to learn the techniques of lyrical verse. *The Stasi Poetry Circle* illustrates how a utopian order of the GDR descended into a paranoid culture in which spies reinvented themselves into poets who then spied on fellow writers. Whereas Peter Taylor structures his book, *Brits*, around time periods, including the "honeymoon" and the "divorce," Oltermann relies on literary devices as titles for each chapter: "Consonance," "Metaphor," "Persona."

The emerging poetic order was established in a tightly controlled environment located in the Adlershof compound, home of the GDR's elite fighting force, the Guards Regiment (or Wachregiment) who supervised the construction of the Berlin Wall. Deep inside their restricted zone, Aldershof became a mythical place in East Germany's imagination. Like so many secret military installations, the site did not appear on any maps; in its place was a blank space. The Guards Regiment was inspired by Felix Dzershinsky, the mastermind behind the Soviet secret police and architect of the Red Terror. Soldiers

of the Guards Regiment spent their days—and nights—watching over the Wall and gazing into West Berlin, which became a "'demilitarized free city' . . . without an army garrison and without conscription for men registered there. . . . [It] amassed an army of only of pacifists, drop-outs and dreamers [for] West Germans keen to avoid military service" (Oltermann, 2022, p. 5). To insulate itself from the West and its other meanings of order, Adlershof contained all the amenities of a small village retrofitted with its own bookshop, radio station, cinema, and even a swimming pool. In the House of Culture—Kulturhaus—the Stasi Poetry Circle gathered to share ideas of a unique vision of communism, thereby transforming one of the world's most brutal spy agencies into a Red Poet's Society. For two hours, every month, members of the program would take turns reciting what they had written in their spare time.

The Circle instilled within its comrades a distinct dogma: "Poetry had to rouse emotion and boost that hunger for victory in class warfare. The group's literary shepherd believed his flock should write poems that were like marching songs: distractions from the everyday hardship of military life that also focused the mind on the ideological goal on the horizon" (Oltermann, 2022, pp. 14–15). Johannes Becher was among the luminaries who would shepherd Stasi poets. In promising a new social order, Becher insisted that workers and intellectuals ought not reside in separate cultural corners. Rather, they would become one in the same in consolidating a "new model society" or "literature society" in which creative writing would not merely reflect social conditions but shape them. Although the term "literature society" did not make its way into technical vocabulary of the GDR, its significance would resonate in the thoughts of political leaders for decades. General Secretary Erich Honecker championed his state as a "country of readers" that would rival what he mocked as the "bestseller country" on the other side of the Berlin Wall. From 1950 to 1989, the number of books of fiction printed in East Germany more than tripled, even as its population declined, making East Germany one of the most prolific publishers in the world next to the Soviet Union and Japan. In terms of literacy, East German students outperformed their Western counterparts. Those studies, however, do not mean that East Germans read more than West Germans. "But it did mean that East Germans read more closely: they excelled at working out not just what the text said on the surface, but what it said between the lines (Oltermann, 2022, pp. 30–31).

As a central pillar of the new socialist state, poetry would become "the very definition of everything good and beautiful, of a more meaningful, humane form of living: it was a creative order, an elevated form of existence, the eternal transcendence of man" (Oltermann, 2022, p. 25). While absorbing the lyrical beauty of poetry, the Circle immersed itself in the sonnet, or the little song that relies on a turn of thought in its concluding lines. In the new East German state, that poetic form would serve utopian purposes. Becher proposed that the sonnet structurally mirrored the Marxist vision of historical progress. With Hegelian logic, history gravitates toward a higher stage of freedom by way of dialectics. A three-step pattern begins with an idea, the thesis, to a contradiction of that idea, an antithesis, and finally toward a solution that resolves those two opposing ideas. For Marxists, society would be transformed from a bourgeois order into a communist state, according to the theory of dialectical materialism, the official worldview of the Soviet Union and its satellite states. Through poetry, Becher believed, East Germans could learn Hegel's "rhythm of insight," in particular the "philosophy of the sonnet." Above all, "the sonnet was the algorithm that would guide East Germany's population of nineteen million gently into freedom" (Oltermann, 2022, p. 27).

Apart from those lofty notions of philosophy, the Circle was encouraged to make an impact with their writings, becoming a technology of power for a "literature society." Poetry, with all its metaphors and personas, would become "effective as a weapon in the ideological class structure with imperialism. . . . The idea that poetry could be a secret weapon was more practical in comparison, especially if your entire existence was dedicated to a struggle to fend off the enemies of socialism" (Oltermann, 2022, p. 40). Some of the poems authored by members of the Circle issued an ominous warning to those considering subversive thoughts, or worse subversive actions:

> We watch your step
>
> We judge, we sentence
>
> and we pardon
>
> We are / an INSTITUTION.
>
> (Oltermann, 2022, p. 48)

This Red Poets Society remained very much committed to Stasi missions to discredit writers who they opposed in the general population. Consider the

controversy over the 1979 collections of works by singer-songwriter Bettina Wegner, who was targeted by informants for her tendency to create feelings of unease and disappointment within her lyrics. Wegner was despised by her detractors in the East as being sympathetic to the "other side." An informant recommended psychological warfare to unsettle the target by recruiting left-leaning journalists in the West to discredit her songs and thereby undermine her popularity. The circulation of a catchy put-down was proposed, disparaging Wegner's songs as "tampon poetry." Other writers were similarly targeted by snitches for producing "verses about boozing, vomiting, and shitting" (Oltermann, 2022, pp. 69–71).

In the larger scheme of things, reverence was reserved for the poem, especially the "good poem" as miniature model for a the "good society." The Circle maintained—and reinforced—the ideological vision of the GDR. "A state with steady feet and a perfectly calibrated rhyme structure would learn to wind its way through the corridor of history to the steady beat of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, just as the sonnet unfurls down the page" (Oltermann, 2022, p. 136). Thanks to the Stasi Archives, where Oltermann conducted research, *The Stasi Poetry Circle*, the poetic order of East Germany, is remembered as a remarkable remnant of the Cold War. More than just a collection of verses and lyrics, Oltermann's volume points to the importance and structure of the technology of power. As a weapon, the art of poetry was aimed at disciplining the East German people while securing the state, at least until the regime collapsed by its own weight (Ash, 1997; Hope, 2022).

CONCLUSION

The meanings of order, as presented in this chapter, point to the depth of interpretations of political and military interventions in Northern Ireland vis-à-vis East Germany. Those sites where power is exercised provide what Foucault describes as multiplicities—social spaces in which discipline and security as well as an array of technologies are activated to manage people. Bundled together, those dynamics contribute to "power knowledge" that allows authorities to gather information about persons that in turn make them more controllable. Whereas a previous set of chapters outlined the big picture, this section explored the more minute details of *visions of prisons* that imagine certain people being situated inside a designated space. Recognizing the many connotations of containment, those social spaces are contoured

along political regimes viewed by those inside them as either colonial or totalitarian, as Northern Ireland and East Germany seem to suggest.

In closing, let us consider a few more examples of the meanings of order, one from Northern Ireland during the Troubles and two from East Germany during the Cold War. At the Ulster Museum in Belfast, a poster with futuristic style lettering reads "Resist Repression: Support Republican Clubs" and features a large brute in body armor and helmet beating a civilian with a baton. A caption explains that in the early 1970s, the Republican movement organized to circumvent a ban on Sinn Fein candidates who were declared illegal in Northern Ireland in 1967; the measure was lifted in 1973. A list of demands are enumerated on the poster: "(1) The immediate release of all political detainees, (2) The immediate repeal of all repressive legislation, (3) The withdrawal of the British Army, and (4) The setting up of a democratic people's assembly." In sum, those statements speak to efforts in forming of a different type of political order by dismantling British control of Northern Ireland (see McCann, 2018).

In Leipzig, the Forum of Contemporary History offers a glimpse into a changing society that resisted the totalitarian regime. There, an imposing border post looms over visitors and bears the GDR's state emblem. It is one of nearly 3,000 markers placed along the 1,400-kilometer-long inner-German border. Curators remind us that "unauthorized border crossings often end in death." Elsewhere in the gallery, objects, images, and text symbolize a shifting social order by displaying barbed wire and bolt-cutters and photographs of Hungarian border guards dismantling the barriers to Austria, thus opening the Iron Curtain to the West. Though previously barred from crossing the border, East Germans were finally allowed to move freely into the West in 1989. Hence, the dystopian character of the GDR, as remembered by border posts, is shattered by East Germans pictured as cheerful "peaceful revolutionaries" in Leipzig, the City of Heroes (Ladd, 1977; Wyden, 1989).

As we segue to the next series of chapters in part 3, "Trajectories of Surveillance," we remain mindful that comparative examinations of post-conflict societies offer ample insights into the remnants of wars, walls, and watching.

PART THREE

Trajectories of Surveillance

SIX

Vertical-Veillance

AS WE EMBARK ON PART 3 OF THIS BOOK, we recognize the various trajectories of surveillance to interpret with greater clarity the dimensions of wars, walls, and watching that in turn create particular *visions of prisons*. A return to London provides an opportunity to understand how these phenomena developed over time, especially since an early history of the Tower of London begins with the incarnation of the Conqueror's Castle. That residence of the victorious William, duke of Normandy, was fortified in the tradition of a military prowess "complemented by the pioneering use of castles as a means of securing newly won territories—as the citizens of London were about to discover." But while the Battle of Hastings (1066) earned William the crown, his "campaign to subdue the rest of this hostile, rebellious country was only beginning." Williams's forces followed circuitous routes through the land, brining terror to villages, and soon, the intimidation of the "evil inhabitants" forged their allegiance to the warrior king who ordered his men to build "a fortress in the city" as a "visible symbol of Norman domination" (Borman, 2015, pp. 16–20). The Tower of London was designed to project monarchical power, and with staggering heights, it delivered a form of vertical surveillance that loomed over the newly conquered people while keeping an eye on potential threats from afar. Today, visitors experience the enduring legacy by touring the Tower of London and absorbing its architectural grandeur.

The Tower of London, with all its royal—and optical—power, holds membership in a distinct group of architectural wonders that include the Bastille. In the previous installment of this trilogy of books, *The Bastille Effect* reminds us that the Bastille emerged as a unique fortress prison whose semiotics were both ambitious and undeniably direct, since it chose to deliver "a show of force, in order not to have a use of force" (Godechot,

1970, p. 86; Welch, 2022). In the popular imagination, we view the Bastille through the famous painting by Hubert Robert replicated on postcards and other memorabilia. Still, it is important to separate fact from fiction, since Hubert took artistic license to make the Bastille appear even taller than it actually was, thus giving it a Babylonian eminence. "Certainly, the elevation of the Bastille in his painting, with its tiny figures scampering jubilantly over its battements, suggests an immense Gothic castle of darkness and secrecy, a place into which men would disappear without warning and never again see the light of day" (Schama, 1990, p. 389). In a strange turn of events, Hubert, for all of his Romantic aesthetics honoring the Revolution, would be suspected as being a traitor by the Reine of Terror. He was hunted down, arrested, and imprisoned in 1793. Due to an error in the processing of the condemned, however, Hubert narrowly missed the guillotine (Bailey, 2016; Catala, 2013).

Testimonies of those targeted by the Stasi echo those who feared first the French monarchy and then the untamed violence in a post-Revolution Paris. The Bastille, with its foreboding towers—albeit exaggerated by Hubert—activated visible awareness of surveillance. Such presence parallels the countryside of Northern Ireland during Troubles. At the Ulster Museum, similar styles of vertical surveillance—or vertical-veillance—are captured in photographs of military installations built by the British Army during the Troubles. One in particular is a remarkable picture taken by Donovan Wylie, who spent a year chronicling the British Army watchtowers in Northern Ireland. Curators explain that Wylie set out to explore the concept of military observation as a tactic of social control. With the aid of a military helicopter, Wylie scanned the elevated position of Romeo 12 on a hilltop in South Armagh. The image captures "the dominance of the landscape . . . reminiscent of an Iron Age hill fort." As a visible sign of the Troubles, those watchtowers conspicuously dotted the border areas. As a condition of the peace process, they were dismantled and removed by 2007.

In this chapter, matters surrounding vertical-veillance are examined in depth. In the first segment, some theoretical ideas are considered as they inform our approach to keeping watch, or the practice of panopticism. With closer alignment, we then delve into the strategies exercised by the British military and intelligence apparatus amid the Troubles and the Stasi in the Cold War. The emphasis here is a trajectory of surveillance that operates power from above, emulating an omniscient deity. In later chapters, two other trajectories will be examined, namely lateral-veillance and counter-veillance, in which power is channeled sideways and from below, respectively.

This particular look at *visions of prisons* attends to certain forms of architecture that allow us to theorize the exercise of power. Indeed, the watchtower offers even more insights into how surveillance is practiced. In that sense, the notion of practice has dual meanings. First, practice refers to the repetition of rehearsing as it strives for improved performance. Second, practice also connotes the actual performance. The circular rotation of practice—as rehearsal then performance—is a constant dynamic of power, especially within a technological and architectural world. The prison, to be sure, has remained a vivid institution where surveillance is established and practiced; with repetition, those technologies of authority are refined, allowing for the diffusion of knowledge that benefits other forms of watching.

Once again, *The Bastille Effect* helps us understand the dynamics of panopticism and the visual power that surveillance produces over its subjects—just one of several propositions in Foucauldian thought. Before we get too far into the thinking of Foucault, it is crucial to throw critical light onto Jeremy Bentham and *The Panopticon Writings* (Bozovic, 1995). Although the Bastille was demolished beyond recognition, it still resides in the popular imagination. Similarly, Bentham's panopticon was never to be built in England. Nonetheless, its design continues to intrigue prison architects, particularly those who take credit for such penitentiaries as Stateville (Illinois). Therefore, much of what we know about Bentham and his captivating invention is drawn from his blueprints, and more significantly, their underlying rationale. Bentham's logic began with micro-philosophical reasoning—utilitarianism—then, with a force all its own, panopticism exploded into a macro-sociological phenomenon, or what Cohen calls "*visions of social control*." For Bentham, the panopticon had a futuristic reach, envisioning an ultimate penitentiary. It's very name was self-evident. The panopticon would serve as a place of sight so as to see everything. Eventually, that "inspection house" would be catch the attention of dystopian author, Aldous Huxley who derided it as a "totalitarian housing project" (Johnston, 1978, p. 20).

Those characterizations stem from the panopticon's layout. Departing from conventional prison designs, the panopticon features an indoor guard tower at the center of the floor plan surrounded by several circular tiers of cells. The design was deliberately intended to maximize surveillance since the guard, positioned inside the tower, enjoyed complete and continuous view of the prisoners confined in their individual compartment. Bentham's careful

attention to detail permits him to add another visual dimension. That is, each cell was fitted with an exterior window that channeled shafts of natural light into the confined space. As a result, the prisoners would be backlit within a performance of surveillance, thereby casting the panopticon as a theatre of punishment (Welch, 2011).

Foucault did not hesitate to unpack the ingenious meaning of the panopticon within a larger paradigm of social control. He quickly points to the merging of geometry with economics that together reinforce the mechanics and practice of observation. The panopticon's circular design renders the prison population more visible, making the institution more efficient since fewer guards would be needed to provide adequate supervision. The conspicuous presence of the central guard tower also creates a sense of an omniscient deity, an ever-present watchful god. According to Bentham's plan, as well as Foucault's critique, the overarching trajectory of surveillance was not so much the body of the convict but rather the mind. By design, Bentham injected his utilitarian tenets into panopticism in which the repetitive exercise of power would permeate the prisoner's consciousness, thereby internalizing surveillance with an enduring presence of mind. "Hence, the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (Foucault, 1979, 201; 1996). Whereas the panopticon is often regarded solely as an architectural style of prison design, Foucauldian thought guides us to recognize that form of power in broader spheres of control. Theorized herein, panopticism is at the very core of *visions of prisons* in an array of social structures ranging from colonial occupation to totalitarian dominance.

The Bastille Effect draws us into the historical significance of colonial resistance and the unique performance of penal architecture. Among those examples is the Kilmainham prison in Dublin. Given its central role in the 1916 uprising in which Irish volunteers rebelled against their British occupiers, Kilmainham commemorates not only its political prisoners but those executed there as well, earning the title the Bastille of Ireland (O'Dwyer, 2010). Today, Kilmainham is open to the public as tourists around the world marvel at its Victorian design and its powerful panoptic interior. As a colonial prison, Kilmainham's architecture was imported from Pentonville Prison in London. The plan, indeed, was futuristic: eliminating corridors, installing catwalks, and illuminating the entire vaulted space with a skylight. Its spatial effects are narrated by placards: "This design combined separate confinement with the greatest possible level of inspection by prison staff, in

a manner that echoes Bentham's *Panopticon* ('all-seeing eye')" (Welch, 2022, p. 104). As we segue to the more recent Troubles, panopticism is witnessed by visitors at the Crumlin Road Gaol that, too, is open for public viewing. Among other things, the "Crum" curates the conflict between Republicans and Loyalists whose paramilitaries were imprisoned in its high-security units that invite tourists to experience their cramped conditions. Still, its Victorian design grabs their attention since like Kilmainham, the "Crum" maximizes its interior visibility with a circular atrium illuminated by natural light, giving it the god-like presence of a cathedral.

Panopticism in other colonial lands is explored in the first volume of this trilogy. In *Escape to Prison*, we spend time in Johannesburg, South Africa, where the British imported another wave of Victorian surveillance. At the former Women's Jail, the power of panoptics is shown in a visual display in which form and function create a compelling mixture of semiotics and space. As *The Fabrication of Virtue: English Prison Architecture, 1750–1840*, by Robin Evans, explains, "[Prison] architecture once the emblem of social order, was now one its fundamental instruments" (1982, back cover; see Bender, 1987). As we stand in the epicenter of the atrium of the Women's Jail, its optical impact is evident. The interior conveys a clear semio-technology by way of is concentric geometry that dictates both its design and its purpose. As Evans points out, the circular layout of prisons can be traced from the temple, to the chapel, to roundhouse theater, to the model penitentiary, all of which boast a symbolic panorama to be contemplated by the observer. "In the prison, however, the properties of the circle were employed otherwise, establishing the authority of the gaoler by displaying not the architecture and its decoration, but the inmates and their activities" (1982, p. 414). Again, panopticism unites geometry with economics, and at a higher level of abstraction, it also projects a sense of morality by imitating Christian beliefs in an all-knowing god that oversees person reform, or conformity as its endgame. Bentham, in fact, cited the 139th Psalm in proposing that the invisible guard in the central tower performed an executive power analogous to that of an omniscient deity who could see everything at all times (1995).

The performance of panopticism at the Women's Jail, both in its previous incarnation as a prison and in its afterlife as a museum, benefits from the lessons of watching as curators quote Bentham: "Rather than confine prisoners to medieval dungeons . . . they should be under constant surveillance by the all seeing eye of prison authorities." As *Escape to Prison* notes, visitors, much like the guards before them, practice surveillance by standing in the epicenter

and gazing down each hallway. It's appealing interior, however, deceitfully hides its harmful effects. Curators summarize this particular panoptic logic:

> Unlike the men's section which does not conceal its primary purpose, this space beguiles the eye and misleads the mind. The light filled atrium and the cells radiating off it conceal the very essence of a jail—punishment and subjugation. The architecture of the Women's Jail might be more subtle than that of a male prison in terms of power and control, but it is just as violent. (Welch, 2015, p. 105)

Whereas South Africa under apartheid and Northern Ireland during the Troubles differ greatly with respect to their struggles against colonial authorities, they share a common bond given the manner in which their prisons practiced panopticism. Louise Purbrick elaborates on the significant innovations in the British response to the Troubles, such as the Maze prison that was constructed to isolate the paramilitaries, mainly those fighting for the Republican cause. In her essay "The Architecture of Containment," Purbrick insists that "repetition is a feature of control systems. The duplication of physical structures (walls, cells, blocks) produces a predictable environment allowing security to be planned out and then constantly repeated" (2004, p. 4). Prior to moving further into an examination of "Brit-veillance" in Northern Ireland, however, let us consider once again the significance of observation towers designed to keep watch over the Irish population.

In his book *British Watchtowers*, Wylie unravels his project to record military stations that permeated the Troubles, noting that "observation whether by the human eye, or the technical eye of a surveillance camera requires an architectural support system that elevates the viewer into a position of command." He reminds us that hill forts dating back to 500 BCE were scattered across Britain, relying on natural promontories to survey the surrounding landscape. During the Troubles, the British Army assembled a comparable system of high-tech watchtowers "to observe the actions of the local people under their occupation. The lines of sight from the watchtowers generated a kind of environment, a protective visual architecture, enveloping the border region of Northern Ireland" (Wylie, 2007, inside flap). Beyond her critique of the Maze, Purbrick also interprets the British watchtowers photographed by Wylie, offering a conceptual window into their meanings. Until the year 2000, there were 12 hilltop sites with one or more watchtowers, making the border region the most militarized part of Western Europe. "Watchtowers," as Purbrick points out, "are an ancient architectural form, as old as war itself"

and have become a central feature of security regimes the late 20th century, such as the Berlin Wall" (2007, p. 57). Observation posts, especially in South Armagh where the IRA concealed itself in the rural landscape, functioned to fortify the area by being able to watch the enemy from a safe distance and prepare military operations. "There is an important political difference between observing your own troop patrols and more general surveillance over a population already hostile to the presence of troops which is subject to these patrols. But these were overlapping roles of the watchtowers" (Purbrick, 2007, p. 60).

The British watchtowers were not unmanned machines of surveillance. Rather, they were occupied by a pair of British soldiers assigned to observation platforms working two-hour shifts; one would watch while the other documented information to be passed on to other security agencies. And with practice, they were able to monitor the hostile environment around them. It has been speculated that soldiers had special equipment that allowed them to read the speedometer dials of passing cars, identify wallpaper patterns inside homes, and see what residents were eating for breakfast—while also listening to their conversations (McKittrick, 2005). With more practice, soldiers improved surveillance by way of three emerging technologies: radar, thermal imaging, and image intensification. The output generated by cameras—capable of recording subjects immersed in complete darkness—would be digitized and transmitted by wire and radio. Given the wide field of vision, the presence of the British intelligence apparatus was constantly absorbed by people within a zone of panopticism. A resident complained that "you're in an open prison here. You're watched all the time" (Curtis, 1994; Hogg, 1997).

Purbrick's analysis of Wylie's watchtower project borrows from Foucault, even quoting him with respect to the power of optics: "Visibility is a trap" (1979, p. 200). She goes on to note that observation seems to be an intangible force, since it is not possible to touch sightlines: "The power of vision is dependent upon architecture. It requires an architectural system that elevates the viewer into a position of command" (2007, p. 68). As a classic model for penal surveillance, Bentham's logic relies on two principles of panoptic power. First, visibility ensures that the prisoners will see before them the central tower that spies upon him. Second, observation remains unverifiable, since the prisoners will never really know whether they are being watched. Consequently, prisoners internalize the gaze and assume that their actions are always under surveillance. To reiterate, it is the geometric shape, a cylinder fitted with a central watchtower, that establishes internal environment

in which optical power is administered. As an endgame within its own multiplicity, observation is intended to produce conformity (Bentham, 1995; Foucault, 1979, 2007). While striving for visual perfection, the British watchtowers, however, inadvertently produced resistance. As one intelligence officer conceded, the towers might serve as a visible sign of deterrence but they are a bad thing because they created a siege mentality. In this sense, the practice of surveillance in Northern Ireland suffered from its own contradictions because it alienated the very people it was trying to incorporate into the British state (Harnden, 1999; Purbrick, 2007).

BRIT-VEILLANCE

In the previous chapter, we learned that the British military deployed in Northern Ireland adjusted to a series of shifts within the low-level war. By 1970, after the "honeymoon" during which the Army enjoyed a brief period of acceptance in Northern Ireland, the IRA had reset its military tactics "to take on the 'Brits'—declaring that British rule is not acceptable in Ireland under any circumstances" (Taylor, 2001, pp. 53, 55). As a key contributor to the British "warrior scholarship," Brigadier Frank Kitson of the Royal Green Jackets arrived with a plan to reorganize the practice counterinsurgency, and paradoxically, those tactics would become source of renewed violence. Within IRA circles, Kitson was viewed as an architect of "dirty tricks," a reputation he had earned while stationed in other colonial theatres, including Kenya, Malaya, Oman, and Cyprus (Elkins, 2022). While studying at Oxford, Kitson authored the book *Low Intensity Operations* (1971), which would guide his approach to the Troubles. The overarching theory of countering insurgents, according to his thesis, was to acquire, analyze, and act on intelligence alongside a program to win the hearts and minds of the local people, who would eventually side with the British. Kitson opened dialogues with community groups, in particular the Belfast Central Citizens Defense Committee, even though he realized that members of the IRA were also involved. Initially, the Army did not see the IRA as an immediate threat, so talks even across the barricades was a useful means to gather intelligence about the conflict. At least one journalist had noted, "Hindsight suggests that the Provisional IRA's statement of September 1970 about bringing about 'the downfall of British rule' should have been seen as an ominous warning" (Taylor, 2001, p. 54).

Whereas efforts to win the hearts and minds of the local people might have had some purchase in Kenya and Malaya, Belfast was different, and the IRA was not interested in helping the Brits look good (Geraghty, 2000). Early on, Kitson inherited an intelligence system whereby information was gathered by the RUC Special Branch through a network of informants then passed to the Army's Headquarters Northern Ireland (HONI), who then delivered it to its brigades and to the local battalion commanders. Kitson wanted to make the intelligence process more efficient by short-circuiting the system, but the RUC was reluctant to fully cooperate. "Because intelligence was power, the Special Branch was not disposed to share it, and at this time the Army had very little of its own" (Taylor, 2001, p. 55). Especially with respect to "Brit-veillance," that gap in intelligence sharing would remain a constant source of friction for the next 20 years (Prince & Warner, 2019).

While the watchtowers and their architectural systems were constructed to keep watch over persons from above, the British Army realized it needed to put its own operators on the ground to track suspicious individuals. The emerging practice relied on special forces trained to provide surveillance over hostile actors. As the British Army eventually realized, the colonial model for maintaining security—and vertical surveillance—had serious limitations in Northern Ireland because it is a unique territory with a complicated history. Thomas Leahy (2020) explains that the military had to prepare for an intelligence war against the IRA. Those finely tuned practices would become a war within a war backed with an array of technologies for watching, such as human sources (HUMINT), the interception of communications (COMINT), radar and electronic intelligence (ELINT), and signals intelligence (SIGINT) alongside open-source intelligence (OSINT) (Omand, 2010). Despite their capabilities, those technologies needed to be connected into a social network in which people would be used—or repurposed—to watch other people. Indeed, informers would be crucial in the intelligence war throughout much of the Troubles. As a former intelligence officer conceded, "Even mechanical gathering has to have a starting point, and that brings me to the informer. Surveillance teams need to know where to go. What houses to target. What vehicles to follow" (Clarke, 2009, pp. 217–218).

Informers, spies, and other forms of infiltration had played a role in previous conflicts between the Irish and British dating back to the rebellion of 1798 (Bartlett, 2003). Thus, deep within the Irish psyche lurks the dreaded

snitch. During the Troubles, it was suggested that "the greatest weapon England has is that of the informer. Without [them] it is possible that the people of Ireland would have had full control over their country a long time ago" ("Loose Talk Can Be Fatal," 1974, p. 4). Tasked to catch spies that had infiltrated the IRA, Freddie Scappaticci was recruited as an internal security enforcer. Although a debate on the matter persists, it has been reported that Scappaticci was also an informer code named "Stakeknife" beginning in the 1970s. He is alleged to have cooperated with the British Army's Force Research Unit (FRU), which ordered agents, handlers, and informers to infiltrate the paramilitaries in Northern Ireland (O'Rawe, 2023; Ware, 2017). Scappaticci not only denies being Stakeknife but also ever having had any involvement in the IRA. Other sources dispute his claims, including Martin Ingram, a former FRU officer (Harkin & Ingram, 2004). A former publicity director for the political wing of the IRA, Danny Morrison (2016) believes that Scappaticci set up his arrest. After his conviction was overturned, Morrison insisted that Scappaticci sought to elevate his status as a spy catcher by preying on weak IRA volunteers. Whether or not Scappaticci was an informer, British military agents have acknowledged that a high-level agent known as Stakeknife did actually exist. The mission of Stakeknife (and another informer, Denis Donaldson) was to infiltrate and disrupt IRA operations and eventually move it toward the negotiating table (Leahy, 2020; McGovern, 2019).

Debates over the effectiveness of the intelligence war during the Troubles continue to mount (Carlin, 2019; Edwards, 2021). In his *The Intelligence War Against the IRA*, Leahy contends that neither the British security apparatus nor the IRA won the conflict. Rather, the peace process was brokered due to a stalemate between the British government and the paramilitaries in Northern Ireland. Leahy's analysis speaks to the limitations of "Britveillance," claiming that the IRA was difficult to infiltrate for three reasons. First, many units of the IRA, especially in such the rural areas as South Armagh, remained elusive. Second, in Belfast and Derry, the IRA adopted a small cell structure that insulated its members from encroachment. Third, the IRA commanders and leadership isolated themselves from the rest of the Republican movement.

While surveillance and intelligence gathering undoubtedly played a key role in ending the low-level war, other factors and forces changed the political landscape of Northern Ireland well into the period that led to the Good

Friday Agreement in 1998. Several scholars take exception with Leahy's (2020) conclusions. Begging the question, "So, why did the guns fall silent?," Tonge, Shirlow, and McAuley (2011) contend that interplay, not stalemate, explains the peace process to end the Troubles. That interplay involved many actors from all sides of the conflict, thereby contributing to negotiations while also keeping the peace. For his part, Matthew Whiting (2018) throws critical light onto the political transformations, particularly those advancing the strategies of Sinn Fein. As the political wing of the IRA, Sinn Fein guided the Republican campaign into the realm of electoral participation. That engagement in democratic bargaining, alongside the role of Irish America and British brokers, allowed Sinn Fein to increase its inclusion within the political system by agreeing to an array concessions. Again, there is no shortage of attempts to explain the end of the Troubles. But as just one more perspective, a social-movements theory adds to our understanding of Northern Ireland and the demise of violence by contextualizing the conflict within a more dynamic thrust of incremental peacemaking (De Fazio, 2017; see also English, 2012; Geraghty, 2000).

To conclude this segment, questions remain surrounding informants and the circumstances under which a target of "vertical-veillance" would capitulate to pressure and inform for the British state, or any state for that matter. In the context of the Troubles, a host of motives emerged, such as revenge for a disciplinary beating meted out by the paramilitaries on its own members. Others were driven by the fear of imprisonment, ideological differences, or greed. Agents determine how to handle informers according to their needs and desires, including gaining status and experiencing the thrill of intrigue. Taylor and Snow (1997) formulated an acronym—MICE—to condense the range of motives: money, ideology, compromise (or coercion), and ego. Naturally, an informer often has more than one motive. In *The Logic of Violence*, Kalyas identifies a pattern of motives that shapes how one personally views conflict. For instance, war "transforms local and personal grievances into lethal violence" and personal disputes take on political meaning (2006, pp. 178–179; see O'Rawe, 2023). While these considerations are evident in the Troubles, they extend to other conflicts such as the Cold War, in which spying and double-spying had serious consequences (see et al., 1997). As we segue to the next segments on vertical surveillance coordinated around the Berlin Wall and the methods of the Stasi, we shall continue to take stock in the political significance of wars, walls, and watching.

During the Troubles, as previously discussed, the landscape of Northern Ireland, urban and rural, was dotted with watchtowers. Similarly, all along the Berlin Wall, watchtowers were installed, delivering vertical surveillance over the death strip to prevent escapes to the West (McWilliams, 2020; Wyden, 1989). Perched on the edge of what was the border separating Berlin during the Cold War stands a decommissioned watchtower. Visitors are invited to enter that former command post of the border troops and to climb its steep stairs to the internal observation deck. Prior to the wall being demolished, there were 280 watchtowers stretched across on the East side of the Berlin. "The commander was responsible for ensuring that no successful escapes occurred in his section." From the watchtower, surveillance information was channeled to supervisors and other command posts as well as to the East German police. Should an escape attempt be detected, an emergency unit was deployed to intercept the fugitives, many of whom perished under a shoot-to-kill policy. Today, the watchtower serves as a memorial to one of the first casualties in the death strip. "It is both a document of the border regime and a testament to its victims."

As a cultural remnant of the Cold War, that particular watchtower has emerged as a storytelling institution devoted to the memory of Gunter Litfin, the first fugitive to be shot and killed. Litfin grew up in East Berlin but was employed in West Berlin until the wall blocked his commute. Suspicious of the GDR's political regime, he contemplated ways to flee. On August 24, 1961, Litfin tried to swim across Humboldt Harbor to West Berlin. To prevent Litfin from reaching the other side, East Berlin transport police fired warning shots before fatally wounding him. Over time, Gunter's brother Jurgen Litfin struggled to cope with the tragedy compounded by restrictions imposed by the GDR. Jurgen sought to emigrate to the West, but his request was denied; then he was arrested for allegedly assisting an escape attempt. He was released from prison when the West German government paid the GDR, allowing Jurgen and his family to relocate to West Berlin. "But the memory of his brother would not let him go." In 2003, Jurgen opened a site dedicated to Gunter and founded an association that entrusted the memorial to the Berlin Wall Foundation.

To orient visitors inside the watchtower, a poster features a large cutaway that allows us to visualize its various compartments and equipment that support the task of "vertical-veillance." The multilayered design fulfills its

purpose as a self-contained security unit. The basement has storage space, a drain to the cesspit, and emergency power switch box. The first level is fitted with a battery depot and air vents. The second tier features a standby room for the alarm group with two sets of bunk beds, weapon stands, gun slits, and a bell to notify other guards of suspicious activity outside. With anticipation, visitors finally reach the top floor built with large windows positioned on each wall, thereby maximizing visibility. Here, more surveillance devices are in place: searchlight controls, directional antenna, binoculars, a map of the border section alongside an electrical heater, ladder to roof, roof hatch, and wind gauge.

As both a memorial site and remnant of wars, walls, and watching, curators carefully arrange objects and text to guide visitors not only around the exhibition space but also through the recent history of the Berlin Wall. By doing so, we witness the power—and aggression—of vertical surveillance as a component of social control which contained East Germans inside the world of the GDR. A wall map outlines the path of the wall as it crisscrosses through the various partitions of Berlin, namely, the American, British, French, and Soviet sectors. Vintage photographs capture the dystopian cityscape of a heavily fortified death strip patrolled by armored vehicles. As a technique in managing "museum space," the observation platform is "personed" by placing a mannequin dressed as a border guard near a window that overlooks the wall. Visitors tend to stand next it, so as to share the visual point of view in a vicarious act of vertical surveillance (Welch, 2020, 2015) (figure 14).

Returning to *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in Urban Landscape*, Brian Ladd reflects on architecture to remind us that buildings, including sections of the wall, "matter not because of any intrinsic beauty or value but because they are symbols and representations of memory" (1997, p. 4; see also Welch, 2022). As we consider further the role of the wall within an apparatus of vertical surveillance, it is important to reiterate that 280 watchtowers were planted around the perimeter of the wall to expand the state's capacity to watch over the East German people. Beginning in 1961, however, the number of checkpoints in Berlin was reduced to just seven, thereby intensifying the inspection of those who dared to cross the "forbidden border, making the experience one of mystery and intrigue . . . enhanced by dozens of spy novels" (1997, p. 15). Ladd goes on to explain that surveillance over the security zone was "less a wall than a controlled sequence of empty, visible *spaces*. More than that, 'the Wall' signified a set of activities—searches, patrols, observation, and identification checks at the crossing points—that

FIGURE 14. Border guard mannequin. Inside the watchtower in the former East Berlin, a soldier stands guard over the wall. © retrowelch 2026

protected the border" (p. 18). Such "wall-veillance" was guarded by terminology, since the word "wall" was strictly banned by the GDR. In the East, the structure was referred to as "the border" or "border security." "This rule has usually been interpreted as an Orwellian denial of reality, but we must also consider it as an attempt—perhaps equally Orwellian—to control the dangerous implications of figurative language" (1997, p. 18). The material facets of "wall-veillance" aimed at controlling space and people cannot complete the circle of analysis without understanding how they shaped state agencies charged with keeping watch over its subjects via clandestine measures, becoming what can be called "Stasi-veillance."

STASI-VEILLANCE

During the reign of the GDR, state television released official programs with political leaders addressing their constituents. In the background stood men dressed in drab gray suits. Those shadowy figures became the subject of a book titled *The Grey Men: Pursuing the Stasi in the Present* by Ralph Hope. Its

introduction draws critical attention to the malevolent tactics of the agents of state security, the Stasi, most notably a "personal destruction as a fine art." In preparation for his study, Hope visited the former Stasi headquarters in Berlin and found himself deep inside the office of the most menacing man in Germany in the postwar era—Erich Mielke, head of the Stasi. "Mielke was called the *Master of Fear* by East Germans for good reason—he created and ran the secret police with an iron hand and was the person who oversaw the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961" (2022, p. 6). As the so-called sword and shield of the party, the Stasi, under the direction of Mielke, upheld its primary mission: to know everything. If there ever was a real personification of an omniscient deity—an all-knowing god—it was Mielke. Compared to other security policy agencies in similar Eastern European states, the Stasi was uniquely organized by combining state security, foreign espionage, and police and judicial ministries into one powerful entity that incorporated an intelligence service, secret police, public prosecutor, and elite military. Surveillance was aimed not only at civilians but also at the cultural sector, including churches and news media. Still, its main function was to target those contemplating escape to the West. On the political side, the Stasi was not accountable to the GDR legislature, the Volkskammer, but rather only to the Soviet Politburo. On the military side, Mielke was protected by a heavily armed motorized rifle regiment, the Felix Dzerzhinsky Guards, with 11,000 members (Bruce, 2010; Childs & Popplewell, 1996).

The Stasi—also known as the Firm—was formed in 1950, and in three years, it had more employees than the Nazi Gestapo in the previous era of Germany. The Stasi doubled its ranks each decade to follow. At the height of the Cold War, by comparison, the KBG had one officer for every 600 citizens, while the Stasi assigned one agent for every 180 persons. The surveillance apparatus became an even greater force due to its reliance on 600,000 unofficial employees who served as informants, an estimated one per 63 individuals. Such "Stasi-veillance" amassed more than six million individual files on a GDR population of 16 million (Ash, 1997). Whereas a blanket surveillance was realized across East German society, the agents to be avoided at all costs were the Gray Men. In the political imagination, they didn't exist, but in reality, they did. Among their obsessions with surveillance was to coordinate a vast system of wiretaps and postal inspections, even designing special machines that steamed open 90,000 pieces of mail each day (Hope, 2022; Funder, 2002).

Those unfortunate to be targeted by the Gray Men—and there were many—could expect a visit. Then the protocol allowed the agents to subdue

their suspects, pushing them into a windowless prison van disguised as a bakery truck that would drive aimlessly around Berlin for purposes of psychological disorientation. Eventually, suspects would arrive inside the sally port of the Stasi Prison in East Berlin, just one of its 17 secret jails that appeared nowhere on a city map. There, newly arrived prisoners would experience the blunt end of "Stasi-veillance." Forced to stand under bright lights, prisoners would be processed by an intake officer who would open a green ledger book and write the person's name and that of the arresting agent. Next, a terrifying transformation unfolded in preparation for interrogation and detention. Prisoners would be assigned a number that, in effect, would erase their identity from that moment on. "Personal identity was over. You were a number, and only a number, to you and everyone you would see. Even the fact that you had been arrested was a state secret" (Hope, 2022, p. 9). Many prisoners would disappear for years at time, never knowing exactly where they were held and never even hearing their names spoken. The physical and psychological isolation was compounded by an eerie absence of other prisoners who themselves were confined in solitary cells.

After rounds of interrogation, some select prisoners were deemed to be dissidents but not real threats to the state and subsequently released. Still, those persons would remain under constant "Stasi-veillance." As portrayed in the highly-acclaimed German film *The Lives of Others*, certain citizens became permanent targets of state security (Henckel von Donnersmark, 2006). Agents, with the assistance of a network of informers that included friends and family, would administer a form of control called *Zersetzung*, which loosely translates as "decomposition," thereby rendering those persons ineffective. That method, according to Hope's opening chapter, was the "personal destruction as a fine art." Over time, targets underwent a series of distressing life events initiated by the Stasi that would gradually degrade and disintegrate a personal sense of autonomy, such as losing a job, being rejected by a university, or losing their state-subsidized housing. "Some found out only years later while reviewing their Stasi files how their life had been ruined. It turns out it doesn't take much to destroy a person." The Stasi, benefitting from routine and practice, ramped up its *Zersetzung* to the extent that two generations of East Germans suffered enduring emotional impairment. By 1977, the GDR ceased recording public health records on suicides. "It became embarrassing and inconvenient to do so." One particular target later condemned the Stasi, saying "Communists are just Nazis painted red" (Hope, 2022, pp. 9, 14; see Funder, 2002).

In the years before the wall was built, the Gray Men were busy trying to keep track of all the East Berliners planning to bolt to the West. As "Stasi-veillance" intensified, more and more people were thinking about the same path Westward. The Gray Men viewed all of them as troublemakers and criminals, creating an increasingly Orwellian society. "Officially at least, there hadn't been and never would be any politically motivated arrests in the GDR. Publicly claiming otherwise could get you arrested. The laws could easily cover anything that the state didn't like" (Hope, 2022, p. 17; see Ash, 1997). The wall, of course, would make it easier for the Gray Men to contain a growing disgruntled population. Vertical surveillance was becoming increasingly necessary to keep watch over people. Those tactics were to be routinely practiced to the extent that the East German population would turn inward against itself, emulating a Soviet style system of repression. Training and retraining agents reinforced their perception that they were controlling the enemy by practicing "decomposition." Each new recruit—carefully vetted for ideological fitness—would internalize the main message: "*Every citizen is a potential security risk!*" (Hope, 2022, p. 24).

The importance of training and practice became so vital that East German universities adopted a curriculum for surveillance, interrogation, and the detection of threats, even developing a criminalistics course designed to analyze graffiti that would identity the perpetrator. The most notable manifestation of that program was the so-called law school in Potsdam whose its elite students formulated dissertation topics aimed at perfecting "Stasi-veillance." Some of the titles reflected precisely that agenda: *Detection and Processing of Offenses of Unlawful Leaving the GDR; Investigation on the Facts or the Endangerment of Public Order by Antisocial Behavior; The Repeated Interrogation of Witnesses and Accused Persons* (Hope, 2022, p. 27).

In the end, the GDR and the party would be "protected" from the West and its predatory capitalist ambitions. Or at least, that's what the Stasi thought. In reality, East German society was, itself, disintegrating, in large part due to blanket surveillance and other Orwellian tactics of repression. Once again, Anna Funder and her volume of stories about "Stasiland" reveal the inner lives of those ruined by state security and the culture around them. In her interviews, Funder was reminded of how difficult East Germany had become, especially compared to other Soviet satellite states. Even as the Russian leaders, such as Mikhail Gorbachev, began introducing economic reforms and cultural openness, the GDR establishment doubled down on its totalitarian governance. The men running the East German political party

"were ossified. They were not interested in reform. As of late 1988, they disallowed Soviet films and magazine in an attempt to stop people being infected by new ideas." Repression thrived, in part, because the Stasi had "somewhere to dump people who spoke out: West Germany. It imprisoned them and then sold them to the west for hard currency." Still, the Stasi could not remove all the East Germans dissatisfied with their lives; that would be impractical, and worse, might be granting them the freedom they craved. "So . . . the old men had another scheme: they would contain the dissenters at home" (Funder, 2002, p. 61; see Glaser, 2011; Koehler, 1999). Under those circumstances, *visions of prisons* abound with all the tragic elements of war, walls, and watching.

Today, the former Stasi Prison in Berlin is open to the public, who hear similar narratives repeated by former prisoners who serve as tour guides. To be sure, "Stasi-veillance" remains a central theme of those disclosures that were once kept secret. Walking around the compound, visitors witness the various tools of control, including the prison vans parked conspicuously on the lot, the prison cells that confined detainees in complete darkness, and the interrogation rooms padded with thick leather walls to keep the questioning quiet. Visitors are noticeably horrified at what they see and what they and hear from the guides. Occasionally, stronghold supporters of the former GDR—some of them former Stasi—pepper the guide with perplexing questions intended to undermine the presentations, suggesting that the entire tour is a hoax—just another reminder that East Berlin retains a certain surreal aura from its totalitarian past (see Hope, 2022).

More recently, the Stasi Prison Museum has been refurbished with an expanded exhibition space that allows visitors to mill about without a guide. Its holdings are immense, overflowing with remnants of the GDR and its ministry of state security. One particular image captures the technological prowess of "Stasi-veillance" within the prison apparatus. The "Surveillance Room" is portrayed with a stack of video monitors. Curators inform us that the Prison Department director entered the back room through a door concealed in the fitted cabinets that also hid a bug-proof telephone line. Cables link the monitors to the central surveillance room in another building within the prison. "This allows him to observe the inside of the prison, as well as the people working there. An elaborate control and locking system make the facility equivalent to a high-security prison." The display, with all its Orwellian equipment, furthers our comprehension of just how deeply surveillance penetrated the GDR and its institutions (figure 15).

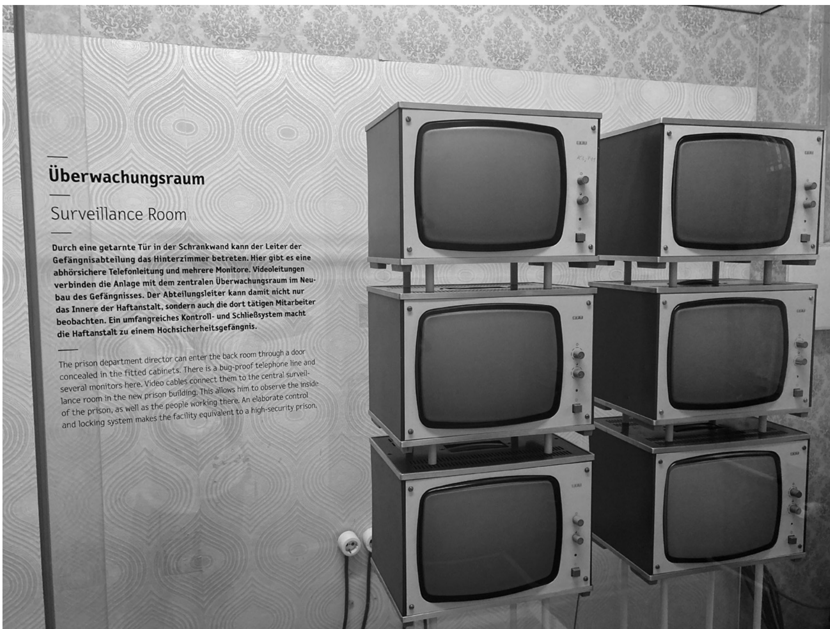

FIGURE 15. Surveillance room. At the Stasi Prison Museum in former East Berlin, an exhibit on the surveillance state is opened to visitors as they learn more about the GDR and its control systems. © retrowelch 2026

CONCLUSION

The notion that surveillance is often directed from the top downward, in a vertical direction, is nothing new. The early history of the Tower of London, as just one example, points to the ways in which monarchical power sets out to keep watch over its subjects in its immediate vicinity while monitoring the distant landscape for potential invasions. The construction of British watchtowers during the Troubles allows us to understand further how in the modern era, similar forms of vertical surveillance, or "vertical-veillance," emerge not only in cities such Belfast and Derry but also along the border region, especially South Armagh, where soldiers keep an eye out for members of the IRA. With practice, those types of surveillance improve with technology. Like many writers on the topic, Niall O'Dochartaigh views the British response to Northern Ireland through the lens of colonialism (Elkins, 2022; Taylor, 2001). He notes that British counterinsurgency campaigns in colonial situations focus "on the control and monitoring of suspect populations rather than on dealing with specific incidents" (O'Dochartaigh, 1997, p. 158; see also

Barthorp, 1976; Hamill, 1981). Again, through technological advances, surveillance in Northern Ireland would rapidly spread; however, those stages in their development all had a starting point. In 1969, as civil unrest mounted in Derry, the British Army relied on "long-distance identifications"—a fancy term for "a soldier watching through binoculars from a roof-top post on the Embassy Ballroom above the scene of the riot" (O'Dochartaigh, 1997, p. 160). Among those targeted by sight was 19-year-old Martin McGuinness, who would be selected by the IRA to take command over Derry. As Derry became barricaded amid the Troubles, the various tactics of "vertical-veillance" would adjust to each new situation, thereby reminding us that wars, walls, and watching are intersecting phenomena.

Those parallels are also easy to recognize in Berlin during the Cold War, particularly since border soldiers watched closely for any sign of escape through the death strip. Whereas technological advances would continue to shape the methods of surveillance along the Berlin Wall, the GDR aspired to keep tabs on its citizens at close range by assigning Stasi agents and their informers to cases in which certain persons were suspected of planning an escape to the West. Ralph Hope mentions that even today, nobody really knows how many informers cooperated with the Stasi. But Stasi files recovered after the wall fell and the state security dissolved reveal that wives reported on husbands and husbands reported on wives. Siblings were recruited to inform on siblings. "In 1989, more than 10,000 of the operational IMs were children. People were scrutinized everywhere. All apartment buildings in East Berlin had a person kept a house-book, a record of all visitors who stayed in any of the apartments overnight. That information was routinely relayed to the MfS via a trusted local police officer" (2022, p. 27). To repeat, the overarching mission of the Stasi was to know everything about everybody, becoming an Orwellian society governed by an omniscient deity that relies on blanket surveillance. Of course, vertical surveillance is just one trajectory of watching. In the chapters to follow, we shall consider both lateral surveillance that moves power sideways between states and their agents as well as counter-veillance whereby watching is directed from the bottom upward (Welch, 2011).

SEVEN

Lateral-Veillance

IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER, we considered the dynamics of the Tower of London—a fortress in the city—that facilitated vertical surveillance, or vertical-veillance. There, William the Conqueror relied on the architecture of Norman castles that were remarkably resilient, and where there were no natural hills, laborers built an artificial mound. That particular design for a foundation was known as a "motte and bailey." It was ingeniously simple, since a wooden tower was placed on top of a hill built to elevate the fortress. "They then dug a defensive ditch around its base (thus forming an enclosure, or bailey) using the excavated earth to make an additional rampart around it. These temporary wooden castles were soon to be replaced by stone and fulfilled the dual function of defensive fortress and place of residence for the new Norman magnates" (Borman, 2015, p. 18; De La Croix, 1972).

Let's fast-forward to the Cold War, when another hill was constructed not so much for vertical-veillance but for lateral-veillance by which Allied intelligence officers monitored communications being transmitted from the East German authorities on the other side of the Berlin Wall. That listening station, known as Teufelsberg, took on a mysterious persona—nicknamed Devil's Mountain. "Twenty-six million cubic meters of war debris formed this mountain, which was heaped up over Hitler's 'Defence Technology Faculty' for many years. Americans and British maintained an important listening station up here. As a relic of the Cold War, the 47,000 square meter site offers a unique history. Visitors can experience history and discover and explore a variety of the premises as part of a guided tour or on their own." After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Allied forces abandoned the station, leaving it to the curious attracted to its panoramic view of Berlin—sitting at an altitude of 140 meters above sea level. Eventually, international artists from

FIGURE 16. Devil's Mountain. In Berlin, Devil's Mountain, with its panoramic view, allows tourists to experience the power of visibility—and panopticism. © retrowelch 2026

the street art scene converged on Devil's Mountain, making the space one of the largest open-air galleries in the world, with some murals reaching up to 270 square meters (figure 16).

Moving ahead with further considerations of wars, walls, and watching, we attend to lateral trajectory of surveillance by which one source of power,

such as Allied intelligence teams during the Cold War, took aim at their East German and Soviet counterparts—and vice versa. The two-way directions of power remind us that surveillance is not bound solely to a position from above. And as we shall discuss in the next chapter, trajectories of power can also be reversed, during which power migrates from below in an upward movement, creating a form of counter-veillance that puts the authorities under surveillance (Welch, 2011). To begin, we add to our conceptual formulations by considering Foucault's thoughts on power as exercised within a wider context of sovereignty.

FOUCAULT AND THE PROBLEMS OF SPACE

In his residency at College de France, Foucault welcomed the opportunity to rethink some of his previous writings, including *Discipline and Punish*. With the lecture hall at his disposal, Foucault thought out loud as he pondered the possibility of another concept related to power, namely governmentality. That notion of the governance of others (and oneself) has had a significant impact on critical theory (Burchell et al., 1991; O'Malley, 1996), so much so that its threads of inquiry have made their way into criminology, becoming what is recognized as the second "Foucault effect" (Feeley & Simon, 1992; Garland, 1996). At College de France, Foucault's intellectual work is on display, and "he approached his teaching as a researcher: explorations for a future book as well as opening up of fields of problemization were formulated as an invitation to possible future researchers" (Ewald & Fontana, 2007, p. xvi). Because Foucault's lectures did not duplicate his books, they retain their own status in ways that deliver a unique scholarly source (Harcourt, 2008). Much like what governmentality did to create a second "Foucault effect," the lectures at College de France might very well constitute a third "Foucault effect" (Welch, 2008a).

The lectures, in a series titled *Security, Territory, Population* (1978), provide another example of how Foucault thought on his feet in front of an audience of intellectuals and students. In the seminar of January 11, Foucault posited the "problems of space" as they shape security, territory, and population. As noted previously, Foucault reestablishes the following concepts: "sovereignty is exercised with the borders of a territory, discipline is exercised on the bodies of individuals, and security is exercised over the entire population" (p. 11). Foucault quickly concedes that dividing lines for borders, bodies, and population are blurred by the presence of immense complexity, or a multiplicity of subjects

and people. Nonetheless, a common denominator for all three constructs is the problem of space. The process of problematization involves the emergence of a (putative) dilemma as it becomes viewed as requiring special attention, particularly by government (Castel, 1994; Rose & Valverde, 1998). Connecting a few dots from a previous lecture series, *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault dissects the problematization of sovereignty in two ways. First, there is "sovereignty by institutions," encompassing a broad range of cooperation and mutual agreements by governmental actors. Secondly, sovereignty is also subject to acquisition, most notably through invasion and conquest, a belligerent maneuver indeed. Building momentum for theory, Foucault taps into his *Society Must be Defended*, introducing war as crucial analyzer of power relations.

With Foucault's attention fixed squarely on war and its capacity to shift power, we come to the realization that military conflict, among other things, problematizes space, with respect not only to sovereign boundaries but to urban environments as well. In each scenario, circulation must be regulated by checkpoints and inspections, thereby screening goods and people so as to determine what and who belongs (and doesn't belong) inside a particular sociopolitical zone. Such procedural interventions are complicated in the wake of "sovereignty by acquisition," which creates greater obstacles for spatial movement and the management of populations (Welch, 2008b). As we shall see in the segments to follow, sovereignty by acquisition figures prominently in the problems of space. Consider the context of the Cold War brought about by the defeat of Germany and occupation of the Allied Forces on one side of the Iron Curtain—and the Berlin Wall—and the governance of the Soviet Union on the other. Similarly, the Troubles initially unfolding in the 1920s with the partition of Ireland were rekindled in the late 1960s, thereby producing problems for the border regions with the Republic of Ireland and the walled sectors of Belfast and Derry.

COLD WARRIORS AND LATERAL POWER

At the National Army Museum in London, visitors are welcomed to an elaborate exhibit on the Cold War and the role of the British military. A large map delineates the various sectors of Allied West Germany vis-à-vis East German territory backed by the Soviets. Adding insight into the cartography, a poster titled "Threat of War" explains the contours of the conflict and the importance of watching the enemy, especially since Allied soldiers were outnumbered

three to one. They realized that "any battle would be short and bloody. . . . Everything about life in the British Army of the Rhine was geared towards fighting and winning this." So as to prepare military personnel for possible attack, a war of intelligence on the enemy was key, even a magazine bearing the name *Threat* and published regularly updated details about what to expect from the Soviets and any vulnerabilities their equipment might have. Likewise, field manuals identified a range of armored vehicles, "so that when the time came in the heat of battle they would distinguish between friend and foe." Curators at the museum prefer that visitors not remain passive as they mill about the galleries. Toward that end, they are activated into the role of a participant, thereby allowing them to appreciate the value of watching—lateral surveillance—in the context of war. An interactive placard called "Vehicle Recognition" asks us, "Can you correctly identify the vehicles?" Pictures of four types of tanks are posted: a Challenger 1, a Leopard 1A2, a T-80, and a USM 60 Patton. The lesson unfolds: "After you've studied the four tank outlines on the right, press start to begin. Then place the correct identity card in the numbered slot that matches the vehicles in the model as they light up." Curators inject tension into the exercise so as to remind us that military engagement requires immediate decision-making. "Be quick before the lights go off!"

Nearby, a similar exhibit asks, "What Was BRIXMIS?" Beginning in 1946, curators explain, BRIXMIS referred to the British commander-in-chief's mission to the Soviet Forces in Germany, which acted as a liaison between the British and the Soviets as they coordinated the administration of Germany in the postwar era. BRIXMIS was based in the British sector of Berlin along with an office in Potsdam inside the Soviet zone. Correspondingly, SOXMIS, a Soviet equivalent, was established in the British zone of West Germany. The complicated arrangement permitted liaison personnel in these missions to move virtually without restrictions inside the other side's zone. As the Cold War escalated, these missions worked with an unusual degree of autonomy, even hosting parties and cocktail receptions with their rivals. Those events provided an unprecedented opportunity to gather intelligence on the Soviets. "Three-man groups would go on 'tours,' operating behind enemy lines. Through infiltrated enemy facilities and tracking Soviet equipment and units, crucial information was passed back to the UK as the British sought any and every advantage in the Cold War."

As lateral power gained momentum, BRIXMIS adopted a specially modified vehicle known as the Opel Senator, fleets of which were deployed. Each Senator was fitted with four-wheel drive, heavy suspension, and armor

plating under the chassis to protect the engine from road obstacles and Soviet traps. To increase their travel range, the vehicles had a larger fuel capacity along with extra spotlights and map lights to improve surveillance. To avoid detection in enemy territory, the Opel Senator's internal surfaces—seats, dashboards, roof linings—were blackened. "It could go virtually anywhere, in any weather. It was fast enough to speed away from hostile encounters, and the touring parties would push them to their limits." Visitors are encouraged to walk around the vehicle and peer into this astute instrument of lateral-veillance. Curators also point out that all British soldiers serving Germany were required to carry the "British Forces Germany Form 66" that instructed them how to spot a Soviet SOXMIS vehicle. An actual card on display contains an example of a typical SOXMIS license plate featuring a red Soviet flag emblem. British soldiers were expected to conduct lateral-veillance by adhering to the "sighting procedure." "Whenever you see a SOXMIS vehicle report by telephone as quickly as possible to HEREFORD Mil 2222 giving as many of the following details as possible."

Time and Place of Sighting

Colour and Make of the Vehicle

License Plate Number

Number of Occupants and Dress

Direction of travel

What occupants were doing

Any points of interests (i.e., radio aerials, cameras, etc.)

Again, British soldiers were reminded of the significance of keeping careful watch amid the Cold War. "Your report will always be useful, even if for some reason you are not able to make it immediately following the sighting."

Greater details on British intelligence in East Germany are provided in a display titled "On Tour With BRIXMIS." So as to deepen our understanding of how lateral-veillance is carried out, curators explain that BRIXMIS was a small organization, numbering just 31 people.

> Yet, they had an unparalleled opportunity to gather intelligence on the Soviets and the East Germans. Small groups of three would set out on a "tour" across East Germany in their specially modified vehicles several times a week. . . . It was a unique unit, with a unique role. The soldiers travelled in uniform, but were unarmed. They carried all the equipment they would need

to camp out for three days at a time, and track and record any Soviet or East German army units.

Members of those "touring" units were afforded a form of diplomatic immunity, but their movements in enemy territory were extremely dangerous. In fact, they were often placed under lateral-veillance by the Stasi as well as the Soviet and East German armies. "They were fired on, or rammed by opposition forces trying to detain them or stop them gathering intelligence." In what appears as a cabinet of curiosities of sorts, a tall display case contains various gadgets and equipment used by BRIXMIS while conducting surveillance behind enemy lines. These objects—remnants of the Cold War—direct attention to the inner workings of lateral surveillance powered by binoculars, mall flashlights, cameras, and listening devices.

Unsurprisingly, the National Army Museum boasts the success of BRIXMIS with posters that read "MISSION COMPLETED." Messages reiterate how surveillance and intelligence gathering flourished in the Cold War, thereby deciphering Soviet military capabilities. "After each mission in East Germany, BRIXMIS officers would have to report their findings, develop the photographs they had taken, and analyze them." Samples of those pictures are displayed, showing clandestine images of Soviet targets as well as British agents in the field. Adding a personal perspective on BRIXMIS, a Cold Warrior is quoted: "It was always pretty spooky, because this was a frontier like no other frontier really. . . . There were certainly lots of border guards around with weapons that you knew were loaded and ready to fire." What constitutes success in the Cold War by the Allied Forces can be illusory. The Spy Museum in Berlin brings critical attention to the story of the Berlin Tunnel. A poster with a portrait of double agent George Blake celebrates the lateral-veillance of the Soviet and East German intelligence systems that detected the operations of American and British spies who built a complex listening station underground—as we shall see next.

TUNNELING POWER

Just as lateral surveillance often moves above ground, such power also has the capacity to travel beneath the surface. Before digging deeper into the project of the Berlin Tunnel, some theoretical rethinking of Foucault is timely. In *The Bastille Effect*, a section titled "Power Underground" offers creative

lessons from another Foucauldian scholar who asks, What would it matter if everything Foucault said about prisons were wrong? It seems that C. Fred Alford (2000) was onto something. Alford reminds us that Foucault regarded *Discipline and Punish* as his first book, not because it really was his first but rather because it embodied his crown theory on penal power (Macey, 1993). For Foucault, it was actually capillary power that provided the force of punishment since it reached so deep into individuals that it shapes who they become (Foucault, 1980). Capillary power implies that control migrates from the margins to the center of society and that perspective departs from the classical top-to-bottom trajectory as suggested by Max Weber. Alford postulates that with respect to the prison, false dichotomies have derailed both prevailing theses: capillary versus centralized power, Foucault versus Weber. Complicating matters, the distinction between margin and center, according to Alford, is also faulty. "Margin to center or center to margin, each assumes that center and margin are places from which one moves, one way or another. What if they are not? What if center and margin are the axes along which power constantly travels?" (2000, p. 126).

Testing his conceptual reworking of traditional Foucauldian principles, Alford applied fieldwork at a maximum security prison consisting of a series of tunnels (Patuxent Institution, Maryland). There he discovered, "All life is underground. So is power. . . . The real power is exerted underground in and through the tunnels that connect the buildings, making it unnecessary for guard or prison to set foot on the surface of the earth" (2000, p. 146). For Alford, prisons represent not power originating at the margins but power that has been moved to the margins from the center without losing its centrality. As an example, Alford notes that relocating the spectacle of an execution to the prison basement does not refine power but conceals it. Modern power, for these purposes, is best exemplified by the veil, since it hides the real operations of authority. Alford does not reject Foucault together but proposes that capillary power moves in both directions while reducing its visibility. "Power has not therefore become more subtle. Power has just gone underground. . . . The ruler still rules, he rules underground. . . . This is not the same thing as internalizing the gaze, but more like swallowing the sword" (2000, p. 140). Disciplinary power, Alford stresses, is very real, especially when attached to political power, but in rethinking Foucault, he concludes that the tunnel is a better metaphor than the gaze.

Before turning attention to the Berlin Tunnel, we examine one more example of underground power as it departs from purely panoptic forms. In

The Bastille Effect, a subplot, the legend of the Bastille's demolition, involves fears that the royal troops might retake the citadel through tunnels believed to extend all the way from the Chateau de Vincennes (Schama, 1990, p. 411; BnF 2010). Even residents living near the Bastille claimed to hear groans and voices of what they imagined to be prisoners confined in dungeons below the nearby streets. As the story goes, ex-prisoner Mirabeau himself returned to the Bastille to inspect the subterranean vaults for signs of any labyrinthine connection to Vincennes. Mirabeau found no such tunnel (Funk-Brentano, 1979; Welch, 2022). Real or imagined, underground power intensifies *visions of prisons*—compounded by war.

Let's now consider the significance of the Berlin Tunnel as contoured by the Cold War. In *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA*, Tim Weiner chronicles key moments leading up to its bold underground operation. The story begins with Walter O'Brien, a washed-up baseball player turned lawyer turned spy. While photographing papers purloined from an East Berlin post office, he noticed descriptions of underground routes of the new telecommunications cables being used by the Soviet and East German officials. A light bulb of an idea switched on: dig a tunnel and tap the cables. The ambitious operation, nicknamed Harvey's Hole after CIA agent Bill Harvey, was planned alongside British intelligence agents who had tapped Soviet communications cables through a series of tunnels in occupied Vienna—Operation Silver—at the end of the Second World War. The American liaison with the British, however, would become the downfall of the Berlin Tunnel. Although the secrets of the Berlin Tunnel had been blown nearly from the start, the CIA set out to build a 1,476-foot tunnel from the American sector into the Soviet territory. To provide cover for the construction site, which would be visible from the Soviet side, the Americans disguised that building with a span of a full city block "with antennae bristling from the roof, and the Soviets would be given to understand that it was a station for intercepting signals intelligence from the atmosphere—the magician's trick of diverting the eye" (Weiner, 2007, p. 111).

The Berlin Tunnel was completed in 1955, and the British Secret Intelligence Service relied on a London office of 317 officers to process spoken conversations that had been recorded by the CIA team. In Washington, the agency assigned work to 350 personnel tasked with transcribing transmissions intercepted in the tunnel. Among the problems facing the Americans was the translation of the communications. As one insider conceded, "We were never successful in obtaining as many linguists as we needed," since

the CIA was hobbled at the time by the lack of competent Russian and German language interpreters. Still, the bigger problem was its lack of secrecy, since the Kremlin, tipped off by a British agent, George Blake, who had switched allegiances while a prisoner of war in North Korea, was aware of the project even during its planning stage. Blake would remain an important mole for the Soviets not only with respect to the Berlin Tunnel but for other espionage operations. "The Soviets valued Blake so highly that Moscow let the tunnel operation run for eleven months before exposing it in a blaze of heavy-handed publicity" (Weiner, 2007, p. 112). To date, surveillance experts debate whether the Soviets, knowing that their communications were being recorded, decided to feed disinformation to deceive the Americans and British (Martin, 1980; Murphy et al., 1997; Wise, 1992). As noted time and time again, knowledge is power, and the Berlin Tunnel was a key site for the accumulation information. According to Weiner, "The evidence suggests that the CIA gained two invaluable and untainted kinds of knowledge from the taps. The agency learned a basic blueprint of the Soviet and East German security systems, and it never picked up a glimmer of warning that Moscow intended to go to war" (2007, p. 112; see CIA, 1967).

In *Battleground Berlin*, the retired chief of the CIA's Berlin Base and his counterpart, former lieutenant general of the KGB, reveal greater details about the Berlin Tunnel, allowing us to appreciate further the dynamics of lateral power and surveillance. Of course, being very much in the know provided those officers, Murphy and Kondrashev, with unusual insight into the complex operations of the Berlin Tunnel alongside the wider espionage warfare during the Cold War. Their timely disclosers and commentary on unclassified materials teach us a great deal about how intelligence gathering influences political decision-making. From the Soviet side of the story, Kondrashev's narrative definitely thickens the plot, as he served as the case officer for George Blake, code named Diomid. Kondrashev was selected to handle Blake because it was believed that he was not known to British counterintelligence, allowing him to move with lateral power. While based in Moscow, he worked against the US Embassy and became familiar with American methods of evading espionage. Armed with extensive operational experience with surveillance and countersurveillance, Kondrashev arrived in London in 1953. He was posted at the Russian Embassy division for cultural affairs, arranging classical music concerts, chess matches, and sporting events. "But Kondrashev's main responsibility was the Diomid operation: within

the residency, he was the only one who knew the name of his source or his position" (Murphy et al., 1997, p. 215).

In addition to studying the Diomid file and British intelligence reports, Kondrashev memorized maps of the London and its transport systems so as to navigate the city seamlessly and without detection. Kondrashev scheduled clandestine meetings with Blake in such places as movie theatres and even on the top level of a double decker bus where documents on British intelligence were delivered. The KGB instructed Kondrashev to keep as his top priority protecting Blake at all costs. When the Soviets learned about the plan to dig the Berlin Tunnel—Operation Gold—they did not openly react, for fear of compromising Blake. Unlike vertical surveillance that often resides in plain sight, such as border guards stationed at the Berlin Wall, lateral-veillance seeks anonymity. Concerning communications through the Berlin Tunnel, Kondrashev "stated unequivocally that they were not used for disinformation. To do so, he said, would have involved too many people and would have risked Blake's security" (Murphy et al., 1997, p. 218).

TROUBLING INTEL IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Lateral power in the Cold War is animated along the lines of an enemy lurking about in the West or in the East. Those forms of power and the surveillance they created within the Troubles, however, are shaped differently due an array of intelligence, military, and police agencies. In efforts to conduct vertical-veillance on the IRA, for instance, those sources of power were expected to work together and coordinate monitoring. Still, such intelligence sharing in counterterrorism is not always easy to establish, since knowledge is power, and whatever agency possesses information, it is reluctant to distribute it to others. In the short and long run, the lack of a common stock of knowledge hampers campaigns to track paramilitary activity. Likewise, interagency rivalries also hindered the intelligence war against the IRA, as many scholars have clearly demonstrated. Although many IRA operations were thwarted due to the cooperation of separate intelligence agencies, "evidence also shows that rivalries between state institutions partly restricted intelligence achievements against the IRA" (Leahy, 2020, p. 7). Intelligence operations were conducted by several agencies, namely the British Army, MI5, Metropolitan Police Special Branch, and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) Special Branch (Edwards, 2021; Omand, 2011). At times, its members

harbored grudges against rival agencies, thereby derailing efforts to draft a cohesive campaign against the IRA. The British Army, for example, deemed the intelligence work of the RUC Special Branch as completely ineffective in the early 1970s. Some Army officials believed that RUC agents secretly insulated themselves, remained mistrustful of other agencies, and even became an elite force within a force (Clarke, 2009).

As a remedy to reduce interagency rivalries, a director and coordinator of intelligence was created to improve cooperation between intelligence groups, especially between RUC Special Branch and military leadership. Nonetheless, unresolved differences remained. Leahy explains that poor coordination between the intelligence agencies continued for several reasons. First, the RUC Special Branch was loyal to Stormont, the legislative assembly in Belfast, while secondly, the British Army and MI5 remained loyal to Westminster, the Parliament. "Westminster was not always supportive of unionist Stormont's actions and slow reforms. In contrast, the unionist government at Stormont directed the RUC to maintain the status quo" (Leahy, 2020, p. 40). Personalities also undermined interagency cooperation. It has been suggested that some military intelligence liaison officers assigned to work with the RUC Special Branch were from upper-class backgrounds and stayed out of touch with the realities of Northern Ireland. The Army served relatively short stints in during the conflict and wanted "kills" and "trophies" to take back home; hence, decisions were made to not share information that would jeopardize long-range planning against the IRA. Along the way, British soldiers wondered why different intelligence agencies had their own sources and informants (Clarke, 2019). Matchett, in *Secret Victory: The Intelligence War that Beat the IRA*, contends that the British Army sought its own agents and informers for power and their unwillingness to share information often disrupted security efforts against the IRA.

Another set of problems complicated the British Army's campaign against the IRA in the border regions. Those operations were supposed to be coordinated with the Irish security forces—the Garda—on the other side of the line separating Northern Ireland from the Republic to the South. Historical and political differences arising from the partition of Ireland during the 1920s continued to shape responses to the Troubles. It has been speculated that some Irish politicians sympathetic to the IRA cause were reluctant to order the Garda to be more proactive against the cross-border paramilitary operations (Matchett, 2016). In *Bombs, Bullets, and the Border*, Mulroe surveyed security policies at the Irish frontier and found that cross-border cooperation

was hindered, to some extent, by political decisions in the Republic. Some advisors to Republican leaders worried about their own internal security during the Troubles and feared that violence might spread over the border—as it did. In some instances, the Garda was hesitant to cooperate with the RUC due to suspicions that some of those agents were colluding with Loyalist paramilitaries in the North. Compounding matters, the Garda would be deprived of adequate funding for intelligence needed to track IRA cross-border activities (Mulroe, 2017). As a result, the IRA in the rural border regions were capable of evading surveillance by intelligence officers on both sides of the partition (Leahy, 2020). In other words, vertical-veillance of the paramilitaries was undermined by fragmented lateral power that was intended to be coordinated by different agencies.

Cross-border security and surveillance operations were also hampered by other controversies during Troubles. In 1989, RUC chief superintendent Harry Breen and Robert Buchanan were killed in an ambush by an IRA unit in South Armagh, a dangerous area known as Bandit Country situated along the border (Harnden, 2000). The Smithwick tribunal in Ireland investigated alleged Garda collusion with the IRA. "During the tribunal, a former RUC Special Branch officer names [John] McAnulty as a source. This admission provoked uproar during the proceedings because the intelligence services do not usually name informants, either dead or alive" (Leahy, 2022, p. 165). In fact, it is an offense under the UK Official Secrets Act for security or intelligence service members (past or present) to disclose the identity of agents, sources, or informants (Matchett, 2016). Several sources contend that McAnulty ran a haulage company and was involved in cross-border smuggling with the IRA, including gunrunning. The IRA accused McAnulty of providing information to the RUC that led to the arrest of Raymond McCreesh in 1976. While incarcerated at the Maze Prison, McCreesh would later die on hunger strike (Beresford, 1987). The Smithwick tribunal revealed evidence that suggests that McAnulty had tipped off the RUC in 1985 that the IRA had a mole inside the Dundkalk Garda. Judge Peter Smithwick conceded the absence of a "smoking gun" but was satisfied that collusion did occur (Government of Ireland, 2013; see *Irish Times*, 2012; Dillon, 1991).

To reiterate, the Troubles posed serious obstacles for security and intelligence agencies as they grappled with the challenges of tracking paramilitary activities. Strained relations between military and police operatives, therefore, created rivalries that disrupted surveillance. The intersection of vertical-veillance (the monitoring of the IRA) and lateral-veillance (the sharing of

intelligence) points to the trajectories of power that move downward as well as sideways. And in the context of an intelligence war, they inject tension into those tactics in ways that compromised both forms of watching. With more conceptual considerations, the border dividing the North and South of Ireland further compounded the Troubles, since the partition not only separated those territories but also united them with a common problem of political violence.

Allegations of collusion between security forces and paramilitaries permeate collective memory of the Troubles. In his book *Disrupt and Deny*, Rory Cormac takes us inside many of those episodes of political violence in Northern Ireland in ways that chronicles the significance of lateral power as it manifests in surveillance. Among those revelations, Cormac points to the investigations led by a former commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir John Stevens (2003), who found a pattern of willful failure to retain records, an absence of accountability, the deliberate withholding of intelligence and evidence; in some cases state actors were clearly involved in murder. "From two farms in South Armagh and Tyrone, RUC officers and members of the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) operated as part of a gang responsible for the deaths of 120 people between 1972 and 1976" (Cormac, 2018, p. 210). Even as the conflict endured into the late 1980s, Loyalist violence increased dramatically in part to collusion with state operatives. Special attention turned to the deployment of the Force Research Unit (FRU), which formed in 1981 as a covert military intelligence body with the mandate of handling British agents inside paramilitary organizations. Becoming a rogue actor, the FRU was allegedly complicit in murder by passing intelligence files and weapons to Loyalist militants (Finnegan, 2016).

The murder of Pat Finucane confirms the extent of collusion in Northern Ireland. As a lawyer for several Republican clients, Finucane was selectively targeted, and in 1989, Loyalists stormed into his home in Belfast and shot him dead in front of his wife and three children. Stevens (2003) investigated the matter and determined that not only was the killing preventable, but it also constituted collusion (O'Brien, 2005). Judge Desmond de Silva (2012) reviewed the crime and learned that employees of the state actively furthered and facilitated Finucane's murder, and that there were clear signs of the obstruction of justice. At the center of the controversy was Brian Nelson, the intelligence chief of the UDA and informer to the FRU. Nelson served 10 years in prison for conspiracy to commit murder. "Finucane was hardly a

one-off. Desmond de Silva, who described Nelson as a direct state employee, found that 'the net impact of Brian Nelson's activity as an agent of the FRU materially increased the UDA's capacity to target Republicans'—and the British knew it" (Cormace, 2018, p. 211; De Silva, 2012). The British Ministry of Defence conceded that Nelson frequently distributed targeting intelligence that enabled the UDA to commit murder. MI5 reported that by the mid-1980s, upward of 85 percent of UDA's intelligence derived from security forces (De Silva, 2012; Cadwallader, 2013; Punch, 2012).

More than 20 years after the Good Friday Agreement, numerous other investigations have uncovered added evidence of collusion between British intelligence and Loyalist paramilitaries. In *Counterinsurgency and Collusion in Northern Ireland*, McGovern takes us further into allegations that killings perpetrated by Loyalist gunmen were aided by British intelligence. Turning back the clock to the late 1980s and the early 1990s when a rash of state-sanctioned paramilitary murders defined that stage of Troubles, McGovern demonstrates how the state's use of agents and informants maneuvered within a wider orbit of covert and unlawful violence. He begins with a 1994 case in which Roseann Mallon, 76 years old, was fatally shot by members of a Loyalist paramilitary team, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). The house where Mallon was killed was under constant surveillance by covert officers in the British Army. Cameras relayed live images to a nearby military command center in which British specialists of the SAS (Special Air Service) had set up their operations. Six British soldiers were positioned in hidden observation posts surrounding the Mallon home. "They were part of a much larger sophisticated long-term surveillance operations, something that would require very senior military and political approval" (McGovern, 2019, p. 1). The British Army covert unit witnessed the shooting and immediately notified their commanding officer. Even in the presence of British soldiers, the UVF gunmen were able to flee the crime scene. "The soldiers had been ordered to take no action" (p. 1). The perpetrators who killed Mallon were never brought to justice. An inquest into the death Mallon remains unresolved.

The Mallon case is just one in series of suspicious murders that have become hallmarks of a darker story of the "dirty war" in Northern Ireland. Unsurprisingly, given role of the state, the legacy of such violence remains politically divisive, and even in an era of the Good Friday Agreement, there is tension over calls for the truth. Margaret Urwin, in *A State of Denial: British Collaboration with Loyalist Paramilitaries*, also weighs into the controversy, citing a tangled web of relations between British government ministers,

senior civil servants, and top-ranked police and military officers with Loyalist paramilitaries that fueled sectarian attacks on civilians. Themes of watching define Urwin's analysis, which notes that from the outset, the British Army decided to treat Loyalist paramilitaries differently from the Republican counterparts, "merely by encouraging their cooperation with the security forces but also by using them as an auxiliary force" (2016, p. 262). The UDA was allowed to patrol certain areas of Belfast in uniform, often in masks. The cover of *A State of Denial* features a stark 1972 photograph of masked members of the UDA marching through Grove Park in Belfast. In some instances, the Loyalist paramilitaries were permitted to patrol with arms while also engaging in joint operations with British troops as they made their rounds through urban zones. With respect to Foucauldian thought, masked Loyalist—with weapons—constitute not only a spectacle of intimidation but also a display of panopticism, since their threatening presence is at once visible and unverifiable. Such collusion of power demonstrates the extent to which surveillance is conducted via proxies with the state relying on Loyalist groups as their auxiliaries. With war serving as an analyzer of power relations, the complicity of state/paramilitary joint operations becomes evident. Urwin suggests that for some, "encouraging loyalist violence, was the least-worst option from a British perspective" (2016, p. 266; see Cadwallader, 2013)

Patterns of collusion between policing agencies, such as the RUC, and Loyalist organizations, namely the Orange Order, further complicate what Hearty (2014) refers to as memory politics. Those mental associations have become deeply embedded in the psyche of many Irish Catholics in the North of Ireland. At the Irish Republican History Museum in Belfast, a collection of political posters, or "Signs of Trouble," provide a semiotic look into the streetscapes of urban conflict (Welch, 2019). In one such illustration, a graphic artist depicts RUC officers wearing the sash of the Orange Order, whose highly contentious marching tradition into Catholic communities remains a flashpoint for contested heritage (Welch, 2016).

Themes of wars and watching are explored at the many historical museums and exhibitions in Northern Ireland. Derry's Museum of Resistance is notable, since its collection of memorabilia, flags, and symbols speak to its sympathies not only to the Republican movement but also to the Irish National Liberation Army. Often regarded as a dissident or splinter group, the INLA was formed in the early 1970s by members of the ("official") IRA who wanted a return to "physical force" strategy (Feldman, 1991, p. 276). As a storytelling institution, the museum unsurprisingly boasts about the

capabilities of Republican paramilitaries and their campaign not only against the British Army during the Troubles but also against their Loyalists counterparts. Vintage pictures of guerrilla fighters during the 1916 Easter Rising are coupled with contemporary photographs of the Battle of the Bogside and Bloody Sunday, events that took place within walking distance of the museum. Narrating the ubiquity of violence in Northern Ireland, curators turn attention to a display titled "The Execution of LVF Leader, Billy 'King Rat' Wright, Inside Long Kesh/H-Block 6, 1997." Billy Wright was expelled from the UVF and subsequently formed a breakaway Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF). His past would haunt him, as he was believed to be involved the sectarian killings of up to 20 Catholics, although he was never convicted for any of them. Unlike other Loyalist paramilitaries, Wright opposed the peace process, viewing it as a concession to Irish nationalists. His public stance continued to cause tension within the Loyalist community, and as a result, the UVF ordered him to leave Northern Ireland or face execution. Wright defied the UVF, and in 1997, he was incarcerated at the Maze Prison after being convicted of issuing death threats against a woman. During that period, the peace process was progressing toward the Good Friday Agreement; accordingly, the IRA and the UVF complied with the cease-fire. However, two splinter groups, the LVF and the INLA, ignored the cease-fire. Contributing to the tension at the Maze Prison, both of those rival paramilitaries were held in separate but adjoining units in H-Block 6. Prison staff strengthened security measures to keep those groups from having any contact but many officers remained concerned over the safety of Wright, especially since the INLA made it known that would target him for assassination (Anderson, 2002).

At the Museum of Resistance, an aerial view of the H-Block is reconstructed by an artist who replicates the scene of the crime alongside photographs of Wright's dead body on the floor of a prison transport van. On the morning of December 27, 1997, Wright was scheduled for a visit, and the INLA housed in the next unit were aware that he would be transported at 10:00 a.m. The INLA activated a three-man team consisting of Christopher "Crip" McWilliams, John "Sonny" Glennon, and John Kennaway, who were armed with two smuggled pistols. Glennon served as a lookout and positioned himself between Wings A and B, pretending to be painting a mural. There, he watched as Wright was being escorted into the forecourt and into the transport van. When Wright appeared, Glennon sounded a prearranged signal to notify McWilliams and Kennaway, who peeled through a pre-cut section of the wire fence and climbed on the roof

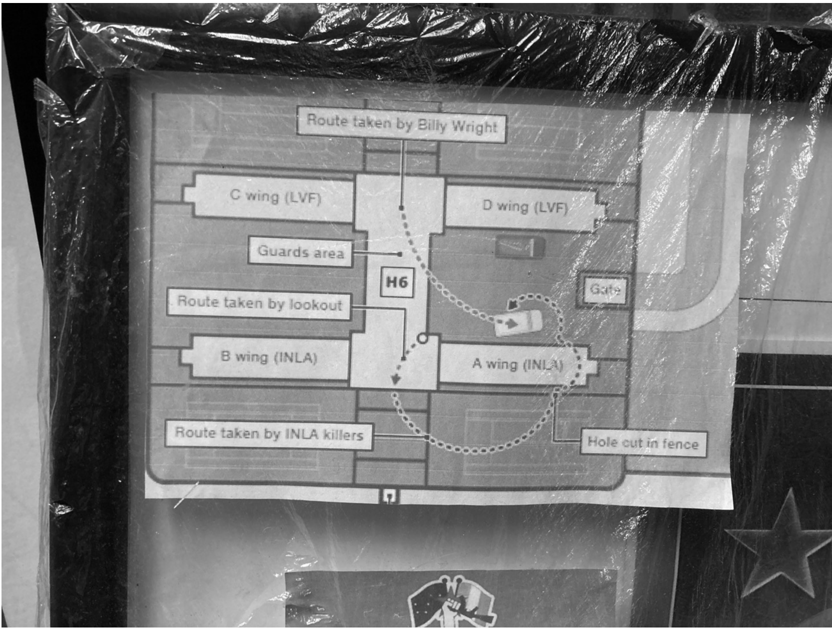

FIGURE 17. Killing of Billy Wright. The Resistance Museum in Derry (Northern Ireland), a map depicts the route taken by Billy Wright and his pursuers inside the Maze Prison that ended in Wright's death in 1997. © retrowelch 2026

of the A Wing. As the gunmen appeared on the roof, a guard suspected a prison escape was unfolding and automatically closed the gate, thereby trapping Wright. The three INLA members leaped down into the forecourt and rushed the van. Unarmed Kennaway restrained the driver, and Glennon, armed with a Derringer pistol, gave cover. McWilliams pointed his weapon at Wright and fatally shooting him point-plank seven times (McKittrick, 2010). To show how the gunmen maneuvered from their cell block through a security fence and into the courtyard of H-Block 6, an illustration plots the lines of their movements (figure 17).

In the immediate aftermath of Wright's murder, the INLA gunmen surrendered and issued a statement: "Billy Wright was executed for one reason and one reason only, and that was for directing and waging his campaign of terror against the nationalist people from his prison cell in Long Kesh [Maze]" (*The Starry Plough*, 1999). In capturing the moment in real time, a curators post a photograph of McWilliams being escorted by two arresting officers. The Museum of Resistance pays tribute to McWilliams with a memorial shrine of sorts, including a picture of the pistol used in the killing.

A T-shirt with a drawing of a rat inside the H-Blocks is captioned "It's A Rat Trap, Billy. And, You've Been Caught"—a reference to the forewarning to his execution. To add authenticity to that cultural remnant, the T-shirt is personally autographed by McWilliams. Along with Glennon and Kennaway, McWilliams was convicted of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment; however, they served only two years and were released under the provisions of the Good Friday Agreement.

As many scholars of the Troubles note, "Wright's killing was laden with political symbolism both within the prison and the world of paramilitarism on the outside" (McEvoy, 2001, p. 129; McPhilney, 1998). To this day, speculation of collusion lingers over the INLA and the prison staff and their alleged involvement in the execution of Wright given that he posed a threat to the peace process. An inquiry into the matter did not reveal any evidence of collusion but did cite serious failings in security measures at the Maze Prison (Cory Collusion Inquiry Report, 2004). As for the INLA, its leadership eventually declared their armed struggle to be over and announced that peaceful political negotiations would be the best way forward. In 2010, they backed up their stance by formally decommissioning their weaponry (English, 2012, p. 396; McGlinchey, 2019).

CONCLUSION

This chapter delves into the meaning of lateral power and surveillance with the intent of exposing their various manifestations in the Cold War and the Troubles. In closing, it is fitting that we address other forms of lateraveillance that speak to the power of the state in its effort to track it rivals. Such tactics speak to the extent that surveillance—and infiltration—are subject to being gendered and sexualized. Returning to the Spy Museum, a large statement reminds us that "Berlin became known as the city of spies and counter-spies." Indeed, that city was brimming with espionage with an array of methods at the disposal of secret agents, including sex. As Oleg Kalugin, former head of Soviet counterintelligence put it in the exhibit *The Honey Trap: Sex as a Secret Weapon*, "I was continually surprised just how many problems people will go through just for sex." As the "oldest" and "second oldest" profession, curators suggest, prostitution and espionage have long been intertwined, as exemplified by the honey trap, a tactic that ensnares its targets into blackmail. The Stasi was committed to those tactics

and deployed men to prey on the needs of lonely women who had access to confidential information. Those "Romeo agents" were taught how to play on the heartstrings of single women working as secretaries in West German ministries. "Some even went so far as to marry their target objects in staged ceremonies (one even engaged a false priest) to manipulate them into gathering information for the enemy. Such methods are still in everyday use." Even high-ranking officials were honey trapped by East German operative Ellen Rometsch, who became a mistress of two America presidents, John F. Kennedy and Gerald Ford. When the FBI picked up on the scheme, she was deported from the United States on August 21, 1963.

In *The Grey Men*, Ralph Hope further informs us that the Romeos were one the proudest operations of spymaster Markus Wolf who recruited East German men to target more than 50 women working in Western government offices (Wolf, 1997). "Sometimes they used homosexual Romeos in the same fashion, but with a simpler goal of photographing and later blackmailing the hapless victims" (Hope, 2022, p. 149). Stasi and the KGB invested heavily in developing those projects. As David Wise reports in *Molehunt: The Secret Search for Traitors that Shattered the CIA*, American agents were especially vulnerable to the honey trap. In one instance, a CIA officer was "sexually compromised by his maid, who was a 'swallow," a female agent of the KGB" (Wise, 1992, p. 47).

Finally, *Defectors and Double Agents: Turncoat Traitors* is the title of a related exhibit at the Spy Museum in which we learn that intelligence services are bent on watching and knowing what their enemies are up to and that the lure of money and the promise of a new life is often used to persuade agents to betray their own side. The "turning" of agents into double agents requires skill and patience, since the conversion may take years of manipulation. Indeed, lateral power, like its downward and upward trajectories, endures as a long form of spy craft. Defector-agents who actually leave their homeland and then work for a foreign power are highly valued. "Using insider knowledge to buy a new life, this option was always open to spies in the Cold War." Among the famous cases to be publicized include Werner Stiller, who absconded to the West with a bundle of secret files that he stole from a locked cabinet in 1979. Six years later, Hansjoachim Tiedge fled the other direction from Cologne. "His role as a senior counter-intelligence agent made him a prize catch for the East Germans."

Up to this point, we have considered the many dimensions of vertical and lateral surveillance. In the next chapter, critical light is thrown on the

potential for power to move upwards in which state actors become the target of surveillance by those presumed to be in a lower position of power. As Foucault and his colleagues in the Group d'Information showed us, prison activism has the power to turn the tables on the authorities, thereby making them the subject of the gaze (Welch, 2011). That counter-veillance is exercised in many other scenarios, including the Cold War and the Troubles, as we shall see. Altogether, these trajectories of surveillance allow us to comprehend the dynamics of wars and watching that speak to the larger imagination of containment, or *visions of prisons*.

EIGHT

Counter-Veillance

AS WE WRAP-UP THIS SEGMENT on the trajectories of surveillance, it is useful to consider that while power has the capacity to move downward as well as sideways, it also is able to move upward. That counter-veillance speaks to the fluid nature of power that can be harnessed by those positioned in the lower levels of a social hierarchy. As a vehicle for illustrating those dynamics, a return trip to the Tower of London proves helpful. The British monarchy, especially early on, was on constant alert for signs of sedition, treachery, and treason from plotters tucked deep under layers of authority. Fear and anxiety of being overthrown by various forms of counter-power are expressed in the architecture of the Tower of London, most notably in the Traitor's Gate. That ominous passageway from the river was reserved for prisoners whose allegiance to the Crown was suspect. Visitors to the Tower are introduced to its historical significance of the Traitor's Gate since it "is the most notorious of all the Tower's entrances. It's not hard to imagine the dread of those ill-fated prisoners such as Sir Thomas More and maybe Anne Boleyn, accused of treason arriving here at the Tower" (Kilby & Murphy, 2020, p. 30).

As a storytelling institution, the Tower of London holds many memories. Among them Henry VIII who did not hesitate to execute those he perceived were his enemies. Still, even Henry might have been startled to learn that other elite prisoners would fall victim to the Tudor regime. In March 1554, his own daughter Elizabeth was transported by barge to the Traitor's Gate by orders of her half-sister, Mary I, whose resentment had turned to suspicion. Shortly after Mary's accession, Thomas Wyatt conspired to place Elizabeth on the throne—a bold and dangerous act of counter-power. Although Elizabeth was almost certainly innocent of any involvement in treason, Mary proceeded with caution:

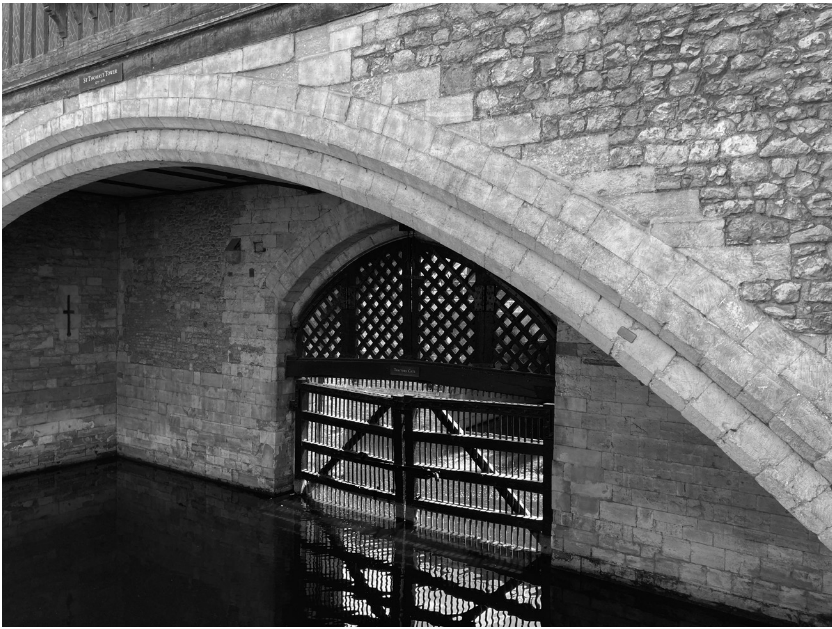

FIGURE 18. Traitor's Gate. At the Tower of London, visitors gaze at the Traitor's Gate as a remnant of royal power and its response to treason. © retrowelch 2026

> It was a cold, wet March day when Elizabeth arrived at the fortress. As she slowly mounted the steps next to the Traitor's Gate, she suddenly stopped and exclaimed: 'Oh Lord! I never thought to have come in here as a prisoner: and I pray you all, good friends and fellows, bear me witness, that I come in no traitor, but as true woman to the queen's majesty as any is now living.' (Borman, 2015, p. 105)

Later released, curators inform us, Elizabeth returned to the Tower in 1559 to begin her own coronation procession. The Traitor's Gate thus offers tourists an up-close look at a remnant of the royal response to counter-power (figure 18).

In this chapter, we go beyond examples of royal power to explore other manifestations of surveillance, particularly as they emerged during the Cold War and the Troubles. As we shall see, these historical moments in Europe remind us that under certain circumstances, power can be reversed in ways that put the authorities under watch. By turning the tables, those in lower positions of conflict develop tactics to undermine state power. Moreover, those techniques of watching are often not just benign forms of surveillance. Rather, they can be used as instruments of violence, such as those deployed by paramilitaries. Setting the stage for closer examination of the trajectories

of surveillance, we return to the notion of war as an analyzer of power, which we follow with a brief summary of Foucault's strategy to invert the optics on the French prison system.

WAR AS ANALYZER OF POWER

The third "Foucault effect," as mentioned in the previous chapter, refers to how the lecture series at the College de France in the 1970s became another source of material for scholars in their quest to advance Foucauldian thought. The seminars that constitute *Society Must be Defended*, accordingly, contribute to this developmental trend. Transcribed from audio recordings of Foucault's teachings, the publication benefits from not only English translations but also condensed course summaries and commentary that situates the lectures in a broader context of intellectual traditions. In this particular work, Alessandro Fontana and Mauro Bertani explain that the series ought to be understood as a unique exploratory exercise. "As for specialists, one can only suggest that they should not forget that this text is not a book, but as a set of lectures, and that it has to be read as such: it is not a work of scholarship, but rather a way of posing an 'urgent' problem . . . and of opening lines of investigation, of outlining a genealogical trace in order to rethink it" (2003, p. 288). On January 21, 1976, Foucault pondered, "To what extent and how can the relationship of force be reduced to a relationship of war?" (p. 46). Given that this project dwells on the intersection of wars, walls, and watching, Foucault's opening salvo gives us inspiration.

As Foucault wades into the lecture, he says, "That is, so to speak, the preliminary question I would like to look at a bit this year: Can war really provide a valid analysis of power relations, and can it act as a matrix for techniques of domination?" (2003, p. 46). Naturally, we all know that the answer is yes. And so we follow his lead. Foucault helps us along by noting that we ought not look for a single form or central point from which all forms of power derive. Rather, we must start by allowing them to operate within their multiplicity. Thus, once again, the ultimate endgame—the multiplicity—is the site where power is being exercised. It is there that power migrates and diffuses, creating reversibility and convergences as they "come into conflict and strive to negate one another" (2003, p. 266). As we shall discuss in greater detail, these ideas have much to do with countersurveillance as a form of resistance to vertical power channeled through war. As Foucault points out, where there is power,

there is always resistance. From that perspective, power is not "omnipotent" or "omniscient." "The reason why we have seen the development of so many power relations, so many systems of control, and so many forms of surveillance is precisely that power has always been impotent" (2003, p. 280). Foucault invites his audience to contemplate the manner by which power and resistance confront each other, producing multiple, mobile, and changing tactics.

In the segments to follow, we examine counter-veillance as another form of resistance. But before we leave the third "Foucault effect," a word or two about the overarching aim of Foucault's work is in order. Fontana and Bertani seem to burst a bubble as they insist that Foucault never devoted a book to power. Rather, he intended "to study the workings, the effects and the 'how' of power in the many historical analyses he made of asylums, madness, medicine, prisons, sexuality, and 'policing'" (2003, p. 274). It is a well-established fact that Foucault was constantly reworking his ideas, but rather than creating intellectual chaos, he offers us refined versions of his original concepts. To the frustration of some readers, Foucault does not deliver "a general theory of power" even though that was what he appeared to be doing with "panopticism" (2003, p. 275; Macey, 1993). In sum, Foucault's style of lecturing allows us to hear him dialogue with other theorists, such as Marx and Freud. As a backdrop to that, Foucault was deeply interested in numerous conflicts unfolding at the time of his talks, including the US War in Vietnam, the Black Liberation Movement and the Black Panthers, and the IRA's offensive in Northern Ireland (2003, pp. 282, 285; Heiner, 2007; Welch, 2002b).

FOUCAULT AND THE REVERSING OF OPTICS

As stated throughout, Foucault's (1979) critique of the birth of the prison, and more importantly the panopticon, has become a touchstone for a growing field of surveillance studies. Scholars have been drawn to the neatness with which the panoptic architecture diagrams asymmetries of power, allowing the few to watch the many. Along the way, the seemingly smooth motion of power becomes problematic, since surveillance both inside prisons and in the outside world has ironic side effects that produce resistance instead of discipline (Boyne, 2000; Haggerty, 2006). Foucault recognized that dilemma, noting that penitentiaries resemble "a witches' brew compared to the beautiful Benthamite machine" (1991, p. 81; 1980). Regardless, those problems are not a dead end, and a reworking of those concepts—a

trademark of Foucault—invites us to re-explore the manifestations of power. Following Foucault, we are presented with an array of countervailing tendencies, including counter-history (2003, p. 297), counter-memory (Foucault, 1977), counter-law (Ericson, 2007), and even more broadly, counter-power (Mathiesen, 1982). As another extension of power, let's ponder the notion of countersurveillance, by which the conventional trajectory of observation is reversed, and by doing so, state operatives themselves become the subjects of inspection (Mann et al., 2003; Monahan, 2006). It has been established that the term counter-veillance joins an expanding Foucauldian vocabulary on observation such as dataveillance (Amoore & de Goede, 2005). Altogether, counter-veillance and related concepts share a common idea that power is inherently strategic (Foucault, 1979).

Foucault's involvement in the Groupe d'Information sur les Prisons (GIP) in the early 1970s provides an opportunity to examine resistance and the reverse-ability of surveillant power (Brich, 2008). The resistance that the GIP stoked was created by prisoners and activists who together exerted pressure on the state to remedy harsh conditions of confinement (Groupe d'Information sur les Prisons, 1971). What is important here is that the GIP relied on forms of counter-veillance to put state officials under unwanted scrutiny. By doing so, two counter-veillant tactics were deployed. First, the GIP turned the prison inside out, so to speak, in an effort to expose unjust penal conditions throughout France. Second, to hold prison administrators accountable for perpetuating problems behind bars, those activists set out to watch the watchers. Both tactics were designed, among other things, to improve transparency in the realm of penal reform (Welch, 2011, 2010).

Panopticism, by way of Bentham (1995), has an interesting connection to French political theory, as Foucault (1996) and his colleagues reveal in a conversation published under the title "The Eye of Power." They say French Revolutionaries admired the panopticon since as a humanitarian alternative to the dungeon, it represented a new and enlightening form of justice. La Fayette even went so far as to propose that Bentham become a "citizen of France" in 1791. In a similar vein, Foucault compares Bentham to Rousseau, notwithstanding some important distinctions:

> For what is in fact the Rousseauian dream that captivated the revolutionary era, if not that of a transparent society, at once visible and legible in every one of its parts, a society where there were no longer any zones of obscurity established by the privileges of royal power. . . . Bentham is at once close to this Rousseauian notion, and the complete opposite." (1996, p. 230)

For the GIP activists, their particular tactic of counter-veillance had its foundation in the Rousseauian tradition of a transparent government (Pickett, 1996). For Bentham, however, visibility is not so much an egalitarian concept as one that derives from a hierarchy that imposes a dominating and observing gaze as a mechanism of social control (Starobinski, 1988). As we shall consider with respect to the Cold War and the Troubles, counter-veillance is a disruptive force that travels upside against the prevailing social hierarchy perpetuated by the Soviet and British states, respectively. These lessons, indeed, prompt us to realize the potential for advancing our understanding of surveillance and its capacity to invert the optics in ways that drive resistance to state power. In doing so, counter-veillance, at least in the case studies presented herein, allows us to interpret more critically wars, walls, and watching as they intersect with a larger *vision of prisons*.

ANTI-SOVIET ÉMIGRÉ RESISTANCE

The authors of *Battleground Berlin*—among whom are a retired CIA officer and a former KGB officer—offer detailed revelations about the Cold War. Covert action—or "psychological operations"—is the topic of the chapter "Cold Warriors in Berlin: A New Era in CIA Operations." Those intelligence agents note that in response to the Korean War and the perceived Soviet threat in East Germany, the CIA developed a major covert action capability, much of which was stationed in Berlin and aimed at the Soviet zone. In administering "psychological operations," the CIA was caught in a row between the State Department and the Pentagon, since "neither actually wanted to carry out covert operations, but both wanted to direct them" (Murphy et al., 1997, p. 103). Once again, we are reminded that rivalries typically strain not only lateral surveillance, as discussed previously, but also countersurveillance. Enter the role of anti-Soviet Russian émigré organizations that would engage in counter-veillance and propaganda against the Soviet forces in East Berlin. Although their activities were subsidized by US intelligence services, those groups were determined to maintain their independence in becoming a bona fide entity of counter-veillance and not a mere instrument of the West. The anti-Soviet émigré operatives, armed with linguistic and political skills, even relied on German intermediaries to form contacts within the Soviet Military Administration and the Soviet Group of Occupation Forces (Deriabin, 1959).

One of those anti-Soviet émigré groups was the Popular Labor Alliance of Russian Solidarists, or the NTS. David Murphy, a former CIA officer in Berlin, concedes that "working with the NTS was never easy," since while the American agents were interested in collecting hard intelligence on Soviet force, the "NTS was driven by its desire to overthrow the Soviet regime." Early on, the US intelligence community in Berlin required that only "Russian-speaking case officers who would appreciate the total ideological commitment of NTS people could work with them" (Murphy et al., 1997, p. 109). The NTS tracked the Soviet regime with tactical precision. In efforts to disrupt Soviet influence in East Berlin, NTS agents distributed propaganda leaflets by hand via East Germans and even had a fleet of short-range balloons that dropped disinformation across the city. Some of the NTS counter-veillance campaign was extremely dangerous, such as making direct contacts with Soviets in East Berlin. In one such instance, the NTS acquired a telephone directory of a key scientific-technical site that was a target of the CIA. Equally risky, the NTS also subverted Soviet state power by urging defections by Soviet military personnel.

The Soviets realized that the NTS and its plans for counter-activities in East Berlin were a formidable force, given its common Russian language but divergent political views. Hence, a KGB unit was activated to intimidate members of the NTS, even kidnapping one of its leaders and attempting to assassinate another. To gain further leverage over the NTS, the KGB pressured family members to halt their relative's political activities. Those experiences not only failed but also inflamed the NTS's hatred of the Soviets. The KGB, determined to foil the NTS, moved to infiltrate the group. In Berlin, NTS operations were supervised by American and British agents. "As the Americans later discovered, George Blake, the KGB source in British intelligence, apparently kept KGB informed on British activities with NTS until the British terminated the mission in 1955. Blake knew perhaps better than anyone why the British abandoned NTS: they were concerned about not only the costs but KGB penetration of the operation" (Murphy et al., 1997, p. 110; see Blake, 1990). In sum, infiltration, penetration, and other counterespionage tactics were deployed by the Soviets to defeat the work of anti-Soviet emigre campaigns. "To KGB political intelligence officers, this excessive concern for NTS seemed a holdover from the postrevolutionary period, when Russian exiles were considered a serious threat to the new regime" (1997, p. 110).

As the Troubles intensified, the conflict created more surveillance and more fatalities. Enter Brigadier James Glover of the British Army's Defense Intelligence Staff, who authored one of the most insightful and prescient reports on the IRA. In his *Future Terrorist Trends*, Glover outlined the direction of the paramilitaries; the 1978 document was marked "secret" but was eventually leaked to the public. In it, Glover writes that paramilitaries had become aware that they were vulnerable to such forces as the "Detachment," and in response, the IRA would increasingly seek to eliminate British operatives. Following Foucault, the IRA had internalized the gaze of state power, but rather than succumb, it would resist. Glover had grown irritated with the prevailing British view that the IRA comprised a bunch of "petty criminals running black taxis" and insisted that his superiors should come to realize that the IRA was settling in for "the long war." Correspondingly, the IRA had altered its tactical and strategic responses to British advances in Northern Ireland. The primary change for the IRA, at the time, was structural. To stem the flow of information from IRA detainees who were breaking under the pressure of interrogation—and torture—the IRA reorganized into "cells" consisting of four volunteers. In the event that one volunteer of a particular cell was captured, only the identities of the other three members could be potentially compromised. As a worst-case scenario, the cell would be contained and eradicated, but the larger structure remained intact (Taylor, 2001, 1980; Glover, 1978).

Glover challenged other misconceptions of the IRA, which had been mischaracterized as a movement of disaffected hooligans drawn from the unemployed and unemployable. With hard intelligence, he confirmed that the IRA had become increasingly sophisticated by recruiting well-educated, well-trained volunteers committed to paramilitary discipline and professionalism. Those social traits, coupled with a firm Republican ideology, shaped their perspective of the Troubles aimed at ultimately pushing the British out of Northern Ireland—an ambitious endgame indeed. Superior weaponry and technology would stretch the "long war." Glover suspected that the IRA would begin to launch "a few spectacular attacks to indicate that their normal lower posture stems from restraint rather than weakness" (Taylor, 2001, p. 220; Glover, 1978). The "spectaculars" that Glover envisioned soon materialized, and they were far worse than initially imagined. Taylor describes the impending chaos as the

"Double Disaster" in which twinned attacks occurred within hours of each other on August 27, 1979 (2001, pp. 218–226; 1993).

On that same day, the first target was Earl (Louis) Mountbatten, the queen's cousin and the last viceroy to oversee the end of British rule in India. Mountbatten maintained a holiday home in Mullaghmore, County Sligo, in the Republic of Ireland. After extensive reconnaissance,—counter-veillance—the IRA planted a 50-pound pound bomb under the deck of his fishing boat, *Shadow V*. As the vessel waded into the sea, the bomb was detonated by radio from the shore, killing Mountbatten and three others. The 79-year-old Mountbatten had vacationed some 30 years at his summer estate and had even sought advice from the British Cabinet Office, the Home Office (presumably MI5), and the minister of defense (presumably the Defense Intelligence) concerning his safety in Ireland. After those consultations, he was issued a memo stating that "although no visit to Ireland could be regarded as risk-free, nevertheless, 'all feel the risk is one that can be reasonably taken'" (Taylor, 2001, p. 221; see Leahy, 2020).

The moment Mountbatten was assassinated, Brigadier Glover was being transported by helicopter from Derry to the British Army headquarters in Lisburn. While informed of the bombing, his shock was compounded by his own realization that the IRA was capable of additional "spectaculars" aimed at high-profile targets. The IRA reconnaissance units were carrying out counter-veillance, and IRA intelligence would facilitate the bomb teams relying on remote-control detonations. Hours after the Mountbatten attack, two other massive explosions occurred near Warrenpoint, close to the Irish border. This time, the target was the Parachute Regiment, and to toll was 18 soldiers killed. For the British military, the bombing caused the largest loss of life since the Second World War. Because the ambush had been meticulously planned, there was no intelligence to alert the Army or Special Branch. The convoy of paratroopers consisted of two four-ton trucks proceeded by a Land Rover. Then, there was an explosion, and soldiers watched as the second vehicle of the convoy was thrown 100 feet in the air. The bomb contained 800 pounds of explosives concealed under a bundle of hay. "From the IRA's point of view, it was the most successful operation they've ever carried out, and what better target from their point of view than the Parachute Regiment. The IRA would see this as revenge for Bloody Sunday" (2001, p. 223). Glover realized that his prophecy about an IRA "spectacular" had come true, not just once but twice. For all its intelligence capabilities, the British Army had failed to interdict and prevent the attacks (English, 2012; Seymour, 1985).

The new prime minister of Great Britain, Margaret Thatcher, inherited the Troubles from her predecessors. The Iron Lady was determined to take on the IRA, especially given the death of Conservatives' shadow Northern Ireland secretary, Airey Neave, who was bombed while driving out of the House of Commons underground parking garage. Neave had advocated the deployment of the SAS to take on the IRA. By 1988, the SAS would indeed become further embroiled in the conflict. With improved counter-veillance, the IRA had its sites on Thatcher. In 1984, the IRA detonated a bomb inside the Grand Hotel in Brighton during the Conservative Party's annual meeting. The 20-pound bomb was placed in a bath panel in room 629 a month prior. The blast, triggered by a sophisticated electronic timing device, collapsed four floors in the center of the hotel, killing five and injuring 30, but Thatcher, whose bathroom was badly damaged, survived the attack. It is believed that Thatcher would pay for the deaths of the hunger strikers who died in 1981 in the Maze Prison. That vengeance had been lingering for years. In the aftermath of the Brighton bombing, the IRA issued a statement: "Mrs. Thatcher will now realize that Britain cannot occupy our country and torture our prisoners and shoot our people in their own streets and get away with it. Today, we were unlucky, but remember we only have to lucky once. You will have to be lucky always. Give Ireland peace and there will be no more war" (Taylor, 2001, p. 265; see Geraghty, 2000).

The Troubles, now well into the late 1980s, raged on. The IRA's "long war" involved sustained reconnaissance and target selection in ways that spilled over into outbreaks of greater violence. The IRA campaign to take aim at British military sites overseas, as had been initiated in West Germany, would escalate. The events at the Rock of Gibraltar threw more unwanted attention on British counterterrorism tactics. On March 6, 1988, news broke that three IRA members were shot by the SAS. It was reported that they were killed while planting a car bomb in the city center of Gibraltar; the target was presumably a British military band at the ceremonial changing of the guard. The British maneuver was dubbed Operation Flavius, after the emperor who quashed a rebellion in an effort to maintain peace in the Roman Empire. Apparently, the Brits hoped to follow suit. However, contrary to what had been previously reported about the incident, the three IRA volunteers were not armed, and there was no bomb. Each of the three had joined an active service unit (ASU) and "were experienced in counter-surveillance techniques and, although observed, succeeded in giving their MI5 'watchers' the slip,

thus evading the 'Brits' tightly-drawn net" (Taylor, 2001, p. 250; see Adams et al., 1988).

Just as the IRA team members planned their next "spectacular" in Gibraltar, the Brits had been watching them in Belfast, and the Spanish authorities were watching them in Spain as they crossed into British territory. Even though the IRA unit had been under intense scrutiny, one member of the ASU team was allowed to drive a vehicle into the colony without being searched. In his investigation, journalist Taylor aske, "Why was [Sean] Savage not stopped and arrested if he was under surveillance and the British suspected the car might be full of explosives?" (2001, p. 282). If Savage, a lone man in a car, was stopped by surprise, he could have been surrounded by plainclothes SAS men and safely taken into custody. As many of the details of the SAS operation continued to be debated, the Death on the Rock case reached the European Court of Human Rights in 1995. The families of the victims petitioned the court, arguing that the killings breached Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights that protects the right to life. The court ruled that ambushing the IRA reconnaissance unit was unnecessary and that the each of them could have been arrested. Nevertheless, the Brits were cleared of allegations that the SAS had been operating a "shoot to kill policy" (Taylor, 2001; see Bolton, 1990; Windlesham & Rampton, 1989). The controversy is remembered at the Irish Republican History Museum (Belfast) in the form of a political poster titled "Gibraltar 3: 25th Anniversary, 1988–2013" (Welch, 2019).

THE PANOPTIC SNIPER

As another remnant of the Troubles, an intriguing poster at the Irish Republican History Museum also reminds us that counter-veillance and political violence are not far apart. Titled "Eamonn Wright: Sniper at Work for Justice," the image shows a rebel armed with a rifle. The message issues a warning that British soldiers in Northern Ireland are not only being watched by the IRA but that they also remain a target of vengeful attack. Recall that after the Brighton bombing, the IRA issued a press release warning then prime minister Margaret Thatcher that she would *always* have to be lucky to avert an assassination. "Eamonn Wright"—or "aiming right"—is a cultural invention that resembles an omniscient deity, an all-knowing god who is always watching (Welch, 2019)(figure 19).

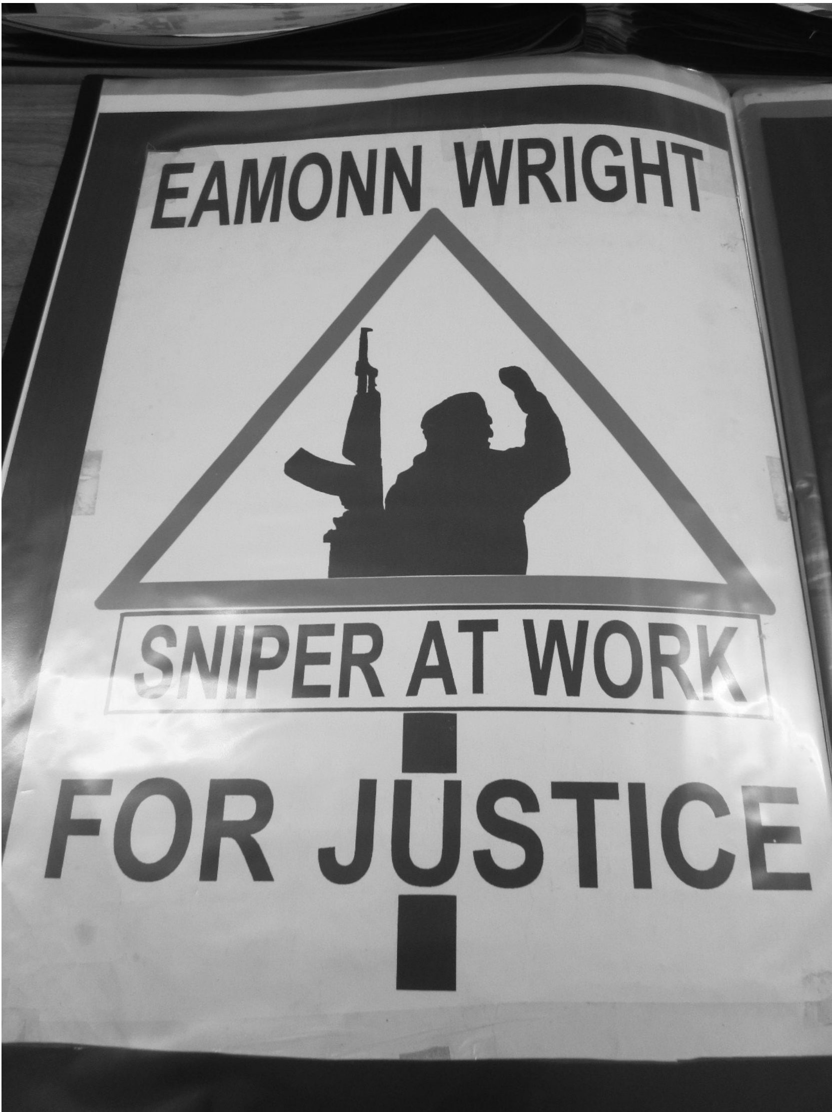

FIGURE 19. Eamonn Wright. At the Irish Republican History Museum (Belfast), a commemorative poster boasts about the power of the IRA with an illustration of a sniper nicknamed "Eamonn Wright" or "aiming right. © retrowelch 2026

To develop the notion of a panoptic sniper, let us lay out some of the events and circumstances that gave rise to that particular form of counterpower. Due in large part to the roadside bombing of the paratroopers at Warrenpoint in 1979, the British Army and the RUC withdrew ground support from South Armagh and began constructing a line of observation

posts from Newry to Monaghan. From then on, all troops and police units would be transported by air, and additional posts were massively fortified to protect them against car bombs and mortar attack. As a result, the IRA had fewer military and police targets, and from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, there were fewer British Army casualties. With strategic readjustment, the IRA stepped up its counter-veillance and adopted long-range sniping attacks to breach the Army's defenses. The IRA even sent gun smugglers to the United States to purchase an array of weapons, most notably the Barrett Firearms M82A1 12.7 mm semiautomatic rifle (Holland, 1999; Makichuk, 2021), which can puncture armored vehicles and aircraft. Its absolute range extends nearly five miles with an accurate sniping range of more than a mile. Human targets were especially vulnerable, since body armor provides no protection from the Barrett's high-velocity bullets. To conceal its shipments from customs inspectors, gun runners from the United States would take the rifles apart and send its components separately, then have them reassembled upon arrival (Harnden, 2000; "Sniper Unit Equipped with Deadliest Rifle Ever Made," 1999).

In the years leading up to the IRA ceasefire in 1994, British security forces suffered multiple attacks by snipers. Soldiers, understandably, internalized the gaze of the panoptic gunman positioned beyond their vision. Whereas the panopticon garners its power by being both visible and unverifiable, the panoptic sniper would assume a seemingly omniscience by becoming both invisible and unverifiable. Especially while manning checkpoints in the border regions, soldiers were vulnerable to a sudden—and silent—bullet that could pierce their helmet. Or as one expert noted, "What's special about the Barrett is the huge kinetic energy. . . . The bullet can just walk through a flak jacket" (Harnden, 2006, pp. 406–407; McKittrick, 1997). In its analysis of the threat of snipers, the British Army issued a report, *Operation Banner*, which found that the increase in shootings had a significant psychological effect on its troops, including a strained morale. Some soldiers were so fearful of snipers that that they remained in shelter rather than carrying out orders to inspect vehicles at checkpoints. The Army's evaluation also concluded that the IRA snipers were capable of evading detection, despite increased use of observation posts and helicopters deployed to survey the area. The report went so far as to concede that the IRA had established an effective response to the watchtowers (Jackson, 2006; Stachan, 2016).

The panoptic sniper, by design, was almost undetectable as he positioned himself inside the back of a specially converted armored saloon car. Known

as a "mobile platform," the stealthy vehicle could speed away after a shot was fired, leaving British soldiers in a panic as they scrambled for assistance (Cusack, 1997). Several factors and forces compounded the danger of sniping, such as cloudy, rainy weather and hazy heat, that would hamper visibility of surveillance at the observation posts. Snipers would also take advantage of trees and mounds of earth to conceal their presence. Moreover, since some of the shots were fired across the Irish border, issues of sovereign territory complicated military responses to what was conceivably a political problem over space. It should be mentioned that the observation towers were extremely unpopular among local residents, particularly those who supported the Republican cause. Newspapers added to the tension by publishing statements that the watchtowers were signs of a British occupation of Irish society (Harnden, 2000; Jackson, 2006, p. 524). The Good Friday Agreement not only put a formal end the low-level war but, in doing so, also allowed the British to demilitarize Northern Ireland along with the removal of checkpoints and watchtowers (Leahy, 2020).

The panoptic sniper—an omniscient deity—would enter the collective consciousness in the psyche of the Troubles. As a reminder of the threat facing British soldiers, and as a form of resistance against the "occupation," the Eamonn Wright emblem would appear on roadside traffic signs with the caption "Sniper at Work" (Horgan, 2005; "Snipers Linked to I.R.A. Attack Army Post at a Belfast Hospital," 1972). Due to the fatal counter-veillance of the marksman, legendary nicknames emerged such as "The Surgeon" and Frank "One Shot" McCabe. When IRA sniper Bernard McGinn died in 2013, the press repeated his claim that he planted explosives on both sides of the border almost daily, "like a day's work" (McDonald, 2013). McGinn was sentenced to a total of 490 years in 1990 for 34 separate offenses, including the murder of three British soldiers and his involvement in the 1992 bombing of the Baltic Exchange and the 1996 bombings of South Quay and the Hammersmith Bridge. Due to the conditions of the Good Friday Agreement, McGinn and all other paramilitary prisoners were released and granted a de facto amnesty for their crimes committed during the Troubles. The panoptic sniper, as cultural remnant of the conflict, would earn an afterlife in film. Actor Liam Neeson agreed to produce *A Mad and Wonderful Thing*, based on a novel that tells a story of a dissident Republican sniper who continued to plant bombs in London in attempts to sabotage the Good Friday Agreement. Neeson reasoned, "I think sufficient time has passed since the Good Friday agreement to, at last, have a novel that goes inside the head of one of the

Troubles' protagonists. The hear the pros and cons of the conflict told in an original way" (Shoard, 2015).

Revealing more details on the intersection of counter-veillance and vertical-veillance, government files now open to the journalists indicate that a British Army unit under the direction of MI5 was "given licence to kill IRA snipers" along the Irish border (Riegel, 2021). As another permutation of counter-power, it has been reported that an IRA "super sniper" was trained as an Army marksman who later joined the IRA in 1971. It has been suggested that some members of the IRA, due to their British military service, were "probably more accurate in their sniping than the average British soldier." Other IRA recruits would attend weapons training across the border in Ireland. So as to maintain a sense of operational legitimacy, those recruits were instructed to join the FCA, the Irish equivalent of the Territorial Army, meaning that they were simultaneously members of the IRA and the Irish Army (Geraghty, 2000; O'Dochartaigh, 1997; "Top Gun—IRA 'Super Sniper' at Time of Bloody Sunday Was Trained Army Marksman," 2003).

SPECTACULAR ESCAPES

Evidence of counter-veillance and skilled planning is located in a series of paramilitary escapes from prisons. In *The Bastille Effect*, attention turns to how the IRA intensified its power against the British penal state, launching what would be remembered as spectacular escapes. In Irish culture, prison escapes are a significant element of heritage dating back to 1561, when Irish clan leaders Hugh Ruadh O'Donnell and Art O'Neil bolted from their English jailers (Foster, 1988). Since then, Irish political prisoners and prisoners of war have embraced their duty to escape from their captors (Taylor, 1997). Turning the tables on colonial power, prison escapes become defiant symbols of resistance that bolster solidarity as rebels join their "fellows to making life difficult as possible for the authorities" (Cohen & Taylor, 1972, p. 48). That exercise of counter-power serves several functions: it relieves prison boredom, frustrates the guards, and offers an adventure, all the while contributing to the war effort. As at least one IRA commander boasted, "Escapes demonstrate to the British that despite the might of the war machine, our Volunteers can defeat them" (McEvoy, 2001, p. 49). Such counter-power transform prison escapes into valuable propaganda messaging

on political resistance that "mocks the myth of the omnipotent British state" (Welch, 2022a, p. 193; see O'Donoghue, 1971).

In *Paramilitary Imprisonment in Northern Ireland: Resistance, Management, and Release*, Kieran McEvoy chronicles the Republican struggle as it manifests within a broader penal context. A list of escapes punctuate the significance of counter-veillance as the IRA monitored the presence of guards so as to pull off daring spectaculars:

1971 (October) Nine IRA prisoners escaped from Crumlin Road prison using a rope ladder to climb over the outside wall.

1972 (January) Seven Republican detainees escaped from the *Maidstone* prison ship moored to Belfast harbour by squeezing through a porthole and swimming to shore.

1973 (October) An IRA unit hired a helicopter and forced the pilot to fly to Mountjoy prison in the Republic [of Ireland], landing in the exercise yard of the prison. Three senior Republican, including Seamus Twomey climbed on board and escaped.

1974 (August) In the Irish Republic, nineteen IRA prisoners blew their way out of Portlaoise prison using tiny amounts of smuggled gelignite and escaped.

1997 (December) IRA prisoner Liam Averill escaped from the Maze prison having dressed as a woman visitor (McEvoy, 2001, pp. 361–362, 368)

The Irish Republican History Museum narrates the way in which the IRA shattered the seemingly infallible prison state designed to contain the paramilitaries. By way of colorful posters, the 1981 "Great Escape" at the Crumlin Road celebrate the masterminds who planned the breakout of eight volunteers who brandished smuggled guns and sported stolen guard uniforms as they made their way to freedom. Their escape was aided by a support team of counter-veillance who kept watch from across the street from the jail, even firing weapons at the guards giving them chase. Among those who escaped was Joe Doherty, who according to plan was taken across the border to safety in the South of Ireland and eventually to New York City (Dillon, 1992; Greg, 2013).

The Maze Prison was built as the most secured maximum security unit in Western Europe. By design, its targeted population was the IRA. With a sense of counter-power, the Maze would become a significant place of resistance and site of a series of protests, including the blanket protest, the "dirty" protest, and eventually the hunger strikes. In 1983, the Maze became known for its

failure to disrupt another mass escape by the IRA. Even with its 15-foot fences and an 18-foot containment wall wrapped in razor wire, the IRA bypassed an elaborate alarm system. In what would become a playbook for the IRA, the leadership's reconnaissance team smuggled pistols, took guards hostage, and confiscated their keys. Then, wearing guard uniforms, 38 prisoners in a delivery truck crashed their way out of the Maze, launching a manhunt that would extend into continental Europe and beyond (McEvoy, 2001).

Prison escapes were also facilitated by the digging of tunnels, thereby advancing our previously discussed notion of power underground. In 1974, IRA prisoners burned down the Cages in protest against conditions and harassment by the administration. In retaliation, the British Army unleased a round of violence to take back the jail, beating hundreds of prisoners. With careful thought, the IRA leadership moved forward with plans for an escape that would remind the British that efforts to contain the Republican movement would have limits. In that particular escape, several IRA internees dug their way under the security fence. However, when they emerged on the other side, they were confronted by British Army soldiers, who shot and killed Hugh Coney. Years later, in 1997, a tunnel was discovered running from the Maze to within 30 meters of the perimeter fence (McEvoy, 2001). The incident reminds us that counter-power is often met with violent vertical-power with a circular pattern of actions and reactions.

GAZING BACK AT THE STASI

To experience the Stasi, at least vicariously, we take the opportunity in Berlin to visit three related institutions, the Stasi Museum, the Stasi Prison, and the Stasi Archives Museum. Altogether, that trifecta teaches valuable lessons on walls, wars, and watching. Given its vast collection on the methods and equipment of surveillance, the Stasi Museum, housed in the former headquarters of the Ministry for State Security, reveals how spying—and the invasion of privacy—was routinely conducted. Next in the machinery of control, the Stasi Prison allows us to learn who the Stasi targeted and subsequently incarcerated. Finally, the Stasi Archives Museum invites us to grasp what information was collected, collated, and stored. It is easy to get lost in the enormity of the totality of the totalitarian state; likewise, it is easy to get overwhelmed by its impact on the East German people. So as to make sense of it all, curators carefully unpack its holdings and display them with

thoughtful intent. By doing so, we are given moments for "safe contact" with surveillance and imprisonment as well as the knowledge produced by government's spy apparatus.

The Stasi Archives serves not only as an office complex that retains personal files available to citizens who request access to them but also as an exhibition space with numerous galleries devoted to the inner workings of the Ministry for State Security. As a museum, the Stasi Archives introduces visitors to what curators call "Access to Secrecy." Taking a more conceptual approach to the descriptive content of its exhibition, we set out to explore the ways the Stasi Archives allows the targets of surveillance to gaze back at the agency that placed them under scrutiny, becoming a form of counter-veillance. For visitors, the "Access to Secrecy" collection also encourages us to gaze back at the Stasi, albeit with "safe contact," since unlike those traumatized by reviewing their own personal file, we witness the casualties of spying without having been the actual subject of observation. By switching attention to the Stasi, we tour the exhibition with a sense of counter-power, thereby uncovering the deep, dark secrets of the Ministry for State Security. It is fair to speculate that the collective consciousness of the Stasi, as an arm of a totalitarian state, probably didn't think that one day, its operations would be made public. Its sense of invulnerability was so complete that when the Berlin Wall quickly crumbled, Stasi agents panicked when they realized that the vertical power they once exercised had been reversed, making them the subjects of investigation. Efforts to destroy as many files as possible is just one of the narratives delivered at the Stasi Archives Museum. With the art of all storytelling institutions, curators take us full circle by informing us that the vast holdings of the Stasi records survived and large swaths of data were reassembled, a task greatly aided by computer software.

In an attempt to provide more conceptual understanding of the Stasi Archives exhibition, we reach back to book *Escape to Prison*, since it goes beyond a mere survey of former prisons and lays out a phenomenology of the museum experience. With an interplay of objects, images, and space at their disposal, curators strive to construct an overarching "museum effect" that situates visitors within a dynamic forum. When done well, such immersion fosters a level of reflection that has an enduring impact on how we understand complex points in history. Dating back to the birth of the modern exhibition movement, *The Principles of Museum Administration* declared that museums should serves as a "nursery of living thought" (Goode, 1895; Key, 1973, p. 86). The Stasi Archives and its companion museums in Berlin

do just that. Rather than being a static environment, the Stasi exhibition is typical of most museums, as it guides visitors around its interior. Indeed, through locomotion, or "organized walking," we enter, exit, and reenter a series of galleries connected to identifiable themes (Bennett, 1995; Williams, 2007). That "mind-on-legs" approach is evident at the Stasi Archives, where the brochure illustrates the floor plan of the collection. With added authenticity, galleries also benefit from sited-ness since the building was the home of the Stasi in its previous incarnation. The elaborate displays unfold on several levels. The ground floor gallery introduces us to the Ministry for State Security; the next two floors attend to the massive card index system and the legacy of the Stasi, respectively.

With a strong sense of "organized walking," curators at the Stasi Archives Museum highlight the exhibition with "walk-in files documenting individual stories. They reveal the impact of surveillance on the people being watched." Recall in previous revelations of the Stasi, the case of Gilbert Radulovic—"the Writer." His case is noteworthy for suggesting a Kafkaesque ordeal. "The Writer's" case study "literally lets the visitor walk into a record . . . . It presents the Stasi's mode of operation." Adding visual content, the gallery posts eerie surveillance photographs of Radulovic at his workplace and simply strolling down a street. "The tour through oversized, walk-in files allow at first an encounter with the Stasi's perspective on Radulovic's life by studying the original files." Curators beg the question, "Why was Gilbert Radulovic sentenced to more than two years in prison?" The "walk-in file" as a technology of museum performance, is contrasted with a video interview in which Radulovic remembers his surreal experience with the state surveillance system.

The *Access to Secrecy* exhibition performs further with sophisticated detail. Toward that end, its narrative seems to inject Foucault's thoughts on power-knowledge (1980a). As an introduction to the birth of the Stasi records, curators label the project "The Stasi's Store of Knowledge." "For the purpose of surveillance, the Stasi collected data on millions of people. In a number of ways it compiled and evaluated information and used the results for secret police activities. . . . This complex information system constituted the Stasi's store of knowledge, the foundation stone for the work of the secret police." There is something insidious about the Stasi's use of the term "knowledge," given that its original meaning suggests benevolence, even virtue. Simply put, gaining knowledge involves incremental learning that benefits not only the individual, but with wider application serves society. The Stasi clearly reverses

course and uses "knowledge" as the foundation for repressive power. characterizing the Stasi's reliance on blanket surveillance as Orwellian is thus not much of an exaggeration.

Rather than subjecting visitors to an experience of downward descent, the exhibition embraces themes of upward ascent as it commemorates the end of the Stasi. As collective resistance, the Peaceful Revolution, in 1989, finally put an end to the surveillance state as the East German political establishment was "forced to abandon its absolute claim to power." Anger fueled more protests against the Stasi as a "symbol of repression and spying . . . culminated in a wave of occupation of Stasi offices." Less than two months after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Stasi was completely dissolved, as organized groups of citizens exercised their counter-power by salvaging millions of documents, "thereby securing the testimony about the surveillance system." The emerging counter-veillance would thereafter rely on the records that the Stasi had collected. To be sure, the occupation of the Stasi offices marked an epic moment, "the start of an unprecedented event anywhere in the world: the first opening of the files of a secret police." Those secret files were soon enshrined in law when in 1991, the Stasi Records Act secured the rights of citizens to access their personal files. The act of gazing back at the Stasi gained even more traction, as the Stasi Records Act allows petitioners to check whether someone else worked for the secret police. The Stasi Records Archive has become a useful tool for uncovering the truth about those placed under surveillance as well "those responsible for the violation of rights in the dictatorship." With a bit more Foucauldian vocabulary, archivists insist that the former secret records contribute to "a social discourse about past injustices, about the power mechanisms of dictatorships and about individual responsibility" (Stasi Records Archive, 2018, p. 5).

CONCLUSION

Together, *Escape to Prison* and *The Bastille Effect* take us through the undercurrents of political imprisonment, which serves as punishment for exercising counter-power in the form of rebellion and resistance, whether under apartheid in South Africa or via Japanese occupation in Korea. In this chapter, we expand on notions of counter-power by focusing on the visual capacity of watching the watchers, particularly in the context of the Cold War and the Troubles. Thus, counter-veillance as a subset of counter-power, demonstrates

how visual tactics of resistance, including reconnaissance, strive not only to level the playing field against vertical power but also to upend the entire hierarchy of visual control, thereby putting the authorities on the defensive. Adding greater refinement to our understanding of control, we borrow from Foucault's conceptual use of war as an analyzer of power. In doing so, the significance of walls, such as the Berlin Wall, is thrown into sharper relief. With its commanding watchtowers and armed border guards, that monolith of the Cold War presented itself as an omniscient deity. So how could such an imposing structure suddenly fall? Of course, there a multiple forces and factors that contributed to the demise of Cold War power—economic, political, even cultural. Still, as Foucault (2003) inform us at great length, where there is power, there is resistance. To reiterate, Foucault insists that we ought not look for a central point from which all power derives; instead, we are better served by recognizing how power migrates. Moreover, as power diffuses, it becomes reversible, creating convergences that come into contact with each other.

Counter-power, counter-veillance, and various forms of resistance all speak to the vulnerability hierarchical power. Foucault (2003) explains again and again that one of the reasons we have the emergence of so many power relations, so many control systems, and so many forms of surveillance is precisely because power has yielded to its impotence. This section on the trajectory of surveillance canvassed the numerous directions of visual power that has the capacity to travel downward and sideways as well as upward. To revisit our initial thesis: What if we were to adopt Foucault's original title, *Surveil and Punish*, and abandon the conventional English-language version, *Discipline and Punish*, to concentrate more on the dynamics of surveillance as analyzers of power without dismissing the importance of discipline and its many sites of control (e.g., prisons, schools, military)?

In part 4, "Enduring Edges," we deepen our explorations of *visions of prisons* by delving into the mental states produced by wars, walls, and watching. In response to the many manifestations of mental repression, the final chapters reveal the various ways in which people under intense control actually resist and defy a dystopia imposed on them.

PART FOUR

Enduring Edges

NINE

Mental States

MOVING FORWARD INTO ANOTHER TERRAIN of wars, walls, and watching, we turn to a certain set of developments to address the long-term consequences of surveillance. Recall that the French Revolutionaries hailed the panopticon as an enlightened institution that would serve as a model for visibility, transparency, and justice, thereby removing the privileges of royal power (Foucault, 1996; Pickett, 1996). Conversely, Bentham (1995) understood visibility to be less egalitarian and more hierarchical, by which the authorities subject people to a dominating gaze alongside subtle—and not so subtle—forms of social control (Starobinski, 1988; Welch, 2008). In changing the title of his book from *Surveil and Punish* to *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault carefully sorted out the nuance of such concepts as inspection and supervision. Dissatisfied with the narrow meaning of those terms, he considered adopting the idea of observation to clarify the thrust of his book. Although Foucault realized that the act of observing might be considered too neutral, he was also "aware of the aggression involved in any one-sided observation" (1979, translator's note). Being watched, Foucault realized, would produce a particular mental state consistent with the aim of panopticism. "Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of consciousness and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (1979, p. 201).

With those brief insights into the power of watching, we delve into the reactions to surveillance, particularly in the context of war. As a continuum of mental states, three stages of consciousness are explored. Beginning with vigilance, then migrating into fear and ultimately into paranoia, our discussion considers how people under watch internalize defense mechanisms that are rational such as vigilance but can become emotive such as fear. At their most extreme, those seemingly normal responses to surveillance can produce

abnormal mental conditions, most notably paranoia. In the pages that follow, the enduring edges of the Cold War and the Troubles are examined to advance the notion of *visions of prisons* in which authorities impose their version of containment—physical and mental—onto a target population. Of course, the source of such material derives from memory, both collective and individual. To remain mindful of those reservoirs of remembering, we begin with another Foucauldian concept known as counter-memory and then to more broader notions of conflicted memory.

COUNTER-MEMORY, CONFLICTED MEMORY

In setting the tone for an interpretation of mental states, we take a look at a particular facet of emotion, namely memory, since remembering is often laden with psychic energy as it recalls the past. As a caveat, it should be understood that attempting event to canvas the scholarly field of memory studies is daunting. For our purposes, a steady flow of ideas concerning memory follows Foucault. Just as power and surveillance move in various directions, so does memory, especially in the context of social conflict. Accordingly, a dominant vision of the past is constructed through an array of cultural techniques at the direction of a hierarchical power, becoming a hegemonic form of collective remembering. Dominant versions of memory, of course, also attract resistance and revision, including sources positioned lower in the social hierarchy. Enter Foucault (1978b, 1977), who remained interested in the roles of discourse as they formulate memory within a larger spectrum of power-knowledge.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Foucault participated in a campaign of resistance against the French prison system by placing the authorities of the penal apparatus under unwanted scrutiny. That counter-veillance was more than visual. The Group d'information sur les Prison, through surveys distributed by Foucault and a team of activists, collected the "voices" of those held harsh conditions of confinement (Brich, 2008; Welch 2011). Prisoners' "voices," therefore, were elevated from the depths of incarceration and liberated into a public forum in what Foucault regards as counter-memory. Such resistance signifies a struggle against dominant memory which maintains a hierarchical position by exercising a top-down vector of power. Albeit falsely, it strives to promote what its advocates claim is a consensual view of the past. In contrast, counter-memory allows "voices" from below to resonate within a

wider constellation of remembering. Or as Foucault concisely writes, counter-memory "must record the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality" (1977, p. 144). Still, Foucault does not suggest replacing old fixed memories with newly fixed versions of the past. Rather counter-memory, much like the nature of power relations themselves, is dynamic and continuously revisited and revised (Hutton, 1993; Misztal, 2003; Pearson, 1988).

Moving further into the mental states produced by the Cold War and the Troubles, we consider the overlap of memory, space, and identity, altogether contoured by conflict. Much like the vast writings involving memory studies, the scholarly literature on post-traumatic societies goes far and wide. Condensing some of these concepts, Brewer (2006) detects an "unholy trinity" consisting of memory, nationalism, and ethnic violence. As way forward, such conflicted memory ought to be revisited so as to correct distortion of remembering that reinforce divisions between people and communities. As just one intervention, the Northern Ireland Consultative Group on the Past (2009) recognizes the emotive strands of memory and advocates the cathartic value of storytelling in reconciling former enemies, thereby forging new collective forms of commemoration. McDowell and Braniff (2014), with an eye on the Troubles, propose that "territoriality" be added to the "unholy trinity" since ethnic segregation, as a force of social space, tends to intensify urban strife. Indeed, looking at the Troubles through a geographical lens, helps us comprehend the legacy of violence as well as its mental—and emotional—states.

Prior to tapping into the dimensions of fear, vigilance, and paranoia, let us look to another form of conflicted memory: post-memory. Hirsch (1997) tracks memories circulated through other people's experiences of a violent event that then were passed down to future generations. Consequently, post-memory becomes embedded into the recollections of the past by people who have no personal experience to the actual episode. Such post-memory is not merely symbolic. Rather its energy fuels animosity against the ethnic "other" responsible for violence. In brief, conflicted memory perpetuates certain versions of the past, creating a circular rotation of victimhood compounded by an unholy trinity of memory, nationalism, and ethnic violence, as well as territoriality. Some of those post-memories are reproduced by authors who share their experiences of war through memoirs. With respect to the Troubles, those "politics of memoir" are rife with selective recollections. Hopkins (2013) cautions us that the current period of relative peace rests upon an uneasy calm in Northern Ireland. Residents continue to inhabit

contested ideological territories; thus, narratives of the past tend to lock them into exclusive and self-justifying discourses. In that sense, memoirs, as just another form of conflicted memory, reside in a cultural atmosphere void of any consensus regarding an overarching truth. In many communities in Northern Ireland, the weary and traumatized inhabitants are thankful for what is viewed as relative peace. However, as Hopkins observes, "There is little realistic prospect of erasing the Troubles from collective memory" (p. 2). He goes on to note that it is a misnomer to suggest that society in Northern Ireland was "peaceful" prior to the Troubles; "rather there was something akin to a 'cold war' characterized by communal distrust" (p. 2; see Bloomfield, 2007).

Memories of war as an individual phenomenon has a corollary in a collective war memory, and together, they persist as another permutation of conflicted memory. Indeed, as multiple scholars have demonstrated, memory of war fosters debates "by exploring the relations of power that structure the ways in which wars can be remembered" and in doing so enter into "the *politics* of war memory" (Ashplant et al., 2015, p. xi). Toward ending the low-level war in Northern Ireland, negotiations turned simultaneously to the disarmament of the paramilitaries and the "decommissioning of mind-sets" that inflame political violence, especially, given that "memories of war tend to become weapons in a war over memory" (Dawson, 2007, pp. 4, 15). To recognize the importance of mental states, it is useful to consider that war and the politics of memory have long-term psychic consequences, such as trauma. Even after the ceasefires in Northern Ireland, many communities experienced high numbers of reports of teenage depression and a "soaring rate of suicide among young people that is among the highest in Europe" (p. 16; Northern Ireland Department of Health, 2019). In the segments to follow, we shall remain mindful that mental states are produced within unique social spaces marred by conflict, whether it be the Troubles or the Cold War.

VIGILANCE

Anna McWilliams, in her analytics of materiality and metaphors, takes sharp aim at the Cold War, an ambiguous conflict without battlefields but stretching into outer space, where satellites looked down at enemy territories. With great precision, she concentrates on how the Berlin Wall had become a potent symbol of a divided world where East and West stood for different

things. "The wall helped to visualize the abstractness of the Cold War and the division between East and West" (2020, p. 117). Still, for citizens in East Berlin, the wall represented a prison. That form of mass incarceration was fortified with security zones, restricted areas, and surveillance systems, which together made the wall inaccessible to those in the Eastern sector of the city. "Instead, the border extended conceptually as well as materially into society with informants keeping track of the population not only in the border zones" (2020, pp. 115–116). With an estimated one informer for every six citizens, the Stasi had created a gloomy mental state hovering over East Berliners. Being vigilant, East Berlins watched their words. As a school girl, Ulrike Poppe remembers being careful not to refer to the border as the wall, because it could arouse suspicion that your awareness had been infiltrated by the West. "Later the taboo disappeared: we spoke of the Wall as such; however, we talked about it less and less because the world on the other side of it had faded" (Stein, 2005, p. 28).

In *Stasiland*, Funder uncovers some of the rules of watching internalized by the unofficial informants for the secret police. Among the "signals for observation" are "Watch Out! Suspect is coming—touch nose with hand or handkerchief" and "Observing Agent wishes to terminate observation because cover is threatened—bend and retie shoelaces" along with "Observing Agent wishes to speak with Team Leader or other Observing Agents—take out briefcase or equivalent and examine contents" (2002, p. 7). In addition to watching their words, as internalized by Ulrike Poppe, East Berliners were vigilant with what they read. Miriam, a young woman interviewed by Funder, said that she lived with a guy who was under close surveillance, and agents would conduct raids on their home:

> One of them was up on a ladder searching the bookshelves when he found Orwell's *Animal Farm*, which, of course, was blacklisted. We held our breath as he pulled it off the shelve. I remember the cover clearly: it was the pigs, holding a red flag aloft. We watched as this young man looked at it, the pigs and the flag. Then he put it back. Afterwards we laughed! We could only think that he saw the pigs—that was bad—but that they were holding a red flag, and they seemed to be on a collective farm—he must have thought that meant it was all right! (2002, pp. 34–35)

In an early look into the Troubles, anthropologist Allen Feldman brings to light the myriad forms of watching that shaped the lives of those caught in conflict. His book, *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and*

Political Terror in Northern Ireland, is based on hazardous fieldwork during the mid-1980s, when the paramilitaries were deeply embedded and urban guerilla warfare compounded by heightened levels of surveillance. Feldman's cultural analysis of interviews benefits from a keen awareness of semiotics and the work of Foucault, producing a performative theory of social life and social conflict. As Feldman reveals, wars and watching are contoured along lines of secrecy. "In a colonized culture, secrecy is an assertion of identity and of symbolic capital. . . . Cultural resistance inspires the production of fragments as a counterpractice to imperial agendas" (1991, p. 11). Lateral power, to be sure, would be activated by not only members of rival paramilitaries but also residents as they kept an eye out for signs of danger.

The barricades, as noted in previous chapters, served as sites where watching was particularly intense. A Catholic community activist and housewife explained to Feldman that the barricades were guarded by other residents who would demand that "passwords" be exchanged to pass through "in order to go to work and to come back" (1991, p. 33). Another Catholic woman said, "I remember the barricades. One of my mates was shot: he was on a barricade at the time to keep the Loyalists from getting into the area. To go from one Catholic area to another there was a password. It was all 'bread' and 'butter' or 'milk'" (1991, p. 33). To facilitate lateral surveillance, the barricades were fitted with an entryway that opened and closed:

> When you walked up to it, it was corrugated iron and you had to rattle it an say who you were and where you were from, your name, and on what street you lived. It was rough. After a while you said to yourself: 'They have to be there.' Inside we had our own shops, even chemist shops and a first aid station. Each street had been given its evacuation plans in case we were overtaken. (1991, p. 34)

As the Troubles spread, vigilance paralleled social and political developments. With respect to the geopolitics of boundaries, we delved previously into the significance of the barricades of Free Derry that were erected on several occasions in 1969, most notably during the Battle of the Bogside intended to keep the RUC and the British Army from entering the Irish Catholic community. The hostile standoff was eventually resolved by replacing the barricades with symbolic white lines that Army leadership recognized, thereby keeping soldiers on the other side of the divide. In his memoir, *War and an Irish Town*, Eamonn McCann chronicles key moments during that period, particularly as local activists urged their neighbors to remain

vigilant of any incursions into their social—and political—space. The evolving mental state of the Bogside became, over time, more fitting to the circumstances as the "vigilante corp to patrol the area at night was enrolled" (2018, p. 95).

Vigilance in the realm of the Cold War is also conveyed through memoirs (Murphy et al., 1997; Wolf 1997). As mentioned, Timothy Garton Ash, a well-respected writer and fellow at Oxford University, published a critique of his own Stasi file that had been compiled while he was conducting research in East Berlin. The cover of his book, *The File: A Personal History*, is wrapped by a reproduction of his actual file that features an index case number and his codeword "Romeo"—perhaps due to his popularity among the women with whom he socialized. Some of those contacts, however, were also informants for the state security services. Adding intrigue to *The File* is a promotional blurb printed on the back of the dust jacket from none other than Arthur Miller, author of *The Crucible*, which dramatized the horror of conspiratorial witch hunts, then and now: "A kind of meditation of Garton Ash's personal experience with the Stasi, the dreaded secret police organ of the East German regime. No population was as closely watched for signs of dissidence, although Hoover's FBI came fairly close at times. The book is fascinating in its unearthing of some terribly human monsters whose eye recorded the fall of every sparrow." Ash quotes numerous extracts from his file, such as "Here, for example, is an observation report describing a visit I apparently paid to East Berlin on 06.10.79 from 16.07 hours to 23.55 hours. The alias given me by the Stasi at this date was, less romantically, '246816'" (1997, p. 7). The seemingly uneventful entries, in the context of the file, point to the intrusive detail that consumed the Stasi.

While under surveillance, Ash was the target of Operational Person Control (OPK), which the Stasi used to identify anyone who might have run afoul of the criminal code of East Germany, had a "hostile-negative attitude," or appeared exploitable by the enemy. The central purpose of the OPK, according to the Juridical Higher School of the Ministry for State Security was to answer the question "Who's who?" (1997, p. 13). Each file begins with an "opening report, " which is followed by a "plan of action." Ash's dossier was initially prepared by Lieutenant Wendt, who notes that his target had been studying in West Berlin since 1978 before relocating to the "Capital of the GDR," whose leadership tends to avoid using the term East Berlin. The file adds that Ash has repeatedly "made contract with operationally interestingly persons" and consequently "there are grounds for suspecting

that G. [for Garton Ash] has deliberately exploited his official functions as research student and/or journalist to pursue intelligence activities" (1997, pp. 13–14). Because Ash also travels to Poland, he was suspected of making connections with "antisocialist forces," which could have been a breach of Article 97 of the criminal code that prohibits the passing of "information or objects that are to be kept secret" to a foreign power or secret service. Such violations were subject to a jail sentence of not less than five years, and in extreme cases, was punishable by death.

FEAR

Drawing further on cultural theory, Feldman recognizes that barricades and vigilante patrols converted communities in "no go" areas into unique social spaces that codified the other side as an immanent source of transgression. "The entire symbology of purity and impurity which impregnated the polarities of ethnicity received a reifying substantiation in the inside/outside division of social space" (1991, p. 34; see Douglas, 1966; Welch, 2019). The formations of violence in Northern Ireland were patterned according to sensory formations and cultural practice of "telling" (Burton, 1979). "Telling" is a mode of sensory identification of the ethnic Other by decoding appearances, such as clothing styles, linguistic dialects, facial expressions, spatial movements, and of course, political and religious insignia. Altogether, they create sign systems that allow a person to recognize the ethnic Other.

Again, that information is processed so that a social situation can be evaluated as safe or dangerous. Through optical and auditory surveillance, "telling" allows the interpreter to navigate an encounter with the Other. Those traditional cultural practices, however, would also drive an emerging trend of political violence in the Troubles. "This implies that telling, in paramilitary practice, is used less an avoidance mechanism and more as a means for the production of violent encounters through victim specification" (Feldman, 1991, p. 57; see Burton, 1979). Paramilitary ambushes, assassinations, and executions all contained elements of telling. Doorstep murders represented a breach of domestic and community space as sanctuary space. "Paramilitaries would drive up to a household and ask for the resident male (whose identity they may have previously researched through surveillance or obtained through prior knowledge of the community). As the victim came to open the door, he was assassinated" (1991, p. 71).

Feldman discusses the significance of surveillance, detention, and interrogation as both ceremonies of verification as well as rituals of state power. Those technologies of power were transposed to Northern Ireland from other societies under British colonial occupation (e.g., Kenya, Cyprus, Malaya). Moreover, those particular techniques in Northern Ireland were modeled on methods developed by the KGB. By comparison to Soviet procedures, however, Ulster methods were "more severe versions of the isolation technique," thereby inflicting fear and suffering through depersonalization along with physical brutality (Shallice, 1973, p. 390; McGuffin, 1974). Still, the fear of arrest, detention, and maltreatment was part of a larger "display of colonizing power and the command of territory. . . . [They functioned] as a disciplinary incision onto the populations and topographies" (Feldman, 1991, p. 89). Arrest is "the political art of individualizing disorder," and the body becomes "the walking panoptic presence of that state in a community that wishes to evade full panopticism" (p. 109). The purpose of injecting fear into the social body, according to Feldman, is to background violence as the assumed basis for an entire domain of social interaction (pp. 109–110).

In earlier chapters, we considered the historical strains of fear as they surfaced in Derry, not only in the Bogside but also in the section known as the Fountain inhabited by residents who regard themselves as British Protestants. Their collective memory is attached to the Great Siege of 1688–89, when Derry was threatened by the forces of King James II, the last Catholic monarch of Britain. Those events served to shape a form of fear that resonates in the Fountain, especially in the face of sectarianism that still persists despite the Good Friday Agreement that put a formal end to the Troubles. Today, a stark reminder of fear and conflict is embodied in a mural in the Fountain neighborhood. The stencil reads "Londonderry, West Bank, Loyalists Still Under Siege, No Surrender." Inserted into the message is a reference to Northern Ireland celebrating its 100-year anniversary, "NI 100" (see figure 3). The Siege Museum, once again, attends to the historical significance of anxiety in the formation of Northern Ireland insofar as the fear of Irish Home Rule, in the aftermath of the War on Independence, would create economic havoc, greater taxation, religious discrimination, and cultural separation from Great Britain (Lynch, 2018; MacDonagh, 1983).

As a tightly contained walled city, Derry was built with fortifications that protected its people against the threat of King James II during the Great Siege. Later, during the Troubles, those same ramparts served as a military installation that allowed commanders to keep close watch on the Bogside,

fearful of attacks by the IRA. Reminders of fear alongside urban fallout produced by the Troubles is captured in another mural in the Fountain section: "Between 1971 and 1991, the Protestant population of the Cityside declined by 83.4% as a result of Republican violence." Whereas that message could be read as a remnant of the conflict in Derry, a boldly printed sign in black and yellow lettering suggests that fear continues to persist in the Fountain: "Warning: These Premises are Protected by Close Circuit Television: Images Are Recorded for the Purposes of Crime Prevention and Public Safety, 24 Hour Video Recording."

By being vigilant, people under watch become mindful of surveillance. And in the face of threat, vigilance can easily become fear. As a totalitarian regime, the GDR was in a constant war with its own citizens (Bruce, 2010). With arrest, interrogation, and imprisonment at their disposal, Stasi agents injected dread into the population. At the helm of the Stasi stood Erich Mielke, the Master of Fear. In *The Grey Men*, Ralph Hope brings us into an atmosphere of terror:

> More than one thousand people were killed for political reasons in the GDR. The Stasi was responsible for fifty attempted murders and 650 abduction, including political kidnappings from West Berlin. Some of those targeted were drugged by a person they thought was a friend before being shoved into the trunk of a car. At least 200,000 persons were jailed for political purposes. More than 300 were killed at the GDR borders trying to flee the country. (2022, p. 29)

Hope (2022) insists that for any dictatorship to remain in power, it must abide by two fundamental principles: control all aspects of society and instill mistrust and fear. In his assessment, the Grey Men succeeded in both spheres. With the power of an omniscient deity, the East German population would assume that the secret police were everywhere, even in those instances when they really were not. In a word, the GDR was a panoptic with a clear *vision of prison*.

Even today in Berlin, a tour of the Stasi Prison is a frightful experience. When the compound was inhabited by the Stasi, the security zone surrounding it was so mysterious that it did not appear on a map. Walking through the neighborhood toward the Stasi Prison, posters describes how extensively the secret police reached into everyday life. Guard towers stationed on each corner of the prison speak to its function as a maximum-security institution. Sitting inside the main entrance, a retired van symbolizes

FIGURE 20. Submarine cell. In Berlin, the Stasi Prison is open to the public for tours. The "Submarine" cell allows us to imagine the fear on confinement. © retrowelch 2026

the fate of those abducted and transported to the Stasi Prison. Tour guides, some of them former political prisoners, share memories of incarceration. The subterranean solitary confinement cell, known as the Submarine, is open for visitors to step inside and imagine the horror of being kept in the dark without a proper bed and without adequate sanitation (figure 20).

Steel cages wrapped around security checkpoints deepen the fear of imprisonment. Beyond the prison cells, visitors are introduced to the interrogation rooms where Stasi agents grilled their subjects accused of such crimes as planning to flee to the West. Many spouses were incarcerated and forced to inform on their loved ones, producing a level of distrust that could forever destroy families. Even Stasi interrogators feared the larger hierarchy—known as the Firm—in which they worked. So as to maintain quality control, some Stasi officers would pose as prisoners and keep tabs on their guards, reporting any infractions to the superiors. The ubiquity of security cameras monitored not only prisoners but also the staff. Nobody would evade the surveillance state.

The Stasi Prison tour concludes with a visit to a newly added exhibition hall that provides more details of the experience of imprisonment, including fire arms, billy clubs, and straitjackets that were used to subdue unruly prisoners. The fear of captivity was also compounded by fear of poisoning, in which unwitting prisoners were subjected to surreal experiments with strange chemicals carried out in the "Secret Laboratory" by the forensic technical department. Even more bizarre, the fear of being infected with radiation, real or imagined, sent shock waves through a country used to bad news. In *Stasiland*, Funder reports incidents in which musicians, writers, and critics either died prematurely or developed a rare kind of cancer. Each had been in Stasi prisons at around the same time. "When a radiation machine was found in one these prisons, the Stasi File Authority began to investigate the possible use of radiation against dissidents" (2002, p. 191). It is believed that the Stasi used radiation to mark people and their belongings in order to track them. Several devices were designed to produce radiative tags and pins inserted into clothing and radiative magnets to be placed on cars. Radiative pellets and sprays were invented so that the infected person would leave radioactive footprints where ever they went. The Stasi File Authority did not conclusively find that agents used radiation as a weapon; however, it did have reason to believe that those chemicals were used with reckless disregard for public health. Correspondingly, it recommended that former prisoners receive regular medical check-ups, thereby adding to a heightened state of fear (see Hope, 2022).

Fear during the period when Berlin was surrounded by the wall was a source of perpetual discomfort. As a form of catharsis to relieve the daily stress of living in a totalitarian society, political humor circulated among East Berliners. More broadly, Freud weighed in on the matter, theorizing that humor illuminates the intersection of aggression, inhibition, and coping with

persons who claim to exercise authority. "The joke then represents a rebellion against that authority, a liberation from its pressure" (1960, p. 105). Mary Beth Stein studied political humor on both sides of the wall in the 1980s, when few ever imagined that it would eventually fall. Among her examples is a joke that centers on the fear of the GDR's shoot-to-kill policy to prevent escapes. Under intense international condemnation, the GDR announced that it would instruct border guards to issue warning shots before firing live rounds at their victims. At least for those confined to East Germany, the claims of warning shots was the subject of ridicule, because border guards were rewarded for preventing an escape, even if that meant killing the would-be refugee. Moreover, failure to prevent an escape was punishable with demotion and a possible prison sentence. In essence, border guards were also trapped in the larger environment of fear. This particular joke, according to Stein, revolves around the incongruity between political rhetoric and actual fact; its macabre tone underscores the role of fear in governing the GDR: "When does a good border guard fire the warning shot? At the end of the second clip of ammunition" (1989, p. 93).

As a mental state, fear along with vigilance had a lasting impact on the population of East Germany during the Cold War. Paranoia, the next topic, is evidence of an extreme reaction to the societal conditions under totalitarianism, not only on an individual level but on society.

PARANOIA

Peter Wyden, in *Wall: The Inside Story of Divided Berlin*, begins with a quote by Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev—"The West will stand there like dumb sheep"—delivered as he crowed about the Berlin Wall. That string of barbed wire that circled the Berlin would grow into 62 miles of 11-foot-tall concrete—"a bleak physical symbol not just of one divided city but of the huge gulf separating the Communist East from the capitalist West" (1989, front flap). Paranoia, severe depression, and psychosis soon made their way into the mental states of those stuck behind the great "anti-fascist protection wall" intended to insulate East Berliners from the forces of the West. For many, the wall and everything it represented would exert enormous strain on the lives of those whom it surrounded, and Berliners began suffering from the dreaded "wall disease," a cluster of clinical ailments that would confound mental health experts. Mrs. Z., patient treated for the condition, was

observed over the ensuing years: "Her state worsened steadily. She became increasingly withdrawn, then suspicious, then paranoid. She thought her neighbors were plotting against her, and her apartment had been searched, that her bed sheets had been moved. She had a 'fine nose' for that sort of trickery, she said. At her workplace she got into trouble because she kept muttering imprecations of 'the Wall'" (Wyden, 1989, p. 384).

Of course, it wasn't simply the wall that caused those symptoms. It was the personal and social pain of separation not only from the West but from relatives, friends, and community. Even East Berliners with marriage licenses and valid visas to the West were barred from crossing the border. In response, East German psychiatrists dispensed sedatives to offset depression. Mrs. E., one of those victims, "acquired a lockjaw condition and could barely open her mouth." The answer, according to the clinicians caring for her, was more medication, hypnosis, and relation exercises. In six weeks, her "jaw problem" vanished and her spirits improved. "Things are looking up for me, so now I finally want to get back to my husband," who was waiting for her in West Berlin where they exchanged wedding vows just before the wall was built, trapping her in East Berlin. Mrs. E. inundated the GDR government with requests to allow her to reunite with her spouse, but her request was denied. "Again she became depressed. This time the condition did not improve with more intensive treatment. In October [1962], she threatened suicide" (Wyden, 1989, p. 381). Fortunately for Mrs. E., doctors contacted the district administrators, saying that they could not take responsibility for her demise. In what was viewed as a unlikely "miracle" in a totalitarian state, Mrs. E. was allowed to return to West Berlin, where she fully recovered.

For skilled psychiatrists in East Berlin, the lines between the physical environment and mental states were clearly drawn. However, they were advised not to use the term the "wall" in their coded reports for fear of attracting unwanted attention of the GDR—the omniscient deity, the all-knowing god. From the standpoint of the GDR leadership, the "wall disease" was a figment of the imagination, and the topic was too hot for psychiatrists who wished to protect the privacy of their clinic. Although psychiatrists were quietly compiling case studies, they realized that their work was capturing only a small fraction of the incidents of the syndrome. Some psychiatrists emigrated the United States to write about the "wall disease" but were unable to travel with their clinical notes that recommended, as a course of treatment, reunion with their husband—a cure the government would not allow (Wyden, 1989, p. 384). Psychiatrists who prescribed such a cure might face

sanctions by the GDR, which accused them of being "seduced by Western influences." The penalty would include "ideological discipline" for failing to follow the party line (Hoffman, 1969; Muller-Hegemann, 1973).

In *The Ghosts of Berlin*, Brian Ladd reiterates just how haunting the wall and its "disease" would become for those stripped of their mobility. "These case studies of divided families and of pressures for ideological conformity clearly reflect the stresses of life in a police state, in which the Wall had become established as the paramount symbol of control" (1997, p. 28). Echoing the psychiatrists who had an up-close look at the pathology of the wall, Ladd reminds us that the barrier violated normal and accepted possibilities in postwar Germany that promised peace and prosperity, only to be replaced with war and mass suffering imposed by the GDR. Even after the fall of the wall and campaigns to erect memorials to those who were killed in their effort to escape East Berlin, the cultural—and psychological—significance of the wall would not budge. Across Bernauer Strasse, on the Western side of the wall, community leaders struggled to establish a proper memorial for the world to see. Directly facing the remnants of the wall stood the Lazarus Home for the chronically ill. "It's director announced that to preserve the Wall outside their front windows would damage the health of the patients by causing depression and anguish" (1997, p. 34). His "prognosis" suggested that the "wall disease" would persist until its visible remnants were eradicated (Funder, 2002; McWilliams, 2020). Today, visitors on the observation deck on Bernauer Strasse can get a view of that dystopia as they gaze into the wall and its death strip (see book cover). Likewise, vintage postcards readily available across Berlin freeze time when the wall separated friends and loved ones. In one such photograph, West Berliners are shown queueing for their turn to look over the wall with the hope of seeing someone they know.

Paranoia is not simply a mental state that inflicts individuals. It can also be a hierarchical power forming the foundation of governmental planning. Day X has become the vernacular for the state paranoia consumed by the head of the Stasi, Erich Mielke—the Minister of Fear. Under Directive 1/67, Mielke would instruct the Stasi to conduct mass detentions of thousands of East German citizens. That *vision of prison*, to take place on Day X, was designed to save the GDR from subversion. At the Stasi Museum in Leipzig, the atmosphere has a different air, especially compared to its counterpart in Berlin. Known locally as the Runde Ecke, or Round Corner, the notorious site was also stormed by local activists in after the wall fell. The entire exhibit relies solely on the German language, adding

to a greater sense of mystique. Still, audio guides in several languages allow foreign visitors to access the meaning of the collection and the horrific story of Day X. Turning to *The Grey Men*, we learn more about Day X and its paranoid state of the state. Just 32 days before the end of the Wall, Mielke fumed at public protests that were becoming all too common in East Berlin and an hour away in Leipzig. Mielke should have been celebrating with his comrades the 40th anniversary of the GDR, as well as his own personal achievements over the past 39 years in the Stasi. Instead, Mielke was obsessed with how to activate Directive 1/67, an ambitious plan that he himself had written, with the approval of the Politburo. "It provided for the creation of internment camps throughout East Germany for political opponents. . . . The constantly updated lists of persons to be screened for immediate arrest by 1989 had swelled to more than 85,000—14,000 more than three years ago" (Hope, 2022, p. 46).

That *vision of prison*—coupled with state paranoia—gave rise to the identification of specific detention facilities, rules for arrests, and details of how to liquidate certain targets, including writers, artists, religious leaders, and other "troublemakers" who inspired East Germans to push back against the totalitarian regime. Mielke had trained anti-riot teams with specially modified electrically charged batons, or human cattle prods, to neutralize the enemy. The Stasi had no qualms about the directive. "The state must be protected. It wasn't as if they would execute everybody like the Nazis did. They were better than the fascists, and it wasn't necessary anyway, in most cases. There were other ways." The *vision of prison* on Day X "would be their finest moment. . . . After the arrests . . . rolls of razor wire were rolled out to encircle all pre-selected places of imprisonment" (Hope, 2022, p. 47). Guard towers would be erected at the first 35 temporary facilities, with a capacity of 22,000 detainees arriving by truckload. Sticking to the party line, language rules would mask the dystopian project by refusing to call their targets prisoners; instead, they were deemed isolated people who would be interrogated by officers from the Main Department VIII, Observation/Investigations. Every minute detail of the directive would be followed, such as sleeping arrangements. "Each cell should have benches suitable for twenty-five people, a transportable toilet bucket and ten square meters of floor space covered with straw for sleeping . . . and guards should permit no talking" (Hope, 2022, p. 50). That description of the prison cells, to connect a few historical dots, is remarkably consistent with that of the "Submarine Cell" at the Stasi Prison in Berlin (see figure 20).

The GDR, which insisted that Stasi agents were adhering to the rule of law, arrested thousands, whom they charged with any number of offenses against socialist property, the national economy, the general security, and state order. To reiterate, the directive would guide the Stasi to crush dissent and save the GDR state. In retrospect, however, "the plans for Day X that lay on the conference table in front of the old men that night would later be described as nearly a carbon copy of the plan used by the Nazis to round up the Jews" (Hope, 2022, p. 50).

The directive did not go as planned. Mielke had waited a month too long, and while protests mounted, thousands of officers could see the writing on the wall. The GDR was on its last legs. In 30 days, Mielke would be forced to resign, and the blueprint for Day X would be lost in the chaos (Bruce, 2010; Childs & Popplewell, 1996).

At the former Stasi headquarters in Berlin, remnants of Mielke's iron hand of governing is embodied in numerous places and things, including his massive office and his square red suitcase that contained documents related to Day X and other paranoid suspicions he had about his inner circle. At Politburo meetings, Mielke would often get the nervous attention of his comrades by putting the red suitcase on the table and snapping open the locks. Deep inside the suitcase were secret files that Mielke kept on his comrades. "He was rarely challenged in those meetings anyway, but if he was, placing the red suitcase within view was usually enough to shut them all up" (Hope, 2022, p. 49). Visitors at the Stasi Museum are afforded a look at the infamous red suitcase protected in a thick plexiglass display case. Curators inform us that "in 1990, the military prosecutors seized a red imitation leather suitcase in the rooms of House 1. It contained court files dating back to the Nazi period that concerned a trial against Erich Honecker and other members of the Communist Party. The suitcase also contained two assessments of these documents that were evidently written by the MfS. It criticized Honecker's incriminating testimony to the Gestapo" (figure 21).

Paranoia, as an enduring edge of the Troubles, provides another example of the mental states of conflict. In *Brits: The War Against the IRA*, the story of "Frank" has many twists and turns, especially within his own mind set. Starting with his entry into the "Det," the secret undercover surveillance team that officially did not exist, "Frank" and the operators became anonymous and mere cogs in the machinery of the military intelligence. Even in the early stages of training, the impersonal nature of induction required that they forfeit their personal belongings, thereby deepening "the mentally

FIGURE 21. Red suitcase. At the Stasi Museum in Berlin, the red suitcase owned by Erich Mielke, head of the Stasi, is on display. Among the contents were incriminating documents about Erich Honecker, leader of the GDR. © retrowelch 2026

draining experience" known as "psychological deconstruction" (Taylor, 2001, pp. 1–3). Blending into enemy territory within the hazardous cities of Belfast and Derry required a studied calmness, borne out of fear, since any false move, such as slipping into an English accent, could result in detection, capture, and brutal interrogation. "Situation awareness" training exercises were designed to induce a sense of survival in the event of a firefight with the IRA. Somewhat robotically, "Frank" responded, "They tried to kill us and we killed them. That's the way armies work" (p. 7).

"Frank's" story does not end there. His mental deterioration was just beginning. With multiple gunshot wounds, Frank spent a year recovering in a hospital. The seemingly anonymous "Det" operative, however, felt that his real world was closing in on him. "By then his first marriage was already in peril due to his absence from home and the pressure of working undercover in Northern Ireland." He filed for divorce and moved on. "Frank" remarried and eventually left the Army in search of a regular job that would accommodate his talents and experience, but like so many retired Special Forces, he struggled to fit into the mundane world. "Frank" mentioned that one of

his former “Det” colleagues was stacking supermarket shelves. For “Frank,” taking a job as a bodyguard seemed to be a better fit, although he soon lost interest. Frustration mounted, and the ghosts of Northern Ireland would not go away. “After what I’d been through, I treated all my enemies as the IRA.” Over time, paranoia seeped in. Then, “Frank’s” hit a breaking point. He suspected his new wife of having an affair with one of her coworkers. “‘Frank’ went into ‘operating mode’ and placed both under surveillance as ‘targets’, using training and techniques he’d been taught in the ‘Det’” (Taylor, 2001, p. 7). On occasion, when “Frank” had to leave the house, he suspiciously wondered what his wife was doing alone, so he bugged their home to keep track of any infidelity. “In the end, he feared that he might do to his wife’s suspected lover what he’d done to the IRA . . . ‘it was a touch and go situation . . . it could have gone the other way.’” In the aftermath of a blazing confrontation with his wife, “Frank” checked into the Army medical center and requested help. For more than three hours, he unloaded his thoughts to an Army psychiatrist who realized that “Frank” had arrived just in time. Within months of therapy, the psychiatrist finally put “Frank” back together again (p. 7).

CONCLUSION

In this penultimate chapter, we scanned the mental states of the Cold War as well as the Troubles in an effort to learn more about how people and governments perceive and act. Toward that end, panopticism with all its hierarchical forces was revisited so as to get a sense of visibility and its effects on consciousness. Correspondingly, a spectrum of mental states are produced, including vigilance, fear, and paranoia, thereby illuminating shifts in rationality that are normal but also vulnerable to the abnormal. Social and political conditions, of course, play crucial roles in the ways people and states think, feel, and behave. In a word, people under watch become mindful of surveillance, and that is a normal reaction, most notably during periods of conflict such as the Troubles. Under totalitarianism that consumed East German society, such mindfulness became more acute as citizens realized that their thoughts, too, were imprisoned. Just being suspected of contemplating fleeing to the West was subject to severe state intervention, including detention, interrogation, and long-term confinement. In Northern Ireland amid its low-level war, house raids and internment without trial also became

commonplace, particularly among Irish Catholics suspected of aiding the cause of the IRA. Throughout our discussion, the twin pillars of *visions of prisons*—surveillance and containment—are recognized as defining features of the British control in Northern Ireland and the Cold War within the GDR.

In next chapter, the enduring edges of the Cold War and the Troubles are explored further with respect to how oppression and dystopia were defied by the East Germans and Irish Catholics in Northern Ireland, respectively. Before we turn to those forms of resistance, it is useful to take stock of some lessons contained in our survey of mental states. First, any one-sided observation can be interpreted as aggressive, as Foucault (1979) reminds us. Second, the body-mind duality ought not be dismissed as just another lofty concept without practical application. Rather, according to Foucault, the body is the ultimate surface, inscribed by all political, economic, and penal institutions. Still, transformations of the body are contoured along lines of consciousness in which the psyche becomes the "prison of the body." Third, the dualism of body and mind is a forceful foundation for "power-knowledge" on which the state and its operatives rely for purposes of control. To reiterate, the more that is known about the body (and psyche), the more controllable it becomes (Feldman, 1991; Garland, 1990). Finally, with all its Benthamite technologies, prisons are rarely clean-running machines. As Foucault concedes, those punitive environments are more like a witches' brew of chaos. The same can be said of many societies, especially those in conflict. By attending to the *visions of prison* shaping various forms of control, we are better able to recognize the nuances of resistance. Defying dystopia, the subject of the next and final chapter, captures the dynamic interaction of wars, walls, and watching.

TEN

Defying Dystopia

THE ALL-TOO-FAMILIAR LYRICS OF PINK FLOYD'S rock anthem denouncing "another brick in the wall" are chanted in unison by school girls railing against misguided education and thought control. While Pink Floyd initially took aim at the rigid British school system, their song would influence how we see other parts of the world, particularly societies steeped in authoritarianism. With bricks and walls and thought control, East Berlin would become a fitting scenario to critique the depths of dystopia. So of course, when the Berlin Wall fell, not only did Berlin rejoice, but so did people around the globe. At the Wall Museum, located in what was once the death strip, defiance of dystopia is on full view. With the distinctive lettering of Pink Floyd's artwork, the gallery displays scenes from *The Wall: Live in Berlin on July 21, 1990 at Potsdamer Platz*. Video screens rotate images from the international concert on a stage that recreates Pink Floyd's vision of the wall as it crumbles brick by brick. With exuberant fans pumping their fists to the beat, a caption reads, "'The Wall', that symbol of human isolation, collapses." Curators add excerpts from an interview with Pink Floyd's cofounder Roger Waters titled, "The Wall, No Thought Control." Waters points out that "The Wall" concert was the biggest live paid performance ever, with guest artists from all over the world. In the heart of Berlin, the stage was assembled in what was part of the no-man's land between East and West Berlin. "By the time the show starts there are over a half a million people celebrating the fall of the Wall. This historic show stands for the reconciliation with the Germans, the reunification between East and West and serves as a strong symbol against exclusion, repression, and 'thought control'" (figure 22).

In this final chapter, we explore the enduring edges of dystopia that eventually fade from the collective consciousness. Even with remnants of the Berlin

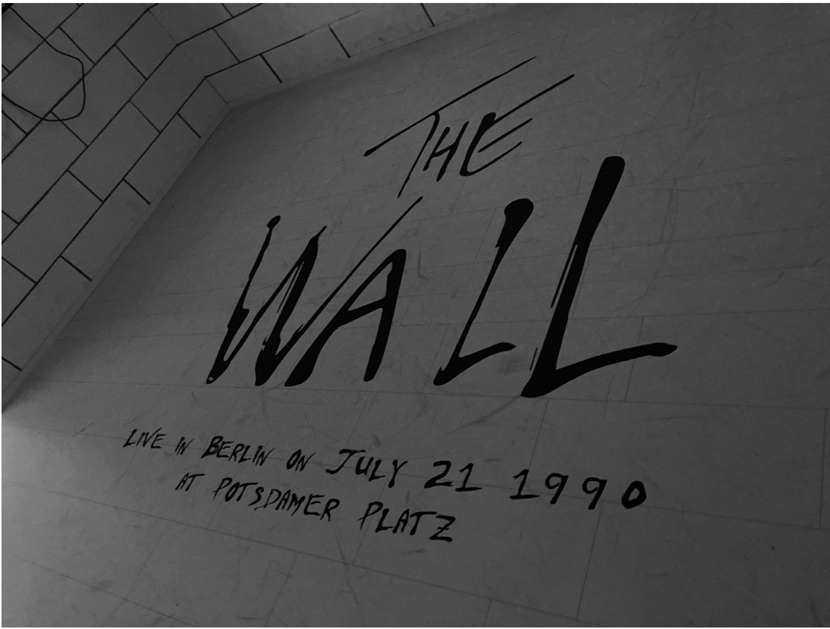

FIGURE 22. Pink Floyd. The Wall Museum (Berlin) features an exhibit titled *The Wall: Live in Berlin on July 21, 1990 at Potsdamer Platz*. © retrowelch 2026

Wall still standing, the notion that there was really an Iron Curtain separating East from West is a memory, narrated by witnesses, photographs, and other artefacts of the past. In Northern Ireland, the Good Friday Agreement dissects Irish history, dividing periods of conflict from those of peace. Unlike Berlin, however, the "peace walls" of Belfast remain. In fact, there are more peace walls separating rival communities today than in 1998 when the Troubles came to a formal end. Thus, *visions of prisons* and residue of wars, walls, and watching linger into an age when segregation in places such as Belfast and Derry is still part of the cityscape. Even visitors who have scant knowledge of the Troubles can easily recognize the cultural symbols marking territory as Irish or British, with tricolor flags in one neighborhood and the Union Jack in another. We are often left to wonder whether "peace" is really just the "absence of conflict," as contemplated at the British Army Museum.

Moving forward with our examination of dystopia and its defiance, we consider an extra layer of critical analysis brought to us through the works of Foucault alongside Stanley Cohen and his *Visions of Social Control*. Both intellectuals throw light onto such phenomenon as the carceral city that serves as a site for surveillance and discipline. Turning attention to Berlin, we

take another look at the remnants of the Cold War embodied in death strips and ghost stations. From there, we think about how cultural and political resistance hit critical mass in Northern Ireland and East Germany with the emergence of a full-fledged punk rock movement. Taking full advantage of the politics of boredom and adventurous transgressions, youth—in search of alternative—pushed back against the colonial and totalitarian authorities. Discussion concludes with a wider commentary on *visions of prisons* and more broadly on prisons of visions in which surveillance continues to shape contemporary forms of confinement not only of the body but also the mind.

THE CARCERAL CITY

In the introduction to *Visions of Social Control: Crime, Punishment and Classification*, Cohen sets the tone for his thoughts by invoking the dystopian writings that have come to define a genre of futuristic literature: *1984* (Orwell, 1950), *A Clockwork Orange* (Burgess, 1962), and *A Brave New World* (Huxley, 1932). Those works, as Cohen notes, ushered in a perspective of social control—or *visions of prisons*—that has the traits of a paranoid Kafka-land. For those of us who reside in Western democracies with an awareness of creeping surveillance, that version of Kafka-land is still a territory far away. For those living in parts of Northern Ireland during the Troubles, and especially people behind the Berlin Wall, that Kafka-land had become the carceral city, a crucial subject for Cohen as well as Foucault. At the center of the carceral city is power. And "this is what Orwell meant when he said that the object of power is power. And this is what Foucault meant when reminding us that power is not just a force that excludes and says 'No,' but is a form of creation. . . . The exercise of power itself creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information" (Cohen, 1985, p. 196; Foucault, 1980).

While confronting "visions of order" in an effort to establish the notion of the carceral, Cohen recognizes that the sites and places, of course, are surrounded by social space, and that social space is surrounded by control. It is within that framework that Cohen interrogates the "dystopian assumption" as a consequence of the failings of utopian experiments with prisons and other total institutions such as insane asylums and poor houses (Rothman, 1990; Welch, 1996). It is difficult to find mainstream penologists who disagree with the depiction of the prison as a warehouse—packed with convicts—where nothing productive really occurs (Welch, 2011a). Cohen suggests that for

scholars interested in penal control, the "visions of hell" embodied in "science fiction deserve genuine attention" (1985, p. 203). In less fatalistic terms, however, Cohen ultimately sides with Foucault, who would "visualize panopticism as a generalized principle, extended and dispersed throughout the social network." Similar to Foucault's critique of a "punitive" with its tiny theaters of punishment, Cohen stresses that what actually emerged was more refined "disciplinary society . . . the carceral network in which power somehow 'circulated' through small-scale regional panopticons" (1985, p. 209). The carceral city, the punitive city, and Kafka-land in one way or another point to a larger sense of dystopia in which life during the Troubles or the Cold War had become bleak.

In *The Firm: The Inside Story of the Stasi*, Gary Bruce explores the stories of persons targeted by the Stasi. Relying on the Stasi files that had become available to researchers, Bruce outlines the vast system of informers, including registered informers, non-registered informers, collaborators, irregular collaborators, and even "tip givers." With an obsession with the youth—reminiscent of Pink Floyd—the Stasi infiltrated schools and recruited principals and teachers, who were instructed to report rebellious students. "Even in the 1980s, high school students were being investigated by the Stasi at the first sign of oppositional behavior." Among them was Franz Lehmann, who attracted attention for a drawing he made in his German culture class. Asked to sketch a picture of the future city as required by all students, Lehmann used colored pencils to illustrate three city streets heading into the horizon with three buildings clearly labeled: "a prison, a bordello, and a nuclear power plant." The teacher admonished Lehmann and demanded that he draw a more proper "vision of the future. . . . This time the cityscape was dominated by prisons and large piles of trash." The teacher reported the incident to the Stasi, and the trip into Kafka-land began. The Stasi officer assigned to the case profiled Lehman as a youth who dressed in punk style with chains, safety pin as an earring, short hair, and neck scarves. "Lehmann did not hide the fact that he despised the lack of freedom in the GDR." Eventually, he was scheduled for prosecution and sentenced to two years and six months in a youth detention center. The Lehmann case signifies the extent to which blanket surveillance is embodied what Cohen and Foucault regard as the carceral city—a dystopian society indeed (Bruce, 2010, pp. 128–129; Funder, 2002).

At the Stasi Museum in Berlin, visitors gain even more insight into the carceral city that had morphed into a wider carceral economy in which prisoners had become a rich source of revenue for the GDR as it plunged into fiscal crisis. As explained in the exhibit *Die, Ware Mensch*, or "humans as a commodity":

> Releasing prisoners to the Federal Republic of Germany [West Germany] for payment became a lucrative source of hard currency for the GDR. After a few cases were negotiated on an individual basis, the GDR began trading humans as commodities in 1963. It became a profitable business for the SED regime. By 1989 the West German government paid a total of 3.5 billion West German marks for the release of almost 34,000 prisoners.

With the use of objects and images, curators further authenticate the business of buying and selling prisoners, including a file card on "Prisoner D," who was on the list of prisoners selected to be released to the West. A black-and-white photograph shows buses full of "ransomed prisoners" being driven to West Germany.

The dystopian practice of trading in prisoners is given added attention at the Stasi Museum with a brazenly worded poster that reads "Hard Currency By Any Means Possible." Here we learn that the "GDR was barely able to generate from the world market the currency it needed to pay for Western imports," and therefore opened the "'Commercial Coordination' branch with the Ministry for Foreign Trade and German Domestic Trade to solve the foreign currency shortages through both legal and illegal means." Those commercial dealings, seemingly detached from the Ministry for Security, however, were actually directly linked to the Stasi. Students at the Stasi Law School in Potsdam wrote their dissertations on the "legal and illegal ways to obtain Western currency. Erich Mielke [head of the Stasi] was present when they defended their dissertation. The minister, who did not have an academic degree, was the first 'advisor' of the dissertation." Still, a key method of generating revenue for the GDR was "having prisoners released in return for payment from West Germany" (see Hope, 2022).

With the objective of cracking down on dissent, the Stasi pushed to incarcerate massive numbers of political prisoners. But rather than stifling protests, the policy actually precipitated more even demonstrations, thus emerging as a significant irony of punishment (Welch, 2015). That phenomenon was recently put to the test by Steinert and Dworschak, who studied the national data between 1984 and 1989 and confirmed that "political imprisonment is a salient indicator of rule creating embodied grievances" (2022, p. 1). In other words, the confinement of political activists facilitates dissident networks not only within prisons but in society, where protests against the GDR were gaining momentum. Hence, political imprisonment had become a "self-defeating strategy, making it easier for the opposition to overcome their collective action problem . . . [thereby increasing] the likelihood of protest mobilization" (2022,

FIGURE 23. Fleeing to West Berlin. In Berlin, visitors tour the neighborhood from which residents fled to the West in 1961. © retrowelch 2026

p. 1; Steinert, 2022). That defiance of dystopia was aimed not only at political imprisonment but also at the larger apparatus of repression predicated on blanket surveillance (Gieseke, 2014; Lichter et al., 2021). Stasi efforts to suffocate resistance failed miserably, and by November 1989, the Berlin Wall was being demolished by demonstrators. In the month prior to the revolution, the Stasi recorded almost 400 protests with more than two million participants. Like political prisoners elsewhere, such as in Northern Ireland, those in Stasi prisons enjoyed considerable camaraderie. "It was common to share food or cigarettes and to comfort others in their suffering . . . [and according one prisoner] . . . in prison I learned the meaning of solidarity" (Steinert & Dworschak, 2022, p. 20; see Campbell et al., 1998; O'Hearn, 2009).

As dramatic acts of defiance, escapes from East Berlin signify enormous resistance to the GDR's attempt to fortify its carceral city, where the population was held captive behind the wall. Visitors to Berlin, and in particular to Bernauer Strasse, are invited to tour the remnants of a neighborhood divided in 1961 when barbed wire was wrapped around the perimeter of the city in advance of the wall's construction. Massive stencils reenact the chaotic scenes of residents dashing across the street to the West (figure 23).

Scattered around Bernauer Strasse, placards tell stories of people forced with the decision to stay in the East or escape to the West. The Knittel Family, for example, "decided to flee. . . . Although Helga Knittel was nine months pregnant at the time, she jumped out of the second story window with her daughter on August 19 [1961], all landing safely in the security net of the West Berlin fire brigade that they had informed by a written note." Another posting tells us about other escapes, even through the underground sewers:

> Since they were not familiar with the sewer channels, they were assisted by West Berlin escape agents who had maps of the sewage system. They sent people to East Berlin to escort the fugitive to West Berlin. They closed the manhole cover behind them to prevent the police from discovering the escape route. . . . The secret police tried to stop this kind of escape by blocking the passage-ways with grating and having them checked regularly.

Growing discontent with the wall prompted refugees in East Berlin to turn to a labyrinth of tunnels that were being burrowed between 1961 and 1989. With the thrust of *power underground*, "escape helpers dug tunnels to bring over their wives, relatives, and friends. The area beneath Bernauer Strasse was particularly well suited for this because the ground was extremely stable. It took workers three to six months to complete a tunnel. . . . Others were abandoned before completion or were betrayed to the secret police. Almost 90 people were able to reach West Berlin through tunnels at Bernauer Strasse." Defying dystopia and escaping the carceral city would eventually become more dangerous. The wall was progressively fortified, as death strips and empty ghost stations of the subway routes were watched by border guards armed with a shoot-to-kill policy. As we segue to the next segment, we visit more remnants of the Cold War and vivid reminders of *visions of prisons* in Berlin.

DEATH STRIPS AND GHOST STATIONS

In a previous chapter on vertical surveillance, we explored the dynamics of "wall-veillance" in an effort to deepen our interpretation of wars, walls, and watching. In particular, special attention was paid to the one of the 280 watchtowers scattered around the East side of Berlin, namely the tower devoted to Gunter Litfin, who in 1961 became the first fugitive to be fatally shot by a border guard. Today, the memorial serves as a storytelling institution with images and objects on display alongside an ominous view of a patch of land

that was once designated as a death strip (see figure 14). Whereas many of the news clippings about the wall are in posted in the German language, English-speaking visitors will quickly identify the front page of the *New York Times*. The article features Hagen Koch, a significant character in the story of the wall who moved up the ranks of the GDR as a cartographer but later was targeted by the Stasi and investigated for keeping a commemorative plate that belonged to the regime. The piece in the *Times* was published on August 13, 2001, to mark the 40th anniversary of the day when the "anti-fascist barrier of protection" was established. Back then, Koch was a 21-year-old soldier who received a major assignment: to follow his maps to double check the work of construction crews building the wall. "He never doubted the East German cause, or that Americans were the enemy" (Andrews, 2001, p. A6; see Funder, 2002).

The *New York Times* was not only interested in what Koch remembers about his role in building the wall but also in Jurgen Litfin, the brother of Gunter. "Mr. Koch and Mr. Litfin have become improbable allies. They are championing preservation of the wall when little remains beyond a few crumbling remnants to remind Berliners of an unhappy division that many have since worked hard to heal, and to put behind them" (Andrews, 2001, p. A-1). Describing a mental state, Germans continue to speak of the "wall in the mind" to capture the social and cultural differences that still divide Easterners and Westerners. The wall, especially the death strips, are painful reminders of that era. In the words of Litfin, "Fewer and fewer Berliners ever go to see the wall or care about it. People want to forget about it. They want to be rid of it and think that life is beautiful. It's a tragedy" (Andrews, 2001, p. A-1). For his part, Koch explains that "what remains of the wall today is what westerners saw of it, but that was entirely different from the view that easterners had. People in the east were not allowed to get near the wall. We knew there was a wall, but what did it look like? How high was it? How deep did it go? People didn't know" (Andrews, 2001, p. A1).

When the wall came down, it came down with a frenzy of demolition. Now, there is a sense that too much of the wall has been lost. Maria Nooke, director of the Documents Center at Bernauer Strasse, laments, "When the wall fell, there was a feeling of liberation and people wanted to tear it down as fast as they possibly could. It is understandable, but now there is an awareness that at least parts of the wall need to be preserved" (Andrews, 2001, p. A-6). Especially during tourist season, visitors flock to remnants of the wall located along Bernauer Strasse, where large picture galleries tell the story of the wall and the lives it disrupted. Tourists, as secondary witnesses, experience not only the wall but also the death strip that has been reconstructed

as an open-air exhibition space with information posts, audio recordings of people who resided there at the time, and solemn memorials planted in plain sight. The emotive registers are varied with historical curiosity merging with realizations that people where actually gunned down there by border guards. Altogether, those mixed experiences serve to defy the dystopia that once dominated what was the wall and its death strips.

Photographs of the death strip along Bernauer Strasse serve as reminders of Berlin's dreadful past. Among them is a series of images documenting the year-by-year clearing of the death strip to make room for more surveillance equipment and booby traps designed to kill fugitives who might have made it that far into no-man's land. A picture dated 1985 shows the Reconciliation Church being imploded so that the death strip would have fewer structures obstructing the view of border guards. Several postings tell the story of the church as it met its fate inside the death strip:

> The Reconciliation Church was walled in after the Wall was built in 1961. It stood on the border strip since the mid-sixties, and until it was blown up in 1985 it was surrounded on all sides by border fortifications. Because of its name, and the fact that the tower seemed to reach to the heavens behind the Wall almost accusingly, it became a symbol of Berlin's division. Well into the eighties it was commemorated in the media on memorial days as an icon of the divided city.

The story of the church benefits from more postings on the very site where it once stood. "As the SED prepared for the city's anniversary celebration in 1987, the border strip was cleaned up; some of the menacing barriers were removed. The SED functionaries became increasingly annoyed by the symbolic value of the walled-in Reconciliation Church. Like other buildings that had become ruins as a consequence of the Wall, the Church had to yield to the Wall." Today, the newly reconstructed Chapel of Reconciliation is open to the faithful who make the pilgrimage into the former death strip to observe the rituals of memorialization—another gesture to defy dystopia.

Nearby, the Nordbahnhof subway station has been repurposed twice since the fall of the wall. Between 1961 and 1989, trains did not stop at this station, and like many others, it became a ghost station. When Berlin was finally reunited, the trains resumed service at these platforms, and the Nordbahnhof also was designed as a museum of sorts. Even with commuters rushing to catch their trains, the station invites the curious to learn about the many developments and incidents that took place in the ghost stations. Pictures

and text guide us through a bewildering period of Berlin when underground train stations were bricked up and patrolled by border guards who were authorized to shoot anyone suspected of sneaking through the tunnel to the West. A series of placards arranged in the upper level of the Nordbahnhof passageway begins with one aptly titled "Border Stations: The Underground Wall." It reads, "The GDR government leadership was perpetually perfecting the Berlin Wall—the above ground border barrier—throughout the three decades of its existence" but to prevent underground escapes, a complex system of signal devices designed to detect motion were installed on the tracks. For greater chronological clarity, the tour continues with a segment devoted to the "Transportation in the Divided City, 1945–1961," which informs us that the Allies moved swiftly to repair the severely damaged transport system. But the Berlin Blockage (1948–49) made it clear that the Soviet occupying power was intent on securing control over the East half of the city. "The two city halves increasingly grew apart and even the local public transport was gradually divided into two independent systems." When the wall was erected, the trains of those lines no longer stopped at the East stations as they traveled to the West. The GDR heavily taxed the West Berlin Senate for the privilege of allowing trains to pass under East Berlin, paying more than eight million German marks in 1984 alone (Ladd, 1997).

At the street level, the ghost stations "disappeared from the cityscape and visibly from the public consciousness." The GDR ordered the that the stations be locked and walled up to prevent escapes. Even the signs for the U-Bahn and S-Bahn were removed so that East Berliners could not identify them. "These measures were also aimed at stifling any memories of the time when the city had been undivided and it had been possible to enter West Berlin unhindered. The blocked off entrances were soon unrecognizable and over time people forgot about their existence." Despite massive security measures underground, the train tunnels were still targeted by refugees in their attempt to flee to the West. A series of posters outline several such escapes, successful and unsuccessful. In 1966, Kurt B. and Dieter K. used simple tools to break through the walled-up entrance of the ghost station. After four days of digging, they reached the tracks but unknowingly stepped on a footboard equipped with a signal contact, thereby triggering an alarm. Two units of border soldiers responded and arrested them, just 25 meters from the border. Their attempt to defy dystopia was punished by prison sentences. Even border guards themselves were tempted to escape, including a corporal who vacated his post. By the time his absence was detected, he had fled deep

FIGURE 24. Ghost Station. In Berlin, the Nordbahnhof has been preserved to remind us about the time when it was a ghost station. © retrowelch 2026

into the tunnel. The chase to catch him was halted by a line marking East and West, prohibiting soldiers from crossing the border. The corporal ran 250 meters to safety and a life of freedom. The GDR realized that border guards were just as likely to flee as other East Berliners. To add more security, bunkers were erected on the platforms, and the soldiers were locked inside while on duty—much like a detention cell.

The Nordbahnhof stop on the U-Bahn was a heavily guarded post. Photographs capture a deep stairwell illuminated by an eerie fluorescent light, adding to its reputation as a ghost station. Due to its connections to Westbound trains, a system of barriers were built to prevent escapes by citizens, rail workers, and soldiers. "These barriers—made obsolete in 1989 after the Wall fell and the SED government had been deposed—were gradually removed and the station was re-opened on September 1, 1990." Given its significance as a former site of division within the city, the Nordbahnhof has been renovated but also preserved to remind us about the GDR's ambitions to isolate East Berliners from the West. The ticket booth now serves as a remnant of the ghost station, and its windows have been replaced with large photographs that document the time when it had been abandoned, both physically and mentally (figure 24).

Defying dystopia by way of escape into the West Berlin constitutes just one of the many ways in which people resist their sense of social—and political—confinement. Popular culture, with its commitment to art and music, has a long tradition of pushing back against convention, especially rigid expectations of conformity. Beginning in the 1970s, punks entered the music scene not only in New York and London but also in Berlin, Belfast, and Derry. While punks shared a common do-it-yourself ethos, their expressions in East Germany and Northern Ireland took on an added edge due to the GDR dictatorship and the Troubles, respectively. In the Ulster Museum in Belfast, the exhibit titled *The Troubles and Beyond* takes us back to the time and place when punks roamed the urban landscape. Visitors are invited to gaze into a display case containing the punk uniform of the day—a studded motorcycle jacket, a T-shirt, black pants and boots. The display is not simply a prototype of the punk persona contoured by an identifiable counterculture. Rather, it is the actual "Outcasts outfit" of the Belfast-based punk band formed in 1977. "This outfit belongs to Greg Cowan. One of the original band members, within the first month Cowan had replaced Blair Hamilton as lead vocalist." Curators boast the musical feats of the Outcasts by noting that between 1979 and 2011, the group released three albums and nine singles. The exhibit ventures into more references to the punk movement by drawing attention to a concert ticket for a performance of Stiff Little Fingers. That punk band was also formed in 1977, and many of their songs were inspired by the Troubles, with lyrics pointing to themes of teenage boredom and sectarian violence. Alongside other musical artists, The Outcasts and Stiff Little Fingers contributed to "Belfast's punk scene, a vibrant manifestation of a broader UK subculture, [that] constructed an alternative space that frequently challenged local sectarian identities."

The unique social space created by punks in Belfast amid the Troubles can easily be interpreted as a form of defiance against dystopia. Still, a deeper excavation of its genesis should be found in what George Legg (2018) refers to as the politics of boredom. Such tedium, especially for young people in Belfast, was compounded by the fusion of conflict, capital, and culture. In his analysis, Legg takes a closer look at bourgeois apathy and geographical inertia, as well as state surveillance and sectarian psychogeography. The punk movement, correspondingly, resided between sites of conflict and ideologies

of capital. Through that lens, punk culture emerged as an expression disenchantment with the consumer boom of the 1960s and dispossession of the conceits of capitalist accumulation. Northern Irish punk is typically remembered for its ecumenical ethos that transcended the region's broader sectarianism. Legg cites testimonies of punks who recall the pleasure of being part of a music scene made up of people from different religious denominations, united by a common anti-capitalist agenda (McLoone, 2004). "Capital may promote the rhetoric of reconciliation, but it cannot efface old divides. . . . Capitalism merely repackages sectarianism, while simultaneously creating its own forms of exclusion and separation: people and places where money still simply refuses to flow" (Legg, 2018, p. 185; Deane, 1997).

Boredom, as a condition that mobilized the punk scene, diffuses and disperses. More significantly, boredom can be painful and disruptive as well as fleeting and obscure. Legg takes us further into his critique of punks in Northern Ireland by politicizing boredom—"casting it not as a singular affliction internally digested, but as a communal condition externally exposed" (2018, p. 187). In what should be understood as defiance against dystopia, Legg concludes that boredom is both a symptom of repression and a catalyst for startling revelation. Boredom creates the conditions for resistance and "through its collective experience and politicised configuration, boredom can also reveal new spaces and alternative modes of being" (p. 189; see Gartzke, 2007; Harvey, 1990).

Apart from the theory of boredom underpinning the punk movement, that brand of counterculture contains real-life experiences. In *Belfast Punk and The Troubles*, Fearghus Roulston takes us into world of cultural resistance as it writes history from below. In compiling interviews with former participants, Roulston remains mindful that memory is not a static depository of facts; instead, it is an active process in the creation of meaning. Through oral histories, punkness is explored within the realm of shared memory, cultural memory, and memories of the Troubles. Much like trying to identify the precise moment when the Troubles hit critical mass, the beginning of the punk scene in Belfast is also difficult to locate. Still, it is suggested that the 1977 cancellation of the Clash concert is a good guess. The reasons for cancelling the show were unclear, but mayhem ensued when police used heavy-handed tactics to disperse the crowd of teenagers gathered in front of the venue. It has been surmised that the incident was perhaps the only riot where Catholics and Protestants were fighting on the

same side (Hooley & Sullivan, 2010). Managers of the Clash recall navigating a militarized city. "Belfast is one long nervously obsessive security check. You can't cross a road, drive down a street, walk into a shop or hotel without passing through an elaborate system of flashing lights, concrete and steel barricades, high barbed wire fences or road blocks" (Coon & Dadomo, 1977, p. 29). At the center of it all were clusters of punks, "an oasis of non-sectarian sociality and interconnection in the midst of a violent conflict predicated on sectarian animosity" (Roulston, 2022, p. 4). Punkism stood out as being a *rejection* of politics. It's been said that punks in New York had the haircuts, and punks in London had the pants, but punks in Belfast had the reason (Hebdige, 1979; McLoone, 2004).

Roulston deepens his musing on punkness by tapping into the significance of gender. Alison, among those interviewed, describes herself being drawn into the punk scene in Belfast while a student in an all-girl, de facto Protestant school. In what is characterized as an "epiphanic story about transgression," Alison attended a gig at an all-boy school featuring a garage band. She recalls the moment as being memorable because it represented a "crossing . . . of all sorts of divides" (Roulston, 2022, p. 62). The pre-punk Alison was a conventional Protestant girl who was then transformed into a punk-Alison capable of rejecting her previous identity via transgressive pathways. "Suddenly you had this new thing where you were neither Roman Catholic or Protestant" and, by way of that transformation, Alison became part of a new community (p. 69). There is something fleeting about transgression, since it is an unstable form of movement; however, it has an emotive charge in which the experience is felt. Transgression, to be sure, involves symbolic as well as material boundaries of order (Cresswell, 1996).

Alison's transgressions were also geographical as she tells her story about spending a weekend in a village on the southern side of the border separating the Northern Ireland and the Republic. Roulston interjects, "The actual border being transgressed here is suggestive of a particular politics of place, one that combines a performative awareness of the artificiality of the split between the north and south of Ireland with an equally performative bravado" (2022, p. 79). On their return back to Northern Ireland, Alison and her friends were stopped by the British soldiers who questioned them but let them go (p. 79). Roulston explains that "the presence of an army patrol and the account of their bemused encounter with a group of out-of-place punks gestures towards the darker edge of the narrative and the militarization of the borderlands, as a site where everyday life was shaped

by the heavy military presence and the high level of paramilitary violence that existed in this area throughout the 1970s and 1980s" (p. 79: Leary, 2016; Nash & Reid, 2020).

Within the punk ecosphere, youth in Northern Ireland rallied against the tension of the Troubles by going about their daily lives as teenagers with interest in dating and being popular—even rebellious—in school. Enter the *Derry Girls*, currently a hit television program that chronicles a clique of Catholic students as they overcome the obstacles of adolescence while also defying the dystopia of a low-level war. The Ulster Museum offers a memorable installment of the *Derry Girls* featuring the blackboard that was used as a prop to illustrate the cultural divide between Catholic and Protestants in Northern Ireland. A placard reads:

> If you haven't seen the famous "blackboard" episode from Season 2 of Derry Girls then this needs a little explanation. . . . Facilitated by a well-meaning priest, the girls are taking part in a cross-community discussion between the similarities and differences between Protestants and Catholics. The group can only think of differences. "Catholics have freckles." "Protestants keep their toaster in the cupboard." The "differences" blackboard is crammed while the "similarities" blackboard remains completely untouched.

The program's creator, Lisa McGee, includes differences and generalizations that are all too familiar. "Yet seeing them represented in this way is a reminder of how easily stereotypes form and circulate. It challenges us to reflect on our cultural identity, in a place where it remains sensitive and disputed." The blackboard on display, recreated for the National Museums of Northern Ireland by Anna McCaughtry, the prop master for the show, joins a vast collection of images and items that offer narratives on the Troubles as young people journeyed through a difficult political—and personal—period of their lives. Still, humor allows us to understand with greater insight how stereotypes perpetuate conflict, such as "Protestants think Catholics are all alcos [alcoholics]" and "Peelers [police] are all Prods [Protestants]."

With more enduring edge of the Troubles, a popular hip-hop rap trio has recently emerged in West Belfast, still a stronghold of the Republican movement. Their name, Kneecap, referring to a form of paramilitary discipline in which a violator of community norms is punished by being shot in the back of the leg, invites derision (Feldman, 1991). Kneecap's popular album is titled *CEARTA*, which is the Irish word for "rights," and since 2017, the group's popularity has grown on both sides of the border and

among the diaspora across the Irish Sea. "Its signature blend of ramshackle rave and rudimentary hip-hop beats, mixed with republican politics—in the Irish sense of seeking unity for the island's north and south—has brought Kneecap sold-out gigs in Belfast and Dublin, and a growing fan base in England and Scotland" (Mullally, 2022, p. 1). Kneecap joins a Celtic revival with its Irish-language rap by raising questions of identity, place, and culture being interrogated across the arts and politics as well as fashion and spirituality. Manchan Magan, a writer and broadcaster, weighs in on the Celtic upsurge by pointing out that not all Irish language artists are driven by politics. The current boom in Irish-Celtic creativity underscores a continuing search for an Irish identity removed from colonialism and Catholicism. "What we're trying to do is rooting ourselves back to—not nationalism, but those things that came before the nation . . . [and] connection with the spirit, or some sort of universal mythology, all of those things that bring us together, that make us realize we're united" (Mullally, 2022, p. 1; 2024).

In East Germany during the later years of the Cold War, the punk movement gained visible traction as young people thrashed convention with new forms of music and fashion. Previous chapters delved into ways the Stasi attempted to keep the punks off balance, since the GDR feared that its youth were being corrupted. Recall the mugshot of the punk posted in the Stasi Museum along with a photograph of the punk rock bassist turned informant. In *Stasiland*, Funder reaches further into the Stasi's technology of power by revealing the extent of control imposed on Klaus Renft, a cultural icon known as the Mick Jagger of East Germany. Renft's reputation as a bad boy of rock and roll was well deserved. Because his lyrics dignified rebellion, the Ministry of Culture required they be changed to preserve the traditions of the GDR. The Klaus Renft Combo attracted a large following, but the band was kept in check and not permitted to play in towns. So Renft and his mates fled to the small villages, where large crowds traveled to see their gigs. Grinning with a sense of defiance, he told Funder, "Woodstock every day" (2002, p. 187). Later, as his Stasi file surfaced, Renft learned that the Stasi and the Culture Ministers tracked his band closely. In at least one ominous passage, Erich Mielke, the Minister of Fear, questioned the officers in Leipzig: "Why can't you just grab them? Why aren't they liquidated?" Renft explained that the Combo was simply "too famous to handle so directly" (p. 188).

Other segments of Renft's dossier includes many condemnations from the Stasi: "We protest the use of inflammatory calls from the stage such as, It's the society that is decadent, we are the opposite. Today, I feel free. There are people sitting in this room reporting on us. . . . You are the audience that will experience the group Renft for the last time because we are about the be banned" (Funder, 2002, p. 189). Eventually, an officer of the ministry approached the band and in blunt terms simply said, "We are here to inform you today, that you don't exist anymore." The Combo asked, "Does this mean we're banned?" The officer replied, "We didn't say you banned. We said you don't exist" (p. 189). From that moment on, the Combo's music was pulled from distribution and from the air waves, and their licenses to perform were revoked. With a flat tone, Renft said to Funder, "We simply did not exist, just like in Orwell" (p. 190). Two members of the band were arrested, imprisoned, and then bought free from the West. Renft was allowed to move to West Berlin, but his professional life had dissolved. "It was hard to go from money and fame to nothing" because his musical persona did not translate over the Wall. Renft was bewildered. "His fans were rebels, and they were not here." His rock-star status was replaced with a job as a sound man in a theatre in the West. Suddenly, the wall came down, and he soon found out that "we'd become a cult band in the GDR—our records were more expensive than a Pink Floyd album" (p. 191). In a weird sense, Renft's defiance of dystopia had traveled full circle, and he would earn the dividends of genuine art.

The legacy of punks is captured at an open-air gallery outside the Berlin's Stasi Museum. A stark photograph shows two passengers sitting near each other on the U-Bahn underground train. On the left is a defiant punk with all the emblems of rebellion—mohawk haircut, black leather jacket. To the right is an older GDR officer in full military attire. The pair do not look at each other. Rather, they seem to stare into different visions of society: cultural resistance versus the old-world order. A caption to the poster explains to us that in the GDR, "Various alterative youth cultures developed. They looked to the West for a feeling of freedom, for their musical influences and clothing, turning their back on the prescribed model for living communist lives. Blues freaks, hitch-hikers, hippies and punks provoked the state deliberately or not, many of them facing considerable repression. Some young people became consciously political, working in peace and environmental groups" (figure 25).

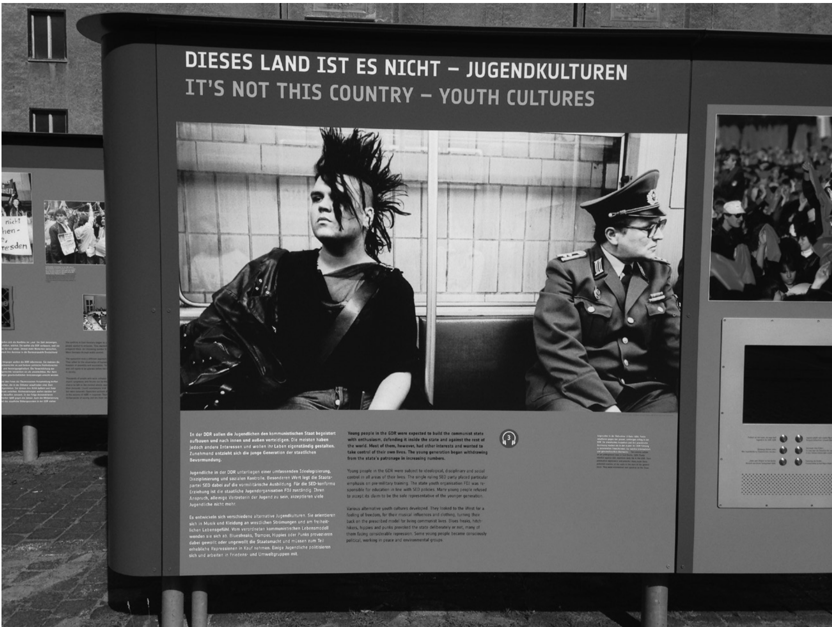

FIGURE 25. Punk and the GDR. Outside the Stasi Museum in Berlin, a photograph captures the cultural and political divide between the youth and their elders. © retrowelch 2026

CONCLUSION

As an enduring edge, defiance of dystopia has a special role in places of turmoil, whether in Northern Ireland or East Germany. In those post-conflict societies, however, remnants of the past remain in full view. In Belfast, brightly colored murals beaming with messages of peace and hope attract international visitors (Migeon, 2024; Rolston, 2013). Similarly, a painting of the Derry Girls accompanies tourists walking the ramparts of Derry walls in a city that has (mostly) embraced the Good Friday Agreement (McGlinchey, 2019). Beyond those upbeat messages, there remain sober recollections of the past. In the realm of conflict resolution, remembrance eases the healing process in war-torn communities as people live out their histories. "What we remember is what we are . . . [as we] find creative ways of remembering that enable us to go forward as a society" (McDowell & Braniff, 2014, p. 1). As just one such act of creative remembering, in 1995, an artist installed a large electronic advertising screen at a busy intersection in the city center of Belfast. A continuous loop of more than 3,500 names of those killed during the Troubles was scrolled in chronological order. However ephemeral, the

exhibit—*Counting Costs*—was a jarring expression within a decidedly neutral, or even forgetful landscape in central Belfast that was pursuing financial investments and tourism (Switzer & McDowell, 2011). Later renamed *Taking Account*, the street sign became an emotive reminder of the Troubles and suggests that society has a duty not only to remember and acknowledge the victims but also assume some responsibility for them (McDowell & Braniff, 2014).

In Leipzig, the home of the Klaus Renft Combo, several museums and exhibitions tell us the stories of how thousands of people publicly defied the GDR during the months leading up to the revolution that opened the Iron Curtain and pulled down the Berlin Wall. At the Forum of Contemporary History, curators introduce us to a portrait of a young man with a self-imposed gag that reads "Troublemaker." He is none other than Roland Jahn, a member of one of the most active opposition groups in East Germany. "Again and again, he organizes spectacular actions to call attention to political injustices in the GDR." He puts flags from Poland's Solidarity movement on his bicycle to support the independent union and protest martial law in Poland. "He was arrested and forcefully deported to the West." There is no other mention of who Jahn actually is, probably because in a unified Germany, he has become a household name. At the Stasi Archives, in Berlin, more biographical information is available. Jahn was instrumental in holding the Stasi accountable for its misdeeds and was eventually selected as a federal commissioner in charge of the Stasi Archives. Not unlike Klaus Renft, Jahn's defiance of dystopia also had completed the circle, affording him the capacity to preserve the vast trove of Stasi files for public—and legal—inspection.

With a keen eye on the carceral city alongside death strips and ghost stations, we set out to interpret the nuances of dystopia and attempts to defy such forms of surveillance and confinement. Those social and political edges exist in many of the remnants of wars, walls, and watching.

To deal with the some of the loose ends in a post–Cold War Germany, this volume concludes with an epilogue in which neo-Berlin is given one more look. While *visions of prisons* have been the subject of intense scrutiny throughout this book, it is useful to illuminate a related phenomenon which we might call *prisons of visions*.

EPILOGUE

Prisons of Visions

In the run-up to publication of his *Visions of Social Control*, Cohen published an elaborate essay on the punitive city and its dispersal of social control. Those insights, shaped significantly by Foucault, provide a foundation for further critique of wars, walls, and watching. Since cities such as Belfast and Berlin provided the case studies for this book, it is fitting that we return the punitive city by attending to Cohen's thoughts on a drifting scholarship of the 1970s. He concedes that penology and social control made great strides in the wake of Foucault's *Discipline & Punish*, or *Surveil & Punish*. Still, many of those investigations are "curiously fragmented, abstracted from the density of urban life in which social control is embedded." Going beyond, Cohen notes, "It is not so much that these institutions are presented without much history . . . they also have little sense of place. They need locating in the physical space of the city, but more important in the overall social space" (1979, p. 340). It is in the city that the master plans of social control are governed by a network of interlocking institutions, encompassing the prison, the school, and state bureaucracies. Borrowing from Foucault, Cohen contends that the punitive city, with all its technologies of power, marks a widening of the "carceral circle" or "carceral archipelago" (p. 360). As this epilogue suggests, perhaps the cultural and material residue the Cold War did not dissipate completely, because long-term *visions of prisons* are not easily eradicated from cities once consumed by conflict.

Of course, the world rejoiced when the Berlin Wall became a dead remnant of the GDR in 1989. Does that mean that a reunited Germany did not contain some surprises for the new government? To answer that question, Ralph Hope pursued the Stasi—the Gray Men—into the present, only to be faced with more questions. Did anyone really think that members of the Stasi, the powerful operators of social control, would simply vanish into thin air when East and West Germany became a single nation? In his investigations, Hope discovered that former Stasi officers were hired as employees for the Foreign Ministry, Academy of Sciences, Ministry of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Transportation, and the Ministry of the Interior—as

well as the police force and other law enforcement agencies. Incredibly, Hope also learned that former Gray Men were assigned to the Committee for the Dissolution of the Stasi with access the Stasi Archives. "The newly formed Committee operated with a staff of 261, more than half of which turned out to have been Stasi employees only months earlier. Many important files went mysteriously missing well into late 1990. Destroyed or taken" (Hope, 2022, p. 130). Reunification became a top priority, and putting everything quickly together was the goal. "For many of the 91,015 just-released members of the Stasi, this was an opportunity not to be missed. And it was about to get even better for some of them. That's because those with the jobs to hand out, in business, government and international organizations, adopted the basic approach of don't ask, don't tell" (2022, 131).

In pursuit of the Gray Men, Ralph Hope stumbled upon some other disconcerting aspects of the legal system in the newly unified Germany, especially since more than 20,000 former political prisoners of the GDR were seeking legal advice to have their Stasi arrests removed from their records. Those arrest records weren't simply stigma, marks of social disgrace. They were serious impediments to gainful employment, passports, and foreign visas. As soon as unification was ratified, Hope explains, there were loads of lawyers to choose from in Berlin. Just as a sense of dystopia was lifting, a persistent *vision of prison* remained. "Few realized just how many of these new arrivals [lawyers] had been employed by the Stasi, and were not trained to represent people at all" (2022, p. 119). Fifteen years after the wall crumbled, there were still about 700 former Stasi practicing law in Germany. Many of them had attended the Stasi Law University in Potsdam. "The training received there was oriented fully toward facilitating the mission of the Stasi, their lifelong client" (p. 119). Those Stasi-turned-German-lawyers concealed their backgrounds, and many of their civilian clients had no idea that their legal counsel was being directed by former agents who had been in state-sponsored violations of privacy. That is particularly distressing because their clients were divulging intimate details about their private family matters. And had they been aware of who their attorney actually was, those clients probably would have been cautious in following legal advice (Ash, 1997; Funder, 2002; Oltermann, 2022).

"So how does someone whose legal training was provided by the most repressive state security apparatus in modern history practice law in a free society?" (Hope, 2022, p. 120). Whether it was a quirk of fate or a carefully planned intervention, thousands of Stasi-educated lawyers were granted a license to practice law under the unification treaty that honored all degrees, regardless of whether they were conferred in the West or East. "More than 300 Stasi officers had also received doctorates, after completing dissertations that in no way correspond to scholarly standards" (Hope, 2022, p. 120). In a post-wall city, such as neo-Berlin, a "don't ask, don't tell" normative boundary insulated former Stasi as they seamlessly reinvented their professional

lives. "It became exceedingly easy for the Grey Men with connections, marketable skills and access to equipment or insider knowledge to disappear into this network of old friends. So, quite naturally, the most determined and ambitious of them did just that" (Hope, 2022, p. 118; see Bruce, 2010: Childs & Popplewell, 1996).

As we reflect on the notion of *visions of prisons*, it is also useful to consider the ways in which our thoughts and actions have been confined within a social and political atmosphere of surveillance; hence, a *prison of vision*. At the Spy Museum in Berlin, a large message near the exit of the exhibition warns us, "Wenn es etwas gibt, von dem Sie nicht wollen, dass es irgendjemand erfahrt, sollten Sie es vielleicht ohnehin nicht tun." It is a direct quote from Eric Schmidt, CEO of Google, in 2009: "If you have something that you don't want anyone to know, maybe you shouldn't be doing it in the first place." The GDR, like the Nazi regime before it, required citizens to carry an official identification booklet that could be demanded by the People's Police or the Stasi at any moment. Even in neo-Berlin today, Germans remain suspicious of police authority and wary of high degrees of concentrated power. Still, after some initial reluctance, the mainstream has complied with the required identification card embedded with an RFID chip, paving the way for more willingness to expose vulnerable personal details. Currently, more than 40 million Germans—half the population of the country—has voluntarily provided Facebook personal access to their homes, lives, family, and friends. That is not merely a German trend as more than 2.3 billion other citizens worldwide have done the same. It is common knowledge that Facebook and other platforms such as Google have become a massive data set examined by governments, intelligence circles, and police agencies, along with employers, the media, and any predatory group or individual. Facebook, as just one operator of social control, dominates a world of personal connections and has quickly become a global digital identity document containing information for public view and consumption. "Borders and walls have no meaning in digital worlds, but as the Stasi knew well, the control of identity, speech and access do" (Hope, 2022, p. 267; Parenti, 2003).

Echoing a sense of *prisons of visions*, Ralph Hope reminds us that physically taking away freedom and jailing people is a government function carried out by both democracies as well as tyrannical regimes. In a digital environment, however, anyone can use information as a weapon. "The Berlin Wall was erected in plain view, barbed wire at first, followed by bricks and mortar and machine guns. Technology today enables placing an invisible digital wall anywhere a state actor thinks it should be, in minutes" (2022, p. 268). The Stasi, as an omniscient deity, became a master at *Zersetzung*, better known as decomposition and personal destruction:

> It's no longer necessary to be a state actor to activate Stasi-like digital tools of decomposition against an individual. It's happening every day, especially in America.

> Anonymous acts of personal decomposition, now called "doxxing," the publishing of false information, designed to intimidate or destroy, are ever present on social media. It's done by small groups, individuals or foreign governmental actors pretending to be someone else. The goal is to destroy the personal for political gain, in true Stasi fashion. It's the *Zersetzung* of today. (Hope, 2022, p. 273)

From *visions of prisons* to *prisons of visions*, the legacy of wars, walls, and watching continue to shape our lives into the foreseeable future. Simply put, both *visions of prisons* and *prisons of visions* seem to suggest that when it comes to living—and even resisting—in a society of surveillance and containment, we seem to be stuck in the same paradigm of social control. Have we, or have we not, really escaped the punitive city with all its tiny theatres of punishment? (Cohen, 1979; Foucault, 1979).

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MICHAEL WELCH is Professor at Rutgers University and Visiting Professor at the Mannheim Centre for Criminology in the Department of Social Policy at the London School of Economics. He is author of several books, including *The Bastille Effect* and *Escape to Prison*.

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