because neoliberalism has "profoundly eroded our sense of political agency, which has compelled us to look for new ways of manipulating the present through a turn to the past" (p. 6). Eichhorn also speculates that archives have become increasingly important because they are a "viable and even necessary means to legitimize forms of knowledge and cultural production in the present" (p. 6). This argument, however, is underdeveloped, and I hope Eichhorn picks it up again in future writing. She misses another crucial consequence of neoliberalism that would seem to undermine her own tendency to heroicize archival work – that is, the rise of neoliberalism has also influenced the acquisition strategies of university archives, which appear to be invested in academic scholarship that investigates social movement activities, especially if these activities are aimed at promoting rights and freedoms. This is evident in the emergence of multidisciplinary programs in equity studies, sexual diversity studies, disability studies, and feminist studies. If the interests of the university are such that there is impetus to collect records that support this kind of scholarship, then the archivists employed within these academic institutions will find it easier to pursue activist collections. Eichhorn even admits in the conclusion that "it is important to bear in mind that simply collecting the documentary traces of an activist movement is not necessarily a subversive act" (p. 160). Perhaps this is simply what archivists do as part of our professional work. Although not its intent, Eichhorn's work challenges archivists to assess our own impact on the collections we keep and the extent to which our work should be characterized as activism in the pursuit of social justice.

Rebecka Taves Sheffield
University of Toronto

Top Secret: Bilder aus den Archiven der Staatssicherheit/Images from the Archives of the Stasi. SIMON MENNER. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2013. 128 pp. ISBN 978-3-7757-3620-6.

Top Secret: Bilder aus den Archiven der Staatssicherheit/Images from the Archives of the Stasi presents a selection of images from the archives of the secret police in Berlin and explores how photography was used as a tool of social control by the government during the East German regime. Simon Menner, a contemporary artist based in Germany, often makes use of historical photography in his work. Whether repurposing historical photographs or creating images himself, he typically focuses on our ability to subjugate our fellow human beings either through war or state-sanctioned oppression.

"Posing with Corpses,"[1] an online work created in 2013, consists of images from the American invasion of Iraq and the Second World War in which soldiers posed with the bodies of their enemies. In each repurposed image, Menner cut away the image of the dead person, alluding to the ability of the victor to forget about his victim's humanity. In *Top Secret*, Menner has not manipulated or repurposed any of the images.

The collection of images chosen by the artist from the Stasi Archive is organized into three main sections. "Manuals" includes photographs used for instructional purposes by the Stasi to train its own personnel, from such diverse activities as how to apply false moustaches or how to stage an arrest (see Figure 1 for an example). In "Operations," the images were generated as part of routine Stasi tasks, such as filming the entrance door to the United States Embassy or searching the homes of East German citizens. Finally, "Internal Affairs" includes images that Stasi personnel took of themselves to celebrate their own accomplishments, such as award ceremonies. The book contains a short introductory essay by Menner, and each thematic segment is briefly introduced by the author, who provides contextual details (where they are available); however, the book consists primarily of selected photographs in various formats (e.g., Polaroid, 35 mm black-and-white prints) from the archive.

Figure 1. Image from a sequence of photographs illustrating a staged arrest. Photographer unknown, date unknown. © Simon Menner and BStU 2013. MfS-BV-Bln-Di-006-084.

1 See the website of Simon Menner, "Posing with Corpses," accessed 21 August 2014, http://simonmenner.com/pages/PosingWithCorpses.htm.

While this book is not aimed at archives professionals, there are several reasons why it can be recommended to this community. The most obvious is that it affords a peek into the holdings of the Stasi Archives, a unique institution and the subject of only a handful of articles in English-language archival journals. Until intelligence documents leaked in 2013 by former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden revealed that the American agency, with the help of its Canadian counterpart, the Communications Security Establishment Canada, was "harvesting millions of email and instant messaging contact lists" and "searching email content"[2] of American citizens, it was thought that the Stasi had had the greatest reach of any state surveillance operation. The German Democratic Republic's Ministry for State (Staatssicherheit, or Stasi) was, as Menner writes in his introduction, "one of the most effective surveillance apparatuses ever" (p. 5). During the Cold War, the Stasi employed more agents than the KGB or CIA. At its height, it had 91,000 full-time employees, an estimated ratio of 1 employee for every 180 citizens. The KGB, by contrast, maintained 1 employee for every 595 citizens.[3]

Upon the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the records produced by the Stasi were not transferred along with other national records to the West German national archive. Instead, the unified country's first freely elected government decided that the records would be preserved together in Berlin as a distinct entity, known in English as the Stasi Records Agency, under the administration of the Agency of the Federal Commissioner for the Stasi Records. As Elena S. Danielson writes:

> Bypassing the West German Bundesarchiv, the legislation placed the ... records ... in the custody of the Parliament, which was charged with appointing a federal commissioner to administer this particular set of records. Stringent German security and privacy laws would not apply. Most crucially the law provided for immediate access by victims of political persecution to their own records.[4]

As Danielson observes in her article, with the creation of the *Stasi Records Act* the new government took a step toward striking a balance between privacy protection and allowing the victims of the regime the right to view the information about them that had been gathered by the East German state.[5]

2 *Wikipedia*, s.v. "Edward Snowden," last modified 19 August 2014, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Snowden.

3 Karsten Jedlitschka, "The Lives of Others: East German State Security Service's Archival Legacy," *American Archivist* 75, no. 1 (Spring–Summer 2012): 82–83.

4 Elena S. Danielson, "Privacy Rights and the Rights of Political Victims: Implications of the German Experience," *American Archivist* 67, no. 2 (Fall–Winter 2004): 179–80.

5 Ibid., 80. Danielson credits Joachim Gauck, who had been appointed in 1990 as the federal commissioner responsible for the administration of the records, with striking this original balance between right to access and privacy concerns.

In bringing some of the photographic components of the Stasi archive to light, *Top Secret* adds to the understanding of how photographs have been used since their invention to control criminals or suspected criminals in society. The Stasi generated a vast array of records. The central card file on individuals, the backbone of the Stasi archive, consists of information on six million people, which adds up to 325,000 linear feet of textual records.[6] Photographic images make up a massive subset of the archive – there are over 1.56 million in various formats. Photographs used to document and control criminals or suspected criminals of the state have been written about extensively in the archival literature, and appropriately so, since one of photography's first uses was to gather visual information on prisoners. Only two years after the invention of the daguerreotype technique, Parisian police were including daguerreotype images in their files on prisoners.[7] Technological advances saw photographs become lighter and more transportable, enabling Parisian policeman Alphonse Bertillon to develop his "system" in which various physical measurements of criminals were kept on cards and cross-filed with their photographs. The proliferation of these images meant they could be read together as a collection. The body of literature investigating the meaning of these images includes writing by John Tagg and, significantly, Allan Sekula, who observed the necessity of understanding the nature of archives themselves and not just photographs as discrete images. In *The Body and the Archive*, Sekula states:

> The camera is integrated into a larger ensemble: a bureaucratic-clerical-statistical system of "intelligence." This system can be described as a sophisticated form of the archive. The central artifact of this system is not the camera but the filing cabinet.... In structural terms, the archive is both an abstract paradigmatic entity and a concrete institution.[8]

Menner's book provides an interesting contrast to this body of literature familiar to archivists. Rather than present us with images of the criminal – a mug shot, for example – Menner has made his book all the more fascinating because he turns this tradition on its head by showing us images of those wielding the power – the Stasi agents. Most likely because of the legislation guiding the use of the records in the Stasi Archive, as described in Danielson's

6 Jedlitschka, "The Lives of Others," 84.

7 Jennifer Green-Lewis, *Framing the Victorians: Photography and the Culture of Realism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 200.

8 Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October* 39 (Winter 1986): 17. For other works that consider archival collections of photographs of criminals, see John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985); and Simon Popple, "Photography, Crime and Social Control," *Early Popular Visual Culture* 3, no. 1 (May 2005): 95–106.

article, no victims of the regime can be seen or identified in *Top Secret*. Instead, Menner is documenting the regime of control itself.

In the section of the book titled "Manuals," Menner has chosen various images from instructional material provided to Stasi agents on topics such as the application of disguises and the steps involved in conducting an arrest. Some reviews of *Top Secret* have emphasized the humorous aspect of these images. The disguises are such poor quality that they would not have fooled

Figure 2. Image of an unmade bed taken prior to a secret house search. Photographer unknown, date unknown. © Simon Menner and BStU 2013. MfS-HA-Fo-1399-003.

many people.[9] But Menner reminds the reader that while "many of the images reproduced here might appear absurd or even funny to us, … they concern photographic records of the repression exerted by the state to subdue its own citizens" (p. 5). A more haunting series perhaps better illustrates this fact: in the "Secret House Searches" series, the victims of the Stasi are again physically absent. House searches, practised by Stasi agents to identify citizens keeping Western contraband consumer goods or to reveal pro-Western political inclinations, were conducted secretly while the occupants were away. After the search was complete, the residents were never informed that the search had taken place, and belongings were arranged just as the agents had found them. The Polaroid photo of an unmade bed (Figure 2) "is thus the picture of an unmade bed before it was searched," and the photo was therefore an *aide-memoire* used by the agents to ensure that the sheets and pillows were arranged exactly as they had been upon arrival.

Top Secret makes an excellent companion piece to be read alongside more theoretical works, such as Jonathan Finn's *Capturing the Criminal Image: From Mug Shot to Surveillance Society*, a study of the evolution of surveillance imagery in photographic archives, from Bertillon cards to digital imagery captured by the American department of Homeland Security. In it, Finn makes the case that capturing the fingerprint is the first form of surveillance practised by law-enforcement agencies.[10] Menner's selection of images from the world's second-greatest surveillance organization brings this remarkable archive to light for discussion, and provides us with evidence from it for examination. In his introduction, Menner expresses concern:

> All too many of the images are open to a wide range of interpretations and consequently to being instrumentalized according to the suspicions of those whose job it was to interpret them. For example a photograph of a Siemens coffeemaker: it is a West German consumer product that as such can be seen as evidence for contacts with Western agents or merely as a present from relatives. The difference can mean years in prison. I believe that this also demonstrates one of the fundamental problems and limitations inherent to any and all forms of surveillance (p. 5).

Archival consideration of the nature and interpretation of surveillance records will be necessary for the day when – if it has not already arrived – archives receive their first transfer of contemporary surveillance records created

9 Lyra Kilston, "Absurd Secret Police Photos Show the Campy Side of Communist Spy Games," *Wired*, 15 October 2013, http://www.wired.com/2013/10/stasi-archives/.

10 Jonathan Finn, *Capturing the Criminal Image: From Mug Shot to Surveillance Society* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009): "The latency of fingerprints and the mobility of the camera meant, at least theoretically, that all public and private space could be subject to police surveillance. Fingerprinting therefore enabled the state to bring all bodies, not just those of marginalized individuals or known offenders, under surveillance" (p. 50).

by digital technologies, which, as Finn writes, have "undoubtedly enhanced the communications, identification and surveillance capabilities of police."[11] Studies of the records generated by a police state using fear and suspicion to maintain control over its citizenry should be considered necessary background reading as modern citizens as well as archivists routinely, and often willingly, contribute to a much larger surveillance operation by creating and preserving personal information about people's whereabouts, habits, and interests.

Sarah Stacy
Library and Archives Canada

11 Ibid., 82.