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Vor der Mauer. Berlin in der Ost-West-Konkurrenz 1948 bis 1961 by Michael Lemke (review)

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of near obsession. When tourism once again became possible at the end of 1956, a surprising number succeeded in making pilgrimages to their former homes. Many unfavorably compared what they found there to the memories of their *Heimat* under German administration, often reviving Nazi tropes of innate Slavic inferiority in the process. But whether visiting expellees acknowledged or ignored the part National Socialism had played in creating the conditions that had led to their exile, virtually all of them discovered, through direct observation of their place of birth, “how drastically it had diverged from the world they still cherished in memory and how it had been reconstructed with a new, Polish character” (230).

It was as a result of this process of gradual renunciation that the signature of the Treaty of Warsaw in December 1970, a key component of Willy Brandt’s *Ostpolitik* that normalized relations between Poland and the Federal Republic, became effectively a nonevent in West German politics. The mass of expellees failed to respond to their leaders’ calls to display their opposition to the accord; rallies and protests attracted turnouts that fell somewhere along the scale between disappointing and derisory; and in the eventual ratification vote in the Bundestag in 1972, a mere seventeen deputies recorded their dissent. With the passing from the scene of the last surviving expellees, Demshuk notes, contemporary Germans are less likely to pine for the lost eastern lands than to display profound indifference to and unawareness of them. For them, the whole of Poland including the “Recovered Territories” is “a boring place, a dangerous place, a land to be avoided” (266). Paradoxically, he concludes, what is now needed are measures “to ameliorate the problem of German ignorance” of the region (274).

The Lost German East is a sophisticated, sensitive, and intelligent treatment of an important aspect of West Germany’s postwar stabilization. Though it takes persons displaced from Silesia alone as its focus of study, the patterns it identifies seem to be broadly applicable to German expellees in general. It deserves, and on its merits will doubtless receive, the widest possible readership.

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Vor der Mauer. Berlin in der Ost-West-Konkurrenz 1948 bis 1961. By Michael Lemke. Cologne: Böhlau, 2011. Pp. 753. Cloth €79.90. ISBN 978-3412206727.

In recent years, historians of postwar Germany have labored to make sense of the “asymmetrically integrated parallel history” (*asymmetrisch verflochtene Parallelgeschichte*) of the two German states—a phrase first introduced by Christoph Kleßmann in the 1990s and now widely deployed in the literature. It has proven devilishly difficult to craft narratives that highlight genuine interactions between East and West, rather than merely juxtaposing two contrasting systems. If it can work at all,

the border regions are a logical place to start, as seen in recent publications by Edith Sheffer (*Burned Bridge*, 2011) and Astrid Eckert (“Geteilt, aber nicht unverbunden,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, January 2014). And what better place to find a porous border than divided Berlin?

Lemke, already one of the most prolific authors on Cold War Germany, shows a deft touch here in focusing his analysis on the years of direct “system competition” (11) between the West Berlin Senate and the East Berlin Magistrate. In theory, his book distinguishes among political, socioeconomic, and cultural interactions; but his main interest is politics and he relies almost exclusively on the records of city administrators. This is no time to grouse about top-down perspectives however: Lemke wields police reports and committee plans to great effect in conveying a granular sense of how ordinary East and West Berliners negotiated the opportunities and hazards presented by the open border. He tells of border crossers ambling back and forth to visit church services, youth festivals, operas, and orchestras, second-rate Hollywood films, and third-rate bakeries and discount shops. In the early 1950s, West Berliners were buying one-third of their groceries in the East, and they gladly availed themselves of cheap haircuts and other inexpensive services (366). The East Berlin Magistrate tried to halt opportunistic border traffic, which exacerbated their own food insecurity, yet they learned to appreciate the inflow of hard currency. For their part, East Berliners looked westward for manufactured consumer goods, above all shoes (349).

One of the strengths of the book is to highlight just how much the two half-governments could do to make mischief in the other half of the city. The Senate harassed the Magistrate by goading East Berliners to demand free elections; the population responded by mailing in some 400,000 ration-card stubs in October 1950 in a clear sign of dissatisfaction with the rule of the Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (SED). The Senate also sought to counter the impact of the enormous youth festivals in East Berlin by inviting participants to cross over and enjoy *Kaffee und Kuchen* (coffee and cake) with private West Berliners. For its part, the SED took advantage of its legal status in West Berlin to campaign vigorously in local elections. It tried in vain to split the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD) and castigate Willy Brandt as an agent of US imperialism. The upshot is that the rival bureaucracies did more than heap propagandistic scorn upon one another; they actively worked to undermine the legitimacy and effectiveness of the other side. Lemke’s is surely the most thorough account of this tit-for-tat disruption since Diethelm Prowe published *Weltstadt in Krisen* in 1973.

Was divided Berlin inherently unstable? Was it inevitable that the border would close? On the one hand, Lemke does not deal in teleology. He notes how stubbornly the Magistrate clung to all-Berlin cultural events, capitalizing on the inheritance of Unter den Linden and the historic city core. On the other hand, economic policymaking almost always pointed in one direction, toward severing still existing ties across the

sectors. In 1952, for example, West Berliners lost control over property they owned in the Soviet sector; that same year the Magistrate amputated the bus and trolley lines that passed between East and West. Still, the sectors remained deeply intertwined. At the turn of the decade, West Berlin's booming economy drew in huge numbers of East Berliners, first as border commuters and then as refugees. This outflow contributed to the collapse of the East's production and consumption in 1960–1961, prompting still more waves of emigration. Historians tend to treat the Berlin Crisis as a Cold War showdown rather than an economic meltdown, so Lemke's emphasis on local Berlin dynamics is refreshing.

Prospective readers may be put off by a thick, German-language tome with dense footnotes occupying more than half of every printed page. Even the generous selection of rare black-and-white photographs bound in the book's center does not quite succeed in making the book inviting. Nevertheless, Lemke's study is surprisingly readable. The copious notes serve almost as hyperlinks or pop-up bubbles, displaying raw archival material to motivated readers at the bottom of each page. The material in question is all from the Berlin archives; the perspectives of the four occupying powers remain underdeveloped here. Even so, the book is a magisterial achievement offering countless impulses for ongoing research into divided, entangled Berlin.

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Encounters with Modernity: The Catholic Church in West Germany, 1945–1975.

By Benjamin Ziemann. Translated from the German by Andrew Evans. New York: Berghahn, 2014. Pp. xii + 322. Cloth \$120.00. ISBN 978-1782383444.

This excellent English translation of Benjamin Ziemann's *Habilitationsschrift*, first published in 2007, makes more accessible Ziemann's examination of West German Catholic reactions to secularization. Focused on the Church's adoption of sociological methods of self-analysis in an era of "scientization of the social," Ziemann's exploration of metaphor, theology, and the social sciences offers an unusually rich interdisciplinary approach from which all scholars can benefit. In a strongly argued study that stands out for its precision of terms, distillation of complex background, and fulsome documentation, Ziemann paints a nuanced picture of a responsive, if divided, Church confronting unprecedented secularity.

Studies of German Catholicism necessarily raise certain methodological debates, and Ziemann nails his colors to the mast by substituting "functional differentiation" (4) for social-moral milieu theory and reframing, while accepting, the secularization paradigm. In functionally differentiated societies, he argues, religion no longer represents a set of shared values but simply one of numerous competing subsystems, each resting on distinctive ideas, including those of politics, science, and education.