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# Bulletin

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# Bulletin

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# BOOK REVIEWS

PATRICK OUTHWAITE, *Christ the Physician in Late-Medieval Religious Controversy: England and Central Europe, 1350–1434*, Health and Healing in the Middle Ages, 7 (York: York Medieval Press, 2024), 298 pp. ISBN 978 1 914049 26 2. £95.00

In recent years, renewed scholarly interest in the history of medicine in premodern Europe has paralleled a growing recognition that conceptions of physical and spiritual health have long been deeply intertwined. This awareness has brought historical perspectives on the connections between religious and medical discourses into sharper focus.[1] With *Christ the Physician in Late-Medieval Religious Controversy*, Patrick Outhwaite offers a timely and engaging contribution, tracing the figure of *Christus medicus* in the context of religious disputes during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The study's main objective is to elucidate how the allegory of the Divine Physician was invoked for different purposes in relation to dissident movements, particularly the Wycliffites in England and the Hussites in Bohemia. To achieve this, Outhwaite examines the roles of various actors and a range of sources, including lesser-known manuscript material, moving seamlessly between two analytical levels: the medicalization of religious language and the influence of religious terminology on medical discourse. While often focusing on conceptual questions surrounding health and healing, his analysis is not restricted to the discursive level. Outhwaite is equally attentive to real-life practices,

[1] Peter Biller and Joseph Ziegler (eds.), *Religion and Medicine in the Middle Ages* (York, 2001), 3–14; Sara Ritchey, 'Health, Healing, and Salvation: Hagiography as a Source for Medieval Healthcare', in Samantha Kahn Herrick (ed.), *Hagiography and the History of Latin Christendom, 500–1500* (Leiden, 2019), 417–36; Chiara Crisciani, 'Medicine and Religiosity: Exchanges and Interactions', *Medicina nei secoli: Journal of History of Medicine and Medical Humanities*, 36/1 (2024), 9–26.

demonstrating how religious rituals informed medical treatments—and how medical institutions and needs, in turn, shaped people's religious lives. The book is therefore as much a conceptual study as it is an exploration of the lived experiences of the administrators and recipients of physical and spiritual care in the late Middle Ages.

The analysis unfolds over five chapters, each emphasizing a different geographical, temporal, and thematic aspect. Outhwaite's concern with the lived realities of care is evident from the first chapter, which offers an insight into the precarious conditions in late medieval hospitals for the sick poor—conditions that motivated fervent calls for reform. At the centre of this chapter is the devotional–medical treatise *Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines*, written by Henry of Grosmont (d. 1361). In the text, Henry describes his own bodily wounds as a vivid allegory for sin and spiritual suffering, illustrating humanity's need for healing at the hands of the Divine Physician.[2] Possibly associated with the Hospital of the Annunciation of St Mary in Leicester, the treatise emphasizes the Virgin as an idealized figure of compassion, positioning her as a model for nun–nurses and canonesses in their care for the sick (p. 32). Drawing on *Le Livre*, alongside similar medical and devotional writings, Outhwaite explores Mary's threefold depiction: as the ideal nurse assisting the Divine Physician, as a form of medicine itself, and as a caring, nurturing mother. Across the three fields, he shows how nurses were expected to offer physical and spiritual care in tandem, imbuing medieval hospitals with a highly devotional atmosphere that facilitated 'a sustained engagement with religion' (p. 65).

Chapter two moves beyond the common ground shared by contemporary authors and explores more controversial approaches that became points of religious dissent. It focuses on the practice of frequent communion as a means of healing body and soul. Initially advocated by Milíč of Kroměříž (d. 1374), the practice sparked considerable debate in Bohemia. While the Church never officially endorsed receiving the Eucharist as a form of daily medicine, several theologians in Kraków considered the practice a viable alternative to the Hussite form of taking communion in both kinds (Utraquism—that

[2] See also Naoë Kukita Yoshikawa, 'Holy Medicine and Diseases of the Soul: Henry of Lancaster and *Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines*', *Medical History*, 53/3 (2009), 397–414.

is, administering both the bread and the wine to all the congregation; p. 105). The ensuing debates reveal the diverse ways in which contemporaries—both clergy and laity—understood the sacrament as a means of experiencing direct engagement with Christ as the Divine Physician.[3] Chapter three shifts the focus to England, highlighting how unauthorized surgeons and preachers who followed the Oxford lecturer John Wycliffe (d. 1384) posed similar regulatory challenges. In their critiques of 'corrupted' Church hierarchies, Wycliffite preachers presented themselves as both 'disgruntled patients and surgeons of the soul' (p. 117). Authorities responded by introducing preaching licences, echoing attempts to regulate the practice of physical surgery. Yet, as Outhwaite explains, both forms of legislation proved equally ineffective: unsanctioned preaching persisted, and calls for more direct access to Scripture continued to reverberate across late medieval England, just as unauthorized (and often unskilled) surgeons continued to operate throughout the fifteenth century.[4]

The final chapters of the book return to Central Europe. Outhwaite offers a detailed account of the Hussites' organological view of the Church, unfolding how they invoked medical language to present their reforms as a means to cure the body of Christ from spiritual pestilence. Yet, as also becomes clear, the *Christus medicus* tradition was not the exclusive domain of reformers like the Hussites and Wycliffites; it was equally employed by those who sought to counter what they saw as the dangerous spread of heresy. At the ecumenical councils of Constance and Basel, which mark the study's end point, the same medical metaphors were used in strikingly different ways—to justify the excommunication and execution of dissidents, or to

[3] See also Alessandra Foscati, 'Healing with the Body of Christ: Religion, Medicine and Magic', in Laura Andreani and Agostino Paravicini Bagliani (eds.), *Il 'Corpus Domini': Teologia, antropologia e politica* (Florence, 2015), 209–26.

[4] Outhwaite references complaints from barbers and surgeons in London, but similar disputes can be found elsewhere; see Jana Madlen Schütte, 'Konflikte und Konkurrenzen der Mediziner in den Fakultäts- und Rektoratsakten des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts', in Jan-Hendryk de Boer, Marian Füssel, and Jana Madlen Schütte (eds.), *Zwischen Konflikt und Kooperation: Praktiken der Europäischen Gelehrtenkultur (12.–17. Jahrhundert)*, (Berlin, 2016), 175–90; and Iona McCleery, 'Medical Licensing in Late Medieval Portugal', in Wendy J. Turner and Sara M. Butler (eds.), *Medicine and Law in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2014), 196–219.

support efforts at reconciliation (p. 226). Outhwaite concludes with a caution that, by this point in the study, has already been well substantiated: surface-level similarities in references to the Divine Physician can be misleading. Only by considering the specific contexts in which the figure was invoked can we fully grasp its evolving significance—whether in late medieval religious controversies, the sixteenth-century Reformation, or, in fact, theological conversations today.[5]

This brings me to the two aspects of Outhwaite's study that stand out most. First, the book leaves a lasting impression of just how much shared language and conceptual ground existed between dissident movements and their opponents. Both drew on the same biblical, canonical, and patristic reference texts and employed similar allegorical and (proto-)scientific frameworks. Still, they used them to argue for fundamentally different theological positions and to support opposed political, social, and religious agendas. Crucially, neither side operated in a vacuum. As Outhwaite illustrates—whether in debates around Utraquism or preaching regulation—each side shaped its arguments in dialogue with, and often in anticipation of, those of its opponents. Taking in the wider panorama of the debate, rather than focusing on the histories of individual groups or particular theological strands, brings these dynamics into clearer view: from shared assessments of the Church's condition and the medical language used to describe it, to the overlapping solutions proposed to address its perceived ills. As wide-ranging yet finely nuanced studies like Outhwaite's show, achieving this demands consideration of diverse sources and close attention to the interplay between laity and clergy, as well as across social strata, gender, geography, and time. Because the often-cited 'blurring of the boundaries' (p. 22) is so deeply embedded in medieval discourses and experiences, it remains not merely a descriptive topos in the study of religious controversies, but an ongoing scholarly imperative.[6]

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[5] See e.g. Woty Gollwitzer-Voll, *Christus Medicus—Heilung als Mysterium: Interpretationen eines alten Christusnamens und dessen Bedeutung in der Praktischen Theologie* (Paderborn, 2007).

[6] Delfi I. Nieto-Isabel and Janine Larmon Peterson (eds.), 'Foreword', in *Blurring the Boundaries of Religious Dissent: A New Approach to Heresy in the Middle Ages*, special issue of *I Quaderni del m.æ.s.*, 22 (2024), pp. i–vi.

Second, the study demonstrates that *Christus medicus* was never merely a rhetorical device or a lofty theological idea. The diagnoses, medicines, and treatments associated with the Divine Physician were not just theoretical; they were actively put into practice, influencing healthcare as well as ecclesiological and devotional matters.[7] They could even take on political significance on an international stage. This is precisely why the figure, despite having already attracted considerable scholarly attention, continues to offer various avenues for further research. As Otto Gerhard Oexle has long reminded medievalists, the study of social metaphors is especially fruitful when they unravel the complex interrelations between social realities and a society's concepts of those realities.[8] Outhwaite meets this challenge in relation to controversies surrounding dissident movements during the Western Schism, which were deeply entwined with the politics of the late medieval Church. Yet the strength of his study lies in its ability to combine broader perspectives with individual cases and everyday realities, whether the harsh conditions of hospital care, the peculiar practices of wandering doctors, or the devotional lives of women.

One area where the interaction between the conceptual and the experiential could be further developed is the failure of and concomitant distrust in the administrators and methods of care. Neither medical nor spiritual treatments were universally accepted; in fact, they frequently attracted criticism.[9] There is sufficient evidence that patients rejected offers of treatment, often seeking out different healers until they found someone they trusted. Understandably, people were also reluctant to pay for medicines or interventions that proved ineffective or even harmful (pp. 148–50). Examining such dynamics in the 'market of care' can help to reveal the agency of those seeking and those providing healing. In further nuancing our view of personal religiosity in

[7] Gerhard Fichtner, 'Christus als Arzt: Ursprünge und Wirkungen eines Motivs', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 16/1 (1982), 1–18.

[8] See the approaches discussed in Otto Gerhard Oexle, *Die Wirklichkeit und das Wissen: Mittelalterforschung – Historische Kulturwissenschaft – Geschichte und Theorie der historischen Erkenntnis*, ed. Andrea von Hülsen-Esch, Bernhard Jussen, and Frank Rexroth (Göttingen, 2011).

[9] See e.g. George A. Trone, '"You Lie Like a Doctor!": Petrarch's Attack on Medicine', *Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine*, 70/2 (1997), 183–90.

the medieval period, we discover that what the author describes as 'a sustained engagement with religion' did not, in fact, always amount to constant or unwavering belief. A doctor's treatments could be met with suspicion—but so could the promises of a priest.

At the end of his book, Outhwaite expresses his scepticism towards attempts to trace the profile of the Divine Physician over a *longue durée*, arguing that such an approach necessarily overlooks historical and local particularities (p. 231). And yet his own study delineates how patristic thought on Christ's medical role was invoked in the religious controversies of the Western Schism. I am convinced, therefore, that this book will prompt further comparative perspectives, whether in examining how late medieval medical imagery reverberated during the sixteenth-century Reformation or, more intriguingly, in exploring how contemporary Christian discourses on healing were perceived and responded to by contemporary Jewish and Muslim authors.

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ANDREAS EDEL, *Zwischen Pest und Feuer: John Graunt (1620–1674). Der Mensch hinter den Zahlen* (Freiburg im Breisgau: wbg Academic, 2024), 454 pp. ISBN 978 3 534 64009 6 (hardback), €68.00; 978 3 534 64079 9 (open access PDF)

One of the most important functions of modern states is to collect statistics about their populations. In many cases, complex bureaucratic systems are put in place for this purpose. One of the aims of these statistics is to understand population trends and track the impact of diseases. As Andreas Edel shows in his excellent monograph, the collation of such information has a long and complex history.

Edel, Executive Secretary of Population Europe, a Europe-wide network of demographic research institutions, provides the first modern biography of John Graunt, regarded as the founding father of demography. Graunt's most famous tract is his *Natural and Political Observations*, which was published in London in 1662 and used the city's *Bills of Mortality* to deduce population trends and the impact of diseases, amongst other things. Although there were doubts about the veracity of Graunt's study and the conclusions he drew, both in his time and later, his work was one of the earliest examples of demography in a modern sense, and also contributed to epidemiology and political arithmetic.

Edel gives an overview of Graunt's times in the introduction, starting with the existing historiography on his life and emphasizing a disparity between his contemporary and later reception. While Graunt's *Observations* were widely read and cited during his lifetime and in the eighteenth century, scholarly interest in Graunt's life only developed in the later nineteenth century—partly because many authors previously focused on Graunt's friend, the demographer William Petty (1623–87). This is followed by a general description of London and England in the seventeenth century. Edel calls this subchapter 'Time Axes [*Zeitachsen*]', without explaining the use of this particular term. It covers a wide range of topics, including significant seventeenth-century wars, the Little Ice Age, and economic and scientific developments. While interesting to read, not all of these details are necessary to understand Graunt's London and his work. Even more striking is Edel's description of the seventeenth century as a 'Janus-headed' time (p. 22) characterized by high mortality, epidemics, war, and catastrophes on the one hand, and by courtly culture, the growth of urban centres, the early capitalist economy, and a new age of rationality on the other. This kind of portrayal seems anachronistic and operates with a dualism that is not always helpful in explaining the complexities of the seventeenth century. It risks glossing over the many grey areas, and even implying the existence of a civilized, rational, and modern seventeenth century at odds with a dirty, backward, and dangerous time.

The second chapter of Edel's monograph turns to Graunt's family and early life. He was born in London in 1620 and married Mary Scott, with whom he had three sons and five daughters, though only four of them reached adulthood. Graunt was a haberdasher and textile trader, and in 1641 he became a member of the Worshipful Drapers' Company. Edel then reconstructs Graunt's life in London—especially his living conditions and social circle, which included the famous diarist Samuel Pepys (1633–1703). Here, Edel remedies several significant gaps and oversights in Graunt's biography. For example, he shows that Graunt's membership in the Trained Bands, an urban militia, was important for his self-perception. As Edel argues, the membership gave Graunt access to an important social group, and he used the titles of general and major repeatedly and with some pride. On 26 February 1662 he became a member of the Royal Society, which at the time was still a modest association that sought to quickly increase its membership and establish its scholarly and public reputation. He also took on roles in local government and in the Drapers' Company and was a highly respected member of the urban elite. In 1672 he converted to Catholicism, and from that year until his death in 1674 he no longer held any offices. Although Graunt flaunted his status, for instance by using a family seal, no depiction of him survives. Through close analysis of archival as well as printed sources, Edel reconstructs Graunt's family background and his life in London in significant detail. Where the sources do not allow definitive conclusions to be drawn, he provides well-reasoned possibilities. He argues, for example, that Graunt's interest in urban demographics may have been inspired by the deaths of his children and his experiences of the London plague epidemic in 1625–6.

Chapter three is concerned with Graunt's business pursuits and adds more detail to some of the aspects already described in the first part. Edel considers different aspects of Graunt's economic life, starting with his activities as a haberdasher and textile salesman. He shows convincingly that this profession was not necessarily confined to the poor. He then discusses investment in joint stock companies and other ways of participating in expanding English overseas interests. Although he provides a knowledgeable overview of these possibilities, the sources do not allow for definitive conclusions in many cases. However, Edel shows that Graunt owned London real estate, likely as an investment for the future. Graunt was also responsible for managing the money of several of his colleagues. In an excursus, Edel provides significant new information on Graunt's son, John Graunt Jr, showing that he worked for the East India Company and did not die at a young age, as some other scholars have claimed. He wrote reports and audited accounts during multiple journeys with the Company and died around 1670.

The fourth chapter of Edel's monograph considers Graunt's most significant work, the *Natural and Political Observations*. By 1676, it was already in its fifth edition, including one officially endorsed by the Royal Society. The treatise is all the more remarkable because Graunt did not show any interest in demographics prior to its publication, leading to speculation that his friend and colleague Petty was the true author of the text. While it seems that Graunt really did write the *Observations*, Edel points out that Petty may have encouraged him, and certainly they were both working on early population statistics at the same time. Moreover, Graunt's focus on the *Bills of Mortality* made his *Observations* especially innovative. Graunt was mainly concerned with the practical applications of his statistics, and also had local government in mind when he published the text.

In two further subchapters, Edel provides information on London's plague epidemic of 1665–6 and the *Bills of Mortality*. He shows that the *Bills* were an important part of London's communication culture and that the city's inhabitants relied on them for information. He describes how elderly women, called searchers, gathered information on deaths and passed it on to parish clerks, who then had the *Bills* printed. Edel then moves on to a discussion of various topics mentioned in the *Observations*, beginning with mortality and fertility in seventeenth-century

London. This is followed by an analysis of a passage on promiscuity and prostitution, which Graunt addressed in relation to birth rates. Edel then turns to the *Observations* to answer a question that was also discussed by contemporaries—namely, that of London's total population, especially compared to other European cities. Moving on to the linguistic level, Edel then asks how Graunt described his findings, analysing his language and his use of tables. In another excursus, Edel provides more general remarks on longevity and death in the seventeenth century, touching on subjects ranging from the iconography of the dance of death to executions in London's Tyburn.

Chapter five carries the title 'Watershed Moments [*Lebenseinschnitte*]'. Edel first provides an analysis of the role of religion in Graunt's life, refuting the claim that Graunt was a great religious zealot, as John Aubrey (1626–97) claimed. Graunt converted to Catholicism, likely in the 1660s, which led to a degree of ostracization by his friends and colleagues when it became public knowledge in 1672. Edel follows this with an analysis of the Great Fire of 1666, the beginning of Graunt's economic decline from which he never fully recovered. After 1672, Graunt fell on hard times; William Petty had to repeatedly remind him about overdue payments, indicating significant financial problems. At the end of his life, Graunt was even prosecuted; however, he died in poverty before he could be called before the court.

The sixth chapter considers Graunt's reception and his role as the founding father of modern demographics. Edel emphasizes the practical uses of the knowledge gathered and analysed by Graunt, especially for the administration of London. Graunt's interests went far beyond an immediate concern with epidemic prevention and included aspects such as care for the poor, birth rates, and the impact on the urban population of male migration to overseas colonies. Graunt's focus on population statistics led to improvements in the *Bills of Mortality* and expanded their influence, including beyond England. For instance, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) referred to Graunt's work when tasked with improving the collection of population statistics in Brandenburg. However, as Edel also notes, it is almost impossible to ascertain whether these changes were connected directly to Graunt or his colleague Petty or, indeed, were merely the result of a greater general awareness of population statistics. Edel also argues that Graunt's *Observations* shaped public discourse, though contrary to Edel's claims, it is hard to tell whether the *Observations* or the *Bills of Mortality* themselves had a greater influence. Finally, the *Observations* also featured in discussions of plague prevention and population patterns.

In the conclusion, Edel summarizes the main findings of his work, including Graunt's novel approach and the pitfalls of both the *Bills of Mortality* and the *Observations*. This is followed by an edition of Graunt's *Observations*. Although the text is readily accessible elsewhere online, Edel's edition is still a useful contribution to the literature because it is based on four different editions of the *Observations*, enabling comparison between the different variants. For example, while in the original version Graunt merely calls himself a 'citizen of London', in later versions he styles himself as 'Capt. John Graunt, Fellow of the Royal Society'. The text contains few explanatory footnotes besides references to the different editions. A bibliography and index of persons concludes the book.

Edel provides scholars of early modern London, historians of medicine and demography, and those interested in early scientific advances in England with a comprehensive account of John Graunt's life and his most important work. He combines archival and written primary sources with recent studies of Graunt, the *Bills*, and London to provide some genuinely new insights, especially regarding the details of Graunt's life and work. He does not fall into the trap of overestimating Graunt's impact, but rather contextualizes his achievements and points out where others contributed to Graunt's success, or where multiple interpretations are possible. The structure of the monograph results in some repetition, and some of the chapters could have been more explicitly focused on Graunt and his *Observations*. For example, Graunt's life is discussed in the second chapter, but then aspects of his biography are addressed yet again in a chapter about crucial turning points in his life and business activities. Nonetheless, the monograph provides the first detailed scholarly account of Graunt and his life, which is a significant achievement, and Edel is a skilled and knowledgeable teller of Graunt's story.

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SÜNNE JUTERCZENKA, *Expeditionen ins Inselmeer: Zur Rezeption von Pazifikreisen im 18. Jahrhundert*, Frühneuzeit-Forschungen, 27 (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2024), 384 pp. ISBN 978 3 835 35684 9. €42.00

The expeditions of Louis-Antoine de Bougainville (1729–1811) and James Cook (1728–79) to the Pacific Ocean in the 1760s and 1770s initiated what historians have termed a 'second age of discovery'. In stark contrast to European overseas ventures of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, late eighteenth-century exploration has frequently been heralded for its benign motives and its impressive scientific output. According to the standard narrative, these expeditions were guided by humane and capable sea captains, and they made major contributions to the natural and human sciences. Instead of violent conquest and brutal oppression, Bougainville's, Cook's, and their followers' approach to non-European regions and cultures was supposedly shaped by Enlightenment principles of rationality, respect, and an abiding thirst for knowledge. While this narrative has been challenged by scholars who have emphasized the negative impact on native populations of encounters with Europeans, as well as the entanglements of exploration, racism, and colonialism, the 'second age of discovery' continues to be seen as a relatively bright episode in the history of European expansion.

While Sünne Juterczenka engages with these debates in her monograph, which was submitted as a habilitation to Berlin's Humboldt University, her principal aim is different: by studying the evolution, structure, and functions of Enlightenment patterns of interpretation (*Deutungsmuster*), she seeks to elucidate how eighteenth-century voyages of 'discovery' were received and evaluated by scholars and the general public. According to Juterczenka, a close study of reception processes proves that contemporaries deliberately shaped the image of eighteenth-century voyages to the Pacific as major advances in human knowledge and science. In doing so, they contributed to the Enlightenment era's image of itself as an age of progress, humanity, and cosmopolitanism. Her study, which focuses on Great Britain, France, and the Holy Roman Empire, incorporates a broad range of source materials that includes travelogues, biographical works, journal articles, newspapers, correspondence, auction and library catalogues, as well as images and material objects.

The book is divided into nine chapters. While the first chapter contextualizes and characterizes the 'second age of discovery' as a historiographical construct, chapter two offers a semantic analysis of the word 'discover' (*entdecken*). While eighteenth-century authors broke new ground by conceiving 'discovery' as a deliberate, collaborative, and transnational process, the word still carried older meanings of armed conquest, territorial expansion, and divine providence. By emphasizing scientific, economic, political, and military purposes, proponents of 'discovery' lobbied for state support. Chapter three deals with Enlightenment projects that aimed to write a history of 'discovery' from Columbus to Cook. Juterczenka shows that late eighteenth-century authors emphasized the contrast between their own age and the sixteenth-century Iberian conquests; instead, they drew a line of continuity from the seventeenth-century scientific revolution to their own endeavours, repeatedly evoking Francis Bacon's research agenda and highlighting the ideal of transnational cooperation. The fourth chapter explores the ways in which Enlightenment authors connected the idea of stages of human development with the concept of cultural hierarchies: as Pacific islanders and Australian natives appeared to represent a more 'primitive' stage of 'civilization', French, British, and German writers imagined voyages of 'discovery' as forays into the human past.

The following chapters take a closer look at the ways in which particular moments of exploration and cultural contact were received, interpreted, and imagined in eighteenth-century Europe. Chapter five shows how Bougainville's 'discovery' of Tahiti in 1768 was transformed into a transnational 'media event' that had a lasting impact on the European imagination. The next chapter explores how Joseph Banks used his status as a participant in Cook's first Pacific voyage to create a public persona and promote a wide range of further scientific projects. The commodification of Pacific exploration in different literary genres and its influence on practices of reading and consumption in various social strata is the subject of chapter seven, while chapter eight traces Cook's growing celebrity through newspaper announcements, biographical works, maps, and globes. The final chapter broadens the study's temporal framework by examining the impact of two events—the violent death of James Cook on Hawaii in 1779 and the disappearance of the La Pérouse expedition in 1788—on the popular imagination of 'discoverers' from their own times to the present day.

While Sünne Juterczenka's thoroughly researched, clearly organized, and well-written study is informative throughout, it is most impressive where it delves into little-used sources. Thus the sections on travel literature in princely and private libraries (pp. 210–19), on serial forms of publication for men, women, and children from different walks of life (pp. 220–41), and on the mapping of Cook's voyages (pp. 260–75) are particularly insightful. In sum, this fine book is a valuable contribution to the cultural history of maritime voyages in the age of Enlightenment.

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BENJAMIN SEEBRÖKER, *Interpersonelle Gewalt und gesellschaftlicher Wandel: Lancashire 1728–1830* (Tübingen: UVK Verlag, 2023), 299 pp. ISBN 978 3 739 83225 8. €49.00

Within the master narrative of modernization as a civilizing process, a popular thesis has it that the emergence of modern society has been accompanied by a long-term decline in violence since the Middle Ages. This thesis was recently called into question by Gerd Schwerhoff, one of the German pioneers in the field, along with three collaborators in a major reconsideration of international research over the last fifty years on the history of crime. They showed, quite convincingly, that even the most sophisticated attempts to chart the course of violent crime in statistical terms (by means of homicide rates) suffer from severe flaws, because both the sources recording violent crime and the population data used for the analysis are a lot less reliable than hitherto thought. The authors were wise enough, however, not to throw the baby out with the bathwater and disregard the quantitative history of crime altogether. Rather, they concluded their reassessment with a thoughtful plea to combine quantitative and qualitative approaches and to pay more attention to the social and cultural context of violence in each particular historical field under study.[1]

One of the co-authors of that article was Benjamin Seebröker, and the book under review, dealing with violence and social change in Lancashire between 1728 and 1830 (based on his Dresden PhD thesis supervised by Schwerhoff), reads as though he set out to answer that plea. The critical points raised in the joint article form the general frame of reference for the book, while the historical material is employed in a determined attempt to address the sore spots in the history of crime in a constructive fashion within the bounds of a carefully staged regional case study. The result is convincing in every respect.

The book consists of four parts. Part one, the introduction, clarifies the aim and the scope of the investigation. In order to determine the evolution of homicide rates in Lancashire during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (a period when they declined in London

[1] Gerd Schwerhoff et al., 'Hard Numbers? The Long-Term Decline in Violence Reassessed. Empirical Objections and Fresh Perspectives', *Continuity and Change*, 36/1 (2021), 1–32.

and the southern English counties, as previous research has shown; ch. I.1), the study draws on all cases of lethal violence recorded in legal records surviving for Lancashire for the years from 1728 to 1830 (ch. I.2). There is a detailed assessment of the sources (origin, substance, scope) and a succinct exposition of the methodology (quantitative analysis, qualitative interpretation; ch. I.3), followed by a brief justification of the choice of Lancashire (cotton manufacture as the heart of British industrialization, Manchester and Liverpool as centres of urbanization; ch. I.4).

Part two is concerned with the quantitative analysis. It begins, again, with a critical look at the sources, or more specifically at the devilish details encountered in the business of operationalization: how do we decide what to count as an instance of homicide? Excluding infanticides, accidents, and unclear cases, the resulting sample comprises 587 perpetrators and 510 victims for the entire period under observation (ch. II.1). Next comes the chronological distribution of these cases, which reveals a threefold increase in homicide rates between the early eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (from roughly 0.5 to 1.5 per 100,000). This is in clear contrast to the findings for other regions, but not readily explained, as the observed pattern bears no relationship to factors like war and demobilization or economic crisis (ch. II.2). About half of the perpetrators were acquitted, the other half found guilty, and of the latter, 60 per cent were imprisoned, 15 per cent branded, 11 per cent fined, 10 per cent executed, and 2 per cent transported (ch. II.3). Homicide occurred mainly within the working classes and was overwhelmingly a matter between men: 90 per cent of the perpetrators were male, as were 70 per cent of the victims, and young males in particular feature commonly in the records: two thirds of perpetrators were aged 17–30 (ch. II.4). Most cases were found in the industrialized parts of southern Lancashire, especially in Manchester and Liverpool (ch. II.5).

Part three is devoted to the qualitative interpretation of the material. This is basically a collection of close narratives of individual cases, drawing on a smaller sample of 144 offences with particularly detailed depositions (often including longer witness testimonies). Again, it starts with methodological clarifications as to which forms of violence can be distinguished: of all cases, just a single one relates to sexual violence, and only 8 per cent to predatory violence (robbery, theft), while the majority (nearly two thirds) involve disputes, though again, the boundaries are not always clear-cut (ch. III.1). Next come the accounts of the cases themselves. In the single example of sexualized violence, three men raped a woman and beat her up so severely that she died from her injuries (ch. III.2).[2] Homicides associated with property crime were rare and include cases related to the notorious highway robberies (ch. III.3). The vast majority of lethal violence was dispute-related. It occurred within everyday quarrels, or more precisely in cases where the 'normal' use of physical force in more serious personal conflicts had gone out of control. A closer look at such cases reveals that these conflicts were mainly about masculinity and male honour, and that the pub was a prominent location. Not surprisingly, alcohol was an accelerant, not least in domestic conflicts, which were in turn often linked to poor housing and deplorable living conditions (ch. III.4).[3] The fights themselves show that violence was regarded as an almost natural aspect of social relationships and that it formed an integral part of everyday life. The typical form of quarrel was the open fist fight, often in a ritualized fashion, in which the surrounding spectators insisted on the common rules of fair play. Occasionally sticks, stones, and tools were used, but weapons only rarely, in just one in eight cases (ch. III.5). The social regulation of violence is also evident in cases where people tried to mediate between the conflicting parties (ch. III.6).

Part four provides a brief summary of the major findings. While the observed increase in homicide rates might suggest that the pressure of social change and hence the propensity to violence increased with industrialization and urbanization, both the social context and the social meaning of violence remained more or less the same. In the case of Lancashire, there was no general change in attitudes towards violence and no behavioural shift towards more 'polite' forms of conflict. If such changes are discernible in London and the surrounding

[2] Two of the men were found guilty of manslaughter. They pleaded benefit of clergy to escape the death penalty, and were instead branded and sentenced to twelve years' imprisonment.

[3] The sample includes one case of an industrial dispute in which a strikebreaker was wounded with his own knife and died a few days later.

regions (as suggested in previous work), the question is to what extent they were restricted to the social elite and the middling classes. And if, by contrast, the labouring classes in Lancashire adhered to traditional notions of violence, might we not regard that as the rule rather than an exception?

Seebröker tends to an answer in the affirmative. I would agree with that, but also endorse his conclusion that we need more historical case studies of crime and violence in industrial regions before we can form a closer understanding of the relationship between violence and industrialization. And I would strongly recommend that they follow the example Seebröker has set. In my view, his book is a model case study. It is not just the combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis which deserves praise, but also each of the two exercises in their own right. The quantitative part is a neat example of how to work with numbers when the evidence is not in itself of that order, so that meaningful numerical units have to be gained from it in the first place (which is so often the case in premodern times). All decisions as to what and how to count are absolutely transparent and the ensuing calculations also made in a clear, conscientious, and careful manner. The qualitative analysis is no less meticulous. The chosen case histories are inspiring, full of interesting detail, and instructively narrated. At the same time, they are not left to speak for themselves, but thematically embedded and perceptively contextualized. Moreover, in considering the wider context, Seebröker is often led to question widely accepted views and wisdoms. For example, in his discussion of the spatial dimension of crime, he is able to show that the distinction between indoors and outdoors, or private and public, is often inappropriate. Thus, quarrels in pubs were never 'private', not only because the pub was per se a public space, but also because quarrels which began in the pub would end up in the streets. Another example would be a drunken husband who swore at his wife, beat her up, and made such a noise that the neighbours stepped in to help her.

Although I recommend the book and wish Seebröker a wide readership, I regret that the latter is probably going to be rather limited. While it deals with an English case and is deeply embedded within British and American research, it is nevertheless a German book, and one most decidedly addressed to German students of crime and violence.

In fact, one of its particular merits is that it provides an excellent guide to two areas largely unknown to the common German reader—that is, English criminal law on the one hand, and English-speaking research on the history of crime on the other. Thus the critical assessment of the sources is at once also an introduction to the institutional setting of the criminal law, highlighting the role of the assizes, the duties of coroners, and other features (there is also a very helpful glossary). Likewise, the major authorities in the English field of the history of crime crop up time and again in the references, including scholars like John Beattie, James Cockburn, Peter King, James Sharpe, and Robert Shoemaker. If these names might not be familiar to most German readers, Seebröker's book will certainly help to make them better known. Still, all this will hardly touch British and American colleagues, most of whom no longer read German. But then, they are lucky enough to be able to turn to an English-language article by Seebröker in which major findings from the quantitative analysis of his Lancashire data are summarized.[4] And I very much hope that he will publish more articles in English featuring case narratives from the qualitative part of his book. They deserve to become widely known in the country in which they originated.

[4] Benjamin Seebröker, 'Lethal Violence in Decline? A Critical Review of Historical Homicide Rates in England', *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés*, 25/2 (2021), 33–57.

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VERNESSA WAGNER, *Geschichten der Krise: Die Berichterstattung über Wirtschaftskrisen in Deutschland und England im 19. Jahrhundert*, Histoire, 216 (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2024), 296 pp. ISBN 978 3 837 67101 8. €47.00

The precise date of the first modern economic crisis is disputed. In Britain, the birthplace of industrialization, crises with incipient modern characteristics appeared as early as the eighteenth century, while in Germany (with the exception of Hamburg) they only emerged in the nineteenth century.[1] Nonetheless, economists and economic historians today hold the view that the modern capitalist economic crisis only began in the mid nineteenth century, when the arrival of industrial capitalism and the modernization of transport and communication had changed the structure of economic shocks for good. The 1840s and 1850s are commonly seen as a transitional period when crises ceased to be primarily agricultural in nature and took on new, modern, capitalist characteristics. Admittedly, the Panic of 1847 was still partly shaped by failed harvests and food shortages, but it also had modern features thanks to the railway boom. By contrast, 1857 is held to be the year of the first modern, global, economic crisis. All the same, the literature on nineteenth-century financial crises is slight compared to the volume of research on the twentieth century.[2]

Vernessa Wagner's PhD thesis breaks new ground in that she examines how the Panics of 1847 and 1857 were perceived and explained

Translated by Jozef van der Voort (GHIL).

1 Alongside the many studies of the South Sea Bubble, see Paul Kosmetatos, *The 1772–73 British Credit Crisis* (Cham, 2018); Tyler Beck Goodspeed, *Legislating Instability: Adam Smith, Free Banking, and the Financial Crisis of 1772* (Cambridge, MA, 2016); Carmen M. Reinhart and Kenneth S. Rogoff, *This Time is Different: Eight Centuries of Financial Folly* (Princeton, 2009); and Margrit Schulte Beerbühl, *Auf dem Weg in die Moderne: Spekulation und Finanzkrisen im 18. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 2023). For a view from Germany, see Werner Plumpe, *Wirtschaftskrisen: Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Munich, 2012).

2 See the older works by George W. Van Vleck, *The Panic of 1857: An Analytical Study* (New York, 1943); James L. Huston, *The Panic of 1857 and the Coming of the Civil War* (Baton Rouge, 1987): and, for Germany, Hans Rosenberg, *Die Weltwirtschaftskrise 1857–1859* (Göttingen, 1974; 1st pub. 1934).

in contemporary print media. Her aim is to analyse 'semantic coping strategies at times of economic upheaval, as well as differences between German and English observations' (p. 13). She understands contemporary reporting not as an accurate depiction of the events of the crises, but as a narrative with its 'own order and reality' (p. 15). A key feature of contemporary discourse was the perception of a 'disruption' that had triggered the 'new' crises, and that was understood as a 'deviation' from the ordinary course of trade (p. 14).

Wagner investigates the discourse surrounding the Panics of 1847 and 1857 through selected German and English newspapers: in Germany, the *Allgemeine Zeitung* and the *Kölnische Zeitung*; in England, *The Times*, the *Manchester Guardian* (for 1847), and the *Daily Telegraph* (for 1857). Her study is divided into three parts. Part one provides an overview of the different economic conditions underpinning the two shocks, explains how they played out in England and Germany, and describes the development of some early theoretical ideas about modern economic crises. It ends with an illuminating section covering the rapid expansion of the press in both countries, the increasing scope and differentiation of newspapers in terms of their subject matter, and the ways in which each country's media viewed the other.

Using a remarkably broad empirical base, part two very clearly reconstructs how the two panics were recognized and explained linguistically. The reporting—or the stories told about the crises—followed a particular structural pattern, starting with information presented without commentary, followed by an attempt to explain and classify the event, and finally some form of critical engagement. In this way, Wagner identifies some core themes in the reporting. First, the onset of each of the two panics was presented as an extraordinary, disruptive event that deviated from normal conditions. Identifying features included suspensions of payments, bankruptcies, and changing discount rates. A large amount of column space during both panics was taken up with inquiries into the significance of investor confidence, as well as the reasons why it declined. Second, reporters tried to categorize events and interpret them. The initial diagnosis of the problem was followed by debates about, and criticism of, the structure of the financial markets and their effects on various parts of the economy, including businesses and the labour market.

Accusations of moral failings were also made against the actors involved; in particular, the media condemned American women for their extravagance and love of luxury. Third, there was discussion of possible ways to contain and overcome the crises, which varied from liberal laissez-faire approaches to state intervention. While *The Times* took a critical view of government action during both panics, the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Daily Telegraph* expected the state to come to the rescue by suspending the Bank Acts. Indeed, most of the British media expressed criticism of Bank of England policy in this regard,[3] while German newspapers found fault with measures taken by the government.

Wagner finds that German newspapers took considerably more information from their English counterparts than vice versa (p. 65). In general, the German press simply reported British policies and presented the various different views in Britain, only occasionally offering independent opinions of their own (p. 173). By contrast, the only detailed reporting by *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* on events in Germany concerned the effects of the Panic of 1857 on Hamburg, along with the measures adopted there to overcome the crisis. This came about because *The Times* had a correspondent in the city.

Newspaper reporters pointed out the fundamentally international nature of the two shocks, but they did so at different points in each crisis: the global impacts of the Panic of 1847 became apparent only gradually, while in 1857 they were highlighted from the very beginning. Attempts to understand the crises repeatedly failed due to slow communication paths, which meant that news took a while to spread.

In part three—a very short section—Wagner examines the imagery and metaphors used in the reporting. Superlatives were deployed to emphasize the extraordinary nature of the events. The media transformed complex economic processes into vivid stories dominated by

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[3] Here it would have been interesting for Wagner to examine whether the media criticized the Bank of England for failing to live up to its role as lender of last resort. According to Paul Kosmetatos, this was a role assigned to the Bank as early as the eighteenth century. See Paul Kosmetatos, 'Last Resort Lending before Henry Thornton? The Bank of England's Role in Containing the 1763 and 1772–73 British Credit Crises', *European Review of Economic History*, 23/3 (2019), 299–328.

images of sickness and especially infection. Wagner's analysis makes extensive use of analogies with the Covid-19 pandemic, which forms the frame of her study; however, this comes across strangely in certain places where the boundary between metaphors of illness and academic language becomes blurred (see for instance p. 114: 'How is the patient feeling?'). The author also notes here that alongside metaphors of infection, the English press drew comparisons with gambling and fraudulent speculation. The imagery of disease was less dominant in the German press, however, where descriptions tended to use language drawn from nature, especially meteorology (p. 220–1).

Wagner then turns to 'fake news'—that is, rumours based on assumptions, false reports (whether deliberate or not), and omissions. On the whole, she argues that journalists dealt responsibly with hearsay and falsehoods. Next, in the last section of this chapter, Wagner addresses the ways in which the panics were evaluated by the media. Reporters emphasized them as unique and unprecedented events, but they also drew frequent comparisons with earlier shocks, such as the Panics of 1825 and 1837 in the USA. At the same time, some outlets attempted to make sense of the shocks of 1847 and 1857. For some, they were controllable and avoidable events, but for others they were recurring and unpreventable phenomena of the capitalist economy. Finally, the book ends with an epilogue containing a summary and a renewed comparison with reporting during the Covid pandemic.

The book's strengths lie in the highly detailed description of newspaper reportage on the two crises, remaining close to the sources at all times. However, this wealth of detail unfortunately comes at the cost of a concise analysis. The study would benefit from being embedded more firmly in existing findings and theories[4] from economic history, as well as in research on economic crisis discourses.[5] However, these comments should not detract from Vernessa Wagner's achievements,

[4] See e.g. the phases of modern economic crises set out in Charles P. Kindleberger, *Manias, Panics, and Crashes: A History of Financial Crises*, 4th edn. (Basingstoke, 2002).

[5] See e.g. Martin Wengeler and Alexander Ziem, '"Wirtschaftskrisen" im Wandel der Zeit: Eine diskurslinguistische Pilotstudie zum Wandel von Argumentationsmustern und Metapherngebrauch', in Achim Landwehr (ed.) *Diskursiver Wandel* (Wiesbaden, 2010), 335–54

as her investigation of reporting on economic shocks fills a significant research gap. All in all, this is a highly stimulating, readable, and painstaking study that not only offers detailed insights into the Panics of 1847 and 1857—two crises that have been inadequately researched compared to the shocks of the twentieth century—but also reveals the different ways in which these events were reported in England and Germany.

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MARK WILLOCK, *Liberale Honoratioren im politischen Massenmarkt: Parteiorganisation und Wählermobilisierung in Deutschland und Großbritannien, 1867–1914*, Bürgertum: Neue Folge, 25 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2024), 548 pp. ISBN 978 3 525 30279 8. €80.00

Mark Willock's book is one of the most important new studies of party history to be published in recent years. His methodological approach of examining liberal party formation primarily at the local level allows him to reassess the often-underestimated importance of the municipality in the process of mass politicization and democratization in Europe. The study's findings are lent further weight by its comparison between Britain and the German *Kaiserreich*, two countries that have long been viewed by scholars as paradigmatic examples of radically divergent paths into modernity. That the commonalities between the two countries in fact far outweigh the differences was demonstrated back in the 1980s by the British historians David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, in opposition to proponents of the German *Sonderweg*, or 'special path'.[1] Because Willock focuses on the liberals, the dominant political force in both states for long periods between the 1860s and 1914, his findings are of fundamental importance for any comparison between the processes of constitutional development and modernization in Britain and Germany.

After a brisk overview of the research literature in the book's introduction, chapter two describes how liberal clubs were organized in selected cities. The chosen case studies are discussed in pairs based on their shared structural socio-economic features: the port and trade cities of Hull and Bremen, as well as the industrial and administrative centres of Newcastle/Mannheim and Nottingham/Magdeburg. Willock does not simply set these cities alongside each other, but consistently compares them by applying a single catalogue of questions to similar sets of sources from both countries: reports in the local press; publications by liberally minded social, electoral, and civic clubs; and the private papers of a selection of prominent politicians provide a

Translated by Jozef van der Voort (GHIL).

[1] David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford, 1984).

broad evidence base. In none of the six cities were the liberals strongly organized on a party-political basis. Only in the last few years before the First World War did local electoral clubs and associations of notables (*Honoratioren*) begin to develop into membership-based parties with financial resources and bureaucratic structures. One noteworthy difference between Britain and Germany can be found in the cooperation with large associations and social movements: British liberals enjoyed close links with Nonconformism, the Temperance movement, and for many years also the trade unions, especially miners' unions. By contrast, their German counterparts drew their support from a heterogeneous Protestant milieu and especially from individual commercial associations, such as the Hansabund, but remained closed off from the organizations of the labour movement.

Chapters three, four, and six focus on liberal MPs, their local voter base, and electoral culture. As one might expect, the social profile of the liberals was largely the same in both countries. Depending on the urban structure of a given city, the typical nominees were industrialists, businesspeople, and economically independent notables from the liberal professions—people who did not need to be paid for their parliamentary work or supported financially by political parties, and who sometimes even expressly declined any remuneration in order to demonstrate their personal independence. Kin relationships, social networks, a shared culture of sociability in urban clubs, and civic engagement in church congregations all played an important role. There were also broad overlaps between both countries in the specifically liberal understanding of politics, in which social differences were rhetorically downplayed in favour of the fictitious, but evidently potent notion of a harmonious liberal 'community' that served the 'urban common good'. As a result, until the early twentieth century, elections were largely contested between like-minded local grandees who represented different factions within the liberal milieu, but always stressed what they had in common. In Britain, the liberal elite was more socially exclusive, with its members from the municipal level right up to Parliament more closely connected to each other through kinship ties and shared academic socialization in schools and universities. British liberals were neither closer to the people nor more elitist than their German counterparts. Nonetheless, they were better able to politically integrate the workers at the municipal level, whereas the regime of liberal notables in the *Kaiserreich* was increasingly outflanked by the Social Democrats and the Catholic Centre Party once these movements discovered the city hall as a political battlefield in the 1880s. The Centre Party played only a marginal role in the cities selected by Willock as case studies, however.

The book's most important findings are presented in chapter five, and are discussed once again in the conclusion. Here, Willock dispenses firmly with the old historiographical prejudices concerning modernization and the rise of political parties. In both Britain and Germany, he argues, the liberals successfully clung to their local autonomy and their municipal roots. Their power base was made up of local voters, whose needs defined their policies as members of the two countries' national parliaments. The 'politics of place'—the claim that they represented the community as a whole—also influenced the liberals' parliamentary politics, albeit to a different extent in each country due to the regional diversity and divisions within German liberalism. This essential connection between local base and national politics answers the core question Willock raises in this chapter about the efficiency and efficacy of party-political centralization, a question that must be approached through the unique conditions of liberal community politics: if the municipalities were 'separate spheres' within the constitutional order, did they form a kind of counter-sphere to the development of political camps at the national level? Willock's answer is shaped by the basic hypothesis on which his study is predicated—a theory I happen to disagree with. He assumes that the liberals failed to adapt their organizational structures to the political mass market and thus lost their head start against the conservatives, and above all against the social democratic and labour movements, well before the rupture of the Second World War—a trend that set in earlier and more lastingly in Germany, where the liberal movement split into two different party-political currents as early as the 1860s.

This interpretation amounts to an unintentional endorsement of the claim that liberalism failed early on in Germany, and thus indirectly supports the *Sonderweg* thesis. Willock assumes that the goal of liberal politics was the ideal of a 'well-oiled party machine' (a phrase he uses several times), with strong links between the party headquarters, the regions, and the municipalities—in other words, an organizational structure that resembles the modern concept of a political party. In fact, however, his findings demonstrate precisely the opposite: that liberals emphasized local autonomy, especially in the nomination of candidates for parliamentary elections, as a prerequisite for successful liberal rule and thus for the viability of their political model. That being the case, why would they have centralized their party structures and thus presented themselves as a distinct force, detached from their municipal voter base? In the cities Willock examines, the liberals had 'almost overwhelming majorities' (p. 88). The expansion of local party structures and the formulation of programmatic goals were evidently seen as unproductive, as they might have posed a threat to the liberals' exclusive political mandate. Close ties between the party headquarters and their representatives among the voter base thus existed almost exclusively via the members of parliament themselves and their affiliated local press outlets.

Willock's study will stimulate new and far-reaching debates about key concepts in party-political history. How accurate is the distinction between notables and professional politicians? What specific effects did the much-cited, but generally vaguely defined 'political mass market' have on voters and candidates in the municipalities? Here, Willock's anachronistic concept of 'grass-roots democracy' (or 'grass-roots democratic socialization') gets us nowhere. In fact, the liberal elite at the municipal level had little interest in democratization, and instead depended on their social reputation and the deference (a word without a ready equivalent in German) of their local followers. When nominating candidates, liberals relied less on voting and more on the acclaim and affirmation of the audiences at their voters' assemblies.

In particular, the book opens a wide-ranging field of discussion in the history of party politics. A broader perspective needs to be applied to the theory of competing camps and their associated multi-party system (*Lagertheorie*).[2] If municipalities are held to be the primary field of experience and activity for liberal politics, this raises the question of how far the idea of the centrally organized party with an ideological programme is really applicable to the liberal milieu of the nineteenth

[2] Karl Rohe, *Wahlen und Wählertraditionen in Deutschland: Kulturelle Grundlagen deutscher Parteien und Parteiensysteme im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main, 1992).

century. It is true that liberal MPs navigated between, on the one hand, the expectations of their local clientele, whom it was their primary duty to serve, and the demands of their work in the national parliament on the other, which called for programmatic principles and disciplined voting. Both of these factors—accountability to the voter base and the pressures of parliamentary factions—posed a challenge to the liberal understanding of politics, especially when they related to the much-vaunted freedom and independence of the liberals' electoral mandate. As long as their local power base remained unchallenged, there was no need to establish party structures in the municipalities that were oriented towards the headquarters in the capital. The bourgeois understanding of power was based on a liberal movement that integrated all citizens, and the appropriate organizational structure was held to be the local civic association, not a party with an ideological programme. The enduring success of the liberal political model only came to an end on the eve of the First World War, after political decision-making was nationalized and moved into parliament, the franchise was expanded, and rival movements began to compete for power in the city halls.

The liberal understanding of politics and the movement's firm foundations in the municipalities may have been the most important common features shared by the parties in Britain and Germany. The liberal theory and practice of politics diverge considerably from the idea of parliamentary representation for specific social interests, classes, and confessions in the manner of Labour, the Social Democrats, and the Catholic Centre Party, as well as (to a degree) the conservative parties in each country. There is thus much to be said for Willock's argument that political liberalism in Britain and the *Kaiserreich* relied for too long on the authority it had acquired as an emancipation movement, as well as the social prestige of its local champions. In both countries, as Willock so accurately puts it, the 'dangerous complacency of a party of notables spoiled by success' (p. 291) ultimately led to the liberals losing power, even in the municipalities.

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DANIEL GERSTER, *Schulen der Männlichkeit: Internatserziehung und bürgerliche Gesellschaft in Großbritannien und Deutschland 1870–1930*, Hamburger Beiträge zur Sozial- und Zeitgeschichte, 64 (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2024), 573 pp. ISBN 978 3 835 35722 8. €46.00

In recent times, a deluge of media commentary has declared us in the grip of a crisis of masculinity. From alarmed reports on the rise of the 'online manosphere' to anecdotal diagnoses of 'something weird' about modern men, the narrative of crisis has been evoked to explain phenomena as varied as mental health decline, rising youth violence, and even—in one particularly notable case—US President Donald Trump's controversial imposition of tariffs.[1] The concept of masculinity in crisis is not a product of contemporary discourse, however; it has long featured as the dominant paradigm in the academic study of men and their masculinities, ever since the field emerged in the 1980s as an extension of a gender history that had, up to that point, focused solely on women.

It is in this tradition that Daniel Gerster's *Schulen der Männlichkeit* intervenes—a monumental 510-page comparative study of all-male boarding schools in Britain and Germany between 1870 and 1930. This book interrogates elite educational institutions as distinct sites where Protestant bourgeois masculinity was forged through institutional structures and everyday practices that tested, reproduced, and, at times, challenged broader ideals. With an eye to the contemporary resonances of his work, Gerster opens with a 2020 incident in which a teacher at Eton College posted misogynistic rants on YouTube, for which he received no formal punishment. Gerster positions his study as a 'prehistory' (p. 9) to such cases.

[1] Conor Lennon, 'Online "Manosphere" is Moving Misogyny to the Mainstream', *UN News*, 7 Mar. 2025, at [https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/03/1160876], accessed 12 May 2025; Christine Emba, 'Men are Lost: Here's a Map out of the Wilderness', *The Washington Post*, 10 July 2023, at [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/07/10/christine-emba-masculinity-new-model], accessed 12 May 2025; Madeline Sherratt, 'Fox News Pundit Believes Trump Tariffs Will Reverse "Crisis in Masculinity"', *Independent*, at [https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/batya-ungarsargon-trump-tariffs-masculinity-b2728661.html], accessed 12 May 2025.

Notably, the framework of crisis has increasingly come under fire from scholars who suggest that its prevalence across vastly divergent historical contexts merely proves the inherent instability of masculinity itself. More pointedly, critics have asked whose crisis we are actually conceptualizing—or, as Peter Davies aptly put it, 'who is *allowed* to have a crisis?'—noting that these narratives tend to centre the experiences of white, heterosexual, middle-class men in Western societies.[2] At the same time, a study of masculinities in the political sphere has articulated the historiographical imperative to confront a 'gender blindness' that has long naturalized men's gender performance in certain realms.[3] This is exactly the starting point for Gerster's contribution amidst a proliferation of 'crisis' narratives: his allusion to the Etonian member of the 'manosphere' points to the enduring tensions surrounding masculine ideals within the rarefied world of elite education. By tracing the education and socialization of boys among the Protestant bourgeoisie, Gerster directs attention to a specific milieu that, despite its visibility, has often evaded critical scrutiny or comparative analysis. His study illuminates the persistent tendency of elite men—those most invested in existing hierarchies of power—to see themselves as under threat. Their position renders them particularly sensitive to perceived shifts or challenges, making them both the agents and the subjects of masculinity's so-called crisis, at a historical moment when it became tangible to contemporaries and was narrated as such.

Contemporary perceptions of crisis also inform Gerster's chronology. Beginning with the *fin de siècle*—when social change driven by industrialization, emerging women's movements, and imperial tensions provoked insecurities about middle-class male identity—the study then extends through the First World War and its aftermath, a profound rupture that deepened the perceived 'disorder' of gender norms within bourgeois society in both Britain and Germany.

Gerster's focus on boarding schools represents the culmination of his academic trajectory to date. Having completed his doctorate on Catholic political cultures in Cold War West Germany, he later

[2] Peter Davies, 'Introduction: "Crisis" or "Hegemony"? Approaches to Masculinity', *Edinburgh German Yearbook*, 2 (2008), 1–19, at 4.

[3] Christopher Fletcher et al. (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Masculinity and Political Culture in Europe* (London, 2018), 248.

turned to the histories of education and childhood—or *Aufwachsen*—approaching the field from both global and German-speaking perspectives. *Schulen der Männlichkeit* is the product of his habilitation, completed at the University of Hamburg in 2023.

Throughout much of the book, the famous English public school Harrow is set alongside the Prussian Schulpforta, housed in a former Cistercian monastery near Naumburg in Saxony-Anhalt. To capture pivotal shifts around 1900, the later chapters incorporate newly founded reform schools—Bieberstein and Salem in Germany, and Bedales in England—which aimed to attract a rising upper middle class and reshape the boarding school *Bildungswelt*. These schools provide a rich source base, enabling Gerster to integrate the perspectives of teachers, parents, pupils, and alumni to show how a broad range of actors shaped and gradually shifted the 'hegemonic' (p. 30) bourgeois ideal that students were expected to embody.

Structured around four main chapters, the book unfolds largely chronologically while retaining a thematic focus, with each chapter subdivided into four substantial sub-sections. Gerster opts to treat the British and German cases as parallel but largely separate narratives, allowing each context to be fully developed before bringing them into dialogue. While this yields depth and contextual richness, it often results in the British case leading and the German responding, rather than placing them in sustained dialogue. A more integrated structure that wove the two cases together across each thematic section may have illuminated their interrelations and disparities with greater clarity. At times, this structural choice also creates a sense of covering similar ground more than once, even as the insights and conclusions offer nuances. While the breadth and depth of Gerster's research is impeccable, the sheer thoroughness and detail of certain sections—particularly the opening contextual chapter—come at a cost to readability. These are, however, minor issues in a study whose comprehensiveness and rigour are undeniable.

One of the book's significant accomplishments is the elucidation of transnational exchange and mutual influence between British and German pedagogues—exemplified by reform pedagogues Cecil Reddie and Hermann Lietz—which had some influence on educational developments throughout the period, and ceased only with the outbreak of war. In this way, Gerster anchors his comparative analysis in a context of cross-border transfer, showing developments in Britain and Germany to be related, rather than occurring on isolated national trajectories.

The first chapter traces the parallel development of British and German boarding schools within a broader European 'educational landscape' (p. 64), from medieval religious foundations through periods of reform and modernization. It elucidates how these schools developed along spatial, confessional, and social lines, with distinct organizational structures and social functions. Divergences were particularly pronounced in Germany, where regional and confessional differences persisted into the modern period—unlike in England, where public schools emerged within a more cohesive, nationally framed system that the newly unified German federal state lacked.

Building on this, Gerster turns to the schools' 'social relevance' (p. 73), concluding that they undoubtedly enjoyed greater significance in Britain than Germany. While this reflects a laudable commitment to situating the institutions within wider frameworks, one might question whether Gerster's analysis would have been better served by leaning wholly into the specificity of his case studies: educational institutions of cultural importance, with clear connections to power structures and a certain place in the public imagination, albeit more so in Britain than Germany.[4] As Gerster himself outlines, these schools served as 'training grounds for a future ruling elite' (p. 66), producing intellectuals, judges, and politicians. In that sense, their significance lies less in their wider relevance or representativeness than in their symbolic weight and social function, and it is precisely this that makes them such valuable windows onto the production and enactment of hegemonic ideals of masculinity in this era.

[4] Harrow and Eton continue to hold an important position in the British public imagination, closely tied to the enduring significance of class divisions in British society and these institutions' propensity for producing Prime Ministers. For notable examples in the extensive literature and cultural commentary, see Richard Beard, *Sad Little Men: Public Schools, Prime Ministers and Me* (London, 2021); David Turner, *The Old Boys: The Decline and Rise of the Public School* (New Haven, CT, 2015); Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, *The Public School Phenomenon, 597–1977* (London, 1977).

The comparison between these particular institutions is also well suited to Gerster's conception of 'spaces of possibility [*Möglichkeitsräume*] for male–male socialization' (p. 14), derived from Bourdieu. In both contexts, cultivating a homosocial environment for young bourgeois men was seen as essential to protect them from the perceived dangers of the opposite sex—namely, sexual temptation or maternal coddling. Homosocial education was framed as character-building, instilling the social duties and conventions required to live as Protestant men, and encouraging students to embody hegemonic ideals of morality, leadership, and resilience authentically—even as the meanings of these concepts shifted in the late 1800s. In Germany, the *Bildungsbürger* ideal was reshaped, while in Britain, a new archetype of the 'English gentleman' took form. Gerster is careful to stress the continuities too; even the new reform schools of the early 1900s, despite their efforts to distinguish themselves from older institutions, did not fundamentally rethink masculinities. Instead, they reaffirmed a familiar model: the educated man as independent, morally upright, and physically strong.

The age of heightened nationalism also left its mark, with education increasingly framed as a means of instilling national belonging—a development Gerster traces closely in his final chapters. By the early twentieth century, nationalism had permeated the boarding schools, with notable contextual differences: Harrow reflected a liberal–imperialist vision of 'Englishness', while Germany's *Land-Erziehungsheime* embraced an increasingly *völkisch* nationalism. In the lead-up to the war, the 'defender of the nation' (p. 365) emerged as a guiding masculine ideal in both; yet Gerster shows that this quickly lost its hold after 1918, despite the starkly different national outcomes. Notwithstanding the drastic upheavals of school life in 1914, when many older students and teachers left for war, a process of normalization was enacted almost immediately and with considerable success. Gerster's findings thus provide evidence against George Mosse's famous 'brutalization thesis', instead pointing to a pluralization of gender ideals, alongside the broader decline of bourgeois gender orders, which accompanied Germany's defeat, regime change, and advancement of women's emancipation.[5]

[5] George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York, 1990).

In the retrospective accounts Gerster examines, former students portray these schools as completely isolated worlds. While Gerster uncovers their specific spatial dynamics and time regimes, his reconstruction of the local, national, and transnational contexts in which the schools were situated makes it clear that this isolation was never complete. Even Pforta, despite its secluded location, officially permitted visits to nearby villages and spa towns and unsanctioned evenings spent in local beer halls. This permeability was intertwined with industrial transformations: the expansion of the Metropolitan Line brought Harrow into Greater London, sparking fears about the moral dangers posed by students' newfound access to clubs, pubs, and brothels. The daily presence of cooks and housemaids also shaped the students' lives, while improvements in transport and communication systems led to more frequent home visits and regular correspondence between the school, pupils, and parents.

Homosociality, in this sense, underpins one of the study's key strengths: Gerster's sustained attention to the agency of the students. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's 'field of social interactions', he illustrates how students contested prevailing ideals and forged a variety of relationships within these spaces, historicizing the discrepancies and overlaps between guiding ideal and everyday practices, as well as the reciprocal relationship between behaviours and evolving masculinities. A crucial shared feature of the newer hegemonic ideals in both countries was the increased emphasis on the male body as a 'natural' site of masculinity, displacing earlier notions of masculinity as an 'affected performance' (p. 126). This manifested in greater focus on physical fitness, health, and the rise of sport: gymnastics in German schools, rugby and cricket in English ones. The bodily turn further extended to posture, self-discipline, and violence, which was a formative element of school life. Beatings were seen as necessary to effect the transformation into resilient manhood, whether through hazing rituals—such as running the gauntlet or consuming grotesque concoctions—or through formal corporal discipline, dutifully recorded in 'Punishment Books' by teachers whose authority was treated as beyond question.

Former students also recall finding solace in close friendships, whose homoerotic undertones remain ambiguous. Romantic relationships, including between teachers and students, were not unheard of, although the prohibition of homosexuality became increasingly explicit by the late nineteenth century. Nonetheless, students' first sexual experiences often took the form of mutual masturbation, which was treated as routine and raised little alarm. These contradictions fit with Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's argument that homosocial bonds can be sustained, rather than undermined, by public repudiations of homosexuality, which maintain the boundary between the acceptable and the taboo.[6] As such, this study follows the concept of 'doing gender', showing that masculinity was not simply something possessed, but something continuously performed—an ongoing, routine accomplishment embedded in everyday interactions.[7]

*Schulen der Männlichkeit* shows that the crisis of masculinity was less a reflection of genuine social decline within this milieu than a construct which, embedded in broader transformations of the era, served to justify reforms, reinforce traditional archetypes, and at times uphold violent practices of elite male socialization. Moreover, the persistence of traditions and the gradual pace of change that Gerster demonstrates reveal more continuity than disruption in the ideals and practices of masculinity within these schools. Gerster's work stands as an impressive achievement: a meticulously researched and ambitiously conceived book that, despite occasional shortcomings in pacing, makes a significant intervention in the historiography of masculinity and education.

[6] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York, 2015), 27–30.

[7] Regine Gildemeister, 'Doing Gender: Soziale Praktiken der Geschlechterunterscheidung', in Ruth Becker and Beate Kortendiek (eds.), *Handbuch Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung: Theorie, Methoden, Empirie* (Wiesbaden, 2008), 137–45.

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BAIJAYANTI ROY, *The Nazi Study of India and Indian Anti-Colonialism: Knowledge Providers and Propagandists in the 'Third Reich'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024), 240 pp. ISBN 978 0 192 88754 2. £84.00

Baijayanti Roy's monograph explores the topic of academic, ideological, and military entanglements between Nazi Germany and India by focusing on a number of German, and German-affiliated Indian, academic experts on Indian history, religions, culture, and languages. These experts occupied politically charged spaces in the humanities in Nazi Germany, effortlessly bridging academic disciplines, research, propaganda, and increasingly radical National Socialist political ideology. They found ways to harness their work and expertise for the regime and often gained professional prestige in doing so. Roy seeks to explore the trajectories of these individuals, the topics which connected them, and their entanglements with National Socialism.

In her introduction, Roy introduces the reader to the research gaps which have existed to date; namely, scholarly attention on the humanities in the Third Reich has largely focused on specific disciplines and not on 'niche subjects' which cross disciplinary borders, such as Indology (p. 1). At the same time, Roy also highlights the long-standing dominance of Eurocentric perspectives within historical research and hopes that, alongside her book, more non-European scholars will be able to contribute to writing European history. This is an important point in terms of both the book's subject and wider debates, particularly in Germany, about dismantling influences of the colonial past on present-day knowledge systems and promoting more varied approaches to national memory and greater diversity in academia.

Roy focuses on four case studies, which are individually examined in chapters one to four. Chapter one concentrates on the India Institute of the German Academy (Deutsche Akademie, DA), which endeavoured to spread German political culture and later National Socialist propaganda in India via religious groups such as Hindu revivalists. The institute's tactics included inviting Indian professors to Germany for lectures to promote the study of India, supporting Indian students by providing scholarships, and collaborating with

Indian universities and institutions to promote German culture. At the same time, German academics also actively worked on and promoted the topic of India, for example through a twelve-part lecture series organized by the institute and the University of Munich in 1933. It was attended by 500 people and topics included 'The Geopolitical Significance of India' (p. 41). In 1939, one of the institute's German academics, Walther Wüst, personally appealed to Heinrich Himmler for financial assistance to send an Indian DA scholarship holder to India to conduct propaganda and espionage. The suggested candidate was Pandit Koodavuru Anantrama Bhatta, an expert on the Sanskrit language. Bhatta regularly gave lectures in German promoting National Socialist ideals for the Strength Through Joy (Kraft durch Freude) organization, and he accessed details on India during the war, passing them to another DA academic, Jakob Wilhelm Hauer. Hauer worked for the SS foreign intelligence service and wrote secret reports with this information.

Chapter two deals with the Special Department India (Sonderreferat Indien) within the German Foreign Ministry, which was formed at the request of the Indian anti-colonial activist Subhas Chandra Bose in 1941. The department was established to assist in the development of German policy concerning India. It produced fortnightly reports on the contemporary situation in India for the Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop, as well as a series of German-language books published for propaganda purposes and to provide practical information for policymakers and the press. While the department utilized anti-colonial and anti-British propaganda, it likewise used empirical data to criticize British policy towards the Indian population, including the Bengali famine of 1943. Interestingly, the department's book series, which included publications by German and Indian authors, was not subject to Nazi Germany's compulsory censorship process, thus demonstrating the importance of the topic of India, as well as the power of the department. One of the main academic driving forces behind the department was the Indologist Ludwig Alsdorf, author of the 1940 German-language book *Indien*, which made it to a fourth edition. The book dealt with the history and impact of the British colonization of India, as well as Aryan race theory, and was allegedly praised directly by Adolf Hitler.

The third chapter explores a number of organizations and scholars affiliated with the Friedrich Wilhelm University (today's Humboldt University) in Berlin. These were concerned with knowledge of India's political landscape and included the Seminar for Oriental Studies. Hermann Beythan, an ex-missionary from Thuringia who had been based in south India, was recruited to a teaching position at the Seminar in 1933. Beythan is best known for his book in Tamil titled *Who is Adolf Hitler? Victory of Strength*, which was published in India in 1936 with financial assistance from the German Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Propaganda. In the book, Beythan praised Hitler as the Mahatma, or 'great soul,' who intended to re-establish Germany's independence but did not aim for personal gain or wealth (p. 112). The Seminar was renamed the Ausland-Hochschule in 1936 and incorporated into the university's Institute for the Study of Foreign Countries (Auslandswissenschaftliches Institut) in 1940. This institute had a counterpart at the same university named the German Institute for the Study of Foreign Countries (Deutsches Auslandswissenschaftliches Institut, DAWI). Roy highlights how the increased political importance of India after the outbreak of the war led to increased scholarly collaboration between the National Socialist state and scholars teaching on Indian subjects. For example, a lecture course titled 'India: Race, People, and Space', taught by Devendra Nath Bannerjea, an Indian scholar from Punjab who claimed that he had a degree from Oxford University and had been a professor in Calcutta, covered topics such as 'The basic features of the Indo-Aryan Society' (p. 124). Meanwhile, the DAWI largely conducted research on foreign countries, including India, and published the results in a monthly journal, yearbooks, and other book series. The publications on India strongly pushed an anti-British narrative, emphasizing British oppression and the Indian struggle for independence, as well as Aryan history.

Chapter four moves away from academic institutions to cover the creation of the 950th Infantry Regiment or 'Indian Legion' of the *Wehrmacht* and the involvement of scholarly experts in its operations. The suggestion to form an Indian Legion came from the aforementioned Indian scholar Subhas Chandra Bose, who highlighted to Ribbentrop how such a unit would inspire Indian soldiers to revolt against the British. The voluntary recruitment of Indian POWs who had fought for the British Imperial Army in Africa began in 1941, and in May 1943 the Indian Legion was deployed in the Netherlands. In 1942 it was transferred to the south of France. The Legion reached a size of approximately 3,500 volunteers by 1943. To assist in the running of the Legion, so-called 'India experts' were hired as interpreters—a necessary step given that the Indian Legion's language of command was Hindustani and not English, as was the case in the British Imperial Army. These interpreters acted as cultural mediators between the Indian soldiers and the German military. Additionally, they took on practical tasks such as censoring the soldiers' letters and producing the Legion's magazine *Bhaiband* ('Brotherhood') which aimed to boost the morale of the Indian troops, oppose enemy propaganda, and spread political ideology. The magazine included positive (but often partially fabricated) reports on military developments and the German war effort, articles, jokes, songs, and poems supposedly written by the soldiers. The 'experts' utilized Indian religious traditions, culture, and political sentiments to promote unity and loyalty amongst the troops, as well as glorifying Hitler and expressing anti-Bolshevik ideology.

Roy's book highlights several interesting threads running through the different case studies, which include the German promotion of Indian nationalism, as well as anti-colonial and anti-British sentiment. At the same time, Roy points to how German scholars used orientalist stereotypes in their work, even in *Bhaiband*'s articles on India's history, culture, and religions, which were aimed at the soldiers of the Indian Legion. While Roy sufficiently covers the topics of anti-colonialism and anti-British propaganda within the Indian context, she saves much of the analysis for the conclusion. However, it would have been helpful to provide more in-depth engagement with these topics and with current historiography within the chapters themselves. Other interesting examples are available that show how anti-colonial sentiment and historical tensions with the British were weaponized in National Socialist propaganda, such as German films on Ireland and the Boers in South Africa.[1] The inclusion of such

[1] See e.g. the 1940 German propaganda film *Der Fuchs von Glenarvon* (Director: Max W. Kimmich); also Paul Moore, '"And What Concentration Camps Those Were!": Foreign Concentration Camps in Nazi Propaganda, 1933–9', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 45/3 (2010), 649–74.

cases, even by means of a short historiographical discussion, would provide an interesting and wider context to Nazi Germany's anti-colonial and anti-British propaganda. Similarly, Roy leaves deeper analysis of scholarly discussions about the humanities and the role of academics during the Third Reich to the end of the book. Again, by engaging with this historiography within the chapters, Roy could have better placed her findings within these discussions and further underlined their importance.

Nevertheless, Roy's book offers significant insights into a number of underexplored areas, such as the trajectories of the different experts, both German and Indian, whose career paths spanned several organizations and often intersected. Roy's study greatly benefits from her use of archives in Germany, Britain, and Poland. In particular, the inclusion of secret British surveillance sources allows for a different perspective on Indian scholars and their activities. Though Roy remarks that she does not situate her book within transnational history, it certainly contributes to the trend of researching Nazi Germany through such a lens. It demonstrates how the National Socialist regime attracted foreign academics with international experience, recruited and attempted to politically influence Indian soldiers who actively participated in the German war effort in the Netherlands and France, manipulated knowledge of India and the Indian desire for independence for its own purposes, and promoted resistance to the British Empire. It likewise contributes to debates on the variety of roles that colonialism played within Nazi Germany. Roy's analysis of Nazi Germany's institutional and ministerial support for research on India thus highlights an often overlooked aspect of colonial entanglements. Rather than focusing on National Socialist colonial ambitions or potential links between the eastern expansion and colonial or imperial examples, as many scholars have done, Roy shifts attention to more indirect forms of engagement which include the instrumentalization of anti-colonialism.

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LUKE DALY-GROVES, *The British and American Intelligence Divisions in Occupied Germany, 1945–1955: A Secret System of Rule* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 373 pp. ISBN 978 3 031 50199 9. £118.90.

Forty years have passed since British historians Christopher Andrew and David Dilks identified, in their history of secret intelligence services,[1] the 'missing dimension' in the international politics of the twentieth century. While this diagnosis was made in 1984 against a backdrop of restricted access to relevant sources under secrecy laws, the situation has changed somewhat since the end of the Cold War. Since then, there has been greater scope to conduct historical research on secret services in their political, social, and cultural contexts.[2] In addition, international intelligence history has focused on occupied post-war Germany, which—in terms of the development of the Cold War—has been historicized as an East–West 'battleground'[3] and a hotbed of intelligence activities.[4] Now this study, submitted as a PhD in 2020 and published in 2023, uncovers another 'missing dimension' in the field. In it, Luke Daly-Groves tells the story of the British and American Intelligence Divisions (IDs). These two intelligence services developed out of the joint headquarters of the British and American Allied forces in Europe after 1945. As the study shows, after the end of the war, the IDs played a central role in securing the British–American occupation and its political goals in Germany.

The role of the IDs has hardly been examined in the historiography to date because, as Daly-Groves convincingly argues in his introduction, research has focused on well-known intelligence organizations that still exist today, such as the CIA, MI5, and MI6. The IDs, which

Translated by Marielle Sutherland (GHIL).

[1] Christopher Andrew and David Dilks (eds.), *The Missing Dimension: Governments and Intelligence Communities in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1984).
[2] For a comprehensive overview of the development of intelligence history, see Rüdiger Bergien, 'Intelligence History', *Docupedia Zeitgeschichte* (3 Aug. 2021), at [http://dx.doi.org/10.14765/zzf.dok-2304].
[3] David E. Murphy, Sergei A. Kondrashev, and George Bailey, *Battleground Berlin: CIA vs KGB in the Cold War* (New Haven, 1997).
[4] Paul Maddrell, *Spying on Science: Western Intelligence in Divided Germany 1945–1961* (Oxford, 2006).

at times were among the largest and most influential intelligence services in the British and American zones, have often been neglected. For his systematic investigation of the structures and practices of the IDs and their cooperative and competitive relationships, the author draws on previously unknown or recently declassified sources in the British and American National Archives. He does not limit himself to the immediate post-war period and the direct occupation administration, but also looks at the early 1950s—that is, the phase after the founding of the Federal Republic through to the end of the Occupation Statute, during which the occupation regime underwent a transformation. The study makes two central arguments: first, that the relationship between the British and American IDs reflects far-reaching 'Anglo-American intelligence cooperation in occupied Germany' (p. 19); and second, that this 'intelligence liaison' was an expression of a 'secret system of rule' which formed the 'real backbone of the British and American occupation of Germany' (p. 2) and 'significantly influenced the course and outcome of the occupation' (p. 20). The book is thus also an example of the broader shift in historiographical perspectives on the Western Allied occupation, which is no longer merely seen as a prelude to the Cold War or the division of Germany, but historicized as a period in its own right, and a complex social system.[5]

Besides the introduction and conclusion, the book is divided systematically into six chapters, the first of which deals with the highly disjointed organizational history of the IDs. The British and American IDs were renamed and reconfigured several times in the post-war period. As Daly-Groves argues, this organizational fragmentation is one reason why the IDs have been under-researched to date. One of the merits of the study is that, by demonstrating organizational continuity within the IDs, it turns them into a tangible subject of research. After the end of the war and the dissolution of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force in July 1945, the British and American administrations developed independent intelligence structures in their occupation zones. First, in 1945, an 'Intelligence Group'

[5] See e.g. Camilo Erlichman and Christopher Knowles (eds.), *Transforming Occupation in the Western Zones of Germany: Politics, Everyday Life and Social Interactions, 1945–1955* (London, 2018).

was established within the British Control Commission Military Section; this was renamed the 'Intelligence Division' in 1946 and was temporarily stationed in Herford. A counterpart organization (G-2 USFET) was created in the American zone at the same time, but was not known as the Intelligence Division until 1948. The American ID, based in Heidelberg, was under the command of the US forces in Europe (from 1947 EUCOM, or United States European Command). Daly-Groves characterizes the relationship between the IDs and their predecessors as 'ad hoc', barely formalized, and based primarily on shared convictions and direct contacts. This led to the creation of a system of 'liaison officers' in 1946 as the 'most important link between the many different forms of cooperation' (p. 55). According to the author, this formed the basis for a comprehensive exchange of intelligence between the Americans and the British, from which the French services were largely excluded for security reasons.

Daly-Groves goes on to analyse the practices and modes of operation of the IDs and their cooperation within various fields of intelligence: military, scientific and technical, security, and political. This systematic approach allows him to present the broad spectrum of their functions within the British–American occupation regime. Yet this structure comes at the cost of some redundancy: as the author himself notes in the introduction, the individual fields of action cannot always be clearly distinguished in practice. Daly-Groves sees the IDs as playing a central role in the field of military intelligence (ch. 3). In the context of the beginning of the Cold War, the focus of intelligence shifted from the fear of German remilitarization to the Soviet armed forces. The author emphasizes that 'military intelligence played a crucial role in preventing an escalation from cold to hot war in post-war Germany' (p. 86). He bases this claim on military insights acquired by the IDs, which made it possible to distinguish between war preparations by Soviet troops and mere manoeuvres, thereby preventing any overreaction in Washington and London. Daly-Groves comes to a different conclusion for the field of scientific and technical intelligence (ch. 4), whose role in ID operations he considers to be overstated in the literature. Although the emerging East–West conflict increased the strategic importance of espionage in this field too, he argues, it was never a priority.

For Daly-Groves, the IDs' primary role was in the fields of security intelligence (ch. 5) and political intelligence (ch. 6). Security and political control were closely linked in the 'secret system of rule' that the author characterizes as the basis of the British–American occupation. The IDs thus made an important contribution to securing and enforcing the political goals of denazification and democratization in the British and American zones. In the immediate post-war years, the focus was on Nazi underground networks. According to the author, cooperation in this area was particularly close. Between 1945 and 1948, the IDs and other British and American intelligence services launched a series of operations targeting actual or purported sabotage and insurrection plans by groups of former Nazis. From the late 1940s onwards, British and American interests diverged against the backdrop of the escalating conflict between the capitalist and communist systems. While the British ID focused equally on communist and Nazi groups, the Americans put less effort into their surveillance of right-wing extremists, concentrating instead on communist networks, such as the KPD. According to Daly-Groves, this was evident in the handling of the Naumann affair in 1953: while the British intelligence services recognized early on that Werner Naumann—former Nazi State Secretary and Goebbels' adviser—was attempting to infiltrate the Free Democratic Party, and took action against his group by making arrests, the American ID did not perceive the Naumann circle as a relevant security threat.

Nevertheless, the author sees the relationship between the British and American IDs as a key factor in the successful establishment of a stable democracy in West Germany after 1945 (ch. 7). The IDs were not merely observers, but actively shaped the political conditions in West Germany. Although Daly-Groves characterizes their influence as often paternalistic, he ultimately sees it as a prerequisite for the stabilization of West German democracy. The role of the British and American services in establishing the Federal Republic's own security agencies was particularly central. British–American cooperation always prevailed, especially in the face of increasing West German agency. However, the author emphasizes the diverging British and American interests in this area too—for example, when it came to the Gehlen Organization (the Org). While the American ID provided significant support for the establishment of a West German foreign intelligence service under former *Wehrmacht* general Reinhard Gehlen, seeing this as a useful instrument in the early Cold War, the British remained sceptical in view of Gehlen's Nazi past and that of many of his colleagues, and merely tolerated the Org for strategic reasons. The American ID, on the other hand, continued to work closely with Gehlen even after the CIA took over the Org in 1949, helping with its evolution into the West German foreign intelligence service (Bundesnachrichtendienst, BND). Although the US Army's contribution to this is already well known, Daly-Groves' consideration of the specific role of the IDs is an important addition to the latest German-language research on the origins of the BND.[6]

In light of such a wealth of exciting findings, minor criticisms are of little consequence. In addition to the occasional redundancies I mentioned earlier, the author sometimes tends to overstate his arguments and research findings. Whether the relationship between the British and American IDs was 'the real backbone of the occupation of Germany' (p. 314) or merely one important factor alongside other instruments of power is certainly open to debate, given the complexity of the British–American occupation system.[7] Wordings like this are probably intended to emphasize the relevance of the topic, which has received little attention to date. The author's findings, however, speak for themselves. With his comprehensive and detailed history of the British and American IDs, Luke Daly-Groves proves once again that the history of the twentieth century is incomplete if no consideration is given to the role of secret intelligence.

[6] Thomas Wolf's comprehensive study on the creation of the BND generally mentions the central role of the US Army, but only touches on the American ID's contribution in the footnotes. Thomas Wolf, *Die Entstehung des BND: Aufbau, Finanzierung, Kontrolle* (Berlin, 2018), 162, 192.

[7] Lena Rudeck, for example, recently emphasized the socio-cultural function of the Allied soldiers' clubs as an expression of 'occupation from below' and an important pillar of occupation rule. Lena Rudeck, *Vergnügen in Besatzungszeiten: Begegnungen in westalliierten Offiziers- und Soldatenclubs in Deutschland, 1945–1955* (Bielefeld, 2023).

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ALEXANDER D. BROWN, *Paul Merker, the GDR, and the Politics of Memory: 'Purging Cosmopolitanism'?* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024), xi + 230 pp. ISBN 978 3 031 62068 3. £109.99

As a member of the East German Politburo, Paul Merker (1894–1969) was the highest-ranking politician in the Socialist Unity Party (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, SED) to fall victim to Stalinist repression. Nonetheless, he remained a loyal—if inwardly broken—party member until his death. His eventful career led him from the Communist Party in the Weimar Republic to the USA, the Soviet Union, France, Mexico, and finally back to East Germany. The few major publications about him are now joined by Alexander Brown's monograph, which, however, focuses not on Merker's biography, but on memory politics in connection with his unlawful incarceration in the GDR. Those politics were non-existent under state socialism, and emerged after 1990 in a dissonant, contradictory way. The latter adjective can also be applied to the book under review, whose author is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at the University of Liverpool. The study is built on a firm source base, but contains a lot of one-sided commentary.

The introduction, the first of the book's five chapters, begins by defining the author's central concept of 'state-mandated memory'. The words 'state-mandated' appear 195 times throughout the book—always in connection with either the official (and, in Brown's view, nigh on monolithic) memory politics of the Federal Republic, or with the author's dismissal of other studies whose conclusions he does not share and whose findings he constantly calls into doubt. The remaining chapters deal with the trials of László Rajk in Hungary and Rudolf Slánský in Czechoslovakia as possible templates for Merker's treatment in the GDR; perceptions of the Slánský trial in the East German state security apparatus, as well as the trial's subsequent treatment by historians in (Brown's understanding of) the memory politics of the Federal Republic; Merker's conviction in light of the Stalinist campaign against 'cosmopolitanism'; and finally, Merker's fate in the context of the 'Jewish question(s)'.

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Translated by Jozef van der Voort (GHIL)

The campaign against 'cosmopolitanism'—which invariably meant the internationalist tradition of the Jewish workers' movement and its intelligentsia—was initially confined to the Soviet Union, but expanded to the Eastern bloc in the late 1940s. In November 1949, only one month after the establishment of the GDR, the SED leadership ordered the Central Party Control Commission (Zentrale Parteikontrollkommission, ZPKK) to investigate the political activity of the so-called *Westemigranten* (Western emigrants) during their years of exile before 1945, focusing on their loyalty to the party line. As part of this process, in Saxony, party members with Jewish heritage were singled out for the first time as a group that required special investigation.[1]

Interviews were carried out with Jewish returnees who had been in contact with Noel H. Field, the head of the Unitarian Service Committee, during their exile in Mexico or Switzerland (but not, curiously, in the USA). The USC was an American organization funded mainly by Quakers that had helped to save European refugees from Nazi persecution during the Second World War. Its leader now stood accused of spying for the Americans—though his links with the Office of Strategic Services were no secret. All Western emigrants who admitted under questioning that they had had contact with the USC, no matter how benign, initially lost their positions in the state and party apparatus. Contrived conspiracist accusations were then followed by dismissal from the party, trials, and incarceration.

Antisemitism did not play a critical role in the Rajk trial of September 1949 in Budapest. It was only in the course of a second wave of investigations that the SED leadership adopted measures expressly against Jews, in response to Soviet pressure in the wake of the undoubtedly antisemitic Slánský trial held in Prague in November 1952. However, these measures varied considerably in intensity and bore little resemblance to the witch hunts carried out in Czechoslovakia. Nonetheless, worried members of the Jewish communities—some of whom had also joined the SED—drew parallels between the ongoing repression in Moscow and Prague and

[1] Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden, Bestand SED-Landesleitung Sachsen, Signatur IV/A/2017. (Not cited by Brown.)

the murderous persecutions that had so recently taken place in Germany. By the end of March 1953, around 550 Jews—most of them members of the Association of Jewish Communities—had fled to the West, including important figures in Jewish life. They spoke of house searches and reported that they had been held back professionally. The Association of Persecutees of the Nazi Regime, which included many Jewish members, was dissolved.

A campaign with antisemitic undertones also became a vehicle for conflict between different factions within the SED. Its victims included the (non-Jewish!) Politburo member Paul Merker and his friends, only some of whom were Jews. In a statement issued on 20 December 1952, the SED Central Committee drew 'Lessons from the Trial against the Slánský Conspiracy Centre'. Rudolf Slánský, the Jewish former General Secretary of the Czechoslovakian Communist Party, was the main defendant in the Prague trial and was executed on 3 December 1952 along with ten of his fellow accused.

This policy can be seen as part of the Eastern European communist parties' efforts to 'unmask' alleged opposition forces in order to demonstrate their acquiescence to Stalin's apparatus of repression. All nationalist developments were also to be nipped in the bud, following the Yugoslavian example, and here too we see the SED anxiously complying with Stalinist policy. The campaign against 'cosmopolitanism' and 'Zionism' was an important aspect of this, but not the only one. Brown makes this observation repeatedly, and he is right to do so, although contrary to his own claims, he is by no means the first person to point it out. On the one hand, the campaign was designed to attack Jewish party members, along with their internationalist tradition, and if possible, to exclude them from party life, or at least to remove them from important positions. In particular, Paul Merker, Alexander Abusch, and Erich Jungmann were accused of having propagated Zionist views during their time in exile, and in November 1952, Merker was put under arrest. On the other hand: why Merker, who was by no means an obvious candidate for a possible show trial?

Brown argues that Walter Ulbricht erroneously saw him as a rival for the leadership of the SED and sought to neutralize him, and that he managed to do so by exploiting the stigma of Western emigration. The apparent paradox that the non-Jewish Merker faced the distinctly antisemitic charge of Zionism in a secret trial was a concession to Soviet wishes, though an antisemitic show trial like the one in Prague was not possible due to the open border with West Berlin.

The Central Committee statement of 20 December 1952 drew links between Merker's alleged espionage during his exile in Mexico, André Simone (the most important defendant after Slánský in the Prague trial), and international Zionism. The committee also accused Merker of having only demanded compensation for Jewish property stolen by the Nazis in order to allow American capital to penetrate Germany. Brown seeks to blunt the antisemitic thrust of the resolution (p. 144):

> No individual, whether Jewish or non-Jewish, who had not been in Western emigration was investigated as part of the ZPKK's probe. This means that there was no targeting or suspicion towards Jews as Jews. This salient point is frequently omitted from secondary treatments of the Merker affair, whether academic or state-mandated.

Merker was held in the Stasi prison in Hohenschönhausen, Berlin, and only sentenced to an eight-year jail term in March 1955. Although Stalin's death on 5 March 1953, which Merker remained unaware of for a long time during his detention, had put a stop to the antisemitic campaigns in the Soviet Union and prevented any further repression, the antisemitic charges remained in force during Merker's secret trial in the GDR in 1955. In January 1956 Merker was released from custody, and in July of the same year he was acquitted by the same judges who had originally condemned him.

Merker addressed the accusations that had led to his arrest in a detailed letter he sent to the ZPKK on 1 June 1956. Brown, however, implies that these charges were partly justified when he writes that Merker 'himself refers to the WJC as a subject of "USA finance capital"' (p. 141). The WJC stands for the World Jewish Congress, which at this time was viewed in the GDR as an architect of anti-communism. It does not seem to have occurred to the author that Merker would have had to tell defensive lies during his trial and in his bid to rehabilitate himself. During the trial itself, Merker only testified against individuals who had been sent to the gallows in Prague, and who were therefore beyond his help.

On 31 July 1956, a conference of the Central Committee issued a half-hearted and cowardly public declaration: 'Following a review of the Paul Merker case, the Central Committee has determined that the accusations laid against him are primarily of a political nature and do not justify legal prosecution' (p. 132). Merker's unequal battle for acquittal was thus successful, but his struggle for political rehabilitation was in vain. The latter would have involved making his case public and calling to account the people responsible for the injustices he faced; naturally, Ulbricht refused to do so.

After receiving a letter from Merker, the Supreme Court decided to grant him a lump sum of 50,000 marks (p. 135). Yet Merker was focused on the political aspects of his 'case'. On 23 August he wrote to Ulbricht to defend both his dignity as a communist during and after the trial and the interests of the party and its leadership, even though they had treated him in an utterly demeaning manner and scorned him because he had opted to stand and face their persecution instead of fleeing to West Germany. In return, he had been condemned in a trial that had brought shame on the legal system of the GDR. He added that the Central Committee's statement had not undone the injustice, but had merely whitewashed it and thus prolonged it, albeit in attenuated form.

In 1957, Merker was given a job as an editor at the Volk und Welt publishing house. Two years later, he retired to Eichwalde, where he lived in seclusion. He remained utterly loyal to the party. Only the historian Wolfgang Kießling, who had earned Merker's trust, was privy to the tragedy of his life. From 1966 onwards, Merker's name began to be hesitantly mentioned in public in the GDR, though without any reference to the suffering inflicted upon him. Shortly before his death on 13 May 1969, he was awarded the Patriotic Order of Merit in Gold, in a pathetic attempt to make up for the crimes of the regime. He was buried in the Memorial to the Socialists in the Friedrichsfelde Central Cemetery, but there was no state funeral. His fate was not reappraised in the GDR before its dissolution in 1989.

Alexander Brown asserts that from 1990 onwards, Merker was mainly an object of study for authors who categorically condemned the German socialist experiment. 'Merker's adversaries, both Jewish and non-Jewish, are not appropriately acknowledged and are implicitly dismissed and vilified as antisemites' (p. 193). This statement is not true of the two most detailed available monographs, by Jeffrey Herf and Angelika Timm.[2]

Some authors, Brown claims, wrote rather crudely on the subject, following the lead of Joachim Gauck and Erhard Neubert, who shaped the historical–political discourse. Yet he adds that even liberal voices, such as Martin Sabrow, betrayed at best a 'supposed plurality' (p. 191), while in reality sharing Gauck's and Neubert's deep-seated anti-communist attitude. Brown confidently asserts: 'The pre-conditioned limits to the permissible pluralism involved in remembering the GDR are clearly indicated in the subjects explored in the chapters of this book' (p. 193). But is this true? Certainly, Brown's book contains stimulating ideas and points out some important details. His central aim—to defend (despite everything) the anti-fascist nature of the GDR—is legitimate and deserves recognition. But he has chosen an unsuitable subject for this endeavour.

He also ducks the question of why the official *Geschichtspolitik* of the GDR was incapable of addressing the nation's own crimes in a self-critical manner—including the scandalous treatment of Paul Merker. This was not solely because many perpetrators held the levers of power from start to finish. (The Stasi chief Erich Mielke is the best-known example of this, but by no means the only one.) Rather, the central problem was that in order to remain credible, the anti-fascism that was not just proclaimed, but also taught and put into practice in the GDR required a socialist democracy, of the kind that Paul Merker had envisioned during his exile. Yet this was impossible under Stalinism. The GDR was and remained a child of Stalinism to the very end; all attempts at reform from among the ranks of the SED were half-hearted, fizzled out, or were smothered at birth. The anti-fascist mission, which so many people had initially fought for, thus increasingly congealed into a mere platitude and lost credibility. This false, insincere form of anti-fascism vanished from the memories of most

[2] Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanies* (Cambridge, MA, 1997), translated into German as: *Zweierlei Erinnerung: Die NS-Vergangenheit im geteilten Deutschland*, trans. Klaus-Dieter Schmidt (Berlin, 1998); Angelika Timm, *Hammer, Zirkel, Davidstern: Das gestörte Verhältnis der DDR zu Zionismus und Staat Israel* (Bonn, 1997).

East Germans, and the legitimate version was forgotten along with it. Here we see one reason—though not the only one—for the expansion of right-wing extremism in the eastern states of the Federal Republic. By ducking this cardinal issue, and by downplaying all these things which must not be played down, Alexander Brown gets in the way of his own argument.

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