



William Glenn Gray. *Germany's Cold War: The Global Campaign to Isolate East Germany, 1949-1969.* Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2003. xiii + 351 pp. \$ 49.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8078-2758-1.

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The German-German Battle for International Recognition

After the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in 1949, both states increasingly sought to build for themselves a reputation based on international relations and global standing. It is no surprise that the foreign relations which emerged over the following years largely adhered to the political allegiances of the Cold War; states which were not aligned to the Warsaw Pact or to NATO, however, often found themselves at the center of both German states' foreign policies, each vying for the exchange of diplomatic relations. Whilst such relations were vital to East Germany's international acceptance as a legitimate state, West Germany did its best to prevent this, presenting itself as the only lawful representative of the German nation, and claiming that Germany must, one day, reunite. As a result of its efforts to isolate the GDR diplomatically and "manage" the behavior of other governments towards the GDR, the FRG ensured that many countries did not formally recognize the GDR during the first twenty years of its existence.

Historians have traditionally presented this battle between the two German states primarily as a "German" affair, and often as a diplomatic war in which the rigidity of the Federal Republic's stance ultimately handicapped its own foreign relations. In contrast, however, and in line with more recent scholarship, William Glenn Gray highlights the flexibility of the Federal Republic's course. In steering away from the hitherto frequently narrow focus on the Hallstein Doctrine, the centerpiece of Bonn's non-recognition policy, he instead foregrounds

the global reach of the German-German conflict.

This global focus is apparent from the outset, for Gray opens with an arresting description of a West German "political safari" (p. 1) to Guinea in 1960, in order to prevent this West African republic from establishing diplomatic relations with the GDR. Having commanded the reader's attention with this bold opening, he then adopts a chronological structure, highlighting the ever changing nature of West German diplomacy. The early years of both states were clearly marked by the presence of the Allies, whose influence on foreign policy was extensive, especially prior to 1955 when both states gained full sovereignty. Despite the initial skepticism of the Western Allies towards Konrad Adenauer's twofold policy of non-recognition of the GDR and exclusive representation of Germany for the FRG, they soon supported the Chancellor in his goals following North Korea's invasion of South Korea in 1950. Bonn thus declared that any countries which recognized the GDR would be committing an "unfriendly act," and by 1954 the imbalance in foreign relations was clear: fifty-three countries recognized the Federal Republic diplomatically, yet this was true of only eleven for the GDR.

As Gray demonstrates, this non-recognition policy was somewhat complicated once the FRG had gained sovereignty, as diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and West Germany would effectively imply recognition of the GDR. Bonn managed to circumnavigate this problem by claiming that diplomatic relations with

Moscow were a valid exception to the rule due to the Soviet Union's Allied status and its future role in unification. At the same time, however, a number of non-aligned states showed interest in recognizing the GDR, and consequently the Hallstein Doctrine was drawn up—in all but name—in which the FRG declared that it would break relations with any state that established diplomatic relations with the GDR; other affairs, which were not deemed to be diplomatic in nature, were subject to discussion. As Gray argues, this marked the beginning of a series of “managed relationships,” in which the Federal Republic regulated the relations of numerous states with the GDR. Whilst the FRG's policy discouraged the majority from recognizing the GDR, Tito decided to do so in 1957, a move which saw Bonn break relations with Yugoslavia and sound a warning shot to the rest of the world.

At this time two further international developments proved influential. Firstly, the Arab-Israeli conflict found resonance in Europe, with members of the Warsaw Pact patronizing Arab liberation, and NATO showing support for Zionist imperialism. Gray argues that Bonn's non-recognition policy in this area was guided primarily by practical considerations and thus adopted more flexibility. The FRG decided not to break relations with Syria, for example, following its decision to exchange consulates with the GDR, as the fear was too great that other Arab countries would retaliate by withdrawing their own embassies. Secondly, decolonization in Africa resulted in a race between the two German states to exchange embassies with the newly liberated countries. The FRG firmly presented itself as the champion of “self-determination,” yet the Hallstein Doctrine appeared also to be softening here; although the GDR failed to exchange embassies with any of the sixteen African states that gained independence in 1960, a number of states at this time did exchange consulates with the GDR.

Gray claims, however, that following the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961, and due to the growing recognition of the existence of two German states by many non-aligned powers, the FRG once again intensified its policy. In addition to breaking relations with any state that recognized the GDR diplomatically, it thus declared that it would also withdraw financial aid. Ironically, however, this meant that a number of small countries, such as Cambodia, held surprising bargaining power over the two German states, playing them off against each other for greater financial aid in return for diplomatic recognition.

As German division gradually became a more accepted status quo, and the German question appeared unlikely to endanger world peace, non-aligned leaders felt less inclined to take a strong position on the issue. At the second conference of non-aligned powers in 1964, for example, it was declared that the German question should be resolved by the countries concerned, and whilst the resulting “Program for Peace” failed to acknowledge the existence of “two states” in Germany, as the GDR had desired, neither did it show overt support for Bonn's program for unification. During this period the Federal Republic was providing Israel with military assistance, despite Arab-Israeli tensions and the possibility that Arab countries may retaliate by recognizing the GDR. It is this moment which Gray identifies as the “beginning of the end of the Hallstein Doctrine” (p. 172), as Bonn's non-recognition campaign no longer appeared to be dictating every detail of its foreign policy. Ulbricht's visit to Egypt triggered further developments in the Middle East, namely the FRG's recognition of Israel, and the consequent break in relations with the FRG by ten Arab states. From this point onwards the Hallstein Doctrine was effectively inoperative in this region.

The formation of the Grand Coalition in the Federal Republic in 1966 and an increasing willingness to experiment in German-German relations marked the end of an era. Yet the opening of diplomatic relations between the FRG and Eastern Europe still remained a moot point, causing objections from both the GDR and the Soviet Union; furthermore, the Federal Republic continued threatening to withdraw aid from Third World countries who recognized the GDR. Thus even in the late 1960s, as Gray argues, the circumstances were far from ordinary, for the Federal Republic still refused to “accept the GDR as a fact of international life” (p. 205). This became ever more difficult, however, with a number of Arab states recognizing the GDR in 1969, and increasing campaigns, both inside and outside the GDR, for recognition. Finally, following the Ostpolitik of Willy Brandt and Walter Scheel, the FRG recognized the GDR with the Basic Treaty of 1972.

The Federal Republic is clearly the subject of this book; as Gray states, “Ulbricht's regime was, in effect, the *object* of a highly successful isolation campaign orchestrated by the Federal Republic and the Western Allies” (p. 223). He thus argues that Bonn held the upper hand throughout, but also emphasizes that by the mid-late 1960s, when the Hallstein Doctrine had effectively become redundant, it was the GDR's own lack of merit that dissuaded many third parties from recogniz-

ing it. The East German state was gaining international prestige, but clearly bankrupting itself in the process of “buying” diplomatic relations. Whilst Gray’s argument is clear and persuasive, one wonders whether he may also have benefited from viewing the German-German exchange from the opposite perspective, particularly in view of his closing remark that “seldom has an internationally recognized state vanished so swiftly and so unmourned” (p. 233).

Gray’s text is, however, engaging, clear, and well written. Considering the tremendous scope of the project, and the admirable range of archival material from German, French, British and U.S. sources, he keeps the argument focused, and explains complicated and detailed aspects of German foreign policy in an accessible and understandable fashion. While the reader’s patience is somewhat tested by having to refer to numerous end-notes grouped at the back of the book, this is only a minor drawback which does not detract from the quality of the work.

“Ideally, readers will come away with a deeper appreciation of the global reach of such Cold War conflicts as the German Question” (p. 4), states Gray in his introduction. There is no doubt that he succeeds in this aim, with his numerous examples ranging from Zanzibar

and Guinea to India, Egypt, and Cambodia, to name but a few. Most impressive, however, is the fact that Gray succeeds in molding these case studies into a tangible whole, drawing out the central themes and arguments. Thus not only is the influence of the Arab-Israeli conflict on German-German relations (and vice-versa) highlighted, but also the surprising power held by many small Third World countries who demanded ever higher sums of financial aid in the “bidding war” between East and West Germany. While the German question often provided such countries with opportunities to improve their lot, the rivalry between both Germanys could evidently blow into a domestic crisis of significant proportions on the opposite side of the globe.

This book clearly demonstrates the international impact of the German Question, and should be commended for looking beyond the narrow focus of the Hallstein Doctrine, while still retaining the necessary details of German foreign policy. Not only is it recommended reading for specialists in the field, but Gray’s clarity renders it accessible to those who are less familiar with this period. It undoubtedly makes an important contribution to scholarship on twentieth-century German foreign policy and throws new light on our understanding of “globalization.”

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