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Michael Schwartz. *Vertriebene und "Umsiedlerpolitik": Integrationskonflikte in den deutschen Nachkriegs-Gesellschaften und die Assimilationsstrategien in der SBZ/DDR 1945-1961.* München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2004. XIV + 1247 S. EUR 128.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-3-486-56845-5.

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Published on H-German (March, 2006)

Integrating Expellees and Germany's Postwar History

Since 1989, German scholars have been examining anew the problem of the integration of postwar German expellees. In all, over 12 million ethnic Germans fled or were expelled from Poland, Czechoslovakia and other lands to the east and southeast of occupied Germany. This massive influx of population into an already devastated landscape severely strained economy and society in a truncated and divided Germany. In his immense study of integration politics and social policy in East Germany, Michael Schwartz definitively puts to rest two persistent myths about integration: that it was largely a West German problem and that it was a relatively smooth, quick and successful process.

While around 8 million expellees ended up in the western zones of occupied Germany (16 percent of the total population in 1949), close to 4.5 million were settled in the Soviet occupation zone (SBZ), constituting almost a quarter of the zone's postwar population. Dozens of recent studies have focused on one aspect or another of this enormous influx of population into the Soviet zone. But as Schwartz points out, these studies have been limited both by their choice of sources and in their regional focus. Above all, they have tended to rely heavily on Socialist Unity Party (SED) and official resettlement organization documents. Though Schwartz does not deny the crucial importance of the SED and its Soviet patrons, he argues convincingly for a "polycentric" (p. 40) analysis of expellee (*Umsiedler*) politics. Instead of focusing only on institutions, Schwartz looks at networks–not only within organizations like the SED, government ministries or regional governments–but also outside of them. This approach allows for a careful examination of the role of unofficial pressure groups like churches and expellee interest groups. But above all, it acknowledges the tremendous amount of conflict, even within the SED itself, over the redistribution of resources that integration required.

The body of the book is divided into two parts. The first, weighing in at just under 600 pages, elaborates the "sociology of power" of the various organs and networks involved in expellee politics. The organization of this section is hierarchical, beginning with the Soviet occupation authorities, moving on to the SED and its apparatus and networks for expellee policy and concluding with "self-organization" and *Eigensinn* among non-state agents, including churches and expellees themselves. Schwartz makes it clear that all levels of this hierarchy influenced each other and were far from monolithic. Though Soviet occupation authorities could and did dictate policy on everything from the allocation of labor to agrarian reform, they preferred to rely on Germans to implement policy. This strategy of rule (also followed in the Western zones of occupied Germany) left a great deal of latitude to German officials. Within the subordinate German administration, moreover, several different organs were involved in integration policy. From the beginning in 1945, the Soviets and the SED tried to "channel" expellee groups into so-called *UmsiedlerausschÃ¼Ãe* (Expellee Committees) under the direction of the state (p. 413). Despite these official attempts to control expellee expression and the eventual repression of expellee organizations altogether, expellees manifested a remarkable ability to self-organize locally on behalf of their social and cultural interests. Schwartz fits his account of expellee self-assertion into a broader literature on *Eigensinn* within the East German dictatorship.

The second part of the book deals with the role of expellee politics in what Schwartz calls the *Konfliktgesellschaft* of postwar Germany. As in the western zones, expellees in the Soviet zone faced substantial hostility from local Germans, who saw the newcomers as foreign competitors for scarce resources and jobs. As Schwartz points out, social redistributive and affirmative action policies towards expellees often came at the expense of long-time residents (p. 628). Schwartz focuses on land reform and the redistribution of household goods as case studies. Land reform was particularly important to integration efforts, as almost half of the expellees in the Soviet zone ended up in towns under 2,000 residents (p. 637). In keeping with communist-led land reforms in Czechoslovakia and Poland, SED officials preferred to parcel out small plots in an effort to generate both legitimacy and dependency on the state. Collectivization would come later. With over a third of the Soviet zone's agricultural acreage up for grabs, redistribution of land created sharp conflicts between and among expellees, autochthonous farmers and the rural poor.

Beyond the tremendous amount of detail on the institutions and practice of integration in eastern Germany, Schwartz's book provides numerous revealing comparisons with the territory that became West Germany. Not only is comparison important to the project of creating an "all-German" postwar history, it also reveals how integration policies in both west and east evolved together. Contemporary officials, expellees and observers compared policies and developments in the eastern and western zones of Germany, so historians too should work to recover what Schwartz calls the inter-zonal "relational structures" shaping integration in east and west (p. 3). Though far too long and dense for the casual reader, Schwartz's book is an excellent resource for those interested in the integration of expellees and postwar social policy in both the east and west of Germany. And it is a must-read for anyone pondering the possibilities of an integrated, all-German postwar history.

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Citation: Eagle Glassheim. Review of Schwartz, Michael, *Vertriebene und "Umsiedlerpolitik": Integrationskonflikte in den deutschen Nachkriegs-Gesellschaften und die Assimilationsstrategien in der SBZ/DDR 1945-1961.* H-German, H-Net Reviews. March, 2006.

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