



Kommission für Geschichte des Parlamentarismus, der politischen Parteien, ed. *Das Auswärtige Ausschuss des Deutschen Bundestages: Sitzungsprotokolle 1957-1961.* Prepared by Joachim Wintzer, Josef Boyer and Wolfgang Dierker. Düsseldorf: Droste, 2003. 1429 pp. EUR 160.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-3-7700-5251-6.

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Parliamentary Minutes

The Kommission für Geschichte des Parlamentarismus und der politischen Parteien is an institution well known to experts on the political history of modern Germany. Since its founding in 1951, the commission has been producing a steady stream of high-quality publications, many of which have become standard works in the field. These include, by the organization's own count, 146 monographs on many different aspects of modern Germany's political development, as well as a rapidly expanding series of document collections covering the history of the German parliamentary system and its main parties from the *Kaiserreich* to the post-1945 era. In recent years, the post-World War II collections have been appearing particularly rapidly, with a wide range of important volumes documenting some of the inner deliberations within the CDU/CSU, SPD and FDP as well as within several different parliamentary organs.

A recent important addition to this post-1945 literature is the two-volume collection of the minutes of the Bundestag's Foreign Affairs Committee during the Federal Republic's third electoral period of 1957-1961, edited by Joachim Wintzer, Josef Boyer and Wolfgang Dierker. These four years marked a turbulent period for the high politics of West Germany. The Berlin Crisis rumbled on for most of the time. The possible opening of diplomatic relations towards east European countries became an increasingly controversial issue, and the erection of the Berlin Wall provided a dramatic coda shortly before the

next round of Bundestag elections in the autumn of 1961. Although decisions about the country's foreign policy were emphatically not made in the foreign affairs committee or in any other parliamentary organ—the top echelons of Adenauer's chancellor democracy functioned on a much narrower participatory basis—the committee's debates and discussions nevertheless cast important light on the broader domestic and international context behind West German high politics.

The two volumes cover each of the committee's seventy-two meetings between November 28, 1957, and October 16, 1961, and provide a detailed record of all sessions. Although the printed text has been edited to add explanatory comments in footnotes and to leave out occasional passages deemed superfluous, the accompanying CD-ROM, included with the two volumes, provides the full, unedited text of each session's minutes. The printed volumes come with a thorough index, and the CD-ROM is fully searchable by keyword, which makes the collection very easy to access. A good deal of additional background information is also incorporated, including brief biographies of all committee members and lists of the treaties and legislative initiatives discussed by the committee, all of which further facilitates the use of the materials.

The introduction of 100 pages, written by Joachim Wintzer, does a good job of giving broader background

for the published documents. The introduction thoroughly explains the committee's structure, composition and operating procedures. It also provides a useful overview of the main issues addressed by the committee during this period and of its position within the Federal Republic's broader political infrastructure. Together, the introduction and the documents form a very useful and informative package which scholars of modern Germany can peruse with profit.

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