

H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Clemens Wurm, ed. *Western Europe and Germany: The Beginnings of European Intergration, 1945-1960.* Oxford and Washington, D.C.: Berg Publishers, 1995. xi + 271 pp. \$54.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-85973-052-2.



Reviewed by Thomas Maulucci (Yale University)

Published on H-German (September, 1995)

This collection of essays by leading German scholars demonstrates that monocausal explanations cannot do justice to the Federal Republic of Germany's role in European integration during the 1940s and 1950s. These decades saw the start of the long economic boom that was vital for postwar stabilization in Western Europe. Moreover, by 1957 the basic institutional framework for integration existed as we now know it. At first glance the volume's title is misleading, since only four of the nine essays deal directly with West Germany or the "German problem" and European cooperation. However, Wurm and his contributors view integration from a variety of angles rather than trying for comprehensive coverage. In doing so, they succeed in illustrating the most fruitful historical approaches to their topic.

The mix of approaches is appropriate because scholarship on European integration is characterized by widely differing interpretations. Most tellingly, no agreement exists on the precise meaning of the word "integration." In general terms, it is "the amalgamation of or the formation and maintenance of close patterns of interaction between previously autonomous units"(11). However, these "close patterns of interaction" between Western European states include many different types of political, economic, social, and cultural phenomena, not just the European Community's institutions. One of

the volume's best contributions, by Harmut Kaelble (219-247), considers how Western European societies have become more similar since 1945. He finds, in part based on "preliminary indicators," that intersocietal contacts in areas such as work, education, and tourism have increased and that industrialization, rising living standards, and governmental policies have mitigated international social differences. Significant social and cultural disparities remain and will preclude the creation of a common national society. Kaelble concludes provocatively that Western Europe is nonetheless more identifiably a peculiar "civilization" than are other regions of the globe.

As Wurm points out in an historiographical essay (9-26), no fewer than three major interpretive schools exist to explain the causal factors behind integration. He calls them the "federal view" (associated with the late Walter Lipgens), which focuses on plans for European union and the "European movement;" the "European nation state view" (associated with Alan Milward and others affiliated with the European University Institute in Florence), which argues that European national governments attempted to solve domestic economic and social problems on an international level; and finally the "extra-European view" (associated mainly with American scholars since the 1950s), which stresses the role of the Cold War and U.S. policy in setting the parameters for coop-

eration. While the federal view correctly emphasizes integration's ideological underpinnings, it often fails to establish the influence of the European ideal on concrete decision making. Wilfried Loth's contribution (201-19) outlines the history of the European movement and puts its successes and failures in a political context.

Most of the contributors take the nation state as their basic unit of analysis. Werner Abelshauser (27-55) writes about West Germany's reentry into the international economy after 1945 and focuses especially on trade integration in Western Europe as a result of the Marshall Plan and European Payments Union. Hanns Juer-gen Kuesters (55-86) outlines the various functions European policy served for Adenauer's government in an article aptly subtitled "The Art of the Possible." European cooperation could help lift occupation controls, provide for economic stabilization, give the Federal Republic international status, foster Franco-German reconciliation, and provide for security against the USSR. In contrast to approaches emphasizing domestic socio-economic concerns, both Abelshauser and Kuesters stress that a primacy of foreign policy characterized West Germany's position on Europe. Ludwig Erhard and the Economics Ministry championed the benefits of free trade and feared that European structures, especially a common market, would lead to protectionism. Nevertheless, the political considerations advocated by the Foreign Office and supported by Adenauer normally won out.

Two outstanding essays deal with relatively unexplored corners of the national perspective. Werner Buehrer (87-115) outlines how the views of German industry evolved from wholehearted support of the Marshall Plan to growing reticence toward European integration after the "economic miracle" began in the early 1950s. Finally, by 1960, most industrialists became pragmatic supporters of integration "according to the principles of the EEC Treaty, i.e. without supernatural elements" (108). Wurm himself argues that the well-known Anglo-French differences on European cooperation were not merely manifestations of a power strug-

gle for European leadership. Instead, different traditions, political cultures, perceptions of national strength, and other underlying factors shaped distinctly different British and French attitudes towards integration which have remained remarkably consistent since 1950 (175-200).

As various contributors point out, the Occupation Powers and especially the United States determined that the Federal Republic would participate in European reconstruction and integration. Unfortunately, the essays using the extra-European perspective advertise more than they deliver. Klaus Schwabe's contribution on American European policy from 1947 to 1957 focuses almost exclusively on the period to 1950 and, more narrowly, on the State Department's views (115-135). Gustav Schmidt (137-174) examines the question of how Washington, London, Paris, and Bonn intended to tie the Federal Republic to the West in terms of security policy through 1957 but concentrates mainly on the nuclearization problem after 1953. The British and French were reluctant to grant the West Germans nuclear status. Despite the obvious significance of these tensions for alliance politics, I think they had little to do with ensuring West Germany's orientation in the Cold War. After 1954, NATO remained unchallenged as the basic vehicle for incorporating the Federal Republic into Western security schemes.

The essays occasionally betray their original format as papers delivered at Wurm's seminar on European integration at St. Antony's College, Oxford, in 1993. As is often true of seminar papers, some are not quite as focused as others, and three – those by Schwabe, Loth and Kaelble – basically summarize the authors' previous books and articles. Although the volume contains an annotated bibliography (249-271), it has no index. These flaws do not seriously mar this useful and often stimulating book. However, the outrageous price for the hardcover edition may limit its readership. Hopefully it will be reissued soon as a paperback.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

<https://networks.h-net.org/h-german>

Citation: Thomas Maulucci. Review of Wurm, Clemens, ed., *Western Europe and Germany: The Beginnings of European Intergration, 1945-1960*. H-German, H-Net Reviews. September, 1995.

URL: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=167>

Copyright © 1995 by H-Net, all rights reserved. H-Net permits the redistribution and reprinting of this work for nonprofit, educational purposes, with full and accurate attribution to the author, web location, date of publication, originating list, and H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences Online. For any other proposed use, contact the Reviews editorial staff at hbooks@mail.h-net.org.