

H-Diplo ROUNDTABLE XXII-10

Hope M. Harrison. *After the Berlin War: Memory and the Making of the New Germany, 1989 to the Present*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019. ISBN: 9781107049314 (hardback, \$34.99).

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INTRODUCTION BY CHARLES MAIER, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

To read these five reviews in conjunction with re-reading Hope Harrison's book, which I had the chance to examine in page proofs about a year ago, is a reminder of how lived experience becomes written history. In my case, for much of the first decade after the wall came down, I was trying to balance my own judgments of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) as I prepared my own work, *Dissolution*.¹ Motivating questions then were how politically autonomous the GDR had ever been, whether the loyalties it engendered could have survived the disappearance of Soviet support, whether the upheaval of 1989 was an authentic radical movement or just a reflection of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's changing policies, and whether the country's quasi-annexation by the Federal Republic was fulfillment or foreclosure of a new political experiment. A succeeding two decades and more of historiography have provided many institutional studies that have addressed these issues and many other aspects of GDR society and of East German collective memory. Harrison's contribution now gives us, in effect, the history of the memory of East Germany in the years since its extinction.

I agree with the preponderance of the reviewers that *After the Berlin Wall* is a terrific book. As Mary Fulbrook says right at the beginning of her comments, it is "comprehensively researched, beautifully written." It also, as Fulbrook acknowledges, raises questions that the author chose not to fully plumb. Harrison provides a story of memory 'activists,' who were determined to prevent the recollection of the Berlin Wall, and the violent and authoritarian aspects of life in the GDR, from fading from German national consciousness. It is truly a history of contested public memory brought up to the thirty-year commemoration of the breach of the Wall in November 2019. It is based on continuing interviews and culling of the documentary records and the press. As Fulbrook writes "Every significant anniversary represented a significant shift in self-understandings in light of the changing political considerations of different parties, while parochial, national and international factors played into changing emphases over time." Pertti Ahonen, who almost a decade ago published *Death at the Berlin Wall*,² agrees that "nothing in the previous literature comes even close to the scope and range of Harrison's monograph."

Fulbrook raises the issue taken up by Harrison in her first major chapter: what responsibility should be assigned to the border guards who shot attempted border crossers. By the terms of the unification treaty the GDR agreed that united Germany could try human rights violations. Harrison compellingly spotlights parents who lost sons in early and late attempts to cross the border strip; she reports that attorneys for the young guards argued that they had been compelled to act, while their judges opted for their accountability and convicted them, but gave light sentences. The author goes on to summarize the trials of the policy makers who approved the harsh enforcement of measures for enforcing the Wall regime: General Secretary of the East German Socialist Unity Party Erich Honecker (until his trial was interrupted for health reasons), Heinz Kessler, head of the NVA or armed forces, Günter Schabowski, who had announced the opening of the Wall and later expressed some remorse, Egon Krenz, who was briefly head of the expiring GDR before its last premier, Hans Modrow, and a few others—were tried and sentenced for four of the Wall shootings. (When I had the chance to talk with Egon Krenz months before his arrest, he reminded me that the United States had extracted its South Vietnam allies by helicopter as that government collapsed in 1975, and he was bitter that the Soviets had not insisted that as a price for East Germany's assent to the unification treaties there should be no trials.) The legal proceedings in effect form the prelude to Harrison's book and illustrate the strong feelings left by the vanished regime. I would have liked some more discussion of the jurisprudential debate, over responsibilities for obeying orders, but this might have been a distraction from the focus on public memory—a term I think more precise than 'collective memory'—that is Harrison's major focus.

¹ Charles Maier, *Dissolution: The Crisis of Communism and the End of East Germany* in 1997 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

² Pertti Ahonen, *Death at the Berlin Wall* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Most of the book concerns debates over memorialization and Harrison follows the memory activists: Pastor Manfred Fischer whose urban Reconciliation Church had been destroyed to make a more seamless wall zone, also Rainer Hildebrand and his wife Alexandra—William Glenn Gray’s designation of them as memory entrepreneurs is apt—who put together the Checkpoint Charlie Museum that is popular with tourists and then erected 104 crosses for individual victims on a private site. She follows the official Bundestag and Berlin debates about the public memorials to be erected along the Bernauer Strasse crossing points, the contending design proposals, and the lurking issues of how to juxtapose these monuments with the Holocaust memorials. Mark Fenimore’s review is the most reserved about Harrison’s achievement, and the most uneasy about the memory ‘evangelists.’ He argues that while the author summarizes the secondary literature, she has “less to say about its overall meaning for Berlin and for Germany.” He finds Hildebrandt a dicey figure, citing his CIA connections as well as his ‘handlers’ description of him as psychopathic; “To be fired up enough to volunteer for the task of documenting suffering and shaping historical commemorations, one must, to a certain extent be both extrovert and eccentric.” Perhaps so, but would we use that language, say about Elie Wiesel? In short Fenimore’s descriptions cast doubt on the character or mental balance of the memory activists, and to be sure they do seem a bit like Coleridge’s Ancient Mariner, impaling the wider community with an uncomfortable tale it may not always want to hear.

Fenimore suggests that Harrison could have devoted more attention to the historical debates and controversies about the nature of the East German regime. I personally would have appreciated more coverage of these, but they would have required a different book. As a fellow at the new Potsdam Center for Contemporary Historical Research (ZZF) in 1994, which was then headed by Jürgen Kocka, I remember the bitterness of these debates, as younger dissident historians who had been been ‘relegated’ in the GDR, i.e., expelled from universities, critiqued the new institution for providing a soft landing for other historians who had made their peace with the academic institutions of the East German regime. Harrison’s circumscribed focus does cut off some of the intellectual controversy, whether over the whole aptness of the term *Unrechtsstaat* or of the ‘second’ German dictatorship on an implicit par with the first. But her concentration on the central symbol of the Wall also provides the granular reconstruction of public memory

I am less certain about Fenimore’s faulting Harrison for lack of anthropological theorizing about the wall as a “boundary between competing systems of meaning.” The Berlin Wall, of course, was only the last link in the closed border between the two German states. Daphne Berdahl, Edith Schaffer, and others have sought to treat the more rural stretches of the inner-German frontier as a sort of fuzzy border zone, where the communities on both sides of the boundary learned to navigate a region that had its own separate logic.³ But the Berlin link in that national frontier was so non-porous, so potentially lethal, that I am not certain it can be freighted with all the tantalizing ambiguities this sort of history likes to celebrate. Where the critique seems more useful is in its implication that it would have enriched the book to consider the two Berlins during their enforced separation, and then after unity. The experience of those who did travel across the frontier for family visits or even as GDR expellees would perhaps have enabled a more total recovery of this strange experience of German-German sundered nationhood.

Pertti Ahonen, whose positive judgment I cited above, also has reservations even as he recognizes that the author “paints on a broad canvas and does so clearly and fluently” and that the book “is a major achievement by a leading scholar.” Referring to Harrison’s earlier book on the developments that led to the construction of the infamous barrier, *Driving the Soviets up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-1961*, Ahonen agrees that Harrison has now become the key authority on both the pre- and post-history of the most prominent symbol of the European Cold War.⁴

³ See Daphne Berdahl, *Where the World Ended: Reunification and Identity in the German Borderland* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Edith Schaffer, *Burned Bridge: How East and West Germany made the Iron Curtain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁴ Hope M. Harrison, *Driving the Soviets up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-1961* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

Stephan Kieninger's enthusiastic review seizes on Harrison's linkage of the post-Wall memory enthusiasm with FRG Bundespräsident [or Federal President] Richard von Weizsäcker's celebrated 1985 speech on the 40th anniversary of Germany's unconditional surrender in 1945, which asked Germans to confront their collective responsibility for the crimes of National Socialist Germany. The speech was indeed remarkable; along with West German Chancellor Willy Brandt's "Kniefall" (kneeling) at the site of the Warsaw ghetto in 1970 (and I would say today's Chancellor Angela Merkel's much criticized statement about accepting refugees in 2015—"Wir schaffen das"), Weizsäcker's address was one of the great expiatory gestures of postwar German history. But was the decision to build a monument at the Wall site, the equivalent sort of acknowledgement? It has fittingly memorialized German human rights violations against other Germans. CDU parliamentarian and earlier GDR dissenter Günter Nöcker's notion that East Germans who had suffered had thereby atoned for Nazi crimes was a bizarre calculation. Perhaps it should be seen as a civil war monument, not for a lost cause, but a reminder of injustice at home, somewhat akin to the Birmingham Alabama museum to the victims of post-civil war racism—and by a regime far less violent to those it suppressed. Harrison sees the wall memorial, I think, as a fusion of Weizsäcker's call for contrition and the acceptance of German nationhood as a source of normal loyalties and pride. I would agree.

Every book, every fine book, necessarily excludes other books. I have long had a problem with the many earlier books that focused on its wall and its sudden breach in 1989, as if that was the decisive event among the remarkable transformations of 1987-89. It was a brutal expedient even if it was clear that the regime could not survive with an open border. After all, the GDR faced a unique problem among the European Communist states, which was the existence of a prosperous and liberal Germany just a subway ride away. But the decisive openings of the frontier—not the most symbolically freighted perhaps—were breached in the summer by the East Germans who used the Hungarian decision to open their border with Austria, and then by those in the West German embassy at Prague. And the decisive political actions that made a vision of liberation plausible were the revival of Solidarity from 1987 through early 1989 in Poland. In the GDR, the equivalent success that rehabilitated East German civic courage was not the almost serendipitous opening of November 9, but the mobilization of opposition in Leipzig and then Berlin between September and November.

Certainly the Wall deserves to be remembered as the major symbol of a regime that could not really have existed for so long without the Soviet presence. The real monument to those who were confined behind it and worked to bring it down is the fact that along so many of the kilometers along which it once stretched, it is now hard to find any trace of its presence. Many historians—and I include myself—have dwelt on what I prefer to call public rather than collective memory because we want societies to accept responsibility. Not all memorializers want society to accept responsibility; they want to ask for recognition of their own suffering or stigmatize those who had a role, even as bystanders, in imposing it. For all the evocation of memory studies, with their sometimes mystic resonance, Hope Harrison's extraordinary and often affecting study makes its mark by exemplifying the evolving political uses of the past; and the reviews by these accomplished historians of divided Germany recognize her achievement.

Participants:

Hope M. Harrison is Professor of History and International Affairs at The George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Her first book, *Driving the Soviets up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-1991* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003) won the Marshall Shulman book prize from the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies and was published in German translation as *Ulbrichts Mauer: Wie die SED Moskaus Widerstand gegen den Mauerbau brach* (Berlin: Propyläen, 2011). She is beginning a project examining life and death along the East German Baltic Sea border.

Charles S. Maier received his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1967 and is currently Leverett Saltonstall Research Professor of History at Harvard University. Concerning the themes discussed in this forum, he published *Dissolution: The Crisis of Communism and the End of East Germany* in 1997 (Princeton University Press), and has contributed to *The*

Cambridge History of the Cold War and *The Cambridge History of Communism*. His most recent book was *Once within Borders: Territories of Power, Wealth, and Belonging since 1500* (Harvard University Press, 2016).

Pertti Ahonen is Professor of History at the University of Jyväskylä in Finland, which he joined in 2014. He received his PhD in modern European history from Yale University in 1999 and previously taught at the University of Sheffield and the University of Edinburgh. His main publications include *Death at the Berlin Wall* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) and *After the Expulsion: West Germany and Eastern Europe, 1945-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

With a Ph.D. in German Studies from University College London, **Mark Fenemore** is Senior Lecturer in Modern European History at Manchester Metropolitan University. Author of *Fighting the Cold War in Post-Blockade, Pre-Wall Berlin. Behind Enemy Lines* (London: Routledge, 2019), he is currently working on a study of policing in four-power, postwar Berlin from 1945 to 1949.

Mary Fulbrook, FBA, is Professor of German History at University College London. Her most recent book, *Reckonings: Legacies of Nazi Persecution and the Quest for Justice* (Oxford University Press, 2018) won the 2019 Wolfson History Prize.

William Glenn Gray is an associate professor at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. He is the author of *Germany's Cold War* (Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2003) and numerous articles and book chapters on German foreign relations. His second monograph is in press under the title *Trading Power: West Germany's Rise to Global Influence from Adenauer to Schmidt*. A project exploring German capitalism and the Global South is under way, with special emphasis on human rights and economic development in Brazil's military dictatorship.

Stephan Kieninger is an Independent Historian and the author of two books on the history of détente and Euro-Atlantic security: *The Diplomacy of Détente. Cooperative Security Policies from Helmut Schmidt to George Shultz* (London: Routledge, 2018) and *Dynamic Détente. The United States and Europe, 1964–1975* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016). His current research looks into NATO enlargement and the search for the post-Cold War order. He received his Ph.D. from Mannheim University. Formerly, he was a Postdoctoral Fellow at Johns Hopkins SAIS, a Fellow at the Berlin Center for Cold War Studies and a Senior Research Associate at the Federal German Archives.

REVIEW BY PERTTI AHONEN, UNIVERSITY OF JYVASKYLA, FINLAND

As a site of memory in contemporary and particularly post-1945 history, the Berlin Wall knows few rivals. Wherever one looks in the history of Germany, the European Cold War or its aftermath over the past six decades, the Wall looms large. It symbolizes the division of Germany, the bifurcation of the continent into hostile blocs, and the manifold tragic consequences of the armed border that ran through the heart of Europe. It also evokes more positive images, particularly from its final stages and aftermath: resistance to arbitrary controls and authoritarian rule, people's power in a moment of liberation, and a search for unity in the post-Cold War world. The Wall's continuing memory-political significance to Germany is obvious, but it also retains considerable resonance for the rest of Europe and the world beyond it. The story of its post-1989 commemoration is complex, conflictual, and multi-layered, and tackling it within the confines of one monograph poses a considerable challenge.

Hope M. Harrison rises to that challenge admirably in this far-ranging, well-researched and highly readable study. She tackles the topic comprehensively, starting with a learned but light-touch introduction about the theoretical underpinnings of the study of collective memory and "history policy" (*Geschichtspolitik*) in post-unification Germany and then proceeding to a thorough examination of key stages in the country's confrontation with the Berlin Wall and its legacies (19). Advancing roughly chronologically, the book first surveys the early post-unification rush to remove the Wall from the Berlin cityscape and the accompanying judicial reckoning with the German Democratic Republic's (GDR) border guards and their military and political superiors for crimes committed at the barrier. In the next step, Harrison traces the growing interest in commemorating the Wall from the early 1990s onwards, manifest in the development of prominent memory sites, especially the Wall memorial at Bernauer Strasse and its long-term rival, the Checkpoint Charlie Museum. Both institutions originally arose from private initiatives, but, as Harrison shows, governmental authorities, at both the city and federal levels, subsequently grew increasingly involved in their activities, through funding, planning, and a concomitant co-optation of sorts, particularly in the case of what grew into the official Bernauer Strasse Memorial Ensemble. As a result, public commemorations of the Wall, especially of its erection and collapse, developed an increasingly high—and rather politicized—profile in the new millennium. At the same time, the perspectives and paradigms represented in those commemorations gradually became more diverse. Although the emphasis on the Wall's victims that had dominated in the early post-unification era remained prominent, East German perpetrators, particularly frontline border guards, began to receive more nuanced attention as well, and the dynamics behind the Wall's eventual collapse, above all the role of East German citizens as "peaceful revolutionaries," emerged as a new focus of commemoration and, indeed, celebration (338).

In tracking such changes, Harrison traces the evolution of what could be labelled the prevailing master narrative behind the public commemoration of the Berlin Wall during the past three decades: a shift from an original focus on "the GDR as an *Unrechtsstaat* or a dictatorship" to a more recent "heroization" of the East German "opposition that created a Peaceful Revolution and toppled the Wall" (420). She convincingly portrays the latter narrative as "a new founding myth about the fall of the Wall and the birth of the new united German nation out of the first successful, democratic, Peaceful Revolution, capital P, capital R, in German history," although she also indicates that in the last few years these hopeful, even jubilant lessons drawn from the events of 1989 have been tempered with new concerns about rifts and divisions in German society (337). In building her analysis, Harrison focuses primarily on key anniversaries of the Wall's erection (13 August) and its collapse (9 November), thereby combining the study of traumatic memories with the much less widely practised exploration of "joyful and positive types of memory," which has recently emerged as a desideratum of memory studies (26). Another methodological focal point of the book is its prioritization of "memory activists," particular individuals whose engagement has been important in promoting and developing the commemoration of the Wall in its different aspects and who have therefore formed "a key link between personal memory and collective memory" (16). Harrison's analysis of the contributions and life stories of these activists consistently drives the book's narrative.

After the Berlin Wall is a study with many merits. Its comprehensiveness is an obvious major strength. Although earlier studies have addressed particular aspects of the public memory and commemoration of the Berlin Wall, nothing in the

previous literature comes even close to the scope and range of Harrison's monograph.⁵ In many ways, then, this is the current standard work on the topic. The book's nuanced contextualization of the Berlin Wall's shifting position within the much broader memory-political landscape of post-unification Germany constitutes another key asset. Harrison is careful to locate the story of the Wall's commemoration within the parameters of memory battles that have raged—and continue to rage—about the ways in which the GDR as a whole should be remembered and represented, particularly in relation to the previous and immensely more brutal German dictatorship and its crimes. Throughout the study, Harrison paints on a broad canvas and does so clearly and fluently, with confident strokes and a presentational style that is graceful and highly readable. Here the emphasis on the contributions of particular memory activists adds useful flair to the story. The book is also frequently quite moving, most notably in its portrayal of the human suffering caused by the Wall. A good example is the detailed account of the efforts of Horst Schmidt, the father of Michael Schmidt, who was shot dead at the age of twenty in a failed escape attempt from East to West Berlin in December 1984, to come to terms with the loss of his son (46-55). In addition, the narrative includes numerous striking details and little vignettes. Who knew, for instance, that the highly trained but maltreated dogs that the GDR border guards used to patrol some of the Wall zone would occasionally turn against their masters? Apparently one such dog prevented border soldiers from shooting at an escaping mother and child and forced the men to run after them instead (298).

Although the emphasis on select memory activists as the nexus between personal and collective memory is a distinguishing feature of Harrison's study and one of its strengths, certainly on the presentational level, it also raises some methodological questions. Does it run the danger of placing too much weight on the impact of particular individuals, as opposed to larger entities and broader forces? Similarly, where should one draw the line between individuals who merit inclusion as memory activists and those who do not? Wisely, Harrison casts her net wide, paying attention to a considerable range of notable actors, people from east and west, from government and civil society, from very varied personal and political backgrounds. Even so, however, it is tempting to query some of the omissions. For example, the mother of the last East German escapee shot at the Wall, Karen Gueffroy, whose son Chris was killed in February 1989, features only on the margins, despite her very extensive public presence as an advocate of Wall victims in post-unification Berlin, and one might also wonder why some of the leading professional historians who have served in prominent advisory roles on Wall-related matters, such as Martin Sabrow of the Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung in Potsdam, do not merit more attention as memory activists. Finally, the emphasis on individual activists also raises potential source problems. To be fair, Harrison draws carefully and critically on a wide source base, ranging from policy papers and parliamentary debates to press reports and exhibition materials, but a good part of her account of many memory activists' contributions relies on the interviews that she conducted with them. Does this pose the danger that the book's analysis could end up reflecting some of the (self-)perceptions and (self-)narratives of particular individuals, thereby perhaps over-emphasizing their relative importance?

Overall, however, it is clear that *After the Berlin Wall* is a major achievement by a leading scholar, a study that will, for the foreseeable future, set the standard for any serious exploration of unified Germany's memory culture surrounding the Berlin Wall. With the addition of this book to her earlier, prize-winning monograph on the diplomatic background of the building of the Wall, Harrison has now become the key authority on both the pre- and post-history of the most prominent symbol of the European Cold War.⁶ And that is no mean feat.

⁵ See, for example, Klaus-Dietmar Henke, ed., *Die Mauer: Errichtung, Überwindung, Erinnerung* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2011); Sybille Frank, *Wall Memorials and Heritage: The Heritage Industry of Berlin's Checkpoint Charlie* (London: Routledge, 2016); Dirk Verheyen, *United City, Divided Memories? Cold War Legacies in Contemporary Berlin* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008).

⁶ Hope Harrison, *Driving the Soviets Up the Wall: Soviet – East German Relations, 1953-1961* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

REVIEW BY MARK FENEMORE, MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

The wall that ran through Berlin from 1961 to 1989 forms a major part of the post-war German memory landscape. Berlin is impossible to imagine without the four decades of Cold War tension, or the deadly barrier that divided the city for 28 years. Prize-winning foreign-policy historian, Hope M. Harrison, established her academic reputation studying diplomatic relations in the run-up to the 13 August 1961 crisis.⁷ There is a pleasing symmetry in the fact that an academic who has studied the causes of an event or phenomenon can also go on to assess its aftermath and legacy. If the construction of the Wall ended a chapter of the Cold War, most people, inside and outside of Berlin, see the fall of the Wall as the starting act for German (re)unification. Some would add that it also helped the Federal Republic on its path towards rehabilitation on the international stage.

The construction of the Berlin Wall was a potent, geopolitical act, the symbolic drawing of a line in the sand. It abruptly established a division between ‘us’ and ‘them’ by imposing a hard, potentially lethal border. The East German regime claimed that it was thwarting people-trafficking and an imminent, ‘imperialist’ invasion attempt. Harrison does not dwell on the period of the open border that lasted from 1945 to 1961, or Berlin’s legacy as a disputed ‘frontier city’ in the Cold War. She does not speculate on whether, through their actions in exploiting West Berlin’s behind-the-lines position, not least through covert intelligence gathering, propaganda, and subversion, the Western Allies created a necessity for a hard, rigid border. Instead, she stresses its imposition as an extreme manifestation of the Cold War, in which Germans were required to kill other Germans in order to shore up the Soviet system. The best estimate is that 140 mostly unarmed civilians were killed at the Berlin Wall.⁸ In all, Harrison estimates that nearly a thousand people died because of the imposition of a militarized border between East and West Germany (11). Like Wall historian Pertti Ahonen,⁹ she covers the peculiar moral landscape of border service, seeing the Wall as an unequivocal symbol of Communist manipulation and oppression, frequently resulting in unwarranted deaths akin to murder. Calculating the material as well as the human cost, Harrison contends that the task of maintaining the Wall as a “deadly bulwark” employed tens of thousands (13). Nevertheless, she differentiates between the “anxious young men” who followed their orders and the rulers who issued the shoot-to-kill policy (420).

Harrison provides some blow-by-blow accounts of would-be escapes to demonstrate how the border agents frustrated them. After (re)unification, the authorities put over five hundred border guards and their commanders on trial. Some claimed to have pulled the trigger in order to avoid demotion or transfer. A few East German guards sought to blame the Soviets for the deaths. However, General Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) Erich Honecker’s removal of self-triggering SM-70 splinter mines, in 1984, shows that as East German leader he possessed leeway and, thereby, a large degree of responsibility.¹⁰ Asked why he did not shoot, a guard leader (*Postenführer*) blamed his own cowardice: “*Weil ich zu feige war.*” The judge responded that, if the veteran remained a coward for the rest of his life, it would be a good thing.¹¹

⁷ Hope M. Harrison, *Driving the Soviets up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-1961* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

⁸ Hans-Hermann Hertle and Maria Nooke, eds., *The Victims at the Berlin Wall, 1961-1989. A Biographical Handbook* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2011).

⁹ Pertti Ahonen, *Death at the Berlin Wall* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Ahonen, “The Berlin Wall and the Battle for Legitimacy in Divided Germany,” *German Politics and Society* 29:2 (2011), 40-56.

¹⁰ “East German Guards Remove Shrapnel Arms from Border,” *New York Times*, 1 December 1984.

¹¹ Testimony of the border soldier Mike Schmidt from the Chris Gueffroy case at the Border Troops Trial, 8 March 1996, in Roman Grafe, *Deutsche Gerechtigkeit: Prozesse gegen DDR-Grenzschützen und ihre Befehlsgeber* (Munich: Siedler, 2004), 121.

Harrison provides a useful summary of the secondary literature in relation to the Wall and its legacy but has less to say about its overall meaning for Berlin and for Germany. She frames her book in terms of post-unification memory politics. Nevertheless, the ‘making of the new Germany’ is less apparent than the contested legacy of the Berlin Wall. The book’s passage, setting the Wall within the larger span of German history, is quite truncated (388). She generally ignores popular notions, like the persistence of a ‘wall in the heads,’ separating East from West Germans. Instead, she argues that the opening of the Wall constitutes a ‘new founding myth’ for the German polity.

Harrison explores the myriad ways in which a desire to shape memory, on the part of private citizens as well as of state actors, can influence official state policy. Throughout the book, she insists that aesthetic preferences are also political and emotional choices. In carefully drawn vignettes, she captures the feeling of temporary installations or statements, like the illuminated balloons that briefly marked the line where the Wall once stood. Without going so far as to call it ‘dark tourism,’ she is interested in the various ways different audiences ascribe meaning to the Wall.

International tourists and young Germans are two separate, but overlapping memory constituencies. After 1989, the Berlin Senate, itself a product of the Cold War, was the driving force, in preserving and curating the legacy of the Wall. Harrison translates its *Gesamtkonzept* as a “master plan” rather than as an “overall concept” (190). This sums up a bureaucratic way of shaping the city’s narrative, by bringing official commemoration into line with popular feeling. While showing how the local connects to the global (creating a ‘glocal’ approach), in memorial exhibits as well as media portrayals, Harrison indicates that local politicians and activists are in danger of using the Wall commemorations for their own purposes (191). Suggesting that Berliners remained divided on whether to destroy or to preserve the Wall, she demonstrates that satisfying both urges would have been impossible. Although primarily pushed by Berlin’s local administration, the federal government also had an interest in debates about recent German memory and, with its own initiatives, sought to influence them. Harrison sees this as a “federal balancing act” (225-235). Another protagonist was the cross-party *Bundestag* commission of inquiry into the Socialist Unity Party (SED) dictatorship.

Harrison’s key focus is on memory management, either through grassroots networks of local historians or events as pursued by activists. These overlap with the commemorations, rituals, and narratives created by official historians and memory managers. With a would-be comprehensive approach to German historical memory, Harrison explores memorialization via films, music, and public ceremonies. She discusses photographic exhibits and other visual media, as well as written sources, like catalogues and articles. Her approach to memory is deliberately interdisciplinary. Together with memoirs, news reports, and exhibit catalogues, she explores how the Wall inspired novels, plays, recordings, and musicals. In addition to archives and interviews, she recounts conversations and emails with fellow memory actors and commentators. As a board member for institutions connected to the Cold War and to the Wall in Berlin, she is well placed to study memory politics. Together with newspaper reports, these autobiographical documents and interviews make up a major part of the source base. This array of evidence allows Harrison to sketch evocative biographical portraits, introducing leading memory champions as (impressive but flawed) human beings. Nevertheless, although critical of some self-serving behaviour of prominent memory evangelists, this is not a tell-all book.

Overall, Harrison suggests that memories and narratives of the Wall are conflicted. She mentions Rainer Hildebrandt’s connection with the Fighting Group against Inhumanity (*Kampfgruppe gegen Unmenschlichkeit*, KgU) but does not explore his ties to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The American covert handlers engineered his ousting from the KgU in November 1951, calling him both a “psychopath” and a “very sick person.”¹² As an archetypal Cold Warrior, Hildebrandt not only shone a spotlight on SED crimes, but also helped to orchestrate escapes. His apartment, overlooking the Wall, served as a control point for designing escape attempts (164-5). Hildebrandt repeatedly called out the Western Allies and the West Berlin authorities for their overly timorous responses to the threat posed by the East German authorities and their Soviet allies. Harrison does not explore the western commandants’ reputation, in relation to their troops’ policing of the

¹² Chief of Mission, Frankfurt: “Boudreau’s Forced Leave from DTLINEN,” 9 November 1951, https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DTLINEN_0035.pdf.

Wall. For example, she does not mention the riots that gripped West Berlin, following American soldiers' failure to help eighteen-year-old Peter Fechter, as he lay dying in no-man's-land.¹³

Although Harrison also focuses on the significance of the Wall for non-Germans, the key shapers of memory, in her view, are local. Memory activists are a small and often self-selecting, but disproportionately loud and vocal minority. A major contribution of the book is to provide the back-stories for principal activists, like the Hildebrandts (Rainer and his then Ukrainian, artist wife Alexandra) and the Nookes (Maria and Günter), who have been disproportionately influential in shaping our views of the Wall and its legacy. Hans-Hermann Hertle and Maria Nooke's study of deaths at the Berlin wall remains the standard work.¹⁴

To be fired up enough to volunteer for the task of documenting suffering and shaping historical commemorations, one must, to a certain extent, be both extrovert and eccentric. Pastor Manfred Fischer, for example, saw the Wall site as a giant crime scene. This perspective inspired his belief that it needed to be preserved intact. His actions suggest the impact of grassroots, bottom-up networking of 'barefoot historians' alongside official, top-down initiatives. Comparing the Wall to a living, dangerous polar bear, a cultural official for the Senate, Rainer Klemke, argued that in the 1990s only the mangy fur remained (8).

Cartographer Hagen Koch's biography demonstrates a remarkable, lifelong connection to the Wall. In the summer of 1961, security chief Erich Honecker tasked him with mapping out the route the Wall would take. Having worn out a pair of boots on the task, in August, he drew the white line, separating East and West, at Checkpoint Charlie. This ensured that the Wall builders remained safely within East Berlin territory. Having worked for the Stasi for decades, he resigned in 1985, only to gain a job at the German Democratic Republic's (GDR) Institute for Historical Preservation, just a week before the Wall fell. In 1990, he was able to use his expertise to oversee the Wall's demolition (33). He also curated his own personal Berlin Wall Archive, using the documents he had acquired thanks to his multiple associations with the Wall.¹⁵

The book's chief contribution is to map out the local memory landscape in the unified, but still divided city of the 1990s. A strength is the space Harrison devotes to the impact of individual biographical factors on positions adopted in debates. These proselytizing partisans of memory helped to bring space into line with politics. There is a strong focus on these idiosyncratic, sometimes 'rogue' and roguish citizens. Their visions of how memory should be preserved often differed from the official stance taken by museum and memorial curators, politicians, and professional historians. One of the main implicit questions asked by *After the Berlin Wall* is 'Who does the past belong to?' Some commemorations were more like crowd-pleasing capers or publicity stunts. Proper commemoration, Harrison insists, required careful discussion and reflection, rather than just "lip service as part of an election campaign."¹⁶ Contemporary politicians nevertheless jockeyed to identify victims and perpetrators as a means of winning supporters and of criticizing their opponents. Alluding to the tense atmosphere of equivocation and blame, Harrison herself uses trial evidence to identify participants as either innocent or guilty, heroes or villains.

The case of the Wall shows that commercial interests can intrude on memorialization, hijacking it for ulterior motives. Although using religious language of sin and guilt, together with a large dose of righteous anger, the Hildebrandt power couple provided their own anarchic version of private-sector, venture-capitalist memorialization and narrative formation.

¹³ Mark Fenemore, *Fighting the Cold War in Post-Blockade, Pre-Wall Berlin. Behind Enemy Lines* (London: Routledge, 2019), 227-28.

¹⁴ Hertle and Nooke, eds., *The Victims at the Berlin Wall*.

¹⁵ Anna Funder, *Stasiland* (London: Granta 2003), ch. 17: "Drawing the Line," 168-176.

¹⁶ Berlin mayor Klaus Wowereit, as cited by Harrison, *After the Berlin Wall*, 195.

From 19 October 1962, Rainer Hildebrandt's original private museum, relocated to within inches of the Wall at Checkpoint Charlie, provided a brilliant example of exciting, emotive tabloid history. Whether in the form of hot-air balloons or micro-submarines, he presented tourists with exactly what they wanted: vivid stories of dramatic escape attempts and brutal Communist repression through excessive violence.¹⁷ Whether illustrating hidden compartments in cars or showcasing homemade boats and aircraft, Hildebrandt offered a straightforward celebration of human ingenuity and inventiveness. The tone of the early exhibition, 'What happened at the Wall,' demonstrated the matter-of-fact tone of his neighbour and early supporter, Axel Springer. The *Bild* newspaper owner and media baron provided practical assistance, not least in the form of vivid photographs.¹⁸ Numerous films reflect this spirit of fascination and wonder at ordinary people's inventiveness and bravery.¹⁹

Hildebrandt insisted that he would never tire of exposing wrongdoing. In 1993, Klemke stated that "The museum stands or falls with Hildebrandt. He is a kind of institution in Berlin, or, to put it negatively, a fossil of the cold war."²⁰ Following Hildebrandt's death in January 2004, his artist widow Alexandra demonstrated a propensity for surprise actions and stunts. Her guerrilla erection of crosses, commemorating the dead, in October 2004, would fit with the idea of "memorial entrepreneurs" (16, note 29). A few of her more extravagant undertakings led to disavowals by former supporters, fractious lawsuits, and the relocation of the Rainer Hildebrandt Foundation to Switzerland.²¹ Although she has been heavily critical of the kitschy Disneyfication of Checkpoint Charlie, especially the uniformed figures offering to pose for photographs with tourists, a number of observers level the same charge at the museum she continues to run in her husband's memory.²²

The focus of Harrison's book is on how memory of the Wall has been shaped and steered. East German memory activist Thomas Flierl saw stimulating debate through repurposing of monuments as more necessary than neatly erasing unwanted parts of the memory landscape. The themes of forgetfulness and erasure were most prominent in the film *Goodbye Lenin*.²³ It is quite possible that, as Harrison suggests, Germans suffer from "anniversary mania" or "anniversaryitis" (25). She recognizes that commemoration can spark "counter-narratives," but does not explore these in depth (27). Overall, she is more interested in producing an archaeology (as opposed to an anthropology) of memory management. She carefully exposes the layers of reflection on the past rather than studying how human societies generate alternative meanings in the present. Eschewing surveys or interviews with memory consumers, as opposed to (amateur or professional) activists, she focuses on the crosses that sprang up, marking sites where East Germans were killed trying to escape. Often accompanied by a photograph of the victim, together with biographical details, she presents these as modern equivalents of ancient *stelae* (260). In this way, she links these commemorative inscriptions to Christian funerary gravestones and pre-Christian stone tablets. Missing an opportunity to view the border more anthropologically, as a boundary between competing systems of meaning, she underplays the Wall's particular psychological or cultural resonance. Although Harrison recorded her

¹⁷ Patrick Major, *Behind the Berlin Wall: East Germany and the Frontiers of Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 269.

¹⁸ Ingeborg Siggelkow, *Gedächtnis, Kultur und Politik* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2006), 104.

¹⁹ The latest is *Balloon*, directed by Michael Herbig (Germany, 2018).

²⁰ Stephen Kinzer, "Germany Warms Up to 'A Fossil of the Cold War'," *New York Times*, 24 August 1993.

²¹ Werner van Bebber and Thomas Loy, "Berlin sorgt sich um das Erbe des Mauermuseums," *Tagesspiegel*, 14 December 2004.

²² Kate Connolly, "Cross Words over Artist's Memorial to Berlin Wall," *Telegraph*, 9 November 2004.

²³ *Goodbye Lenin*, directed by Wolfgang Becker (Germany, 2003).

conversations and emails, the book does not contain field notes of her interactions with Berlin's memory landscape. Such an approach would help in problematizing the author's (privileged) position as an insider/outsider.

There is surprisingly little focus in the book on the work of historians in formulating memory policy. To some extent, wars over memories are part of the globalized culture wars between left and right. Missing, for me, was a contrast between the two different approaches to the 'red and brown' dictatorships. For right-wingers, they are both linked, totalitarian expressions of misrule. For left-wingers, an antifascist dictatorship is fundamentally different from a fascist one, because of its ideological foundations. Strangely, Harrison does not address the debate on 'fascism' or 'antifascism' in the literature on the GDR, so large parts of the existing history of German memory are not covered.²⁴ Harrison focuses upon studying debates rather than analysing discourse. Her perspective, as a Washington insider, is largely untouched by voguish French cultural theories or other European intellectual preoccupations. Harrison sees the fall of the Wall as a crucial component in Germany's resurrection on the world stage. Quoting Federal German President Richard von Weizsäcker, she explores Germany's tortured confrontation of its past and hints that, for some, the Wall itself became a repository for shame and guilt. A number of Germans recognized the Wall as the price that they, as a nation, were required to pay for not having resisted Adolf Hitler and the Nazis. As a monument, it became a focus of "contrition and collective suffering" as well as of "disgrace and failure."²⁵ While insisting that we need to remember Communist crimes, Christian Democrat politician and memory activist Günter Nooke suggested that, through division, East Germans had managed to pay off the part of their moral debt stemming from the Holocaust.²⁶ In this sense, the Wall, and the suffering it caused, could constitute atonement for collective guilt. International audiences also have a stake in Berlin's (and the Wall's) history. A number of Turkish children died at the border of Kreuzberg, often drowning in canals and rivers that were inaccessible to rescuers because of the geopolitical tension.²⁷ Some memory activists attempt to bring in this community's perspectives on the impact of the fall of the Wall, an event that arguably pushed them into competition with former East Germans for which group would be relegated from second- to third-class citizenship status.

While exploring the hot air generated by this structure and its commemoration, it is commendable that Harrison never loses sight of its deadliness. In the Wall's final iteration, planned for the year 2000, the East German authorities envisaged infrared sensors and laser tripwires. When the guards shot twenty-year-old Chris Gueffroy in the spring of 1989, his death unleashed an unprecedented wave of international revulsion and led Honecker to end the policy of shooting escapers. In a more hopeful and optimistic passage, Harrison recounts the familiar story of how the Politbüro's unofficial spokesman, Günter Schabowski, managed to unleash chaos at the border with his impromptu statement, on 9 November 1989, that the Wall would be opened "immediately without delay" (2, 57).

Recent events in the United States and Europe have revealed the human costs of unilaterally tightening a border and the contested nature of symbols of memory. The fallacy of trying to build a Wall to harden and make impassable a disputed, swiss-cheese border could have been at the centre of Harrison's book. Nevertheless, while noting that such parallels exist (418), Harrison does not discuss the clear links between Berlin's Wall and others at the Israeli border or, as proposed by President Donald Trump, at the United States' southern border. She does present the European refugee crisis of 2015 in the light of the Wall (395). Former refugees from the GDR explicitly linked their experience, of abandoning everything, to that

²⁴ Konrad H. Jarausch, "The Failure of East German Antifascism: Some Ironies of History as Politics," *German Studies Review* 14:1 (1991), 85-102.

²⁵ Fenemore, 230.

²⁶ Interview with Günter Nooke, 25 November 2004, as cited by Harrison, 230.

²⁷ "Kinder als Maueropfer. Jung, unschuldig, tot", *Tagesspiegel*, 13 August 2009; <https://www.kreuzberger-chronik.de/chroniken/2010/februar/geschichten.html>; <https://www.berliner-mauer-gedenkstaette.de/en/1972-320,426,2.html>.

of the recent migrants from the Middle East. They unstintingly offered aid because they knew “what it was like” (399) to be driven into flight.

Harrison does not dignify the current incumbent of the White House with much attention or analysis. The world’s most significant would-be wall builder, complete with sharpie-drawn snakes and alligators, goes unmentioned until page 418.²⁸ She focuses on straight historical studies of this precise Wall’s operation and impact rather than exploring other governments’ continued need to use walls as hard borders. The bickering of local Berlin memory activists receives more attention than does the cultural practice of building walls.²⁹ Sometimes, as in Belfast and Baghdad, walls are crucial in maintaining a fragile peace between warring sectarian groups. Harrison links Trump’s chronic need for security at the border to East German dictators’ experiences of powerlessness. She points to the irony of President Frank-Walter Steinmeier inviting Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, to the commemorations coinciding with the thirtieth anniversary of the fall of the Wall: “Perhaps he hoped that the experience would inspire... Orbán to remove the fences he had erected against immigrants on [his] country’s southern border. Certainly inviting right-wing leaders, with ties to the Alternative for Germany (AfD), to participate in the celebrations could be seen as a risky strategy” (418).

Harrison is correct to argue that “no single narrative” could “fully capture the complexity of the Wall” (420). Without agreeing with their sentiments, she cites former SED politicians, who sought to blame the Cold War for causing death and injury “on both sides of the border”.³⁰ Although open to interdisciplinarity, Harrison excludes some disciplines and debates from her discussion. One glaring absence was the decision not to frame the Berlin Wall in terms of critical border studies.³¹ Ageing rock band Bon Jovi gets a citation in the index, but ‘border’ does not. The soundscape associated with the Wall thus receives more attention than do the mental conceptions or the semantic shaping of border-policing dynamics. The examination of the ultimate expression of a hard border is strangely quiet about bordering as a process. There is no concept of the ‘borderscape,’ or of a particular mental landscape created by discourses of bordering.

Is it possible to assess the Wall’s impact without exploring the social and cultural meanings attached to the border? Harrison focuses on the Wall as concrete bricks and mortar rather than on the sector boundary as a shifting, evolving and, in part, liminal concept. A particular weakness of the book is its narrow vision of walls and narratives that ignores important debates about geopolitical frontiers in the academic literature.³² German border studies is a developing field, with influential

²⁸ Michael D. Shear and Julie Hirschfeld Davis, “Shoot Migrants’ Legs, Build Alligator Moat: Behind Trump’s Ideas for Border,” *New York Times*, 1 October 2019.

²⁹ Harrison does not cite the interdisciplinary work taking research on walls as borders and boundaries further than Berlin. See, for example, Marc Silberman, Karen E. Till, and Janet Ward, eds., *Walls, Borders, Boundaries: Spatial and Cultural Practices in Europe* (New York: Berghahn, 2015).

³⁰ Generalleutnant Gerhard Lorenz as cited by Harrison, 60.

³¹ Noel Parker and Nick Vaughan-Williams, “Lines in the Sand? Towards an Agenda for Critical Border Studies,” *Geopolitics* 14:3 (2009), 582-587; Columba Peoples and Nick Vaughan-Williams, *Critical Security Studies: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge 2015); Noel Parker and Nick Vaughan-Williams, eds., *Critical Border Studies: Broadening and Deepening the “Lines in the Sand” Agenda* (London: Routledge, 2016).

³² Harald Bauder, “Toward a Critical Geography of the Border: Engaging the Dialectic of Practice and Meaning,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 101:5 (2011), 1126-1139; Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, “Borders, Borderlands and Theory: An Introduction,” *Geopolitics* 16 (2011), 1-6; Corey Johnson, Reece Jones, Anssi Paasi, Louise Amoore, Alison Mountz, Mark Salter and Chris Rumford, “Interventions on Rethinking ‘the Border’ in Border Studies,” *Political Geography* 30:2 (2011), 61-69; Anssi Paasi, *Territories, Boundaries and Consciousness: The Changing Geographies of the Finnish-Russian Border* (Chichester: J. Wiley & Sons, 1996).

work by Daphne Berdahl, Edith Sheffer, Sagi Schaefer, Yuliya Komska, and Jason B. Johnson.³³ As Berdahl argues, borders can give rise to hybridity and resistance as well as to bifurcation and enmity. The continued tunnelling under the border shows that Berliners resisted what they saw as an artificial, imposed separation.³⁴ The lack of focus on the period when the border was still open and porous underplays the brutal impact of suddenly hardening and hermetically sealing it.

Harrison provides a useful summary of German scholarship on the Berlin Wall. Here, the book sits alongside those by Pertti Aho, Hans-Hermann Hertle, and Patrick Major.³⁵ It would be appropriate for Harrison to have situated this monograph on commemoration within the recent literature on memory in reunited Berlin. Here the works of Karen E. Till and Janet Ward are salient.³⁶ Ward's theorization of the Wall, as a contested site of memory, would be worth exploring in more depth. Harrison focuses instead on German-language "history policy." (19-20, 240, 243) She does not engage with Ward's belief that continued border-making is a psychological as well as a geopolitical necessity (18). Like Till, Harrison conversed with people as they tried to understand and come to terms with the past. However, she does not go as far in adopting a geo-ethnographic approach. The idea of the past haunting us (or resurfacing as a repressed, Jack-in-the-box memory) is not considered. Harrison mentions the work of University of Liverpool historian Anna Saunders in passing, but avoids critically assessing her approach to memorialization.³⁷ David Clarke's chapter, on the representation of victims at the Berlin Wall Memorial Museum, is also useful to read alongside Harrison's survey.³⁸

The choice to include some methodological approaches and debates but not others is not always easy to follow. Harrison's chief focus is on translating German debates for non-German readers. As a consequence, some teachable moments, such as tapping into existing debates about the meaning and memory implications of disputed borders, are missed. Overall, the book adds to our understanding of the Wall as a touchstone and sounding board for memory. Harrison succeeds in bringing out the palimpsest qualities of this stark, spray-painted structure. However, in parts, by widening her conception of the Cold War border as a concept, she could deepen the book's theoretical exploration of the meanings of memory.

³³ Daphne Berdahl, *Where the World Ended: Re-unification and Identity in the German Borderland* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Edith Sheffer, *Burned Bridge: How East and West Germans Made the Iron Curtain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Sagi Schaefer, *States of Division: Border and Boundary Formation in Cold War Rural Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Yuliya Komska, *The Icon Curtain: The Cold War's Quiet Border* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); Jason B. Johnson, *Divided Village: The Cold War in the German Borderlands* (London: Routledge, 2017); Edith Sheffer, *Burned Bridge: How East and West Germans Made the Iron Curtain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

³⁴ Helena Merriman, "The Story of Tunnel 29," https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/extra/Od4dL9Lip2/tunnel_29; Greg Mitchell, *The Tunnels: The Untold Story of the Escapes under the Berlin Wall* (London: Transworld, 2016).

³⁵ Aho, Major; Hans-Hermann Hertle, *The Berlin Wall. Monument of the Cold War* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2007).

³⁶ Karen E. Till, *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Janet Ward, *Post-Wall Berlin: Borders, Space and Identity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

³⁷ Anna Saunders, *Memorializing the GDR: Monuments and Memory after 1989* (New York: Berghahn, 2018).

³⁸ David Clarke, "Representing the Experiences of Victims at the Berlin Wall Memorial Museum," in Martin Hoondert, Paul Mutsaers and William Arfman, eds., *Cultural Practices of Victimhood* (London: Routledge, 2018), 83-103.

REVIEW BY MARY FULBROOK, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

Comprehensively researched, beautifully written, *After the Berlin Wall* focuses on ‘memory activists’ and the ways in which diverse groups and selected individuals played key roles in emerging contests over how the Berlin Wall should be remembered in public. Hope M. Harrison has engaged in exhaustive research not only in the relevant archives, but also through interviews with individuals who were involved in a variety of ways. She traces how different initiatives were variously able to make a mark in changing historical contexts in the three decades since the Wall was first breached on November 9, 1989.

Initially—as with remembrance of the Holocaust in the early years after the end of the war—the primary focus was on victims; in the case of the Wall, these were the individuals who had been killed while trying to escape from Communist East Germany. At the same time, however, there was also a widespread desire to utterly destroy all physical remnants of the hated symbol of division. It took quite a struggle on the part of committed individuals—notably Pastor Manfred Fischer at Bernauer Straße—to ensure that at least a short section remained partially intact and gave some indication of the breadth of the no-man’s land, the area with tripwires and tank tracks and dogs, that had to be traversed before reaching the well-known concrete blocks that had to be scaled before reaching the West. In exploring how the preserved remains and aesthetic memorials at Bernauer Straße, along with its exhibition and Chapel of Reconciliation, ultimately became a concentrated centre of memory, Harrison ranges from the politics of the parish pump—almost literally, as two churches vied over the significance of the land—through to the wider politics of unified Germany. But other sites were significant too. Key memory activists ranged from Greens and others determined to create an environmentally friendly and life-enhancing cycle path, all around Berlin on the tracks of the former Wall, through to the entrepreneurial director of the private Checkpoint Charlie Museum, Alexandra Hildebrandt, who at one point created a field of crosses to represent those who had died. As Harrison explores the twisted and continually contested route to the eventual dominance of the Bernauer Straße site, she also illuminates the changing shape of the enlarged Federal Republic from unification under Christian Democratic Union (CDU) Chancellor Helmut Kohl, through the Social Democratic Party (SPD)-Green coalition of 1998-2005 headed by Gerhard Schroeder, to the long-lasting chancellorship of Angela Merkel from 2005.

While key physical sites of memory were identified and developed, ceremonies of remembrance were bedevilled by wider debates around what memorialisation might mean. The initial focus on victims widened to include perpetrators, and posed questions on how to portray the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the Cold War, the role of West Germany, and even the character of the new Berlin Republic itself. Every significant anniversary represented a significant shift in self-understandings in light of the changing political considerations of different parties, while parochial, national and international factors played into changing emphases over time. Memorialisation of the Wall presented a complex set of challenges around conceptions of shame, guilt, and pride in having achieved ‘freedom and unity’ without (much) bloodshed in 1989-90.

The allocation of guilt is a particularly interesting aspect of this issue. Most obviously, of course, there were the border guards at the front line who had to shoot would-be escapees. They were predominantly conscripts rather than volunteers, drafted in to border duties during their compulsory military service. Over the 28 years in which the Wall was in existence, more than half a million young men experienced the excruciating combination of boredom and terror that such service entailed, and were caught between the push and pull of fears and inducements, constantly evaluating the likely responses of their colleagues and superiors. They worked in ever-changing pairs, and were kept under close surveillance; there was a high percentage of Stasi informers among border guards. How to portray these men was problematic, as evidenced in controversial representations in films and documentaries. Their predicament—not having much choice about whether or not to shoot, or to deliberately miss their target—raised wider questions about who was actually responsible for having given them the orders to shoot. Were the perpetrators in fact those in command, rather than the conscripts at the front line? But the question of guilt could not stop there. For who was actually responsible for the very fact that there was a Wall in the first place? Was it the Socialist Unity Party (SED) under Walter Ulbricht, or was it rather the Soviets who should be held to account? Was the Wall in some sense justifiable—better a Wall than a war, as many on the left tended to put it? And, indeed, once victims and perpetrators had come under the spotlight, what of the responsibility of bystanders? Why was it

that the western powers, and particularly West Germany under the then Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, chose not to intervene in August 1961? Here, right-wing and left-wing views curiously coalesced, as many conservatives who supported Adenauer's stance also appealed to the argument that a Wall was better than war. Moreover, over time it became normalised, a feature of the frozen peace in the Cold War. Over the years, western tourists who stood on the viewing platforms looking over the death strip came to perceive this simply as an interesting feature, rather than a stimulus for protest. Even on the GDR side, most East Germans had little choice but to resign themselves to the fact that the Wall existed, and to ignore it as best they could, accommodating themselves to the regime and making the best of their lives for an indeterminate future.

Harrison sketches in some detail the differing views of memory activists on these issues, but does not explicitly offer her own assessments; one has to turn to other books (including some of her own previous work) to reach an evaluation of the historical issues.³⁹ Her concern here is rather to elucidate what the arguments were among the protagonists in these memory battles. There is, then, in effect no 'external adjudicator' or reality check on the memory contests; only a detailed rendition of who felt what was at stake at any given time, and what compromises were reached among those with the resources to engage in shaping the visible and symbolic landscapes of memory of the Wall.

Harrison's work is at times moving, when she describes individual experiences. At times, it is densely informative and on occasion the details threaten to become overwhelming. But Harrison firmly keeps the reader on track as she portrays the layers of emotional and political as well as historical complexity in coming to terms with this recent past.

The book also raises wider questions which go beyond the scope of her study. The most intriguing, for me, have to do two particular features of representing, after the event, life within a dictatorship.

One concerns the somewhat problematic ways in which perpetrators can represent themselves, or be portrayed by others, as being also in some sense 'victims of history' - a dangerous tendency when applied to the preceding Nazi dictatorship. It was this sort of slippage that occasioned the row over U.S. President Ronald Reagan's ill-chosen remarks concerning his visit to the Bitburg cemetery with Chancellor Helmut Kohl in May 1985, when Reagan suggested that young men in German uniform serving the Nazi regime were essentially also victims, on a par with victims in the concentration camps. While that particularly egregious comment aroused international outrage, many Germans nevertheless felt—or at least later claimed—that they had been constrained into supporting the Nazi cause. The question of degrees of choice and individual agency is key not only to legal defences ('only obeying orders') but also to how people try to live with a difficult past and subsequently portray themselves in a good light, despite complicity or involvement in perpetration.

The other question, which again Harrison's work adumbrates but barely develops, relates to the portrayal of relatively happy personal memories or the sense of having lived what was seen as a 'normal life' under a regime that has been discredited. The issue of nostalgia for the GDR is generally explained in terms of rose-tinted memories of a sense of security, and widely discounted; the memories of 'good times' under Nazism in the 1930s are rarely juxtaposed with the question of 'at whose expense.' These patterns of memory and self-justification at both a personal and public level in relation to the two dictatorships would bear further discussion and comparative analysis.

This fascinating book does much to illuminate the ways in which contested questions about the memorialisation of the Berlin Wall were debated by a range of actors in an evolving story. This exhaustive account will certainly attain a classic status on this topic, and raises wider issues that, building on Harrison's work, deserve further discussion.

³⁹ See for example: Hope M. Harrison, *Driving the Soviets up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-1961* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Patrick Major, *Behind the Berlin Wall: East Germany and the Frontiers of Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

REVIEW BY WILLIAM GLENN GRAY, PURDUE UNIVERSITY

Histories of the present serve as a clarifying lens. So much gets lost in the blur of day-to-day events; even the keenest observers of contemporary Europe can quickly lose track of EU or NATO or G-7 summits from one season to the next. Along comes an author such as Adam Tooze, whose 2018 tome *Crashed* provides an essential orientation to the past ten years—from the financial crisis to Euro-austerity to the rise of populism. In Tooze’s narrative, disparate events that virtually all his readers have lived through take on a greater semblance of coherence. We begin to chart the passage of time in larger units than days or weeks, and to discern the contours of longer-term developments. For all the limitations that a ‘presentist’ outlook can impose, a well-crafted work of contemporary history establishes key narrative lines that render the immediate past more legible.⁴⁰

Hope M. Harrison’s *After the Berlin Wall* covers a longer time span than Tooze’s book, but here, too, readers will find fleetingly observed—or even personally witnessed—ceremonies contextualized as a distinct historical process of memory formation. She demonstrates convincingly that a new memory culture has emerged in united Germany over the past thirty years. To be sure, ‘history and memory’ is a long-established genre in the Federal Republic. Scores of monuments have been erected in recent decades to mourn Germany’s victims during the era of the World Wars. Holocaust memory remains the most significant locus of commemorative politics, as Harrison readily acknowledges; yet the Cold War is emerging as a secondary node of official memory, with the Berlin Wall at its symbolic core. In depicting three decades’ worth of controversies surrounding the Wall and its meaning, Harrison offers rich insights into how Germans conceptualize national identity today.

Given that the Federal Republic moved its seat of government to Berlin more than two decades ago, the prominence of Wall memory might seem self-evident. Yet Harrison shows that it took determined individuals—memory activists, as she calls them—to avert the complete demolition of the Berlin Wall in the winter of 1989-1990. Their swift interventions helped to preserve certain sections of the original concrete, including the “East Side Gallery” (a row of painted and repainted slabs) and a more mundane, more representative border strip at Bernauer Strasse. Harrison identifies Manfred Fischer—a Lutheran pastor whose parish spanned the Wall at this location—as the most prominent advocate of a permanent memorial at Bernauer Strasse; but she goes on to sketch out the personalities and careers of numerous other city and federal administrators with a hand in funding what became a museum, chapel, study center, and outdoor display.

Despite its historical significance, Bernauer Strasse was somewhat out of the way and less famous than other points along the Wall’s 140-km route encircling West Berlin. In one of her most engaging chapters, Harrison highlights the savvy showmanship of Rainer and Alexandra Hildebrandt—proprietors of a privately owned, tourist-friendly museum at Checkpoint Charlie. Historians often sniff at the tabloid-style sensationalism on display there, with tales of daring escapes and gruesome deaths along the Wall during its 28-year existence. To Harrison’s credit, she takes the couple seriously as memory entrepreneurs. In 2004, for example, the newly widowed Alexandra installed hundreds of crosses across from Checkpoint Charlie—allegedly representing every single Wall victim. Hildebrandt’s research was sloppy and the presentation problematic, yet the public resonance was undeniable. In demonstrating the insatiable tourist demand for knowledge about the Wall, the Checkpoint Charlie spectacle helped to shake loose municipal and then federal support for systematic research into those who died along this unforgiving concrete barrier.

Memory studies typically point to anniversary celebrations as the principal drivers of memory culture.⁴¹ The Berlin Wall offers a tight rotation of historical dates to commemorate: August 13, 1961 (the building the Wall); November 9, 1989 (the

⁴⁰ Adam Tooze, *Crashed: How a Decade of Financial Crises Changed the World* (New York: Viking, 2018).

⁴¹ For examples in a German context, see Mary Fulbrook, *German National Identity after the Holocaust* (Malden, Mass.: Polity Press, 1999), Jon Berndt Olsen, *Tailoring Truth: Politicizing the Past and Negotiating Memory in East Germany, 1945-1990* (New York:

fall of the Wall); and October 3, 1990 (the reunification of Germany, which is often seen as the logical culmination of the Wall's collapse). Given the Germans' penchant for round anniversaries, this made for rapid-fire sequences: 1999 (10 years since the fall), 2000 (10 years of unity), 2001 (40 years since the Wall's construction); 2009 (20 years), 2010 (20 years), 2011 (50 years); and so forth. Each anniversary milestone has featured a burst of museum exhibits, scholarly lectures, book publications, and solemn speeches. Most spectacular are the wall-tumbling exercises in central Berlin. Harrison recounts dominoes falling in 2009, balloons flying in 2014, and preparations for musical performances across the city in 2019. Even during 'off' years, August 13 and November 9 did not go unobserved. Lower-profile events shifted increasingly to the Bernauer Strasse location, which by 2011 had finally established itself as the principal repository of Wall memories.

Harrison's study follows two main strands—the traumatic memories of 1961 and the joyous revolution of 1989. When warranted, she expands the scope beyond Berlin itself. In recounting debates about the moral agency of border guards, for example, she draws on literary and film examples set along the 'green' border between East and West Germany.⁴² She later documents efforts by the citizens of Dresden and Leipzig to foreground their own civic courage in challenging the dictatorship. This is a point Harrison reinforces with a wonderfully lyrical passage explaining the persistent association of 1989 with Ludwig van Beethoven—not just the 9th Symphony with its "Ode to Joy," but also the 7th Symphony and the opera *Fidelio* (36-46). In general, the Cambridge editors have granted Harrison considerable leeway to follow through on her subject matter, resulting in a book that is richly detailed and a delight to read.

For historians of Cold War Germany, the memory culture depicted here diverges starkly from the tenor of much academic writing. Well-known scholars do make an appearance in Harrison's study—as experts testifying before parliamentary committees, for example. Nevertheless, German politicians are seen here crafting their own historical perspectives. More often than not, this involved branding the German Democratic Republic (GDR) as a harsh dictatorship, a state lacking in basic freedoms, a regime that penned in its subjects and murdered would-be escapees at the Wall. Such a viewpoint ran the risk of alienating those harboring a certain nostalgia ("*Ostalgie*") for the former East Germany. Harrison finds some of the explanation for this in party politics: when the Social Democrats in Berlin formed a coalition with the Left Party, which had descended from the old ruling Social Unity Party of East Germany—Mayor Klaus Wowereit took pains to show that the Social Democratic Party (SPD) leaders were not GDR apologists. In the Bundestag, too, deputies brushed aside historians' efforts to promote a more nuanced view (241-243).

The flip side of this unabashedly negative view of the GDR was a conscious effort to build up 1989 as a first-of-its-kind German revolution from below. Harrison is clear about the shortcomings of this interpretation: it neglects the wider Central European context and it underplays the contingent, accidental circumstances that prompted the Wall's chaotic opening on November 9.⁴³ Nevertheless, event planners sought to draw prominent East German dissidents into the official commemorations—particularly from 2009 onward—in the hopes of underscoring the values of civil courage and the freedom of expression. Harrison observes that these lesser-known German role models were constantly upstaged by foreign guests such as Russia's former party leader and president Mikhail Gorbachev, Poland's former president Lech Wałęsa, and Hungary's former prime minister Miklós Németh. Even as Germans sought to define Wall memories on their own terms, outside powers demanded a mic at the podium. The anniversary galas in Berlin were too glamorous to pass up, and Germany's Cold War history was, in the end, very much a European and global history.

Berghahn, 2015), and Edgar Wolfrum, *Geschichtspolitik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Der Weg zur bundesrepublikanischen Erinnerung 1948-1990* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1999).

⁴² On the "green" border, see Astrid Eckert, *West Germany and the Iron Curtain: Environment, Economy, and Culture in the Borderlands* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

⁴³ Mary Sarotte, *The Collapse: The Accidental Opening of the Berlin Wall* (New York: Basic Books, 2014).

Harrison's boldest claim is that the motif of a citizens' revolution has emerged as a kind of state doctrine for the Berlin Republic—a founding myth that underscored Germany's fundamentally sound democratic culture. She pairs this reading of 1989, expressed most clearly from 2009 onward, with the more commonly cited reemergence of the national flag during the 2006 World Cup. The net result, in Harrison's view, was a novel and uniquely positive self-understanding of German national identity. If memory culture in the 1980s had produced contrition and self-restraint in relation to the Holocaust, the newer memory culture surrounding 1989 yielded liberation and something approaching normalcy. This is an intriguing suggestion with significant implications for German history more generally.

One might qualify Harrison's thesis with a side glance at the student protests in 1967-68, which many a '68er' remembers as the true breakthrough of democracy in West Germany. Meanwhile, the year 2018 saw remembrances of the top-down parliamentary revolution of 1918—also, coincidentally, falling on November 9. (As did the "Night of the Broken Glass" in 1938; this is why the October 3 German unity holiday remains distinct from the November 9 Wall festivities.) There are, in short, many historical dates signposting the advent of democracy in Germany. The defeat of May 1945 is now commonly presented as a liberation from Nazism—as seen during the 75th anniversary on May 8, 2020, when "thank you," "merci," "Спасибо" and "Danke" were projected onto the Brandenburg Gate in homage to the victors of World War II. Yet amidst all these anniversaries, which sometimes implicitly compete with one another, November 9, 1989 is crystallizing as the most consequential founding moment of something historically new: a united, democratic Germany at peace with all of its neighbors. Harrison's book shows how the Berlin Republic has used historical memory to consolidate and celebrate the achievements of its hard-won democratic culture. If the opening of the Berlin Wall is claimed, rightly, as a powerful moment of global transformation, the story of German democracy in the twenty-first century is equally important for the future of Europe and the international community.

REVIEW BY STEPHAN KIENINGER, INDEPENDENT HISTORIAN

Hope M. Harrison's splendid book is a tremendous achievement. It is a uniquely new study of Germany's post-1989 struggle over the history and the memory of the Berlin Wall. Combining archival research and oral history, it depicts the evolution of anniversary politics and more generally *Erinnerungspolitik* (the politics of memory) in Germany connected to the Berlin Wall since 1989. Harrison's book focuses on memory activists, their narratives and their contribution to public debates on the history of the Berlin Wall. One of the main characters in the book is Manfred Fischer, a pastor who undertook tireless efforts to preserve the memory of the Berlin Wall. Fischer had been the pastor of West Berlin's reconciliation parish since 1975. The Berlin Wall divided his parish, it surrounded the massive red-brick church and it prohibited its use for anything other than as a post for border soldiers in the death strip. In January 1985, ten years after Fischer's arrival, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) authorities blew up the Church of Reconciliation – and Fischer organized a three-day ceremony to bid farewell to the church. In the tumultuous time after the toppling of the wall, Fischer and some other activists were able to preserve remnants of the wall at several locations. Fischer's tireless work over many years contributed to the emergence of the Berlin Wall Memorial that educates hundreds of thousands of people each year about the history of the Berlin Wall and Bernauer Strasse.

Harrison's book breaks new ground in showing us how activists such as Manfred Fischer made a tremendous contribution to turn the focus of Germany's memory to the Cold War and the Berlin Wall in particular. The book is masterfully told. Harrison combines micro and macro perspectives; her narrative interweaves Fischer's personal story with the broader debates on *Erinnerungspolitik*. It is also superbly informed and deeply original. Harrison's countless interviews give the reader a direct glimpse into the idea and motives of Fischer and other protagonists. Harrison points out that Fischer was not happy with the so-called wall-peckers who began to chip away at the Wall. In an interview with Harrison, he noted that "I couldn't bring myself to hammer on the Wall and take a piece as a souvenir. It was a death machine, not a souvenir. It was dangerous. We must retain part of it so people will have some idea of what it was like. I had an instinct but not a plan. I just knew that we needed to secure the crime scene, preserve the clues. And to do that, we needed to get some of the Wall declared a historic landmark and could not be touched" (82).

Harrison's book is a tour de force engaging the reader in the contests over the past and future of united Germany. The book tells the conflicts over the establishment of the Berlin Wall Memorial with empathy, passion, and analytical clarity drawing from numerous sources from the Landesarchiv Berlin and the German Historical Museum (Deutsches Historisches Museum, DHM). The sources shed new light on the congenial efforts by Fischer and Helmut Trotnow, a historian working as the head of the department of history and memorial sites at DHM, who had the same instincts Fischer did that some of the Wall must be saved as a memorial. Trotnow fought an uphill battle among his West German colleagues who assumed that the vast majority of Berliners simply wished the remnants of the Wall away. Fischer had plenty of pastoral opponents to preserving the Wall at Bernauer Strasse. The leaders of the Sophien Church community and the Lazarus Parish were fundamentally opposed to Fischer's and Trotnow's plan. Both institutions were residents of the section of Bernauer Strasse where they sought to preserve the remnants of the Wall. Pastor Johannes Hildebrandt of the Sophien Church was adamantly opposed to preserving any part of the Berlin Wall. As Harrison writes, "the fact that many of the graves in the Sophien cemetery had been moved by the [Socialist Unity Party] SED authorities only increased his passionate feelings that the Wall must be completely eliminated. He certainly did not want to see the state again taking the land from the cemetery grounds, not even for a Wall memorial" (90). In turn, Harrison investigates Fischer's and Trotnow's controversial plan for the future of Bernauer Strasse consisting of three components, a memorial for the victims of the Wall, a museum, and a reconstruction of a section of the former border strip (94). Policymakers in Berlin were impressed by the way Fischer presented the case for the establishment of the memorial. Harrison shows that Fischer "sought to rise above [...] local disagreements on Bernauer Strasse appealing to a wider interest in remembering the Wall. Fischer repeatedly stressed [...] both the Wall's impact on the residents of Bernauer Strasse and the global significance and memory of the Wall. [...] Bernauer Strasse was known around the world as the Wall Street. Tragedies occurred here. The demolition [of the remaining sections of the Wall] would obliterate a piece of tragic German history, and that cannot be in anybody's interest" (96). Eventually, on August 13, 1991, after more bureaucratic infighting, the Senate of Berlin backed the creation of a memorial site at Bernauer Strasse, 30 years after the erection of the Wall. Harrison reiterates that the finalization of the

Memorial in 1998 “marked an important first step in broadening German memory culture to include victims of the Berlin Wall” (110).

Another important contribution of the book is its analysis of the connection between national identity, history, and collective memory. As Harrison puts it: “How nations remember their past – what they choose to mark or to ignore – says much about what they value, how they see themselves in the present, and how they want to be in the future” (15). Harrison depicts West German President Richard von Weizsäcker as one of the first influential memory activists. On May 8, 1985, on the fortieth anniversary of the German surrender to the allies in World War II, von Weizsäcker gave a cutting-edge speech calling on the Germans to accept responsibility for the Holocaust, speaking at length about the need to “look truth straight in the eye” (17). As Harrison notes, von Weizsäcker declared that the Germans should see that “May 8 was a day of liberation. It liberated all of us from the inhumanity and tyranny of the National-Socialist regime” (18). Von Weizsäcker wanted the Germans to look back on May 8 not primarily as a day of defeat, but as a new start on the path to democracy.

In the 1990s, von Weizsäcker’s thoughts on responsibility played a crucial role in the emergence of overall concept for the memory of the Wall. The victims and the perpetrators had to be named, and the *Gesamtkonzept* (overall concept) for remembering the Berlin Wall took a much stronger line against the East German leaders than had initially been called for in the draft plan (208). Moreover, as Harrison notes, the narrative of the Wall’s memory also included the role in the East German civic opposition movement in bringing down the Wall. “People overcame the wall with their own power. This can and should make one proud,” one of the initiators of the Bundestag motion noted (209). Harrison shows that another focus of discussions about a master plan concerned the meaning and the lessons of the Wall. In June 2005, the German Bundestag adopted the *Gesamtkonzept* in a unanimous vote. Harrison quotes German parliamentarian Stephen Hilsberg, who passionately described the educational tasks of memorizing the wall: “We can’t just forget about [the Wall] as if we had a bad conscience [...] We must show it all, and not just dryly, correctly, and in details and with scholarly methods but also emotionally and engagingly. We must give emotional answers – the opposition to dictatorship, the surge for freedom and democracy. We must show the importance of democracy as a guarantor for freedom, independence, self-reliance and emancipation. Democracy solves problems much better than dictatorship” (307-8). The overall approach looked at the Wall in the broader context of European and global history during the Cold War.

Harrison makes an important point in emphasizing that former GDR officials still object to a critical view of the Wall, arguing instead that SED policymakers, the army, and border soldiers had been fulfilling their duties in protecting the GDR’s security (212). She deserves credit for her precise analysis of the conflicting narratives about the Wall and the increasing federal involvement in memory politics emphasizing the need to create a positive narrative about the fall of the Wall (chapter 8). Harrison writes that “Bundestag members believed it was important to celebrate the East German opposition movement, the fall of the Wall, and unification by building a monument. With the Holocaust Memorial of 2005 and other monuments and memorial sites in Berlin dedicated to the Nazi and East German periods and their victims, policymakers argued that it was high time for a positive monument to celebrate the fateful developments of 1989-90” (306). She traces back the origins of the advocacy for a Freedom and Unity Monument, noting that in November 9, 2007, the Bundestag issued a decree proposing the site of the former National Kaiser Wilhelm Monument on the Schlossfreiheit for the new structure, next to the site of the City Palace Berlin that since 2013 has been in the process of being reconstructed. As of 2020, construction work for the Freedom and Unity Memorial is underway.

After the Berlin Wall includes a subchapter on external approaches to remembering the Wall (326ff) that looks into the controversies about the meaning of the Wall outside of Germany and critical views of the main German narrative about the fall of the Wall. Harrison points out that “the Poles were incensed when the European Commission produced a short film ‘20th anniversary of Democratic Change in Central and Eastern Europe,’ which completely left out Solidarity.” (328) Harrison depicts international perceptions of the events in 1989 arguing that “for countries farther away from Germany and not involved in the revolution of 1989 [...] the fall of the Wall was viewed in a much more German centric-way” (330). It might be promising for future research projects to look even deeper into external perceptions of Germany’s memory policy after the Wall and external images of the new Germany and the Berlin Republic in general. Who are the Germans? Can they be trusted? Do they trust themselves? To what extent has Germany become a more normal state?

How do the Germans see themselves in the present? How do we want to be in the future? What is our identity? These questions are at the heart of Harrison's conclusion on the relevance of 'memory as warning' in the context of the 2015 refugee crisis. Civic activism is all the more important in the face of rising intolerance in recent years. Hope Harrison concludes her book by again quoting Manfred Fischer: "We can never sit still and think our work is finished. We must keep confronting new challenges or we won't matter" (423). Harrison's book will matter. It will be a reference point. It will frame the memory and identity discussions for the future.

RESPONSE BY HOPE M. HARRISON, THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

I am very grateful to H-Diplo for commissioning these reviews and to the reviewers for putting such time and thought into reading and commenting on my work. While a book is a concrete thing that represents years of hard work (at least in my case!), it is also something magical. Once you create it, it is out in the world for people to take what they will from it. People the author has never met and probably never will meet read and interact with the book in a way that feels miraculous. Especially in these difficult days of the Covid-19 pandemic, I treasure the chance to interact with colleagues around the world via this roundtable.

Any author is happy to read that her colleagues find her book to be movingly written and comprehensively researched. I am particularly gratified that William Glenn Gray appreciated the way I wrote about the connection of the fall of the Berlin Wall with performances of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and his opera *Fidelio*, since those were some of my favorite writing moments. But of course I am not called on to write an author's response because of the reviewers' praise for my work; rather I will take up their questions and critiques.

My book focuses on the politics and culture of German historical memory of the Berlin Wall, particularly the narratives put forward in public spaces and at public ceremonies. I was interested in unpacking how certain narratives have dominated the public sphere at various moments over the past thirty years. To do this, I investigated the role of particular individuals who drove the process of creating these narratives. I considered how those individuals and processes fit into broader debates and developments. Some of the reviewers—Pertti Ahonen, Mark Fenemore, and Gray—raise some questions about my focus on individuals in general and on some individuals instead of others.

Ahonen wonders whether I overemphasize the impact of some individuals instead of broader forces. This is of course an old historical debate. I meant to show both individuals and broader forces and the intersection between them. Too many studies of history and collective memory neglect to uncover exactly how certain narratives gain traction. They forget that real people are involved in creating the way history is remembered. My approach identified key public sites connected to the Berlin Wall (especially the Berlin Wall Memorial and Checkpoint Charlie), memory policies at the federal and state level, and commemorative events (especially on anniversaries of the rise and fall of the Wall) and then investigated the back story of the key individuals involved in these. I also noted whether and when the efforts of those individuals had broader support in society and/or the political sphere and when they did not.

On the role of the broader German public, Fenemore wanted me to look more at memory consumers and public opinion surveys. I did some of this, but my focus was not on the reception of historical narratives; it was on their creation. There is much work for others to do on the reception side of memory policy.

Ahonen, Fenemore, and Gray were surprised I did not devote more attention to the role of professional historians in the memory policies I analyzed. At multiple points in the book, I describe the role of historians and their own concern at both the extent to which the government was making history policy and at their own roles in advising the government. Martin Sabrow, Bernd Faulenbach, Konrad Jarausch, Manfred Wilke, and Hans-Hermann Hertle are among the historians whose influence I analyze. But they were not the only individuals influencing history policy.

Among the other individuals influencing public memory of the Wall, Ahonen asks why I did not say more about Karin Gueffroy, the mother of Chris Gueffroy, the last person shot by East German border soldiers when he tried to escape from East to West Berlin in February 1989. Karin Gueffroy has been the most widely written about (including by Ahonen

himself)⁴⁴ family member of someone killed attempting to reach West Berlin. For this reason, I chose to write about the role of another parent, Horst Schmidt, and his fight for justice in memory of his son Michael, who was killed in an escape attempt in December 1980. Horst Schmidt was just as involved as Karin Gueffroy in the trials of those who killed their sons and the later trials of the military and political leaders in which they were both co-plaintiffs. While Chris Gueffroy's case was the first trial of those involved in killing would-be refugees in 1991, Michael Schmidt's was the second.

I think perhaps Fenimore wanted me to write a different kind of book, one more theoretically focused on borders and "borderscape." My interest, however, was in the very real, traumatic impact of the division of Berlin and Germany on Germans and how that impacted historical memory of the Wall. Discussions about the Wall are deeply emotional for many Germans, and that emotion was one of the things I was wanted to convey. That emotion is no doubt why some reviewers have been moved by my book. Similarly, while Fenimore wished I had written conceptually about the idea of the past haunting Germans, the individual and broader social reality of that is in fact described on every page of my book.

Mary Fulbrook argues that I did not explicitly offer my judgements about the memory contests and the Wall itself and wishes that I had. I struggled with this issue as I wrote the book and discussed it on multiple occasions with colleagues. In the end I consciously tried to keep my own assessments out of the book as much as possible and to let the Germans speak for themselves. Of course, if I did not think it was important to remember the Wall and to grapple with the history of those who built it, lived with it, and helped bring it down, I probably would not have written the book.

Stephan Kieninger takes up my discussion of German national identity and how that is seen domestically and externally. Both he and Gray place my work in part in the broader literature examining whether the Germans can be seen as "normal" or whether they will always be seen as uniquely tainted because of the Holocaust. As I describe, twenty years after the fall of the Wall, German memory policy regarding the Wall evolved from a focus on the Wall as another German mass crime with perpetrators and victims into a perspective that highlighted the East German people's call for freedom and democracy in a "Peaceful Revolution" that brought down the Wall and the Communist regime behind it. This new founding myth of united Germany made Germany and Germans appear not only more "normal," but indeed admirable.

Since the refugee crisis of 2015 and the attendant rise of the far right in Germany, proponents of this founding myth have emphasized the urgent importance of defending civic freedoms, democracy, and human rights for all. That is the kind of civic activism they endorse, drawing on the lessons of the Communist Wall and also the Nazi Holocaust, as I describe in the book. Yet, as we have seen on the streets of Germany, the U.S., and other countries, that is not the only kind of civic activism people are practicing these days. The far right has a very different image of which rights should be defended, for whom, and to what ends. Battles over the past and the present and the relationship between the two are continually evolving. I hope my book elucidated that in a persuasive and powerful manner in the case of remembering the Berlin Wall.

⁴⁴ Pertti Ahonen, *Death at the Berlin Wall* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 255-57. See also Mary Elise Sarotte, *The Collapse: The Accidental Opening of the Berlin Wall* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 174-75; and Andy Eckardt, "Victims of the Berlin Wall never forgotten: no joy for mother of last young man killed attempting escape," NBC News, November 12, 2004.