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Review of *The state against society: Political crises and their aftermath in Central Europe*

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promise to reconcile opposing policies quickly turned into a nightmare, snuffing out hopes of child-welfare advocates of all schools. Hitler's failure made possible the "(re)establishment of a stable corporatist-democratic child welfare policy," Dickinson argues (243).

Situating his dense but carefully sculpted account of policy debates in a broader context, the author provides background essential for the reader interested in the comparative study of social welfare but not steeped in German history. For example, he provides a concise synthesis of the pertinent German political developments impinging on welfare policy after 1945 (244-46). One element in this picture was the growth in Catholic influence within the post-war boundaries of the Federal Republic, a point that the author will perhaps explore comparatively in a promised future study that will include Italy and the United States.

Washington, D.C.

Thomas M. Adams

The State against Society: Political Crises and Their Aftermath in Central Europe. By Grzegorz Ekiert. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996. Pp. xvi, 436. \$19.95.)

Grzegorz Ekiert has written a useful and insightful volume that cuts a wide swath through the postwar history of East Central Europe. He focuses on what he regards as the three most significant political crises of the period of Soviet-dominated Communist rule: the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the Prague Spring of 1968, and Poland's "self-limiting" revolution of 1980-1981. His special interest in these turbulent events, however, is not so much their origins or reasons for their short-term failure. Instead he concentrates on the efforts of the communist party-state in each case to achieve, as he puts it, demobilization and reequilibration immediately following the suppression of the forces for change. In every instance, the author considers the influence and interaction of the party-state itself, the opposition and resistance groups arrayed against it, and, to a somewhat lesser extent, the international situation.

Ekiert calls for "a more specific and historically grounded understanding of structural factors shaping processes of regime change and democratic transition," and finds that the outcome of the demobilization process differs according to the characteristics of the political crisis in question (330). In Hungary, the triumphant party-state was able to move beyond an initial period of severe repression and begin pursuing more flexible and inclusionary policies ("goulash Communism") that eventually won it a large measure of popular support. The other two cases produced weak party-states, but for different reasons. In Czechoslovakia, the attempt to create "socialism with a human face" was never more than a top-down revolution in which the level of popular mobilization was low. Factionalism among the ruling elites eventually resulted in the victory of pro-Soviet conservatives who applied neo-Stalinist policies to the country, keeping it the most regressive within the Eastern Bloc for the next two decades. While official demobilization succeeded there, nonparty political activity in Poland was so widespread and entrenched that, even after the imposition of martial law and the outlawing of Solidarity, the regime was unable to reclaim the political initiative and increasingly had to justify its very existence on traditional, non-Marxist grounds. Ekiert also maintains that these political crises and their aftermath helped to determine the manner in which each

country would achieve its independence in 1989 (a “negotiated transition” in Poland and Hungary versus a “popular upsurge” in Czechoslovakia).

The State Against Society has much in it to recommend. By means of sophisticated analysis and impressive research, Ekiert successfully demonstrates that the political situation in each of these countries was a unique phenomenon rather than just another product of the state-socialist cookie cutter. The organization of the book is clear; each crisis merits a chapter devoted to its causes and nature, another dealing with the manner of its immediate suppression, and a third detailing the policies of the post-crisis regime. A by-product of this approach is a certain repetitiveness, not necessarily a bad thing in a work so rich in concepts. That, however, is no excuse for the glutinous prose and many stylistic errors. Ekiert's book, which deserves the attention of students of East Central Europe, deserved a better editor as well.

John Carroll University

James H. Krukones

Reinventing Germany: German Political Developments Since 1945. By Anthony Glees. (Oxford and Washington, D.C.: Berg, 1996. Pp. xxxiii, 306. \$22.95.

Anthony Glees has provided us with an extremely insightful, detailed, and readable account of postwar German political development. Of necessity, the coverage is selective. Thus the author focuses primarily on “high politics”—the origin of the Federal Republic in the postwar context; Adenauer's “Westpolitik”; Brandt's Ostpolitik; nuclear re/disarmament during the 1980s; and German unification. Likewise, the emphasis is on the major players in these processes: the top echelons of government, particularly the respective chancellors themselves; the main political parties; and the four victorious allies of World War II. Anyone looking for a comprehensive social, political, and economic history of the FRG will thus be disappointed. The eastern part of the country is treated sparingly, though the title of the book might suggest otherwise.

Glees is extraordinarily knowledgeable of, and sensitive to, the psychological dimension of German politics. This quality sets him apart from many analysts, both foreign and domestic. For example, much has been written since 1989 about the likelihood of a “Fourth Reich” emerging, particularly in the nonacademic press. He effectively debunks such nonsense without failing to see the possibility of less benign developments in the future. He shrewdly and correctly points out that Germany's European partners, particularly France and the United Kingdom, have a major responsibility of insuring that Germany is not pushed in such a direction.

Glees stresses the extent to which Germany, under the leadership of Adenauer and later Brandt, has recast itself in a liberal Western mold and how it is governed in a distinctly consensual fashion. There are occasions, however, when the author's otherwise acute judgment fails him. For example, he claims that, had it not been for the collapse of communism in 1989, the political system “might have begun to unravel” as a result of the numerous scandals during the 1980s (213). This conclusion, even if it were true (and it is not), flies in the face of his analysis in the first 200 pages of the book. His statement that, when unification appeared