

2-1998

The United States Military Government in Austria, Volume 1. Aspects of Security Policy in the American Occupation of Southern Upper Austria, 1945-1950 – Book Review

Harry Ritter

Western Washington University, harry.ritter@wwu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://cedar.wwu.edu/history_facpubs

Part of the [History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Ritter, Harry, "The United States Military Government in Austria, Volume 1. Aspects of Security Policy in the American Occupation of Southern Upper Austria, 1945-1950 – Book Review" (1998). *History Faculty and Staff Publications*. 34.
https://cedar.wwu.edu/history_facpubs/34

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the History at Western CEDAR. It has been accepted for inclusion in History Faculty and Staff Publications by an authorized administrator of Western CEDAR. For more information, please contact westerncedar@wwu.edu.



German Studies Association

US-Militärregierung Oberösterreich. Band 1: Sicherheitspolitische Aspekte der amerikanischen Besatzung in Oberösterreich-Süd 1945-1950 by Kurt Tweraser

Review by: Harry Ritter

German Studies Review, Vol. 21, No. 1 (Feb., 1998), pp. 182-183

Published by: [The Johns Hopkins University Press](#) on behalf of the [German Studies Association](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1432447>

Accessed: 29/10/2014 16:18

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



The Johns Hopkins University Press and German Studies Association are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *German Studies Review*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

constitutionalism of Bonn depicted in this volume is so remarkable that when Glees enumerates the problems of today's reunited Germany in his final chapter, Germany ironically appears to be headed in a quite different direction. Just as Bonn was not to be Weimar, so too the Berlin Republic may not be Bonn, because Germans, Glees argues, are only now reclaiming their national heritage of an erratic political development.

Dramatic confrontations aside, given its clear manner of integrating chancellors with crucial issues Germany faced after 1945, this book is provocative and should serve as a vivid and profitable supplementary text in any undergraduate course dealing with contemporary Germany.

JOHN F. FLYNN, *Sewanee, University of the South*

Kurt Tweraser. *US-Militärregierung Oberösterreich. Band 1: Sicherheitspolitische Aspekte der amerikanischen Besatzung in Oberösterreich-Süd 1945-1950*. Linz: Oberösterreichisches Landesarchiv, 1995. Pp. 447. Cloth DM 49,—.

In the first volume of his projected two-part study of the U.S. military government in Upper Austria, Kurt Tweraser has produced a model of regional administrative history. Based on careful research in the archives of Upper Austria, the Linz city archives, and the U.S. National Archives, the study is the capstone of Tweraser's valuable series of monographs and articles on Upper Austrian politics from the late Habsburg era to the Cold-War period.

In his second volume, the author promises to analyze economic and cultural themes; this volume's focus is on "security," a term that embraces the establishment of the American occupation system, the revival of local politics and judicial process, denazification, criminality and other complications arising from the displaced persons problem, and neo-Nazi and communist agitation. The narrative unfolds in clear, logical prose, each section concluding with a concise review of that chapter's most important findings.

As in Austria overall, Tweraser asserts, the key word for understanding postwar American policy in Upper Austria is "ambivalence." Army proconsuls, unschooled for the tasks of peacetime administration (much less building democratic institutions), viewed Austrians concurrently as liberated people and conquered foes. The latter attitude was reinforced by the discovery of the horrors of Mauthausen and other camps located, incongruously, in the beautiful countryside. American military leaders were nonetheless mainly pragmatists, usually politically conservative, and often uneasy in the context of an alien culture self-confident in its own authoritarian norms of bureaucratic process. Under the circumstances, they were eager to find local officials to rebuild an effective administration and to expedite economic recovery. Thus they embraced experienced, moderate to conservative officials

epitomized by the right-wing Socialist Ernst Koref (Mayor of Linz from 1945 to 1962) and the former Fatherland Front official Heinrich Gleissner (Upper Austrian *Landeshauptmann* from 1934 to 1938, reappointed to serve again from 1945 to 1971). As a result, there was no imposition of an American political style, but rather a continuation of Josephinian legalism. Denazification was quickly relaxed, given the trans-ideological ties that bound most officials and the interest of all experienced bureaucrats in preserving administrative traditions. Nevertheless, there was no significant support for neo-Nazi agitation.

Tweraser also pays considerable attention to latent and overt anti-Semitism, which rushed to the surface over popular belief that Jews enjoyed privileges and protection in DP camps. Tweraser's discussion of Communist efforts to manipulate these tensions and American authorities' inept response culminating in the "Bad Ischler Milch-Prozess" of 1947 is particularly useful as a micro-study that illuminates the dynamics of relations between occupiers, native officials, and the public in the emerging Cold War environment. The Bad Ischl affair was also recently discussed by Margit Reiter in *Politische Affären und Skandale in Österreich*, edited by Michael Gehler and Hubert Sickinger (1995).

In sum, in this volume Tweraser has produced a gem of regional political history that makes an important contribution to our understanding of the dawn of Austria's postwar order.

HARRY RITTER, *Western Washington University*

Martin Georg Goerner. *Die Kirche als Problem der SED. Strukturen kommunistischer Herrschaftsausübung gegenüber der evangelischen Kirche, 1945 bis 1958* (Studien des Forschungsverbundes SED-Staat der Freien Universität Berlin). Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997. Pp. xii, 433. Cloth DM 98,—.

This study by a promising young scholar represents the definitive historical work on the church-state relationship in the GDR during the early postwar period. Goerner brings to this topic not only extensive familiarity with the archival sources, but also personal experience in the GDR. The study builds upon his extensive research for the Enquete Commission on this topic, augmented by in-depth treatment of the rapidly growing body of secondary literature. The study was originally written as a dissertation at the liberal Potsdam University, but was published under the auspices of the conservative Research Group on the SED State at the Free University of Berlin. Despite the obvious cross-pressures, Goerner has succeeded in producing a rigorous, nonpolemical treatment.

His main purpose is to analyze the shift in SED policy in 1953: after earlier attempting to integrate the church, then to liquidate it, the SED shifted to a strategy of infiltrating and undermining the church from within, seeking to control the