Guido Goldman: Transatlantic Bridge Builder

By Martin Klingst. Translated by Brian Hanrahan. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2021. Pp. xx + 208. Paperback $34.95. ISBN: 978-1800732636.

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Originally published in German, this brief biography examines the life of one of the transatlantic elite's lesser-known members: Guido Goldman (1937-2020), the Swiss-born son of Nahum Goldmann, founder and president of the World Jewish Congress, and Alice Gottschalk. It is an authorized biography, commissioned by the German Foreign Ministry to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the German Marshall Fund, one of the many transatlantic organizations Goldman was intimately connected with as a fundraiser and manager.

Martin Klingst, a former *Die Zeit* journalist and speechwriter for President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, openly admits to his initial reluctance to take on the project, "when I realized just how many contemporary witnesses there were, not to mention the rich and extensive collection of available historical documents" (xv). As it turns out, historical documents hardly play a role in this biography, nor does the existing (academic) literature. Instead, Klingst relies mostly on interviews, giving the book somewhat of a best-of-dinner-table-stories feel. Granted, some of these stories are interesting, since Goldman was an influential behind-the-scenes operator, who was involved in the creation not only of the German Marshall Fund (GMF) but also Harvard's Center for European Studies (CES) and the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies. His main talent seems to have been for fundraising, relying in part on the network of wealthy contacts established through his family connections while growing up in New York City. According to Klingst, Goldman "raised more than $100 million in donations" (6) over the course of his life. An impressive sum, indeed.

While working on a Ph.D. in History at Harvard University in the 1960s, Goldman befriended several colleagues with similar Jewish-European backgrounds. Together with two of them – Henry Kissinger and Stanley Hoffmann – Goldman helped set up West European Studies, the precursor to the Center for European Studies. As director of West European Studies and CES, Goldman recognized the importance of a special relationship between Harvard University and the Federal Republic of Germany. This special relationship was based in part on a mutually beneficent scenario: Harvard could provide honorary degrees and the perfect setting for a high-profile speech or commencement address; the Federal Republic (or its private and political foundations) could provide funding for CES, the German Marshall Fund, and a variety of Harvard fellowship programs.

Goldman first pulled this off in the summer of 1972, when he invited West German Chancellor Willy Brandt to give a speech at Harvard to announce the creation of the German Marshall Fund (based on a 150 million Deutschmark gift by the West German government), twenty-five years after Secretary of State George C. Marshall had used Harvard to announce the Marshall Plan. Many high-ranking German politicians would follow, including Helmut Schmidt, Richard von Weizsäcker, Helmut Kohl, and Angela Merkel. According to Klingst, Goldman even "pulled some strings" (144) to allow Walter Kohl, Chancellor Helmut Kohl's son, to spend time at Harvard in 1985. As Klingst wryly notes, "maintaining relationships definitely did not hurt. Eventually Kohl gave in, granting the German Marshall Fund a further hundred million marks" (145).

Klingst does an engaging job of telling these stories, but he is less interested in the institutional histories of CES or GMF, or in the inner workings of the transatlantic networks at

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the heart of them. Perhaps it would have been too much to ask for an in-depth study like Anne Zetsche's recent book *The Atlantik-Brücke and the American Council on Germany, 1952-1974* (2021). As it stands, *Guido Goldman: Transatlantic Bridge Builder* serves mainly as an interesting short introduction to an important transatlantic "informal diplomat."

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Sustainable Utopias: The Art and Politics of Hope in Germany

By Jennifer L. Allen. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 2022. Pp. 368. Cloth $39.95. ISBN: 978-0674249141.

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As the East Bloc began to crumble in the late 1980s, Germany found itself at the epicenter of tumultuous political change. Much has been written about West German chancellor Helmut Kohl's long tenure in office, which began in a divided Germany and ended in a reunified one. Jennifer Allen's important new book takes a fresh approach to this period by exploring its cultural dimension. The 1980s saw the demise of the guiding visions of the post-World War II period in both West and East—the turn away from the "68ers" ideals, the decline of the postwar settlement between labor and capital, and the beginning of an era of neoliberalism in the West, as well as the failure of the socialist ideal in the East. It seems odd, Allen acknowledges, to frame a book in terms of utopias in an era of apparent anti-utopianism. This is, however, exactly what she does. She reinterprets the meaning of the term, or rather her research subjects do, abandoning grand societal visions in favor of stepwise progress toward practical, community-level "sustainable utopias" (14).

Allen builds her argument around the trajectories of three West German activist movements stemming from the early 1980s. Each was utopian, she asserts, in the sense that it mobilized space with the intention of upending societal power relations and fostering radical democracy. The Berlin History Workshop was a nexus of professional and amateur historians whose goal was to challenge "undemocratic hierarchies of knowledge" by moving historical methodology out of the academy and into local communities, helping ordinary citizens narrate their own histories (23). The Greens, a movement turned political party, pursued a program of cultural engagement in everyday spaces. They viewed this engagement as a "catechism" for both green living and for grassroots democracy (140). The spatial interventionists were less an organized group than a "loose collection" of practitioners and advocates for public art (23). They tried to force local citizens to think differently about the nature of public spaces by placing ordinary objects in unusual places or in unusual patterns in a space. Their installations were meant to compel democratic engagement with those spaces in order to foster social change.

The first three chapters describe the origins of these movements and their early interventions aimed at promoting community-level cultural change. The Berlin History Workshop's signature project was documenting the Nazi rise to power in everyday Berlin life. The Greens supported the decentralization of cultural spaces and the notion of average citizens as cultural mediators, reflected in their support for an Active Museum and opposition to a