

Auf die weiteren Teile des Konferenzbandes kann hier aus Platzgründen leider nicht näher eingegangen werden. Den Vf. wie auch den Hrsg. ist aber für eine trotz der Themenvielfalt sehr konsistente Darstellung der Möglichkeiten und Grenzen bei der Erforschung der von den Sicherheitsdiensten stammenden Überwachungsakten und damit verbunden deren historischer Bewältigung zu danken. Die Beiträge sowohl in englischer wie in deutscher Sprache sind gut und flüssig lesbar. Allen, die sich für die zentral- und südosteuropäischen „Giftschränke“ des Kommunismus aus wissenschaftlicher Perspektive interessieren, ist der Band auch aufgrund vieler neuer Informationen und Überlegungen nachdrücklich zu empfehlen. Der Aussage Roland Berbig vom Institut für deutsche Literatur an der Berliner Humboldt-Universität, der in seinem Grußwort Überwachungsakten als eine Textform charakterisiert, die „aus Ungeheuerlichem kommt, Ungeheuer gebiert und uns aus düsteren Gründen nicht geheuer ist“ (S. 17), kann man allerdings nur zustimmen, und so lässt die Lektüre sowohl der Akten als auch dieses Bandes über den Umgang mit ihnen viele Leser angesichts der sich eröffnenden Abgründe menschlichen Tuns sicherlich recht fassungslos zurück.

Marburg

Jürgen Warmbrunn

Pauli A. Heikkilä: Estonia as a Captive Nation. International Cooperation in Exile within the Assembly of Captive European Nations, 1954–1972. (On the Boundary of Two Worlds, Bd. 46.) Brill Schöningh. Paderborn 2021. XXII, 296 S., Ill., Tab. ISBN 978-3-506-79182-5. (€ 109,—)

Pauli Heikkilä has already published a book¹ and several research articles on aspects of the history of the Estonian exiles during the early phase of the Cold War. This time, he focuses on the Estonian activists who became involved with the work of the Assembly of Captive European Nations (ACEN) from 1954 to 1972. The ACEN was funded by the Free Europe Committee, which is best known for running the Radio Free Europe broadcast operation, and was one of the front organizations of that Committee. The ACEN was in fact an umbrella organization for ten exile committees and councils from nine Central European nations, so the work of the Estonia section studied in this book was only a fraction of the ACEN's work.

The question of the ACEN's place in the overall US anti-Communist strategy, both in terms of overt and covert measures, still remains very much unanalyzed and is not fully explored in this volume. However, it is known that the Free Europe Committee was founded in 1949 by the State Department and the CIA and received the bulk of its funding from government sources. When the CIA's involvement became clear in 1971, funding ceased and the organization was shut down in 1972.

The idea of the ACEN was to use Eastern European émigrés to gather information from behind the Iron Curtain and assist in anti-communist propaganda and other measures considered advisable by the CIA, in order to roll back or contain communism. Quite how the ACEN, and the Estonian group within it, fitted into grand strategy of the US we will not find out in this volume. However, in perhaps the most interesting part of the book (chapter 4.1., "Losing Foundations"), H. gives examples of the ideas of some Estonian activists on how the US should have tried to liberate Eastern Europe. He illustrates, but does not analyze comprehensively, how the change in US strategy from containment to coexistence created difficulties for Estonian émigrés glued to the idea of a rollback.

Unfortunately, much of the book is burdened with detail about internal squabbles among the Estonian diaspora politicians. That émigré politics was beset with intrigue hardly comes as a surprise. For these first-generation émigrés still finding their feet in their new home countries, the question of who would achieve which position (paid in American

¹ PAULI HEIKKILÄ: *Estonians for Europe: National Activism for European Unification, 1922–1991*, Bruxelles et al. 2014.

money), was clearly one of subsistence and not only of politics. Does it need that much attention? Many interesting themes and promising openings are buried under the ballast of explaining exile quarrels and organizational issues. Moreover, the intricacies of all the intrigues and developments that the author tries to explain often remain indigestible because of the style of the writing.

The problem is not one of language, even though English is not the author's native tongue, but an inability or unwillingness to explain ideas in greater length. The reader is often left wondering about the intention of the author's lines of argument, and must either re-read sentences and passages several times or abandon the attempt. There are also questionable speculations, like those at the very beginning of the book. It is supposed that Charlie Chaplin got the idea for the character "King Shahdov" in his film *A King in New York* (1957) from an obscure Estonian émigré politician, about whom there was a news item in *The New York Times* in 1952. Speculations such as these and the obscurity of many passages diminish the value of the author's extremely thorough research.

Part of the problem why the ideas of the book are hard to comprehend may be a confusion about its aims and the resulting inability to structure it properly. In the introduction, it is stated that the book has "enough of a theoretical basis to take an objective perspective regarding sources," (p. XIII). This clearly is an overstatement, because there is hardly any theory to be found. Moreover, there is no proper introduction to the Cold War context. The overview of historiography, pressed into less than two pages, is insufficient as well. It does not do justice to other authors (for example, the works of Anna Mazurkiewicz are mentioned only in passing), but it also leaves the reader wondering where H.'s work is positioned in the overall literature on the Cold War and the American Eastern European diaspora.

H. adds that his book "primarily relies on primary sources and seeks to remind readers of a forgotten past" (p. XIII), which is not a valid objective for an academic work. Indeed, the author goes beyond those aims along the way, providing a lot of interesting insights, but these are usually not followed through. In the end, however, he does present some conclusions that are worthy of consideration. For example, he suggests that the ACEN remained an elitist organization that had difficulties mobilizing "ordinary emigrants" (p. 275) and speculates that it would have fallen into oblivion without the withdrawal of CIA funding. This seems to be a valid point.

There is also the hypothesis that 1972, the year of the termination of the ACEN, was a "turning point in Cold War exile politics" (p. 276), but this is not substantiated by research. Indeed, H. contradicts himself by saying that the significance of the ACEN had, in fact, diminished years before. Furthermore, he points to President Richard Nixon's visit to Peking as a watershed without providing evidence of how it actually impacted émigré politics.

H. seems to imply renewed efforts to strengthen Baltic cooperation as one of the changes brought about by détente, but largely underrates the importance of joint Baltic organizations in the US, such as the Baltic Appeal to the United Nations (BATUN), established in 1966. If we look at the activities of BATUN, we will see that it engaged in global (largely informal) cooperation with Balts already at the end of the 1960s. As to strategy, in 1970/71 BATUN changed its focus from decolonization to human rights and its scope of activities from a global arena to the region of Europe, quite apart from events surrounding the CSCE. The ACEN had already become irrelevant by that time.

Overall, this book is a reservoir of facts and thoughts about aspects of Estonian émigré politics that has slight connection to the overall history of the Cold War. Its usefulness is limited. Its detailed, sometimes tedious text is challenging for a specialist, not to mention a reader unfamiliar with the history of the Estonian diaspora. The theme is not insignificant, but the presentation is not reader-friendly. Additional difficulties arise from confusion about aims and scope, which undermines some valuable aspects of the monograph. Anyone interested in the history of the ACEN would be better served by looking at other sources, for example Mazurkiewicz's *Voice of the Silenced Peoples in the Global Cold War*.

Helsinki

Kaarel Piirimäe