

bleibt auch, dass die britische Militärregierung 1945 gegen vormalige polnische Zwangsarbeiter, die als marodierende Banden das Land unsicher machten, hart durchgriff. Später wollte man jüdischen DPs, die am Schwarzmarkt mitverdienten, solche Geschäfte verwehren. Selbst die Bedeutung der von den Alliierten 1945 durchgesetzten neuen Grenzfestlegungen kommt zu kurz, wenigstens eine entsprechende Landkarte hätte ergänzt werden sollen. Für 1949 spricht B. fälschlicherweise von „Czech Republic“ (S. 74). Überdies gibt es nicht wenige kleine sprachliche Unstimmigkeiten.

In ihrer Schlussbetrachtung macht die Vf. deutlich, dass bei ihrem im Untertitel des Buchs genannten „Kampf um eine Zukunft“ sich viele Entwurzelte nach ihrer Befreiung bzw. Ankunft im DP-Lager unschlüssig waren, wohin genau es gehen sollte; den meisten war zunächst die Familie wichtiger. Der Zionismus war nicht nur Symbol für das Ende der Diaspora und politische Überzeugung, sondern bot auch Ersatz für zerstörte Bindungen an die Herkunftsfamilie bzw. ethnische Gemeinschaft in der früheren Heimat. Nicht nur erwuchs er bei den jüdischen DPs über Kontinuitäten aus der Vorkriegszeit, sondern er gab ihrer Selbstorganisation auch Halt.

Als einen wesentlichen Unterschied der kollektiven Selbstwahrnehmung von Polen und Juden erkennt B., dass Erstere sich vor allem als Opfer des Kommunismus, Letztere hingegen (nur) des Nationalsozialismus betrachteten.

Sowohl jüdische als auch polnische DPs reisten oft nach den USA aus, was von „different pre-existing communities“ erleichtert wurde und weitere Migranten aus dem eigenen Umfeld nach sich zog (S. 19). Letztere schufen eine neue Diaspora, als der polnische Staat sowjetischer Fremdherrschaft unterworfen wurde.<sup>2</sup> Ausblickend bemerkt die Vf., es komme beim gegenwärtigen Forschungsstand darauf an, „to connect the population transfers of Germans, Poles, Ukrainians, and Jews into a common conceptual framework“ (S. 254). Für eine solche übergreifende Betrachtung hat sie eine wichtige Vorarbeit geleistet.

Marburg

Klaus-Peter Friedrich

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2 Über das Konstrukt einer in den 1940er Jahren einsetzenden „Zweiten Großen Emigration“ siehe zuletzt: KATARZYNA NOWAK: *Kingdom of Barracks. Polish Displaced Persons in Allied-Occupied Germany and Austria*, Montreal 2023, S. 20, 261.

**Tibor Valuch: *Everyday Life under Communism and After*.** Lifestyle and Consumption in Hungary, 1945–2000. CEU Press. Budapest u. a. 2021. XIV, 492 S. ISBN 978-9-633-86376-3. (€ 171,—)

Understandably, the peculiarly fraught history of Central and Eastern Europe since World War II has lent itself, especially among historians, to a preoccupation with sudden and violent change engineered by state actors. In *Everyday Life under Communism and After*, Tibor Valuch advocates recentering our understanding of the second half of the twentieth century in two important ways, namely by focusing on everyday life rather than politics and on continuity as opposed to change. When viewed through this prism, the late 1960s and early 1970s emerge as a liminal period in postwar Hungarian history that was characterized by “an infrastructural revolution” predicated on the spread of the mass media, motorization, and improved housing conditions, which, in turn, set the stage for the return to market capitalism after 1989 (p. 2).

V. divides his account into a short introductory chapter followed by five thematic chapters addressing income, consumption, housing, clothing, and food. He traces a similar trajectory across all these categories as the widespread deprivation of the 1950s gave way to something resembling a consumer society by the 1980s (although V. himself rejects this term, as discussed below). Although state socialism did not deliver on its promises of a better life for its subjects, he notes, “the mass pursuance of activities that supplemented income (second jobs, garden plots, working under the table, trading on the black market)” provided many the means to circumvent and manipulate the system to some degree

(p. 473). This was most apparent in the building trades, where fully half of all residences were being built with private funding by the 1970s. Indeed, for V., “the reality of everyday life in Hungary throughout the 1960s and 1970s consisted of the step-by-step reacquisition of the private sphere, from both a social and economic viewpoint” (p. 471). However, this was not a simple victory for “people power” over the regime: Many marginal groups (the urban poor, the rural population, and the Roma) were unable to benefit from these activities and saw little or no improvement in their lives before, during, or after the state socialist period.

Overall, this is a significant contribution to the historiography on Hungary and for the study of everyday life behind the Iron Curtain more broadly. While there is no shortage of statistics from archival and published sources in this account, but V. also cites a broad array of evidence drawn from non-archival sources, such as regime publications, fashion magazines, and even estate inventories. The result is a remarkable account of life lived under the state socialist regime told from the ground up. For this reader, the strongest part of this book is the chapter on fashion, which adroitly charts the evolution of a domestic fashion industry from its origins in the 1950s, when “portraits of Rákosi, Lenin and Stalin frequently hung above the catwalk,” to its 1970s counterpart flaunting jeans and miniskirts (pp. 346, 378–379, 409). In this case, as well as throughout this study, V.’s explanation of the rise of consumerism under state socialism is cogently argued and assiduously proven.

Regrettably, one cannot say the same about his treatment of “consumerism” as a category of analysis. V. argues against the emergence of “a ‘consumerist model of socialism’ complete with its own unique array of Hungarian characteristics,” (p. 91), but elsewhere agrees with many scholars on this topic that “Soviet satellite nations underwent an undeniably idiosyncratic type of ‘consumer revolution’” (p. 25), before concluding that “the rather complex array of social and economic mechanisms that are part and parcel of a consumer society represent the polar opposite of state socialist principles” (p. 470). While this does not necessarily detract from V.’s argument, it would have been interesting to see him engage more closely with the extensive scholarship on this topic.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, V.’s treatment of gender and women’s history is somewhat narrow; while there is a wealth of evidence here on women’s fashion, there is little mention of how the longitudinal shift towards consumerism affected other aspects of women’s lives, most notably in regard to having children (or not). As every parent knows, child-related costs significantly impact household economies—arguably, more so than any other single decision made by consumers. Purchasing contraceptives and paying for abortions are also consumer choices. All these considerations are curiously absent from this otherwise comprehensive treatment of consumerism in Hungary.

These relatively minor faults, however, are far outweighed by the book’s many strengths detailed above. While *Everyday Life under Communism* is likely too dense and granular for the general reading public or most undergraduate students, it should be required reading for all serious scholars of Central and Eastern Europe.

Whitewater

Karl Brown

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1 PAULINA BREN, MARY NEUBURGER (eds.): *Communism Unwrapped: Consumption in Cold War Eastern Europe*, New York 2012.