

LOBERG, Molly. *The Struggle for the Streets of Berlin. Politics, Consumption, and Urban Space, 1914 – 1945*. Cambridge; New York; Melbourne; New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2018. 329 p.

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In *The Struggle for the Streets of Berlin*, historian Molly Loberg (currently at the Department of History at California Polytechnic State University) brings together several topics in her research - politics, consumption and urban space. As she states, by combining these topics, she wants to contribute to research on the history of urban modernity. Part of the analysis she undertakes is to explore the relationship between lived experience in the capital, the media's interpretation of urban life, and the use of these interpretations in political struggle. For Loberg, the streets are at the centre of this, as they link all three aspects of her research. The book covers the years 1914 to 1945.

The book consists of 7 chapters. In the first chapter, the author focuses on advertising in the urban space of Berlin after the end of World War I. In doing so, she also begins the chapter by paying attention to the development of urban advertising in the context of the previous revolutions - the French Revolution, and especially the Revolution of 1848. She analyses the role of information columns in city streets, which served as highly visible and accessible sites of government regulations, as well as commercial advertising and political propaganda. The author considers them as the main form of urban media in the period under study. The chapter also includes a reminder of the transformation in the meaning of symbols that took place just after the fall of the German Empire. The main source the author works with in this part of the book is the poster. She analyses a number of contemporary posters and shows how the message to the masses was constructed just after the war. According to the author, 1918 represented a major turning point in this respect. Whereas in the previous period the display of posters had been under strict supervision and censorship, after November 1918 there was a relaxation of censorship. This caused a tremendous boom in street posters, and they began to be used in large numbers in political struggles. The subchapter on the relationship between municipality and public space is instructive; according to the author, the municipal government's attempt to both exploit and profit from the street as a readily available medium caused a boom in urban advertising in 1920s Berlin.

The second chapter is devoted to the issue of post-war street trade. The author analyses a number of topics related to street trade. She notes the role of war veterans in it, the relationship between the black market and the official market, as well as the relationship between street hawkers and traders. The author argues that it was war veterans who played a key role in this regard. Many of them were unable to find a place in society after returning from the front. One of their livelihood options was a 'career' as a street hawker. The conflict between street hawkers and traditional traders caused social tensions in whole neighbourhoods. The author argues that the first outbreak of anti-Semitism in Berlin (which took place in November 1923) was also closely related to this conflict. At the same time, she compares these riots in the Scheunenviertel neighbourhood with later pogroms that took place in Berlin in the 1930s. The author concludes the chapter noting how the difference with later pogroms was that in 1923 this act did not find support from members of the municipality, the wider public or the press.

In the third chapter, the author examines another aspect related to urban public space - its control. She demonstrates how the post-war municipality of Berlin dealt with this topic. In particular, the challenge was to keep the traffic situation in the city under control, which had already become one of the main issues in the 1920s. The municipality initiated several solutions that targeted not only traffic control, but also the crowd itself. They were based on the assumption that where there is high traffic (whether in the form of cars or pedestrians), there are crowds. It was the crowd that was the main subject of both political and commercial interests. The author shows what techniques were used by politicians and merchants alike to appeal to the crowds moving through the streets of Berlin. Through analysis, she argues that these techniques were in fact very similar. The Nazi NSDAP included many of them in their propaganda. The author argues that the crowd played a key role in Nazi propaganda. In the context of the use of various techniques, the conveniences of modern times - light advertising, sounds, the use of mechanical devices - also played a large role. The subchapter devoted to the modernization of the street in the period under review is also one of the suggestive parts. Here the author presents a detailed topography of the modern street of the 1920s and 1930s. Finally, he analyses how the Berlin municipality tried to resolve the chaos and liveliness of the street by issuing the Berlin Traffic Regulations (the latter was published in 1929). Its aim, according to the author, was to bring discipline, order and harmony to the streets. The author's argument that the adoption of this regulation allowed the greater control over the public space in the city is supported by plausible reasoning.

The fourth chapter deals with the violence that dominated the streets of Berlin at the turn of the 1930s. As in the previous chapters, the author uses a suggestive manner to portray the gradual rise of unrest in the streets. At the same time, she draws attention to new patterns of violent behaviour, which she argues were different from those associated with the post-war crisis in the city. In particular, shops became the target of this violence during the Great Depression. It is the relationship between modern commerce and politically motivated violence that is very interestingly depicted. The chapter also carries one of the main theses of the book, that the street did not become a site of violence by accident. On the contrary, the struggles that took place on the street were meant to intensify the perception of the crisis. Thus, the street became not only a place but also a tool to provoke a crisis in society. It was precisely this instrument that the Nazis used for their political aims. They targeted those parts of the city which they identified as centres of Jewish commerce.

The fifth chapter explores the Nazis' relationship to public space after their rise to power in January 1933. The author begins her narrative with the organized intervention by the Nazi regime, which was the boycott of small and medium-sized Jewish shops in April 1933. Although the entire event fit

within the framework of Nazi ideology, the author argues it did not fulfil its purpose. The highest political leaders considered the action undesirable for the stability of commerce at a time of ongoing economic crisis. The year 1933, however, marks a milestone in the Nazis' relationship to urban space. It quickly came under their complete control. The author's analysis also includes the process of purges in the Berlin municipal office, including the replacement of the director of BEREK (Berliner Reklamewesen) - the Berlin Advertising Enterprise. The author also points to the establishment of a new organisation, the Advertising Council, which was to unify the principles of good advertising. Advertising was to be based on German principles, and the form and content of advertisements were to correspond to this. The sector was therefore also undergoing a process of glossing over. The Advertising Council issued guidelines on the appearance of shop windows, street advertisements and street cleanliness and thus took over some of the competences that had previously been in the hands of the municipal authorities. All the interventions concerning trade and commerce went hand in hand with the Nazis' ultimate aim - which was to remove the Jews from the commercial sphere.

In chapter six, the author maps several Nazi projects to harmonize Nazi policy and commerce. Despite Nazi ideology that railed against capitalist society, the city of Berlin was still a modern capitalist city. The Nazis sought to transform this character of the city through a number of interventions, such as the organisation of Winter Relief in the streets of Berlin. Some top Nazi politicians also participated in the relief effort. At this point, the author analyses the method of visual presentation, including the symbolic elements of the whole event. In the next subchapter, she similarly analyses the significance of the Christmas markets in the period under review or the organisation of the 1936 Olympic Games. As the culmination of these efforts, the author considers the Nazi intervention known as Kristallnacht, which occurred in November 1938. The author concludes the chapter by arguing that it was this event that definitively blurred the boundaries between politics and commerce. She also considers it as a kind of milestone between the urban experience of the Weimar Republic and the German Nazi Reich.

In the seventh and final chapter, the author examines how Berlin gradually changes under the impact of the war. The beginning of World War II first affected the nightlife of Berliners. Due to energy restrictions, Berliners had to contend with electricity shortages. The city, which had been full of lights, had to cope with major power cuts in the first months of the war. The author describes how life on the streets and in cafés went quiet and how these blackouts affected, for example, the theatres and cinemas. According to the author, Berliners were experiencing a new normal, different from the cosmopolitan life of the Weimar Republic. In this chapter, the reader will also find a brief mention of the Nazis' megalomaniacal vision to rebuild the city of Berlin into Germania - the capital of the Third Reich. The author concludes the entire publication with a subchapter devoted to the destruction of the city at the end of the war. However, the seventh chapter, which also serves as an epilogue, would have deserved more space. The topics outlined by author would have deserved a little more attention, even in the context of her subject matter. Overall, however, I highly rate the book. It can offer new perspectives and topics also on the relationship between politics and public space in the conditions of Hlinka's Slovak People's Party regime during WWII in Slovakia.