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Malte Zierenberg. *Berlin's Black Market: 1939-1950.* Worlds of Consumption Series. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Illustrations. 292 pp. $95.00, cloth, ISBN 978-1-137-01774-1.

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Central Europeanists with a focus on urban history, the history of everyday life, and the culture of consumption in Berlin during the first half of the twentieth century will read Malte Zierenberg's recent monograph with keen interest and appreciation. The book is all the more noteworthy given that not long ago Paul Steege's ***Black Market, Cold War: Everyday Life in Berlin, 1946-1949*** (2007) established itself as a benchmark study in the history of everyday life in Berlin during the second half of the 1940s. Indeed, the importance of Steege's contribution leads to the question: how might one return to the topic? Zierenberg charts his own course in two ways.

The first is through his own particular approach to the history of everyday life, in the form of detailed ethnographic investigation of the experiences of buyers and sellers in Berlin's black market culture, including "business practices, self-images, everyday circumstances, and coping strategies." His study of the everyday concerns itself with social and economic considerations, and integrates political developments to only a rather limited (but not insufficient) extent. While he remains mindful of the political/legal context in which small- and large-scale marketeers operated, he is concerned with how illegal trade contributed to the logic of the unique consumer culture that was "Berlin's bartering society"—a world that, he suggests, contemporary readers will likely find quite foreign (p. 5). Zierenberg demystifies this difference through employing fields of inquiry that include money, ration cards, or commodities as bases for exchange; trust versus mistrust; the cultural geography in which markets existed as distinct sites and as spaces in which participant networks took shape; and social markers, such as gender, class, or other forms of identity. His is an approach that historians, cultural anthropologists, and sociologists will find innovative and thoughtfully executed.

Second, Zierenberg opts for a temporal frame that captures the entirety of the 1940s, yet he reminds us that discourses treating the "hustler," the "war profiteer," "trustworthiness," or the dis-

tinction between "necessity" and "luxury" did not emerge with the Nazis. Fittingly, then, his first chapter analyzes the emergence of large-scale retail with its mass-produced goods in the late nineteenth century, and the persistence of outdoor markets, market halls, and small neighborhood shops with their more traditional, personal interactions between buyers and sellers (the latter frequently also producers of the goods they offered). In both settings, albeit with different social rules, consumers encountered dependably established prices; quality could be gauged rather reliably in most exchanges. He notes that barter and negotiation began to figure more prominently in buyer-seller relationships during the First World War after the introduction of rationing, widespread experience of hunger and shortages, and the emergence of the black market. Postwar economic challenges, culminating in hyperinflation and then the Great Depression, provided the conditions under which illegal trade continued. Upon introduction of the four-year plan in 1936 that began to orient Germany's economy toward rearmament, Zierenberg tracks how shifts in consumption patterns—most notably, with the introduction of food ration coupons just before the war began—led to reemergence of illegal trade and the formation of a vibrant subculture that became a growing concern for National Socialist (NS) authorities. Subsequent chapters take up illegal trading networks during the period 1939-45, particularly with the transition to "total war" after Stalingrad; the emergence of illicit exchange into public places during the last months of the war and the first months of occupation; the structure of postwar black markets, new urban networks, participant groups (occupation personnel included), items traded, and the German and occupation forces' responses to the black market; and the persistence of illegal trade beyond the 1948 currency reform in both eastern and western halves of the city.

The broader chronological scope Zierenberg employs offers alternatives to periodizations that have more narrowly included perhaps the transition from the imperial era to Weimar, Weimar to the NS era, or the NS era into the postwar occupation. In the process, Zierenberg demonstrates persuasively that the "profiteer/hustler" and "foreigner element" discourses persisted over decades yet took on slightly different registers depending on the regime and the circumstances. "In the face of recurring chaotic economic conditions" from World War I into the early 1950s, "a sustained discussion about correct moral behavior in the marketplace occurred that mattered to black marketeers and government officials alike," he asserts (p. 19). Because Berlin's population had demonstrated strong left-wing support over the previous decades, and given that such a significant percentage of city dwellers struggled during the 1920s (up to 40 percent were on the dole), the Nazis took particular interest in "cleaning up the city"; this included cracking down on street trading and regulating public market hall activity, both common particularly in districts that had long been Social Democratic and Communist-friendly workers' bastions. Such measures proved a delicate balancing act in the later 1930s and into the war, though. Keenly aware of popular, largely working-class discontent with living standards from 1916-17 through the end of 1918 that led to unrest, the regime sought pragmatically to balance increasingly rigorous controls introduced in 1936, 1939, and 1943 with as much accommodation as it deemed expedient. The first priority remained maintenance of Nazi hegemony, of course.

At least until 1943, legal practice and public perception had tended to draw a distinction between occasional, small-time traders who tried to make ends meet and larger-scale illegal entrepreneurs whose activities undermined the ostensible "collaborative relationship between buyers and sellers as an organic constituent of the *Volksgemeinschaft*" (p. 39). While illegal traders could reckon with arrest and prosecution, the nature of the punishment (i.e., corrective to violations of morality and public order) varied accord-

ing to both the scale of activity and the identity of the accused. ("Large" and "small" trader were fluid categories, especially depending on whether the individual in question was an "Aryan," a Jew, or a foreign worker). The more desperate Germany's economic situation became over the last two years of the war, the more concerned the regime grew with checking the social (read: morale) and material implications of illegal trade. Because the black market represented what Zierenberg describes as a new space for consumption with its own distinct rules, it was an unsanctioned realm that the regime perceived evermore acutely as a threat to the racial community and wartime economic imperatives. Illegal trade could only be controlled—albeit never completely—through diligent, ongoing application of executive and judicial power. To appreciate how the rules of that space manifested themselves in a culture of consumption, Zierenberg explores a number of themes, including the social logic behind the ways trading networks formed (and in which parts of the city they emerged), how participants ascribed value to certain commodities, and the way time could be reconceived to correspond with the validity of ration coupons. These phenomena persisted throughout the Nazi era (again, especially once the war began) and continued after 1945, he argues. Discourses on order and community continued through the second half of the 1940s. In popular parlance, in newspapers and radio broadcasts, and in political speech, German was substituted for "Aryan" and occupation soldiers or Displaced Persons were understood as "foreigners."

Zierenberg's excavation of everyday life under the Nazis and under postwar occupation relies chiefly on archived police reports and published primary sources. The latter provide breadth and depth when interrogated in light of police activity, judicial decisions, and the practice of denunciation. He draws on scores of cases from among hundreds that survive in Berlin archives in order to arrive at a broadly representative sample with which to advance his argument responsibly. The illegal trade network with Martha Rebbien at its center provides Zierenberg an opportunity to develop a comprehensive argument about the role of trust among Berlin's black market participants between 1939 and 1945. Dangers posed by denunciations and police crackdowns relegated exchange to discrete transactions in the familiar environment of apartments or carefully chosen workplace spaces.

After the war, black market activity became a fixture of public life in an era marked by scarcity, disrupted supply networks, and concern over currency stability. Although they remained illegal, exchanges took place on the streets, rather than surreptitiously. Again, police, judicial, and district administrative documentation provide the archival foundation, supplemented with material from the UK's Public Record Office. Zierenberg also consults photos of black market settings during the later 1940s that, together with diaries and other published primary sources, allow him to engage in thick description of the culture of barter and exchange. Here he argues that displaying wares in public and physical contact with items and between people served to build confidence and foster trust among those who had the constitution to interact in crowded public places and face the risk of raids by municipal police or occupation force military police. Moreover, his inquiries into perceptions of status (the well-supplied occupation soldier or financially strong German hustlers versus "normal consumers," such as mothers, the elderly, disabled people, or veterans), gender (for example, sex as a bartering tool for less affluent women, or women as skilled and successful commodity traders in their own right), and the cigarette as both luxury item and necessity provide additional points for fruitful integration of social scientific theory and historiography.

In short, even as some features of the black market changed, certain phenomena associated with it persisted on either side of 1945. Zierenberg

explores these continuities in his own version of the long-established revision of the *Stunde Null* myth. One example is the hustler discourse noted above. A second is what Zierenberg refers to as a two-pronged approach to illegal trade. If, as pointed out earlier, the Nazis allowed for some mitigating circumstances between "large" and "small" traders (although they were few and not always quite consistent) with different actions that might have been taken toward each category, postwar "authorities pursued a two-track strategy, which carried on National Socialist practices in its repressive elements, even though penalties were less severe than those imposed by the Nazi justice system.... Although a zero-tolerance policy might not have been enforceable, the authorities considered it desirable. A second track was new: authorities attempted to control the existing desire to barter and trade by legalizing some bartering. One was not allowed to trade objects of value or food in officially recognized and supervised swap markets; one could, however, swap basic commodities" (p. 149). Nonetheless, food—along with such valuables as clothes, tobacco, and services—remained the most widely traded black market items. This speaks to a third area of continuity Zierenberg identifies: the "mentality of comparison." The Nazis had created distinct consumer groups in an allocation system designed to prioritize productivity for the war effort. Although in the black market it was the price of goods, not one's designated social category, that determined one's status, those able to leverage the resources to meet price requirements enjoyed greater purchasing power—and, thus, higher status. Comparisons could prompt resentment and create the potential for social unrest that occupation authorities and local politicians in both sides of the city sought to avoid.

Zierenberg concludes with a challenge to traditional Eastern and Western Berlin representations of a "'chaotic new beginning amidst the rubble' that made the black market and everything associated with it appear to be a transitional phenomenon like a ghost that suddenly appeared and would disappear just as quickly"; "it was generally believed," he argues, "that the currency reform had, in fact, successfully banished it"—which, in turn, served as "integrating historical narratives" in both the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic (pp. 212-213). He demonstrates that the black market was not something brief and isolated, and was not associated with the chaos and rubble of the earliest postwar years. It did not vanish with the currency reform. In fact, he points out, "the expectation of currency reform led, on the one hand, to a 'flight into material assets.' As these, however, could largely be exchanged only on the black market, illegal trade also 'flourished' after the news of the imminent currency reform" (p. 190)—and into the early 1950s, when economies had stabilized, each after their own fashion, in both sides of the city.

Berlin's Black Market offers a fresh perspective on Berliners' experiences through several transitional periods with an emphasis on the micro-level economy and the culture of consumption. The book's sophisticated methodological approach is to be applauded. It should be welcomed, too, for the possibilities the author opens to further research into Western perceptions of Eastern backwardness and Eastern criticism of the coexistence of luxury and misery in the West over the decades following 1949. We must be grateful that Zierenberg's work—certainly in its own right but also in combination with Steege's study—offers us such a significant range of insights into fundamental aspects of everyday life in Berlin at mid-century.

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