

Recovery and Restoration: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Politics of Reconstruction of West Germany's Shipbuilding Industry, 1945–1955. *By Henry Burke Wend.* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing, 2001. xxxii + 255 pp. Bibliography, notes, index. Cloth, \$70.00. ISBN 0-275-96990-8.

Reviewed by Raymond G. Stokes

Ever since historical documents became freely available to historians under the thirty-year rule for public records during the late 1970s and 1980s, the history of Allied policy and the reconstruction of West German industry has constituted a major research theme. Initially, large-scale industries—and especially heavy industry and chemicals—were the primary subjects. More recently, attention has turned to other industries that are less prominent but still very important, and these studies have provided useful nuances and correctives to earlier interpretations. Henry Burke Wend's study of West German shipbuilding is a good example of this trend. It is a competent, well-researched study of an industry that, as a result of previous strong traditions and postwar Allied policy, grew to become the Federal Republic's seventh largest export earner by the late 1950s.

Wend pursues two major sets of arguments in his study. The first one revolves around the notion that changes in U.S. strategic goals in the German area in the late 1940s and early 1950s led to changes in policy toward West Germany. Initially, the primary thrust of the United States was toward punishment and containment of the German economy. Gradually, as a result of the emerging cold war and a growing realization of the centrality of West German economic growth and performance to European recovery and prosperity, the focus shifted toward fostering growth, requiring cooperation rather than confrontation with West German policy makers. Although Wend's argument is competent and persuasive (with the sections of certain chapters on emerging U.S. policy being among the most concise and useful I have ever seen), it is fairly unremarkable. The details of U.S. policy formation with regard to shipbuilding, and its implementation, for the most part merely confirm what we already know from studies of other industries and of politics and the economy more generally.

Wend's second set of concerns focuses on the contention that "the globalization and militarization of U.S. policies amplified the significance of local politics in northern Germany in the estimation of American policy makers" (p. xxv). This is a more novel argument, especially

because postwar politics in northern West Germany tended to be dominated by parties outside the ruling coalition led by Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. Wend's contention is persuasive that this U.S. concern with local politics in the north helped push American policy makers more quickly and decisively than might otherwise have been the case toward discounting French and British security concerns and British and American fears about German competition. They therefore moved to a position of favoring full-scale reconstruction, and even expansion, of this controversial and war-related industry.

Wend makes his argument in three sets of chapters. The first focuses on the development of the shipbuilding industry in Germany through 1945. The second deals with the period from 1945 to 1949 as American policy makers moved "from reorientation to reconstruction," with a chapter each on general U.S. industrial policy, policy toward shipbuilding in particular, and policy toward a single firm, A. G. Weser. The final part deals with the period from 1949 to 1955 as policy moved "from reconstruction to rearmament." Again chapters detail general industrial policy, policy toward shipbuilding, and the treatment of the Weser firm. As he shifts focus from Washington to Bonn to northern Germany, and then to a particular shipyard, Wend demonstrates how the shipbuilding industry by the mid-1950s was becoming "Americanized" in key respects, but he also notes that it still remained recognizably German. Its form and structure stemmed from the pre-1945 period, while production methods and business practices evolved toward those characteristic of American industry.

All in all, this is a useful case study that explores complex interactions between a large number of institutions and individuals located in several countries. Still, the insistence on focusing primarily on U.S. policy toward the shipbuilding industry is somewhat puzzling at times, especially for the early occupation. The Americans eventually emerged as the most important occupying power in West Germany, mainly as a result of their economic might. But, in the early period, it was the British who controlled most of Germany's shipbuilding capacity. Although Wend uses materials from the Public Record Office in Kew, and although he tries to incorporate this additional element of complexity into his overall interpretation, his primary emphasis on the concerns of Washington leads him to underestimate the power and influence of London on the post-1945 development of this industry.

That having been said, this is a competent, well-researched study that should be considered by all interested in postwar German and European reconstruction.

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1945–1990 (2000) and (with Rainer Karlsch) *The Chemistry Must Be Right: The Privatization of Buna Sow Leuna GmbH, 1990–2000* (2001). He is currently completing an extensive contribution to the history of BASF AG to be published in 2002.