better "bar-going experience"—and that he "had less to fear" (88). Yet, Rottmann does not inform her reader that Schmehling had been convicted under §175 in 1957, a conviction that made it difficult for him to find work, even years after the law was reformed. Far from illustrating how normatively masculine men had it easier, Schmehling's experiences undermine Rottmann's argument.

Similarly, Rottmann argues in Chapter 3 that "queer East Berliners in particular came to associate the [Berlin] Wall with death" (110). While I have no doubt that some did, the book presents no compelling evidence for such a sweeping, generalized claim. In fact, the sources used to discuss the Wall's meaning are East German propaganda and a short story published in the Swiss homophile magazine *Der Kreis* in 1963 along with the debate it spurred in letters to the magazine's editor. But neither the propaganda nor the story and letters—of which Rottmann admits, "East German voices were not represented in the discussion" (129)—offer insight into the thinking of queer East Germans themselves or what associations they might have had with the Wall.

Thankfully, these interpretive missteps only occasionally distract from what is otherwise an interesting new history of queer Berlin, one that widens historians' gaze beyond sexuality and the experiences of gay men. In so doing, it points to future research on lesbian, trans, and gay everyday life in postwar Europe.

Bojan Aleksov. *Jewish Refugees in the Balkans, 1933–1945.*

Leiden: Brill Schöningh, 2023. xlii. 389 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. €107.47, hard bound.

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At one point in his book, Bojan Aleksov evokes W. G. Sebald and his fusion of historiography and poetry, "combining the reality of observation and what is always the functionality of representation" (328). *Jewish Refugees in the Balkans* is an exemplary work of historiography suffused with the poetry of empathy. This welcome book makes at least three critical contributions.

First, it intervenes in the rich Holocaust literature by identifying a serious lacuna whereby an important aspect of the Jewish past is absent, reproducing Balkan marginality: "Cynical as it may sound, the existing research seems to suggest that if you escaped through Paris, your experience is more valuable than if you escaped through Tirana" (xxi-xxii). Aleksov not simply fills in this historiographical void; he writes about middle-class people escaping the Reich who had been rejected in their immigration bids to western Europe and the Americas and fled to the poverty stricken Balkans where many "were saved either by mostly illiterate peasants or by Communist-led Partisan resisters" (xxiv). The numbers of the non-organized Jewish migration to the Balkans are difficult to ascertain, but only Yugoslavia became a transit or exile country of over 55,000 Jews between 1933 and 1941. This figure seems small but when compared to the 24,000 in neutral Switzerland, Europe's richest country, it becomes considerable. This book is, in fact, about Jewish refugees in Yugoslavia, and the few hundreds in Albania. The author is well informed about Jewish victimhood and survival in the Balkans, but excising Greece (with minor exceptions), Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania (the latter two the main gateways to Palestine) renders the title problematic. This is not a criticism. A work on a German village is sold as European history, research on England as global, so it is understandable to wrap this valuable study in a broader Balkan receptacle.

Second, the book provides a theoretical justification of ego narratives and their contribution. Aleksov has tirelessly combed dozens of archives, excavated hundreds of interviews, unpublished manuscripts, published memoirs and accounts, most of them collected in the 1980s. This is all the more valuable, as many had been earlier dismissed as lacking in literary merit and were not treated as important historical sources. Uniquely, many were written by women, offering an unprecedented glimpse into their experience and perceptions. Aware of the shortcomings of ego-literature, Aleksov carefully weighs the reliability of each material. While recognizing the fissures between experiencing an event and remembering it in representation, he insists that "by acknowledging the right of survivors to enrich our historical knowledge about the Holocaust we are reversing the obliteration to which they were sentenced" (xlii).

Third, this is a serious, successful (and deserved) effort to restore the subjectivity and agency of Holocaust survivors. It is not quite microhistory, as it does not lead to unexpected conclusions, but it complicates and enriches the overall narrative with minute details of everyday life, illegal border crossings, support networks, fictive marriages, vivid cultural life in adverse circumstances, help from local Jewish and Gentile communities, but also instances of corruption, greed, and ethnic prejudice. It provides abundant material for comparative transnational perspectives on diaspora identity, memory, and commemoration.

The book is organized in eight chronological chapters, following the consecutive waves of refugees, who were first welcomed, then, with the increase in numbers after the Anschluss, met with restrictions, and after the German invasion in the spring of 1941, subjected to brutal annihilation. As a survivor put it: "Spring was cancelled in 1941" (111). Two chapters offer case studies: one on the obliteration of Jews in the town of Ruma by the Germans; the other, the more humane treatment of the Italian occupation on the island of Korčula, juxtaposed to the former. Two chapters specifically address the Italian rescue, and the survival of Jews in Albania.

Most interesting and uplifting is the last chapter on resistance. Of the 4,572 Yugoslav Jews who joined the Partisans, one third lost their lives. Aleksov does not spare the clashes of mentality between cultivated intellectuals and rough peasants but shows the adjustment and mutual appreciation. Jews dominated the medical roles. As he laments the lack of photographs and other visual materials, Aleksov compensates with vivid descriptions worthy of a cinematographic shot: "Doctor Maria Schlesinger (1895–1943) was dying in the midst of the biggest Nazi offensive. She asked her comrades to bury her at the top of an earth den where the wounded Partisans were hiding . . . The Nazis discovered her grave but did not dig further, establishing one of the famous Partisan stories about how doctor Maria, even in her death, protected her patients" (306).

Till Hilmar. *Deserved: Economic Memories After the Fall of the Iron Curtain*.

New York: Columbia University Press, 2023. 263 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Tables. $140.00, hard bound. $35.00, paper.

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In his interview-based study "Deserved: Economic Memories After the Fall of the Iron Curtain," Till Hilmar compares memories of the post-socialist economic transition among