

Anmerkungen

- 1 Herbert Lüthi, „Vom Geist und Ungeist des Föderalismus“, *Jahrbuch der Neuen Helvetischen Gesellschaft* 36 (1965), S. 29–54, hier: 41.

Frank Bösch, *Deals mit Diktaturen. Eine andere Geschichte der Bundesrepublik* (C. H. Beck, 2024), 622 pp.

Reviewed by
Matthias Middell, Leipzig

Frank Bösch, director of the Research Centre for Contemporary History in Potsdam, provides a memorable story of often neglected aspects of the Federal Republic's position in the world in 13 chapters, each dedicated to a different foreign relationship of the Federal Republic that was considered problematic, from the Iranian Shah and the European dictators Franco and Salazar in Spain and Portugal to Ghaddafi's Libya and Deng Xiaoping's China and finally to the relationship of the Germans to dictatorships in today's globalised world. The individual anecdotes are not unknown and were the subject of fierce criticism from contemporaries - one need only recall the role of the Shah's visit in mobilising the 1968 movement. But taken together, they show a continuous line of realpolitik compromises, mostly based on economic interests, sometimes also driven by geopolitical considerations. Until 1990, the latter were primarily the considerations of allied powers, in which the respective West German governments'

own aspirations tended to be woven in. This corresponded to the self-image of sailing in the shadow of the new world order after World War II, so to speak, and exercising the utmost caution with any overly recognisable intentions of their own. One exception was perhaps the claim to sole representation of the German nation as expressed in the Hallstein Doctrine. But even this was at least temporarily abandoned in favour of the new Ostpolitik and the defusing of the Cold War in the 1970s. Economic success was the yardstick, but the author makes it clear that there was also repeated resistance to such pure interest policy because refugees from the respective countries drew attention to massive human rights violations, because solidarity movements with the oppressed in the dictatorships had to be taken into account as a domestic political factor, because the German Democratic Republic (GDR) never tired of pointing out one or other duplicity and because sometimes the protests in allied countries against inhumane practices of rule in the global South became too violent to be ignored without losing one's own reputation. One example that could have illustrated the interplay of these factors is certainly apartheid South Africa. It is not included in this volume, but there is now a wealth of literature on the subject that can be used to reconstruct the role of the two German states vis-à-vis the racism that had become a regime in the Cape just as vividly as Frank Bösch does in the examples he has chosen.

Such a history of deals with dictatorships could of course also be written for many other Western countries. However, the subtitle "A different history" would hardly be chosen for this. The fact that this seems

plausible in the case of the Federal Republic of Germany has a lot to do with its history policy, which is used to paint the picture of a purified democratic society with clear ties to the West that is completely subordinate to the principles of freedom and human rights. The rigorous moralism of this self-description (which always points the finger at others) can be explained by the attempt to leave the legacy of National Socialism far behind and to avoid any suspicion of a risk of repetition. However, the title of world export champion was not to be had without reference to raw materials and sales markets that lay beyond the democratic world, and to an ever-increasing extent, as the example of the development of relations with China, beautifully recounted by Bösch, shows. The fact that this not only promoted the political stability and economic prosperity of the other side, even if its handling of democratic participation rights did not meet one's own standards, has only recently become a problem since the consequences for the political and economic world order in terms of a high degree of dependency have become apparent.

Bösch's book therefore comes at a time when this foreign policy is being thoroughly scrutinised. The context of the Cold War has disappeared, when the division of Germany made it much easier to sort the world into democracies and dictatorships. Germany now finds itself confronted with expectations of actively and explicitly assuming a global role on the one hand, and on the other hand has to calculate the costs of "decoupling" and "derisking," because simultaneously breaking away from all well-established value chains is likely to further strengthen the feeling of "multicri-

sis," i.e. political powerlessness in the face of a multitude of overlapping challenges, and—this would then be the final irony of this narrative—further strengthen autocratic desires within German society.

Fritz Bartel, *The Triumph of Broken Promises: The End of the Cold War and the Rise of Neoliberalism* (Harvard University Press, 2022), 400 pp.

Reviewed by
Max Trecker, Göttingen

On March 27, 1990, the US television studio PBS aired a documentary about the situation in Poland after the breakdown of state-socialism and the installation of a government headed by Solidarity. The documentary was titled "Poland – The Morning After." One could have expected to see only happy faces of people feeling free at last and embracing the new times. Quite the opposite was shown in the documentary as most ordinary people still struggled to make ends meet. Still more astonishing were the interview parts with people close to either Solidarity or the former communist rulers.

When the reporter talked to a young Solidarity activist in the coal region of Upper Silesia, the following dialogue unfolded:

- "The government should give up, should resign. They should give the power back to the communists."
- "Give the power back to the communists?"