

Dülffer, Jost: *Frieden stiften. Deeskalations- und Friedenspolitik im 20. Jahrhundert*. Köln: Böhlau Verlag Köln 2008. ISBN: 978-3-412-20117-3; 401 S.

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This volume is a collection of previously, individually published essays by one of the most eminent peace historians, Jost Dülffer, who taught at the university of Cologne until his retirement. In its entirety, the book is intended as a compendium of Dülffer's thoughts on methodology and theory in researching war and its prevention, the transitional phase between war and peace, and ultimately the making of peace and peace treaties – and furthermore seems to present a kind of Festschrift in celebration of the author's 65th birthday. Geographically the focus is on the Germany and Europe of the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century.

Although not divided into parts, the book starts out with five chapters focused on historiography, method and concepts. Dülffer suggests that comparative peace research and specifically the tracing of the evolution of the state system from war to peace times and vice versa should benefit from an interdisciplinary approach which involves borrowing methodological approaches and findings from political sciences and international law, but should also take cultural and mental factors into account (p. 12). In exploring whether democracies on the whole have been more peaceful than dictatorships (as the thesis of a democratic peace developed by political scientists suggests), Dülffer comes to the conclusion that such structural determinism especially with regard to post-war scenarios has to be applied to with caution. He points to the needs of studying the origins of war, and how peace research with its broader social and cultural approaches can thus complement more traditional international history (pp. 33-38). In his chapter on the relationship between political and military history, Dülffer discusses the new historiographical trends; he believes that the military ought to be studied both in view of its hinge function between domes-

tic and foreign policy and between peace and war. Thus he promotes the approach that historical peace research and political military history should be understood as two sides of the same coin (pp. 21-23). Another important direction of research is discussed under the heading „European Contemporary History“. Dülffer points to the need of scholars to get involved in researching post-war and contemporary transnationalism, European identity formation grounded on cultural history and the history of mentalités, comparative approaches, as well as the importance of examining the influence of exogenous developments such as globalisation and increased international communication on voluntary or involuntary European integrative developments. As for his chapter on the Cold War, Dülffer characterizes this epoch with terms of a self-sustained, self-perpetuating conflict between East and West, where the memory of World War Two, the nuclear arms race and the ideological (societal and economic) competition created a certain stability. The conflict's longevity was ensured by the many resources – material, human, cultural and social – that were committed to it. But in contrast to Bernd Stöver, who has recently emphasised how such self-contained stability dissolved because one side was being too weakened or rather because the other grew too strong and thus destroyed the balance¹, Dülffer highlights military de-escalation during the 1980s while pointing to three „Cold Wars“ (three serious escalations): 1948/50 (Berlin, Korea), 1958/60 (Berlin, Cuba), 1979/1983 (arms buildup) (p. 68).

Three chapters follow that are concerned with legal aspects at times of war and the organising of the international system after conflict, before specifically engaging in five essays with aspects of post World War One and Two conflict resolution and peace making in Europe and Asia. Dülffer explores how after capitulation or even total surrender and an eventual armistice, victors and defeated seek

¹ See Bernd Stöver, *Der Kalte Krieg. Geschichte eines radikalen Zeitalters 1947-1991*. Munich 2007; see the review Wilfried Loth: Rezension zu: Stöver, Bernd: *Der Kalte Krieg. Geschichte eines radikalen Zeitalters 1947-1991*. München 2007, in: *H-Soz-u-Kult*, 10.07.2007, <<http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/2007-3-025>> (22.09.2009).

to legally bring about peace and stability. He reveals however some perils in such an overly legalistic political approach: experiences and perceptions of the war and its ending may mean that mentally „the war situation“ actually continues after peace making, thus leading to political revisionism. While this interpretation is useful in explaining the Germans' perceptions and reception of the Versailles Treaty, Dülffer shows that conversely after 1945, as the Cold War progressed and Germany became divided, precisely the absence of a de jure peace treaty between victor powers and 'Germany' perhaps allowed for a peace culture to be fostered. This peace culture became consolidated via the continued existence of the four power rights as much as through Ostpolitik and the codification of peaceful politics and stability in the Helsinki Accords of 1975 (pp. 217-219). According to Dülffer, peace in Europe, and specifically the political and economic rise of Western Europe from the ashes of World War Two (with a West Germany that was institutionally bound through the EEC and NATO at its heart) was further determined by close transatlanticism and the bipolar reality (pp. 191-195).

This highly stimulating book ends with essays that take a socio-cultural historical approach and engage with recent trends and developments in collective memory. Dülffer analyses the experience, specifically the suffering, active warfare and feeling of victimhood, of German soldiers and civilians in 1944/5. As he explores individual and collective memories and the musealisation of the Nazi past and points to the continued orientation of German history along the pivotal events of the Second World War with all its terror and violence, we are reminded that these national memory cultures (just as the actual events that are being remembered) must in future also be studied transnationally, that is if not universally, then at least Europe-wide.

To conclude, contemporary historians broadly speaking as well as historians specialising in exploring the politics, diplomacy and military affairs, even social and cultural historians, have certainly over the last decades studied the wars and eras of conflict discussed in this book in great detail and with many different methodological approaches.

What Dülffer however can reveal so well via this collection of his essays, is that much more attention must be paid to processes of transition from war to peace, if we are to draw some more generic conclusions on successful peace making and consolidation, and if we want to be able to make comparisons between national experiences and across time. Indeed, peace treaties alone do not mean the outbreak of peace. New findings emerge if historians study what can be coined de-escalation and escalation of conflict as this involves whole societies and not just high politics. By looking at mentalities and cultures we can fathom why some peace treaties did and some did not allow to usher into a peaceful era.

HistLit 2009-4-006 / Kristina Spohr Readman über Dülffer, Jost: *Frieden stiften. Deeskalations- und Friedenspolitik im 20. Jahrhundert*. Köln 2008, in: H-Soz-Kult 02.10.2009.