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pated in the pogroms of 1938. And, as we know from Raul Hilberg's studies of the *Reichsbahn*, participation in the logistics of the Reich contributed to the genocide. Yet the self-perception of those who were involved with the NSKK was technocratic: when interviewed in 1999, a witness to the events of 9 November 1938 distinguished between the NSKK roadblock (his assignment) and the pogrom itself.

From the perspective of the political history of National Socialism, Hochstetter's voluminous study is important as the first monograph about this organization and for the revision of its interpretation. From the perspective of the history of technology, there is something else important. Generally we assume that the history of road safety in western Germany is a story beginning after 1950, as motorization boomed and the number of road casualties reached its peak in 1970 at 19,193, there then being 16 million motor vehicles. In the unified Germany in 1993, there were 9,949 road casualties and 45 million motor vehicles. But in 1936, 7,636 persons died in road accidents, even though there were only 8 million motor vehicles. This was a serious impediment to the propaganda campaign in favor of motorization and led to the NSKK's activities in the realm of safety education. These did not make road traffic safer, nor did the denunciation of traffic offenders as criminals. Nevertheless, the educational work of NSKK had an important impact: many people first learned to drive motor vehicles under the auspices of this organization—some in driving schools, others by education from the *Verkehrserziehungsdienst*. This is worth more study. Further research, either on the history of National Socialist organizations or on the history of road safety, will have to make extensive use of Hochstetter's book.

MICHAEL HASCHER

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Begrenzte Mobilität: Eine Kulturgeschichte der Autobahnen in der DDR.

By Axel Doßmann. Essen: Klartext, 2003. Pp. 431. €27.90.

At first glance, a monograph on the autobahn of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) would appear to be a dead-end street. Anyone who ever drove on the four-lane highways bequeathed to the communist state by the megalomaniac designers of the Nazi *Reichsautobahn* project would realize that leaders in East Berlin had other priorities than roads. Axel Doßmann tells us that by the late 1980s, almost half of the 1,378 autobahn kilometers existing in 1945 in East German territory had been virtually untouched for forty-five years; because of the potholes, there was little need to enforce speed limits. But neglect is only half the story; the other half (and the story of dereliction also) is a fascinating analysis of an infrastructure that was

both ignored and loved, supported and rejected. Doßmann's well-written and important book adds considerably to our understanding of engineering, technology, and state symbolism in postwar Europe.

The autobahn, a propagandistic symbol for the Nazis, left an ambivalent legacy for the communist regime. On the one hand, the GDR strove to distance itself from the fascist dictatorship and its icons; but in the case of the autobahn, the East German state did not come up with an indigenous building style, as Doßmann shows convincingly. Most civil engineers who had worked for the Nazis in what became East Germany left the country before the building of the Wall in 1961, preferring the pay-scales and political climate of West Germany, with its more ambitious road-building programs. Indeed, West and East German *Autobahnen* became one of the many items of competition and contention between the two Germanys. The west's extensive construction projects spurred the east into countering with its own new autobahn project, a road from Berlin to the Baltic harbor city of Rostock. It was planned as early as 1958, yet fell victim to political maneuvering after 1961. In fact, one writer likened the Wall, which was built in that same year, to a vertical autobahn "hung out to dry" between East Germany and West Germany (p. 227). Construction was paramount for the GDR, and Doßmann analyzes the close relationship among planning and building roads, border walls, and housing. Thus he contributes to the historiographical debate over consumerism in East Germany, which—in constant reference to West Germany—was meant to pacify citizens and achieve a modicum of support for the regime.

Doßmann's tale is one of constant cross-referencing and relationships. In one chapter, he subtly analyzes the postwar history of a bridge smack on the border between Bavaria and Thuringia, which became parts of the two opposing Germanys. During the 1950s and 1960s even the most minute details of reconstructing the bridge that had been dynamited by the *Wehrmacht* had to be negotiated on the highest levels; both sides fashioned it into a symbol of either capitalist arrogance of socialist incompetence, when less than a generation earlier the Nazis had speculated on the bridge's aesthetic qualities and its meaning for a master race.

After the rapprochement between the two countries during the early 1970s, West Germany paid exaggerated amounts of hard currency to the GDR so that westerners could drive on eastern autobahns to West Berlin. What is more, the Bonn government also supported two-thirds of the costs of repairs and widening, turning the GDR's autobahn-construction brigade into a de facto western-supported unit. The Federal Republic paid for the completion of the Hamburg–Berlin transit autobahn. The 1970s also saw the only new autobahn construction projects of the GDR: a stretch between Dresden and Leipzig, opened in 1971, and the long-delayed construction of the Berlin–Rostock route, finished in 1978, which was to cement the east's reliance on the Baltic rather than the North Sea harbors. For both projects,

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East German engineers proudly, if not always successfully, used expensive machinery for mass production: a concrete slip-form paver purchased in Belgium and built under U.S. license. In the 1980s, both East and West German construction units planned and built highways in Iraq.

Doßmann is strongest when he analyzes the changing cultural meaning of the autobahn from Nazi icon to contested artifact in both Germanys. The design and extent of the highway network were not just preconditions for economic growth (as in the west) or an often unsuccessful means to compete with the more powerful sibling (in the east). Both sides aimed at inscribing what they perceived to be their core values onto the roads. This relational aspect of postwar German technology becomes apparent to anyone who follows Doßmann's lucid prose. One can only hope that historians of West German technology as well will continue to understand artifacts and systems in relation to those of the other Germany, and to those of Europe in general.

THOMAS ZELLER

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Earth Repair: A Transatlantic History of Environmental Restoration.

By Marcus Hall. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005. Pp. xvi+310. $35.

Marcus Hall's *Earth Repair* is a well-written book that offers a rare glimpse at environmental-rehabilitation projects in North America and Europe over the past two centuries. It focuses primarily on watershed restoration in the Rocky Mountains of Utah and the Piedmontese Alps, which Hall uses to highlight the differences in how Americans and Italians conceive and maintain their respective landscapes. But his broad and sophisticated analysis of Euro-American cultural attitudes makes his book worthwhile for all scholars interested in the environmental, cultural, and technological transformations of the modern era.

Hall argues that "enlightened" Europeans of the eighteenth century, most notably the French naturalist Comte de Buffon, tended to view natural events—fires, floods, landslides, droughts, earthquakes—as the prime instruments of environmental destruction. Restoration in the Buffonian sense means repairing the damage that natural forces wreak on civilized areas over time. With the publication of George Perkins Marsh's *Man and Nature* in 1864, a new viewpoint emerged: that humans through their eco-