

Martin Müller and Nadja Imhof reflect on both the symbolic and the political significance of the landscape's sudden transformation. Highlighting official efforts to reconceptualize the "Waldfriedhof" as a "Waldwildnis," they explain how it was possible for some to reimagine the bark beetle as a "creator of new forests," capable of revealing the "authenticity of nature" to modern humans (119).

This well-curated and -illustrated volume is a model of interdisciplinary debate, demonstrating how scholars from a variety of fields can broaden our understanding of a particular place and its history. Like any edited collection, however, it has its issues. One could argue that the quality of chapters varies across the four sections, with some providing more robust analysis or greater attention to the Bavarian Forest National Park than others. In the end, however, the insights the volume imparts outweigh any superficial complaints about its consistency.

doi:10.1017/S0008938923001474

## **“Technologie für Öl” und “Recycling der Ölmilliarden“. Die Beziehungen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zu Iran unter der Herrschaft von Mohammed Reza Schah Pahlavi, 1972—1979**

**By Alexander Lurz. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2022. Pp. 487.  
Hardcover €79.00. ISBN: 978-3515131612.**

Nicholas Ostrum

Kent State University

Alexander Lurz's book is an important addition to a growing catalog of studies centering on West German foreign and energy policy in the 1970s. Uniquely, the book focuses on the tangle of geopolitical, economic, industrial, and energy objectives in Iran – a key petroleum producer for the Federal Republic of Germany that was intent on becoming a regional industrial and military power. In this pursuit, Lurz draws attention to the surprising readiness of Willy Brandt, Walther Scheel, and Helmut Schmidt to break with two decades of noninterventionism in foreign economic affairs and contort policies on armament exports and nuclear non-proliferation in pursuit of diplomatic favor, export growth, and, ultimately, domestic energy security.

Growing out of a dissertation project, this is a formidable book. It is long and detailed, but also keenly focused on the bilateral energy-economic ties and the nexus of business and governmental connections that sustained them. The book is divided into five sections organized chronologically. The heart of the study comes in section 3, "Technologie für Öl," and 4, "Das Recycling der Ölmilliarden." In the first, Lurz analyzes Bonn's turn to a more active foreign energy policy during the global oil price acceleration of 1971. Coupled with a series of high-level visits in both directions, including that of Chancellor Willy Brandt to Tehran in March 1972, the new, more activist approach involved the state-facilitated technology transfers subsidies for gas pipelines to run through the Soviet Union, contracts for refineries in Iran, downstream cooperative ventures, and, ultimately, military material (including permissions to produce Leopard 2 tanks, which have recently made news again in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine) in the FRG.

By 1975, it had become clear that this approach to economic cooperation, in part through the direct transfer of technologies for petroleum, was ineffectual. This realization came in

part from the 1973–1974 oil crisis, which also further bumped up producer profits and convinced Bonn that its future energy security lay not in a deepening turn to oil, but in a diversity of hydrocarbons and nuclear power generation. Iran still played a critical role in these new pursuits. Bonn soon offered nuclear technologies, construction contracts, and arms supply deals in exchange for Iran's growing reserves of petrodollars, which the Shah was eager to "recycle" back to the industrial North in exchange for help in achieving his military and industrial modernization goals. As before, because of German foot-dragging, inter-ministerial disputes, shifting Iranian demands, and, now, changing political conditions in Iran, these projects – including the delivery of a spent fuel reprocessing plant that would have closed the Iranian nuclear cycle – died before they came to fruition. (In the specific case of the nuclear facilities, the German Kraftwerk Union's bid for the contract surprisingly met no significant resistance from the *Bundesregierung*, though the United States staunchly opposed it.) As Lurz emphasizes, the failure of such projects and the deepening interdependency they would have engendered was ultimately a stroke of good fortune, however unintentional.

The book hits its stride when Lurz addresses the big questions regarding German foreign policy at the time. How could Chancellor Willy Brandt, who had just received a Nobel Peace Prize in 1971, advocate arming and nuclearizing a notoriously repressive regime? What motivated the relevant ministries – Defense, Economics, Foreign Affairs, the Chancellery – to consider the authoritarian regime of the Shah an exception to the 1970 *Politische Grundsätze*, which restricted weapons exports to NATO states? How, moreover, did intra-European competition for Iranian contracts and oil encourage Bonn to assume outsized financial risks, negotiate deals over providing arms – according to Lurz, breaking the intention of the *Politische Grundsätze* – and contribute to an Iranian nuclear program that had clear military ambitions? "*Technologie für Öl*" answers these and other important questions through teasing out the entanglements and tensions among private companies' and German ministerial and Iranian governmental objectives.

Truly, this book has many strengths. It examines an underexplored facet of West German foreign energy and economic policy, telling a new and impressively detailed story about German-Iranian relations during this critical period roughly spanning the two oil crises, a major reorientation of German oil and energy policy, and the Shah's last decade in power. Its detailed cataloging of intra- and interdepartmental discussions and intergovernmental negotiations will likely prove invaluable to other academics. That said, its meticulousness might also limit its reach. Only the most dedicated readers will find much value in the minute details of so many meetings that eventually came to naught. The book also introduces one big question that it does not fully answer: How unique were these strategies and policies? The exchange of projects and technologies for oil and oil-derived state revenue was hardly confined to Iran. One can see echoes of it already in the early 1960s, when German negotiators simultaneously pursued contracts to construct a dam on the Euphrates River and to develop an oil concession in Syria's northeast. One sees them in Libya, as well, where the FRG and companies such as Gelsenberg (which also plays a prominent role in Lurz's book) pursued a policy of qualified appeasement, which included technological aid and policing and military aid, to encourage petroleum production. (See, for instance, Tim Szatkowski's *Gaddafi's Libyen und die Bundesrepublik Deutschland* [2013]. Although Lurz footnotes this book in his introduction, he does not draw that important connection.) In other words, technology for oil and petrodollars ran deeper than just Bonn and Tehran, even if the latter posed a special case.

That unanswered question of singularity, however, does not undermine the very real merits of this book. It is well-researched, exceedingly detailed, and effectively argued. For those reasons, it may well become a basic text for future studies into this overlooked but consequential period of German-Iranian relations as well as West German energy-economic and diplomatic history more broadly.