



Strangers in the Wild Place: Refugees, Americans, and a German Town, 1945-1952

By Adam R. Seipp

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In 1936, the Nazi state created a massive military training site near Wildflecken, a tiny community in rural Bavaria. During the war, this base housed an industrial facility that drew forced laborers from all over conquered Europe. At war's end, the base became Europe's largest Displaced Persons camp, housing thousands of Polish refugees and German civilians fleeing Eastern Europe. As the Cold War intensified, the US Army occupied the base, removed the remaining refugees, and stayed until 1994. *Strangers in the Wild Place* tells the story of these tumultuous years through the eyes of these very different groups, who were forced to find ways to live together and form a functional society out of the ruins of Hitler's Reich.

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Editorial Review

Review

"In clear, straightforward prose, Seipp does yeoman's work with his extensive use of both primary and secondary sources.... His treatment of the pentagonal interaction of the camp's residents, the town of Wildflecken, the US Army, the UNRRA and the Land of Bavaria contributes to a greater understanding of just how complex the reconstruction of a country's socio-political infrastructure must necessarily be in the aftermath of a major conflict." ?German History

"Well written and based on an abundance of local, national, and international sources, *Strangers in the Wild Place* reveals the inner 'workings of rural society in occupied and semi-sovereign West Germany'.... [T]his book makes an important contribution to a more nuanced understanding of how (West) Germans negotiated the transition from Nazism to democracy, from war to postwar." ?Central European History

"[T]his book makes an important contribution to a more nuanced understanding of how (West) Germans negotiated the transition from Nazism to democracy, from war to postwar." ?CENTRAL EUROPEAN HISTORY

"This well-researched and well-documented... book will contribute to the growing literature of the refugee crisis throughout postwar Europe and the variety of populations gathered on Allied occupied German territory, and thereby forcefully challenge the myth that the conspicuous and anxiety-provoking presence of 'non-Germans' is a new 'problem' for Germany.... It demonstrates clearly... that it was the presence of foreign east European DPs as well as American occupiers that served to push the integration of ethnic German refugees into the young Federal Republic and to reconstitute in the wake of a catastrophic war a new and highly functional Volksgemeinschaft." ?Atina Grossmann, New York University

"Strangers in the Wild Place is a mix of social, government, and military history. The book capably captures individual plight, describes group interactions, and sets all these relationships in an understandable historical context of the place of Wildflecken. It is definitely a work of imaginative and sound scholarship.... *Strangers in the Wild Place* is worth exploring for the complex human tale that it so imaginatively reveals." ?Journal of Military History

"This book is a carefully crafted treatment of how one community, Wildflecken, in rural eastern West Germany fared with its various refugees and US occupation troops while the world transitioned from the horrors of WWII to the tensions of the Cold War.... Highly recommended." ?Choice

About the Author

Adam R. Seipp is Associate Professor of History at Texas A&M University and author of The Ordeal of Peace: Demobilization and the Urban Experience in Britain and Germany, 1917-1921.

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