

worrying situation of which the Saxon leadership was well aware. Against this backdrop emerged the Revolution itself. Bramke and Reisinger focus in detail on its beginnings in November 1918, before chronicling its radicalization and culmination in a general strike in March 1919, as well as the eventual occupation of the city. The authors are compelling when arguing that Leipzig's particular conditions are crucial for understanding its experience of the Revolution (although calling it a *Sonderweg* is a heavy-handed, and unnecessary, analogy). Particularly successful is their nuanced discussion of the political parties involved. So, while many middle-class citizens opposed the Workers' Councils, they also bitterly resented the city's occupation. Both actions impinged upon the city's autonomy, and tarnished Leipzig's economic and cultural status. Conversely, the successes of the socialists were limited, even during the height of the Revolution. This was due to a combination of the moderate nature of the majority socialists, tensions between workers and soldiers and the fractious nature of the left-wing parties. All this reveals much about Leipzig, but also valuable information about Germany's diverse political makeup. The inclusion of photographs enhances the discussion, although a greater focus on the society pictured within them would add to the text. A city map would also be invaluable.

It is this assumption of prior knowledge that is the book's major weakness. Although it contains an interesting contextual chapter, the book still requires a specialist knowledge of Germany's early twentieth-century political history, and a basic knowledge of Leipzig is also helpful. Political actors are not introduced; the many political parties are only referred to by acronyms. This makes the book's interesting conclusions rather inaccessible. Referencing similar studies for other German cities would not only strengthen the authors' contention that Leipzig was unusual, it would also make a wider readership possible. Finally, given the book aims to re-orientate scholarship, it surprisingly lacks an involved historiographical discussion (as well as a bibliography). If the authors are serious in their claim that Germany's political tensions restrict academic inquiry into the Revolution, then they should help correct this problem by referencing the very good scholarship from outside Germany. Most important is Sean Dobson's *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910–1920. The Story of a Relationship* (Yale, 2001). David McKibben's illuminating article on the German Independent Socialists (*Central European History*, 25 (1992), 425–43) reaches similar conclusions and deserves recognition. Since Bramke and Reisinger advocate a more diverse approach to this period, it is a shame their use of scholarship is not itself more cosmopolitan.

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M. Jeffrey Hardwick, *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. 288pp. 47 plates. £16.50/\$24.95.
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Victor Gruen, like many successful idealists, might have been happier as a failure. Gruen cherished great European public spaces and genuinely believed that he could build functioning, satisfying public squares in the heart of American

shopping centres. Toward the end of his career, however, he recoiled in horror at the sprawl he had helped to create, accused developers of betraying his vision and retreated to the urbanity of his native Vienna. In spite of his guilty conscience, he could not help himself from introducing the American shopping mall to classic European cities, including Vienna.

Mall Maker, Hardwick's readable treatment of Gruen's career, offers much for urban historians. His research methods, for instance, provide solid support for his broad, and original, claims about Gruen's national importance. Hardwick uses to good effect material drawn from Gruen's papers, contemporary coverage and the literature in urban studies. As Gruen was an indefatigable showman, Hardwick can easily deploy careful description of projects, illustrations, press coverage and excerpts from Gruen's writing to convey the excitement that landed Gruen so many plum projects. The man comes alive and Hardwick vividly illustrates how Gruen's designs captured the American imagination. Hardwick affirms the subtle but important point that the shopping mall, considered an inevitable aspect of post-war suburbia, almost did not happen. The financial and design complexities of shopping malls in the 1950s have been underestimated and Hardwick lays out the evolution of the mall nicely as Gruen, and a few other pioneering architects and developers, moved haltingly from individual stores, to strip centres, to malls and finally to downtown malls for urban renewal. Hardwick does, however, seem to have been seduced by Gruen and accepts uncritically the genius of both his designs and ideas. Gruen's early modernist store designs showed signs of innovative thinking, but from an outsider's point of view Gruen appears to have been a mediocre, media-savvy architect with one powerful design combination that he used *ad nauseam*: modern stores surrounding either open or enclosed plazas, vast parking lots, public art and lush plantings. Not a single one of his designs is likely to stand the test of time and some particularly clumsy ones, like Midtown Plaza, have already been demolished. Nor do his books, and the ideas in them, appear to be more than extended sales tracts to promote the Gruen brand; or worse, pathetic attempts to soothe his conscience with absurd plans for remaking cities and suburbs.

Good as the book is, urbanists would probably want more about the long-term shape and impact of Gruen's designs; many of his malls and pedestrianized main streets, for instance, have been demolished or redesigned. Hardwick also avoids the declining fate of the regional mall in the past decades and the rise of alternative retail settings such as big box stores and lifestyle centres. More could have been said, perhaps, about Gruen's inability to capture the genius of American urbanism including the grid and sidewalk cultures. Maps of the urban context and economic/sociological data on the impact of Gruen's malls would also have been welcome. These oversights are minor, but they do point to a profitable direction for future research.

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Marshall Berman, *On the Town: One Hundred Years of Spectacle in Times Square*. London and New York: Verso, 2009 (originally published by Random House, 2006). xxxvi + 264pp. \$18.95.
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