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Review
Reviewed Work(s):
Deutschland danach: Postfaschistische Gesellschaft und nationales Gedächtnis
by Lutz Niethammer, Ulrich Herbert and Dirk van Laak
Review by: Robert Moeller
Source: *Central European History*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (2001), pp. 295-299
Published by: Cambridge University Press on behalf of Central European History Society
Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/4547088
Accessed: 19-11-2024 14:48 UTC

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journals with the highest print-run of any journal published in the western zones. Yet such overtures toward the political Left soon suffered from the adverse currents of Cold War politics and culture, and mainstream Catholicism reinforced its commitment to conservative Christian Democratic politics. A number of contributions dramatically underscore the tight hold of the clergy over their flock, openly advocating a CDU vote and publicly branding social democracy as the enemy throughout the 1950s.

Perhaps the most telling indicator of the weakness of progressive strands of postwar Catholicism in Germany compared to its francophone homologue is the fate of Catholic Action. Originating in the 1920s as an apostolic mission designed simultaneously to re-Christianize an increasingly secular modern world and to strengthen the hold of the church hierarchy over the Catholic laity, Catholic Action groups in France and the Walloon portions of Belgium experienced not only a phenomenal growth rate but, in parallel fashion, increasing points of friction with church authorities worried about the growing independence and the dangerous inner dynamic experienced by many of these ultimately left-leaning and quasi-autonomous groups. As Wilhelm Damberg's case study of German Catholic Action in its stronghold Münster makes abundantly clear, such worries never troubled its advocates in the German state. If Catholic Action failed in Germany, it was for lack of activist commitment of any sort, reflecting the dissolution of a specifically Catholic milieu in the process of the development of the modern welfare state. *Siegerin in Trümmern* is essential reading for any student of post-World War II German and European Catholicism.

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Deutschland danach: Postfaschistische Gesellschaft und nationales Gedächtnis. By Lutz Niethammer. Edited by Ulrich Herbert and Dirk van Laak. Bonn: Verlag J.H.W. Dietz Nachfolger. 1999. Pp. 623. DM 58.00. ISBN 3–8012–5027–X.

Rather than celebrating Lutz Niethammer's sixtieth birthday with a collection of essays written by his students and admirers, Ulrich Herbert and Dirk van Laak, with the assistance of Ulrich Borsdorf, Franz-Josef Brüggemeir, Alexander von Plato, Dorothee Wierling, and Michael Zimmermann, have chosen to honor this major historian of postwar Germany by compiling a series of essays by the birthday boy himself. All but one have been previously published. This is the cream of a crop: twenty-nine essays that represent nearly thirty years of scholarship. The essays address an impressive range of topics and reveal a

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historian who moves with ease from macrohistorical analyses of post-World War II social and economic reconstruction to nuanced readings of what we can learn from a sketch done by an inmate in Buchenwald, from theoretical reflections on the "history of daily life" to a critical analysis of "postmodernism" and "collective memory."

The editors create four major rubrics to organize Niethammer's work. Under "German Reflections" (*Deutsche Erwägungen*) they include essays that draw on Niethammer's pathbreaking study of denazification (*Entnazifizierung in Bayern: Säuberung und Rehabilitierung unter amerikanischer Besatzung* [Frankfurt am Main, 1972]). At a time when most German historians of his generation were focusing their attention on the Kaiserreich or Weimar, Niethammer was insisting on a contemporary history that included a systematic analysis of how West Germans "came to terms with the past." Nearly three decades later, his work remains unsurpassed. His assessment of the failures of denazification leads directly to his concern with the appearance of neo-Nazism in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Those who are concerned with the resurgence of the National Democratic Party (NPD) and right-wing attacks on immigrants today would be well-advised to consult the analysis of "postfascism" that Niethammer offered nearly twenty years ago. "German Reflections" also include essays that indicate Niethammer's interest in class formation, not only of the working class but also of the middle class. In a more recent essay on the relationship between state and society in the German Democratic Republic, Niethammer offers an instructive prescription for a history of the GDR that would move beyond a "comparative dictatorship" model and an exclusive focus on the Ministerium für Staatssicherheit to incorporate such key topics as the militarization of society, the social composition of those who left the East for the West in the 1950s, the quality of class relations and the material circumstances of class existence and "political culture," broadly conceived. And in a 1972 essay on the concept of the "nation-state" in the BRD, Niethammer already clearly signals a theme that emerges again and again in his work: that the history of neither postwar German state can be studied in isolation. Germans, east and west, were constantly looking over their shoulders in their efforts to determine what distinguished them from Germans on the other side.

Under "Comparative Perspectives" (*Vergleichende Perspektiven*) the editors include essays in which Niethammer underscores his thesis that German history can only be understood by locating it in the context of larger European and global developments. Whether his object of study is fascist movements in the interwar period, attempts to establish a unified trade union structure after the war, or antifascist working-class councils after 1945, Niethammer demonstrates an extraordinary grasp of twentieth-century trends and demonstrates where Germany followed and where it diverged from the paths taken by its neighbors. In a superb essay on allied internment camps — American and Soviet — in

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postwar Germany, Niethammer also reveals an abiding commitment to archival research. Not comfortable to rest on his laurels, he continues to delve into new sources made available since unification. The essay is a preview of a major work on Soviet camps that recently appeared (*Sowjetische Sonderlager in der SBZ*, 2 vols. [Berlin, 1997–99]).

In the "Love of Detail" (*Die Liebe zum Detail*), another Niethammer emerges, this time a historian of "daily life," who championed techniques of oral history in the 1970s when most social historians — east and west — sought to subsume individual experiences under big structures and metanarratives. In the vanguard of the techniques of oral history in the Federal Republic, Niethammer was behind a pathbreaking project that captured working-class memories in the Ruhrgebiet over the period 1930–1960. Indeed, it is unfortunate that the editors of this volume chose not to include one of Niethammer's own contributions to that project (e.g., "Privat-Wirtschaft: Erinnerungsfragmente einer anderen Umerziehung," in Niethammer, ed., *"Hinterher merkt man, dass es richtig war, dass es schiefgegangen ist": Nachkriegs-Erfahrungen im Ruhrgebiet* [Bonn, 1983], pp. 17–105). In this essay collection, we get instead Niethammer's reflections on method, not his own illustration of how oral history can interrogate grand narratives and periodization schemes. Among the "details" captured here are also a fascinating essay in which Niethammer uses a pencil drawing of a Communist Kapo in Buchenwald to open up a probing discussion of the ways in which postwar commemoration of resistance and antifascism in the GDR transformed all Communists into heroic resisters, erasing the experiences of Communist prisoners who found themselves in something analogous to Primo Levi's "grey zone" where they sought to preserve themselves and their comrades by assuming privileged positions of authority and cooperating with the SS. And in an analysis of a film, produced at the instruction of camp guards by inmates of Theresienstadt in the summer of 1944, Niethammer offers a fascinating case study of how we can best understand strategies of resistance and hopes for survival in the face of imminent destruction.

The line between Niethammer's interventions into discussions of the history of daily life and the uses of oral history and "History and Memory" (*Geschichte und Gedächtnis*), the last section in the book, is porous, and what unifies the work under both rubrics is his sensitivity to theory and his interrogation of grand narratives that silence individual voices or different visions of the past. His critical analysis of categories of "collective memory" and "identity" clearly emerges from his own experiences as an interviewer and his insistence on locating individual experience in a macrohistorical context. Unlike some others of his generation who have viewed postmodernism with skepticism, moreover, Niethammer has no difficulty welcoming this theoretical tendency. Challenges to received wisdom and the demolition of grand narratives, he admits, may sometimes be painful, but the flipside of uncertainty is

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exhilaration, the embrace of methodologies and theoretical approaches that will allow us to understand a far greater expanse of "the dimensions of life" and that will equip us better to understand the individual historical subject (p. 602). No one who knows Niethammer's work will be surprised by this conclusion.

Across these thematic groupings, a number of common themes emerge: a fascination with how Germans — east and west — have confronted the past of National Socialism and the ways in which the construction of public memories and forms of commemoration have eclipsed or silenced individual memories; the centrality of class relations for understanding postwar German and European history; the importance of establishing what he elsewhere has called the "socio-cultural continuity of the people" in a form that allows Germans the "right to speak" (*Mitspracherecht*); the necessity of writing a history of postwar Germany that begins with recognition of the shared past of National Socialism and insists on a systematic German-German comparative perspective; and a commitment to theory that is anything but dogmatic and authorizes the use of different approaches for different objects of study. Not easily categorized, Niethammer is a political historian of big structures, comparisons, and macrodevelopments, a historian of "daily life," a historian of post-Holocaust memory and commemoration, and a theorist. For those who have followed Niethammer's career, this is not news. For those who have not, this book is an extremely welcome and highly instructive sampler. In the list of Niethammer's publications, included in an appendix to the volume, there is a striking absence of works that have appeared in English translation. That is regrettable. Much of what Niethammer has to say addresses historians who are not German specialists and a broader public that may find German history fascinating but does not know the language. Perhaps the appearance of this book will inspire a U.S. or British publisher to take on the project of bringing out at least some of these essays in translation.

A little over two-thirds of the way into this massive volume, Niethammer reflects on the "Schwierigkeiten beim Schreiben einer deutschen Nationalgeschichte nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg" (The difficulties of writing a German national history after the Second World War). He insists that any adequate history of Germany — from one nation to two states and back again — must take seriously the shared past out of which two very different social orders emerged. It must recall that the boundaries of postwar Germany did not reflect diverging ways of life or thought, but resulted rather from the internationalization of the "German question," a specific consequence of the Third Reich. Unlike those who have studied the GDR in the context of a model of "comparative dictatorships," comparing East Germany to the National Socialist state, the relevant comparison is of successor states, and between the two Germanys and their neighbors in east and west. A "contemporary history" of postwar Germany, he warns, should avoid the tendency to be focused on the history of politics

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narrowly conceived and must include consideration of demography, the economy, social structure, and culture. It cannot be a "national" history in any conventional sense, given that after 1945, there were two German states, both of which were tied into supranational federations; a history of postwar Germany is thus, in some sense, a postnational history. And it must be ready to interrogate the many things that historians have unconsciously come to take for granted about an era through which they have lived (p. 435). What these essays make clear is that Niethammer has been preparing to write such a history for the last thirty years. Let's hope in his seventh decade, he does it.

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Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene: Gesellschaft und Vertriebenenpolitik in der SBZ/DDR und in Polen 1945–1956. By Philipp Ther. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. 1998. Pp. 382. DM 74.00. ISBN 3–425–35790–7.

Philipp Ther examines two less familiar aspects of the wave of ethnic cleansing that swept east-central Europe at the end of World War II. First, he focuses on the not inconsiderable number of expellees in the former East Germany; approximately one in three of the ca. 12 million surviving German expellees who arrived in rump Germany found themselves in the Soviet occupation zone. For a time they formed an even greater share of the population of that zone than of the British or American zones. Although a third of them moved on to West Germany before 1961, a significant number remained behind, and their experience differed in important respects from the more familiar story of the West German *Vertriebenen*. It differed above all in that its public discussion was basically taboo in the GDR from 1948–1949 until 1989, for which reason much of what Ther reports about their circumstances, official treatment, and halting integration will be new even to specialists.

A second novel feature of this work is Ther's ambitious attempt to compare the experience of the Germans expelled to East Germany with the ca. 2 1/4 million Poles who were expelled from what had been eastern Poland (some having been expelled first to Siberia, 1939–1941) and resettled in formerly German lands east of the Oder and Neisse. Indeed, readers will probably find the sections on Poland, simultaneously victim of Soviet ethnic cleansing and party to history's most extensive ethnic cleansing project, the more revelatory. Ther's novel use of Polish archival sources to shed additional light on the expulsion of Germans turns up some interesting material, e.g., Polish party chief Władysław Gomułka's May 1945 instruction, while the eventual German-Polish

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