image of the Resistance' (83), whereas Tillion's ethnographic training allowed her to highlight its 'unifying character… in which former social and ideological divisions might be transcended' (85). Stephanie Hare's 2003 interviews with former Paris police prefect Maurice Papon form the basis for an investigation into the complexities of oral history and the 'behavioral codes and mentalities of the French civil service' that shaped his defence of his wartime activities as a 'duty to obey'. His defence, she concludes, was a combination of 'self-justification and "business as usual" for the state', revealing the shared responsibility of Papon and state bureaucrats (100).

The third section, 'Toeing the Party Line', considers how party membership affected a variety of writers, intellectuals and artists. Angela Kershaw considers the struggles of the *résistant* and writer Edith Thomas to reconcile her commitments to the French Communist Party with its constraints on her activities. Jean-Baptiste Bruneau asks why contemporaries found the political beliefs of the right-wing writer Drieu La Rochelle so hard to pin down, revealing that the 'problems in understanding and recognizing fascism derived from a serious inability to grasp its impact on French politics' (122). Finally, the art historian Sarah Wilson examines how communist party membership affected the political and representational strategies of several painters engaged in anticolonial struggles on the eve of the Algerian War.

This collection offers stimulating insights into mid-twentieth century political life, reminding us of the embodied aspects – physical, verbal, and visual – of political engagement as well as the persistent tensions between individual and collective action that typified the period between 1930 and 1950. More important, the contributions illustrate how the political polarization that preceded and followed the Second World War compelled many people to commit to a party or cause, even when this resulted in disrupted family life and professional life or class and ethnic identities, producing the competing memories of the period that persist today.

Hubert Wolf, *The Nuns of Sant'Ambrogio: The True Story of a Convent in Scandal*, Ruth Martin, trans., Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2015; 496 pp., 20 halftones; 9780198732198, £20.00 (hbk)

Reviewed by: Liise Lehtsalu, *Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, USA*

Hubert Wolf writes at the end of *The Nuns of Sant'Ambrogio*, 'what had sounded like an outrageous fantasy turned out to be a true story of a convent in scandal' (371). The story that Wolf presents to his readers has all the components of a good scandal: a dominating novice mistress, innocent novices, false saints, broken confessionals, violations of monastic enclosure, murders, sexual encounters between nuns, and a priest exchanging French kisses with a nun. When the German princess Katharina von Hohenzollern entered the Regulated Franciscan Third Order convent of St Ambrogio in Rome in 1857, she did not expect having to escape the convent in summer 1859, fearing for her life. What had happened in St Ambrogio during the princess's novitiate and the preceding decades became the subject of a

trial by the Holy Office. The inquisition trial lasted until spring 1862 and concluded with the convictions of the abbess, the novice mistress and both confessors of St Ambrogio, as well as the dissolution of the convent and the suppression of the cult of the convent's founder, Agnese Firrao. Wolf follows the inquisition trial from preliminary investigations through to the verdict and its aftermath. He quotes extensively from the trial records, which are part of the Archive of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and have only been accessible to researchers since 1998.

A historian of the Roman Inquisition and the Church in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Wolf provides a detailed overview of the inquisition process and contextualizes the case of St Ambrogio in the history of nineteenth-century German Catholicism and curial politics in Rome. Wolf's analysis focuses on the second confessor of St Ambrogio, the Jesuit theologian and philosopher Joseph Kleutgen, aka padre Giuseppe Peters. Kleutgen played a leading role in the nineteenth-century revival of scholasticism and supported the dogma of papal infallibility. Wolf relates the outcome of the inquisition trial that saw Kleutgen receive minimal punishment, even though he had broken the confessional and his priestly vows, to the favourable position the Jesuits held in the Roman curia in the later-nineteenth century and the political victory of the Ultramondists in German Catholicism.

Wolf's focus on the political and theological contexts surrounding St Ambrogio's trial, and its sentencing in particular, underplay the fascinating history of convent life that emerges from his extensive citations of the trial record. Wolf uncritically adopts the term 'lesbian' to discuss sexual acts between nuns in St Ambrogio and leans on present-day psychology of childhood sexual abuse to interpret these acts. Unintentionally, perhaps, the story of the nuns of St Abrogio acquires a sensationalist tone, which recalls Denis Diderot's famous *La Religieuse* and has also been the focus of the popular press reviews of Wolf's book. Wolf fails to follow his own suggestion that 'gender studies research is especially helpful' for understanding the motivations of the novice mistress and the case of St Ambrogio (440, fn. 76). The tantalizing references in the quoted trial records to gendered practices of piety, mysticism and power are dismissed as feminine 'manipulation' (256) and 'lust for power' (267). Yet, the testimonies from St Ambrogio do reveal that the eighteenth-century feminization of religion and the early-nineteenth century resurgence of Marian devotion in Italy were still current in mid-nineteenth-century Rome. Moreover, the nineteenth-century spaces of female monasticism were not dissimilar from Italian convents before the Napoleonic suppressions. Marina Caffiero, in the introduction to her volume on the Church and modernity in Italy in the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, has stressed a continuity across this period in Italian history. The case of St Ambrogio should not be considered without reference to the history of female monasticism in early modern Italy, or the history of the Italian peninsula in the early-nineteenth century, especially the aftermath of the Napoleonic period and the developments of the Risorgimento. Unfortunately, Wolf presents the story of St Ambrogio as a German story, with limited regard to the physical and temporal context of the

convent in Rome. Nevertheless, and even with these shortcomings, *The Nuns of Sant'Ambrogio* is a pleasurable read that has the character of a crime novel while also providing a detailed overview of the procedures of the Roman inquisition and access to extensive excerpts of a fascinating trial record.

Oliver Zimmer, *Remaking the Rhythms of Life: German Communities in the Age of the Nation-State*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2013; 416 pp., 24 illustrations; 9780199571208, £38.99 (hbk)

Reviewed by: Xosé-Manoel Núñez, *Ludwig-Maximilians Universität Munich, Germany*

National identities have been approached by historians in the last twenty years from diverse angles, from the local sphere to the global, and from the social perspective to the cultural one. However, a relatively marginalized aspect in most studies on the formation of national identities in nineteenth-century Europe has been the place reserved for local and the regional identities within the new hierarchy of loyalties increasingly imposed by nation-states and/or national movements. While the bulk of historical research on this has focused, particularly in the German-speaking context, on the emergence and variegated meanings ascribed to the term *Heimat* and local cultures, much less space has been devoted to the role of cities and, therefore, the emergence of specifically urban identities and their relation to the nation. A further vacuum was that of the redefinition of daily life brought about by urbanization and social change, along with the impact of nation-building, by applying a bottom-up perspective that emphasized the way in which national worldviews had an impact on ordinary lives, from consumption patterns to local festivities.

This is precisely the field that the Oxford-based historian Oliver Zimmer, himself a well-known specialist on the study of Swiss nationalism, comparative European nationalisms and, more specifically, on the role of national symbols to shape collective identity, attempts to cover in this study. As he explicitly declares, his aim is to shed some light on how ordinary people 'strove to regain a sense of place in a changing world' (1) by inquiring into the way in which urbanization and modernization influenced their 'rhythms and routines'. The perception of time and place by the inhabitants of these towns, as well as the emotional attachment they developed to the new built environment and the rhythms of life which developed within its limits become central categories in the author's analytic lens, which he develops in a multifaceted comparison of three medium-sized and biconfessional South-German towns during the second half of the nineteenth century: Ludwigshafen, Augsburg and Ulm, which experienced different paths of modernization – while Ulm was a traditional artisan and merchant town, Ludwigshafen was characterized by a speedy economic growth, and Augsburg remained fairly stable as a traditional merchant and industrial city.

Resorting to a broad sample of sources, from local archives to the press and personal memoirs, Zimmer approaches the ways in which the 'rhythms of life' changed in all three towns by selecting a number of topics: the evolution of local