REVIEW ARTICLE

WEIMAR TO COLD WAR: NEW BOOKS ON TWENTIETH-CENTURY GERMAN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY

EMILY A. STEINHAUER


NOAH BENEZRA STROTE, Lions and Lambs: Conflict in Weimar and the Creation of Post-Nazi Germany (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), xii + 357 pp. ISBN 978 0 300 21905 0. $US 40.00. £30.00


The history of German political thought and ideologies is currently experiencing a moment of political urgency: comparisons, denials, and revisions are shaping public discourse and historians are increasingly under pressure to leave the confines of the academy and address a wider audience. Thus during the recent ‘Historikertag’, the Association of German Historians (VHD) published a resolution on current threats to democracy, arguing against populism and discrimination and in favour of democracy and pluralism.¹ At the same time,

¹ Verband der Historiker und Historikerinnen Deutschlands, ‘Resolution of the Association of German Historians on Current Threats to Democracy
in a more reflective mood, historians and the public are looking back on the course of the twentieth century as a number of anniversaries converge. As far-right parties and movements are on the rise across Europe, seemingly defying the ability as much as the willingness to learn from the recent past, Germany battles with old concerns: Bonn might not have been Weimar, but would the ‘Berlin Republic’ see a revival of the factionalism and extremism that eventually undermined the democratic institutions of the inter-war period? Similar developments in the Anglo-American sphere call into question the longstanding transatlantic alliance, escalating the breaking apart of a shared value system based on ‘consensus liberalism’ that had shaped a formative part of the twentieth century.

As historically rooted values and narratives are increasingly disputed, discussion surrounding the deconstruction and reconstruction of historical storylines is revived, leading to fierce battles over prerogative of interpretation. Some voices are now calling for a ‘conservative revolution’ to set an end to the perceived dominance of a morally patronizing, elitist minority of leftover 68ers. The far right now openly calls into question the place of the Holocaust and the National Socialist regime in the narrative of German history and identity. The liberal camp tries to counter this rhetoric with a moral consensus deeply rooted in ‘working through the past’. Yet it also cannot close its eyes to the demographic changes that make a homogeneous, historically grounded moral identity increasingly difficult to achieve. The well-known but also worn-out storyline of twentieth-century Germany needs to be reassessed, as the straightforward narrative of a ‘long path towards the West’, in which an authoritarian Germany learns its lesson and proceeds steadily on a path towards democratization in the wake of the Second World War and Holocaust


3 This rhetoric is, of course, fundamentally shaped by Theodor W. Adorno’s essay, ‘Was bedeutet: Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit’ (1959), in id., Gesammelte Schriften, 10/2 (Frankfurt, 2003), 555–72.
no longer encompasses the historical diversity modern observers are attuned to.\textsuperscript{4}

Scholarship increasingly recognizes the narrative structures of historical writing for what they are: literary interpretations that serve a particular status quo, consensus, or viewpoint as much as they reveal about the actual past. All the books reviewed here contribute in one way or another to this deconstruction, whilst also developing new ways of thinking and writing in the twentieth century. Spanning almost the entire century, they challenge existing intellectual histories of a period or a set of thinkers and activists, taking readers from Weimar—Udi Greenberg’s \textit{The Weimar Century} and Noah Benezra Strote’s \textit{Lions and Lambs}—to the consequences of the 1968 student movement in the works of Robert Zwarg, Heinz Bude, and Stuart Jeffries.

Two central themes stand out: first, the role of generations and intellectual cross-generational fertilization, and second, the widening of the geographical scope to include transnational, and especially transatlantic, perspectives. The latter does not remain uncontested: whilst the ‘Westernization’ trope popularized by historians such as Anselm Doering-Manteuffel is discernible in much of the scholarship under scrutiny here, especially Strote’s work and the reflections of Heinz Bude call for a more careful acknowledgement of the inwards-turned intellectual world of twentieth-century Germany. Both these themes share, however, the overarching concern with the way ideas travel—across countries, time, and generations. Especially Greenberg’s, Bude’s, and Zwarg’s works therefore also open new avenues in emigration and remigration history. They manage to break with a more negative trope of homelessness and pessimistic paralysis that still dominates existing literature.\textsuperscript{5} Unlike these works, referencing even in their titles dismayed remigrants—‘\textit{Ich staune, dass Sie in dieser Luft atmen können}’: Jüdische Intellektuelle in Deutschland nach 1945 (Frankfurt, 2013); Irmela von der Lühe, Axel Schildt, and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum (eds.), ‘\textit{Auch in Deutschland waren wir nicht wirklich zu Hause}’: Jüdische Remigration nach 1945 (Göttingen, 2008).

\textsuperscript{4} Heinrich August Winkler, \textit{Der lange Weg nach Westen}, 2 vols. (Munich, 2000). ‘Westernization’ as a field of historical scholarship was established by Anselm Doering-Manteuffel in the 1990s, see e.g. his \textit{Wie westlich sind die Deutschen?} (Göttingen, 1999).

\textsuperscript{5} Monika Boll and Raphael Gross (eds.), ‘\textit{Ich staune, dass Sie in dieser Luft atmen können}’: Jüdische Intellektuelle in Deutschland nach 1945 (Frankfurt, 2013); Irmela von der Lühe, Axel Schildt, and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum (eds.), ‘\textit{Auch in Deutschland waren wir nicht wirklich zu Hause}’: Jüdische Remigration nach 1945 (Göttingen, 2008).
Luft atmen können’, ‘Auch in Deutschland waren wir nicht wirklich zu Hause’—Greenberg’s and Zwarg’s books both confidently assert the influence German émigrés had on the constitution of twentieth-century thought.

Central to this is the problem of generations and their importance for German history in the twentieth century. Thus whilst Strote calls for a greater appreciation of the generation born between 1890 and 1910 as the founding fathers of German post-war democratic consensus, shifting emphasis away from what scholars such as Dirk Moses have called the ‘45ers’ or ‘Flakhelfer’ generation, Bude in Adorno für Ruinenkinder closes in again on the generations of the ‘45ers’ and the ‘68ers’.6 In Bude’s narrative, the absence of this older generation shaped the political generation of those growing up in the ruins of Nazi Germany. Searching for new ideas and idols, they turned to figures who had never completely shaken off their ‘outsider’ status, in contrast to the heroes of Strote’s and Greenberg’s stories, who had helped build the consensus of the 1950s.

Yet in Theodor W. Adorno they again chose a figure from their father’s generation—no family novel without a paterfamilias, after all. Stuart Jeffries, in his wide-ranging, eclectic account of the Frankfurt School, Grand Hotel Abyss, tries to capture the attraction this group of thinkers exerted over multiple generations—and establishes how the intellectual history of the twentieth century can still frame the political discussion of the twenty-first. This fascination with outsiders and the exiled and their apparent ability to provide a sense of identity and identification for younger generations was not limited to Germany but also an American phenomenon, as Zwarg shows. His Die kritische Theorie in Amerika shares some ground with Greenberg in emphasizing the transatlantic exchange, eventually enabling a global transmission of ideas initially conceived of in Weimar Germany. To what extent, Greenberg asks, is the ‘American Century’ also the ‘Weimar Century’, a century in which some of the most formative political and intellectual constellations from totalitarianism and militant democracy to conceptions of the individual, were forged in the heat of German inter-war ideological conflict?

The title of Greenberg’s 2014 monograph neatly encapsulates his main argument: The Weimar Century: German Émigrés and the Ideological

6 Dirk Moses, German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past (Cambridge, 2007).
Foundations of the Cold War. By tracing five biographies, Greenberg challenges some of the preconceived narratives surrounding the intellectual context of German reconstruction as well as the Cold War generally. First, he argues, émigrés are often unrecognized vital players in post-war reconstruction. Yet through American financial and institutional support, they in fact shaped much of the ideological consensus that created a stable, democratic West German state. Not only did they (re-)introduce certain ideas into the intellectual sphere, they also helped to delegitimize others that could have threatened the construction of liberal democracy: thus the doctrine of anti-communism and the theory of totalitarianism were developed and fostered by German theorists in exile. Greenberg certainly has a point here; accounts of exile and remigration tend to focus on the difficulties faced by remigrants as well as the hostilities of the German population. The figures he points to—Carl J. Friedrich, Ernst Fraenkel, Waldemar Gurian, Karl Loewenstein, and Hans Morgenthau—all had a significant impact not just on the formation of German politics, but also on the way American policies were developed and applied globally: ‘Their ideas, policies, and institutional connections stood at the heart of the postwar Atlantic order.’

Yet the character of Greenberg’s study—individual biographies tracing the development of thought and influence of five different thinkers from the Weimar Republic to America and into the Cold War—glosses over the difficulties faced by the majority of emigrants and remigrants. Returning to Germany was generally confined to those with contacts and sufficient financial backing, whilst the ‘common people’ usually faced too many bureaucratic obstacles and more or less veiled hostilities to make a return seem viable. Those who returned had usually been in influential positions before the rise of the Nazis and the outbreak of the Second World War, but frustration and rejection ran high among these as well. Thus Thomas Mann’s criticism of the ‘inner emigration’ and Alfred Döblin’s ultimate decision to throw in the towel as a member of the French post-war re-education effort already demonstrate the difficulty many exiles faced reconnecting to the German population.

Finding a footing in America had been equally difficult for many exiles, as Robert Zwarg’s brief analysis of the Frankfurt School in

7 Greenberg, Weimar Century, 3.
America demonstrates. His argument that many emigrants struggled to integrate themselves into American institutions, despite existing organizational structures, is similarly evinced in Thomas Wheatland’s account of the American years of the Institute for Social Research.\(^8\) The impact émigrés could have was largely determined by their usefulness to the Allies. This was demonstrated by members of the Frankfurt School themselves, when in the course of the war their expert knowledge on Germany suddenly opened doors for them at the Office of Strategic Services (OSS).\(^9\)

Greenberg’s second major argument, that the intellectual roots of democratization were not merely a reaction to Nazism but derived from the tense atmosphere of the Weimar Republic, thus makes sense only insofar as a particular set of ‘influencers’ is considered. Whilst Greenberg’s case studies are coherent, meticulously researched, and conclusively analysed, the wider argument they feed into must be viewed with caution, keeping in mind the countless ideas that were born in the context of the Weimar Republic but not rekindled in the post-war world.

Greenberg’s third major point then turns the readers’ gaze from Europe to America, highlighting not only how the rise of the USA to superpower status enabled the emigrants to spread their ideas more forcefully, but also how these ideas helped to forge the new American empire. Ernst Fraenkel’s reach thus went as far as Korea, and Loewenstein’s ideas influenced policies across Latin America. However, the book does not shy away from highlighting the darker sides of this influence. In his chapters on Gurian’s early conception of ‘totalitarianism’ and Loewenstein’s ‘militant democracy’, Greenberg forcefully demonstrates the sad irony in the emigrants’ aggressive defence of democracy. By delegitimizing any critical or deviant voices, they sometimes mirrored the practices of the authoritarian regimes they were trying to combat. Greenberg’s book is hence not an idealistic account of Westernization, nor an intellectual ‘rags-to-riches’ story. Instead, his analysis of transatlantic exchange carefully unearths the institutional, political, and governmental factors that framed twentieth-century soft power and cultural diplomacy.

\(^8\) Thomas Wheatland, The Frankfurt School in Exile (Minneapolis, 2009).

Like Greenberg, Noah Strote in his *Lions and Lambs* traces the biographies of several intellectuals born around the turn of the century, emphasizing the importance of Weimar thought and its relationship to German post-war consensus. In Strote’s analysis, it was the generation born between 1890 and 1910 that took on the role of ‘founding fathers’ of the new Federal Republic of Germany, overcoming internal fissures that had, twelve years previously, hindered them in constituting a united front against Nazism. It is, however, this focus on the national that differentiates Strote’s work from Greenberg’s account. Taken together, the two texts help to differentiate the history of post-war German reconstruction and international order, doing so at the expense of homogenous, linear explanations.

Strote’s book is divided into two parts, ‘Conflict’ and ‘Partnership’, and therefore stresses the intellectual break occurring at some point after 1937 much more clearly than Greenberg, who emphasizes continuity across the watershed of the Second World War much more vigorously. Strote consciously sets out to challenge dominating narratives asserting the importance of economic development, stable institutions, and American influence. Instead, he focuses on the reconciliation of former conflict groups within the German debate as such. His argument here transcends the framework of the specific case of German post-war reconstruction and makes a wider point about the way societal success has been analysed and theorized. Both the modernization theory of the 1950s and 1960s and newer models of neoinstitutionalism had focused on the relationship between prosperity and liberal democratic institutions on the other.\(^{10}\)

Strote points out another formative element: value consensus. In the course of the book, he tracks the emergence of this consensus in a region traditionally fraught with political, social, and religious strife, accentuating that this was an internal transformation.\(^{11}\) Unlike in Greenberg’s account, émigrés hardly play a role at all in this account. One of the reasons for the emphasis on internal developments, rather than influences coming through outside exchange, is Strote’s attention to the part played by Christianity in these con-

\(^{10}\) Strote, *Lions and Lambs*, 4–5.

\(^{11}\) Strote himself uses the term ‘region’, implying that this is a conflict reaching beyond the German empire of 1871.
Although he includes figures from all sides of the political spectrum, except communists, who did not manage to integrate into the post-war consensus, the long-raging conflict between Protestants and Catholics is of prime importance. Strote traces the evolution of the ‘culture war’ between the two confessions, as well as the struggle between church and state for influence on education and culture policy, right up to the rise of the Nazis and the growing disenchantment of religious thinkers after Hitler’s lack of true commitment to supporting church influence became evident. After the war, the commitment to reconciliation and partnership allowed a new, mutually inclusive society to emerge: ‘What was decisive in the postwar period was not the importation of foreign ideals, but rather the reconciliation of German ideals that had long been regarded as mutually opposing.’

Participation in this consensus was vital in order to influence politics at all, as Strote demonstrates in his last chapter, in which he discusses the role of Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer. Despite their left-leaning, critical attitudes they established themselves as part of this German partnership in order to participate in its politics. To include them in this consensus might seem strange at first. Debates about their role in the ‘intellectual foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany’ are not resolved, although in more recent years, the work of Monika Boll and Raphael Gross among others has made headway in ascertaining their re-establishment and role in the young West German state. Their case also serves well to highlight one of the major problems with Strote’s otherwise excellent study. As with Greenberg, the focus on individual biographies allows Strote to give an extremely detailed overview of the evolution of actors and their ideas in the historical development of Germany. Yet at times

12 For the current scholarly interest in Christianity and politics, see e.g. Samuel Moyn, Christian Human Rights (Philadelphia, 2015).
13 Strote, Lions and Lambs, 149.
14 Clemens Albrecht et. al, Die intellektuelle Gründung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Eine Wirkungsgeschichte der Frankfurter Schule (Frankfurt, 1999); Jens Hacke, Philosophie der Bürgerlichkeit: Die liberalkonservative Begründung der Bundesrepublik (Göttingen, 2006); Monika Boll, Nachprogramm: Intellektuelle Gründungsdebatten in der frühen Bundesrepublik (Münster, 2004); Monika Boll and Raphael Gross (eds.), Die Frankfurter Schule und Frankfurt: Eine Rückkehr nach Deutschland (Göttingen, 2009).
this destabilizes his ‘enemies into partners’ thesis. It is, for example, not always clear whether these individuals chose ‘partnership’ out of a true desire for reconciliation under a (Judeo-)Christian banner, or whether they participated in the new consensus simply to play along in a new game for influence. Similarly, not everyone partaking in the new public, political, and academic sphere had renounced authoritarian or even Nazi ideologies—universities, political parties, and other public roles were still staffed by former members of the Nazi party, or those who had enabled, condoned, or fostered its rise. Strote himself admits that, when zooming out to look at the bigger picture, his conception of consensus might appear brittle, as marginal and minority figures excluded from partnership now come into focus.

Like Greenberg’s book then, Strote’s well-researched, detailed contribution adds another piece to the vast puzzle that constitutes the intellectual transition from the Weimar to the Federal Republic. Both are aware that the particular intellectual climate and consensus they envision did not last forever. The 1960s, with the rise of the student movement and alternative politics and lifestyles, put an end to these trajectories. Heinz Bude and Robert Zwarg follow these lines of development further, explicitly engaging with the way different generations related to their predecessors—not just across time, but also geographical, national, and cultural boundaries.

Heinz Bude’s ‘story of 1968’, published in time for the fiftieth anniversary of that year, follows a similar structure to Greenberg’s and Strote’s studies: every chapter focuses on a different individual, bringing together distinct experiences to form a kaleidoscopic expression of the historical moment as a whole. Bude’s book, however, is much more difficult to situate in terms of genre and objective. It follows up on his sociological research on Das Altern einer Generation, but is less restricted by the methodological and stylistic demands of the previous study. Instead, Bude himself describes the work as a ‘remix’ that questions the role of the ‘68ers’ in the ‘Familienroman’ of the Federal Republic and their place in the succession of generations. It is as much of a socio-psychological reflection as a personal coming to

16 Bude, Adorno für Ruinenkinder, 9.
terms with a generation that fascinated, but also confused Bude. Unsurprisingly, one of his interview subjects, Peter Märtesheimer, called him a ‘mix of therapist and judge’.¹⁷

The book brings out, in impressionistic miniatures, the non-synchronicity of critical theory (and Marxism in general) that Zwarg also describes in his own portrait of 68ers across the Atlantic and their reception of German thought.¹⁸ Unlike their American counterparts, the protagonists of Bude’s story are not interested in orthodox Marxism and theorizing—let alone practising—the revolution. Instead, the German 68ers appear preoccupied with themselves and their own biographies, which seem interwoven with the larger fate of the nation. The modern eye visualizes 1968 through demonstrations, sit-ins, and lecture-halls filled with rebellious students, images of mass power and mass agitation. Yet Bude’s protagonists all emphasize the importance of autonomy and personal development; although 1968 did awaken a new sense of responsibility in them, this played out in the confines of the individual.

Hence Bude’s is a story of those who did not fit in, who were uneasy with strict organization and party lines, and whose own backgrounds alienated them sometimes from the rebelling, largely middle-class students. The absence of fathers, as well as childhood and adolescence spent in wartime Nazi Germany and its aftermath, emerge as an overarching theme. Seemingly, it is this lack of an identification figure that leads Bude to anoint Adorno as patron saint of the 68ers. This move is not always convincing; some of Bude’s subjects, such as Adelheid Guttmann or Camilla Blisse, appear to have developed interests outside the mainstream of the student movement’s revival that for a time at least celebrated Adorno’s iconoclastic, critical power. Nonetheless, their inclusion is important and laudable because it sheds light on figures who have remained excluded for a long time thanks to the idealization of the ‘revolutionaries’ who shouted the loudest and simply drowned out their often female challengers.¹⁹ A defeated, resigned tone therefore dominates the book. ‘1968’ as a political moment never lived up to the expectations of its

¹⁷ Ibid. 24.
¹⁸ Zwarg, Die Kritische Theorie in Amerika, 224.
participants, and its second coming in the shape of the 1999–2005 
coalition government of SPD and Greens might have been, as Bude 
contemplates, a ‘perversion’ of older ideals. Missed chances domi-
nate these accounts. Whilst Bude’s book is not an academic study, 
and never attempts to be one, it can function as a discussion-piece 
bringing to the forefront those personalities, ideas, and projects that 
are not (yet) part of the collective memory of ‘1968’ but that nonethe-
less shaped Germany’s way towards this anniversary.

Robert Zwart’s *Die kritische Theorie in Amerika* only reveals its true 
subjects in the subtitle: instead of contributing to the growing inter-
est in the Frankfurt School’s first generation’s exile in America, 
Zwart focuses on the *Nachleben einer Tradition*, the reception of criti-
cal theory in the USA by the students coming of age around ‘1968’. 
Diligently researched with great attention to detail, Zwart’s study 
not only manages to capture the avenues of reception and dissemi-
nation of critical theory’s core texts. It also demonstrates how theo-
ries can develop a life of their own when they are confronted with 
new contexts, receptors, and influences. Zwart’s book is therefore 
also partly a history of the evolution of the American Left and its 
encounter with Marxism on the one hand, and German culture on the 
other. The towering figure in this narrative is, as in Bude’s book, 
Adorno.

However, whilst some of the protagonists of Bude’s narrative still 
had first-hand encounters with the philosopher, either in lecture halls 
or at the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, Zwart’s main pro-
tagonists rely on a few translations and contact with émigrés who 
had stayed in the USA. The practice of reading for reception as an in-
depth exegetic endeavour, rather than independent philosophizing 
and writing, takes centre stage. In this, Bude’s ‘Achtundsechziger’ re-
semble Zwart’s ‘Sixty-Eighters’. Whilst in Germany publishing hous-
es and their distinctive publications, such as Suhrkamp’s cheap and 
colourful paperbacks and Peter Gente’s Merve-Verlag, began to shape 
the image of the intellectual moment, theoretical journals provided

---

21 Besides Wheatland’s 2009 work referenced above, see also David Jene-
mann, *Adorno in America* (Minneapolis, 2007) and, most prominently, the 
works of Detlev Claussen, e.g. ‘Intellectual Transfer: Theodor W. Adorno’s 
the much-needed space for thought and discussion in the USA. Yet, as Zwarg is quick to point out, because the reception of critical theory is predominantly a hermeneutic exercise, and because this process of interpretation is highly charged with political expectation, conflict easily emerges over who holds sovereignty of interpretation. This leads, for example, to the rejection of Martin Jay’s *The Dialectical Imagination*, the first history of the Institute for Social Research. In the eyes of its critics, Jay’s study was too historical and too unpoltical in its assertion that the moment of critical theory had passed.

Jay, however, is only a minor figure in Zwarg’s analysis that focuses on the two major theoretical journals emerging in the wake of the student movement: *Telos* and *New German Critique*. Both of these were embroiled in an attempt to make sense of the ultimate failure of the student movement and the problem of reconciling theory and praxis. They were closely linked to academic centres, Buffalo and Madison, and therefore also to the academic influences there. Zwarg points here especially to the impact of German émigrés who had remained in their US exile. Cultural and intellectual historians such as George L. Mosse or Peter Gay were not direct representatives of critical theory, but their work allowed students to immerse themselves more fully in the Weimar context of critical theory’s initial inception. This contact with a generation of émigrés conscious of their outsider status influenced the students to such an extent, Zwarg argues, that a ‘Jewish habitus’ developed among them, transferring the experience of exile into a narrative of self-description in which the young generation suddenly saw themselves as ‘displaced persons’ like their teachers.

At the same time, Zwarg concedes, many of the members of the close-knit editing and contributing circles around these two journals had roots outside the USA: Seyla Benhabib came from Turkey to study in America, Andrew Arato fled Hungary after 1956 with his parents, Paul Piccone hailed from Italy, and many other members were part of a Jewish diaspora that remained socially excluded—

---

24 For one of the most famous conceptualizations of the role of the outsider in culture see Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (London, 1968).
Paul Breines, Jack Zipes, and Russell Jacoby among them. Although a certain distance to American culture and politics is therefore unsurprising, Zwarg digs deeper than this superficial ‘otherness’ of critical theory’s new American generation to showcase also how a non-synchronicity and incommensurability of German and American contexts made a complete adaption impossible. Whilst Bude’s subjects were becoming increasingly resigned to the fact that their dreams of changing the world had been naive, Zwarg’s students are still leading the fight, albeit in a mainly intellectual milieu, to redefine the new left. As Zwarg notes repeatedly, this also has to do with the absence of Marxism from America in the previous decades, which had led the Left on a completely different course compared to Europe. America was also, however, always more positive about its own culture than the persistent pessimism of German intellectuals allowed—the terms of critical theory on either side of the Atlantic therefore could never completely align. And, finally, the emergence of French theory in the two decades after 1968 fed new impulses into an increasingly embattled intellectual debate.

Zwarg traces the breaking apart of the first moment of reception, seeing the dividing lines between different camps drawn up in the confrontation of Habermas and French theory as well as in different interpretations of ‘praxis’. He ends, eventually, with Telos’ turn towards Carl Schmitt under its long-time editor Piccone, which alienated many of his original collaborators. Zwarg’s book is thus not only a reception history of critical theory in America but, by necessity of its subject matter, attempts to achieve something more ambitious: it traces the evolution of thought conceived in response to specific contexts and experiences, which are, in turn, received by individuals with their own specific influences.

Sometimes, the work appears to falter under the pressure of this task, and long passages on French theory seem to lead the reader astray from the initial theme, whilst passages on exchanges and travels as well as translations could have been more elaborate. All in all, however, Zwarg achieves his bold goal. Die Kritische Theorie in Amerika is not only a formidable study of critical theory’s multiple traversing of the Atlantic, but also delivers a more general model or method for studying the transfer of ideas.

Out of all these works, Stuart Jeffries’s Grand Hotel Abyss is in many ways the most ambitious, attempting to cover a substantial
part of twentieth-century German intellectual history. His collective biography of *The Lives of the Frankfurt School* follows a number of prominent intellectuals more or less closely associated with the so-called Frankfurt School or the Institute for Social Research. Jeffries’s declared aim is to offer a re-reading of this group of thinkers that frees it of older interpretations and makes their critical apparatus accessible to the understanding of current society. Jeffries’s book is most successful when it attempts to do exactly that, that is, to use the mechanism of critical thinking propagated by the Frankfurt School to understand our modern world. Whenever he veers from this political and journalistic tone, problems begin to appear. Despite his claims to offer a new reading of the Frankfurt School, he remains stuck in many of the old orthodoxies that have persisted since the 1970s. Quoting Georg Lukács’s dictum that the Frankfurt School had withdrawn into a ‘Grand Hotel Abyss’ in which the elitist critical theorists were pessimistically and apathetically watching the decline of Western civilization, and referring to them on multiple occasions as ‘armchair philosophers’, means Jeffries resurrects dismissive tropes that much scholarship has successfully left behind. His aim to offer a new reading is also undermined by the fact that he draws mostly on older scholarship and does not undertake any considerable primary research. Whilst this approach can partly be explained by the audience Jeffries is writing for—an interested but not academic public—it does prevent him from offering anything new to readers. The latter point is particularly disappointing because new material is constantly becoming available as the Theodor W. Adorno Archive is digitizing Adorno’s vast correspondences, lecture drafts, and notes.

Whilst the book therefore does not break any new ground in the field, it can serve as a solid introduction to non-academic readers, although caution is necessary here as well, as the book contains some factual errors and superficialities. To highlight one example, Jeffries does not differentiate between the Frankfurt School and the Institute for Social Research, although the former term is much contested in research and, regarding its ‘members’, ideas, and objectives, not congruent with the Institute, which has its own distinct history. Without

---

an understanding of this difference it is impossible to grasp the con-
sequences and developments of the political role of critical theorists
as public intellectuals, academics, and institute directors in West
Germany and across the Atlantic—a task Strote masters far more skil-
fully in his (much shorter) account. Jeffries’s work thus lends itself
well to the current political climate. Although published before
Donald Trump’s election and the Brexit referendum, it does capture
the economic and political anxieties of the twenty-first century that
increasingly have to confront the question of whether history repeats
itself after all. He provides ample food for thought for a new genera-
tion willing to adapt critical theory’s original texts to their own cir-
cumstances, even if it cannot replace older histories and accounts of
the Frankfurt School, the Institute, and their associates.

All the books discussed here prove that the intellectual history of
twentieth-century Germany has not yet been conclusively written.
As the role of émigrés and permanent exiles gains more traction in
research, and groups whose place in Germany’s ‘Bildungsroman’ has
previously been eyed with suspicion, the field as such opens up to
new dimensions. As the above studies have shown, these are often
grounded in a vast expansion of the geographical scope of what
German history and thought can entail: the transatlantic connection,
but also the global spread of ideas emanating initially from Germany
are increasingly prominent in new historical research.

Greenberg’s and Strote’s books stand out with their ground-
breaking research, highlighting how much of the history of exile and
especially remigration remains to be written. Like Jeffries’s book,
their emphasis on a creative, positive German intellectual develop-
ment in the twentieth century will also be significant for the evolution
of German intellectual history, signalling a more substantial
entanglement with transatlantic history. The role the Frankfurt
School has played in many of these accounts demonstrates how, fifty
years after Adorno’s death, the historicization of critical theory is still
very much debated. Yet as philosophy turns from praxis into history,
historians need to set to work; Bude and Zwarg have, each in their
own way, embarked upon this task, pushing the frontiers of histori-
cal research closer towards the contemporary once more.
WEIMAR TO COLD WAR

EMILY A. STEINHAUER is a third year Ph.D. candidate at Queen Mary, University of London, School of History. Her thesis is an intellectual history of the return of Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer from American exile to West Germany, and explores the post-war transformation of critical theory.
BOOK REVIEWS


Jesse Spohnholz, Associate Professor of History at Washington State University, devotes his second book to one single historical document: a handwritten Latin church ordinance, nowadays kept in the Utrecht Archives, that until now has generally been thought to be a record of the ‘Convent of Wesel’—the protocol of a clandestine meeting of more than fifty Reformed leaders from the Netherlands in the German city of Wesel on 3 November 1568. Spohnholz has been researching the city of Wesel and the community of Dutch refugees who lived there for one and a half decades during the Dutch Revolt, but his recent publication may be justifiably called his masterpiece. Not only does he revise a venerable historical narrative that featured more or less prominently in Reformed church history for four centuries; he also utilizes his findings as an example of the history and development of early modern and modern historiography, and of the general methodological problems every prudent historian needs to face.

The book is divided into two parts. Part one provides a meticulous historical investigation of the above-mentioned document, a deconstruction of its ancient interpretations, and a reconstruction of the actual circumstances and conditions of its composition. Spohnholz demonstrates convincingly that the conventional understanding of the document cannot be upheld. In reality this ‘Convent of Wesel’ (which, if it had taken place, would have been by far the largest event of this kind in the Reformation era) was no more than a mystification by later historians. The neatly written Latin text of twenty-three pages, comprising articles on the institution of local church councils, ministers, the catechism, elders, deacons, baptism and communion, marriage, and church discipline, fits perfectly with the historical setting in early November 1568, when Dutch refugees were expecting William of Orange to win a military victory that would allow them to return to their homeland and build up a Reformed Church. The arti-
icles advocate a clearcut Reformed church model but are not really representative for the Dutch Reformed movement of their time. Instead they emphasize the model of the Reformed Churches of Geneva, France, and the Palatinate.

In fact, they were not the outcome of a one-day discussion, but the project of an individual man who wanted to promote his ideas about the future organization of the Dutch Reformed Church. As Spohnholz shows, the author (and first signatory) of the articles was the exiled Flemish minister Petrus Dathenus (c.1531–88). The sixty-three signatures were added to the document not at one single meeting, but in a series of several small encounters at Wesel, Emden, and London, to where it was taken by another exiled minister, Herman Moded, during the following two or three months. Early in 1569, however, the document was tacitly deposited in the archive of the Dutch refugee congregation in London, in response to the changed military situation and William of Orange’s new political strategy. Accordingly, there is no evidence that it had a significant impact on the Synod of Emden in 1571, as has long been assumed, nor on the building of the Dutch Reformed Church or Reformed churches in north-west Germany. The articles of 1568 turned out to be a failure. On the whole, Spohnholz has thus convincingly demonstrated that the alleged ‘Convent of Wesel’ must be considered ‘an event that never was’.

How could it be, then, that the failed initiative of an individual was reinterpreted as the documentary foundation of Reformed church-building in the Netherlands and on the Lower Rhine in neighbouring Germany? This is the theme of the second part of this book. Here the author traces, in chronological order, the history of tradition, archiving, research, and interpretation of the Wesel articles, and positions this history within the changing religious, political, intellectual, and scholarly contexts of the last four hundred years. The articles of 1568 were only rediscovered in 1618 on the fringes of the Synod of Dort, when orthodox, Contra-Remonstrant Calvinists sought archival evidence to prove that their tenets had been held by Dutch Protestants since the very beginning of the Reformation.

It was Simeon Ruytinck, the minister of the Dutch Church in London, who found the forgotten document in the local archive and praised it in his Harmonia synodorum belgicarum as the first of a series of six national synods. Thus the ‘National Synod of Wesel’ saw the light of day. Transferred to the Continent, the original document had
found its way into the office of the Provincial Synod of South Holland by 1638/40 and was published in print for the first time soon afterwards. In 1737 it was carefully scrutinized by the president of the synod and made part of a bundle of acts of National Synods. In addition, some transcripts were made and sent to other archives. On the occasion of its bicentenary in 1768 Adrianus ’s-Gravenzande dedicated the first monograph to ‘the first Synod of the Netherlandish Churches’ at Wesel.

In the nineteenth century the narrative of the ‘Synod of Wesel’ (the adjective ‘national’ was now omitted) reached its climax. In the Netherlands, under the influence of emerging romanticism and nationalism (largely promoted by the Dutch Réveil), anti-Catholic and anti-liberal sentiments culminated in the formation of a neo-Calvinist orthodoxy. To combat liberal tendencies in the newly established state church, orthodox authors frequently referred to the alleged Synod of Wesel and other synods of the Reformation era. In Germany, the Synod of Wesel served as evidence for the ancient adoption of a presbyterial–synodal constitution by the Reformed communities on the Lower Rhine, which was eventually granted to the Protestant Churches of Rhineland and Westphalia by the Prussian King in 1835 (not 1855, p. 170). The joint celebration of the Synod of Wesel’s tercentenary in 1868 by German and Dutch Reformed churches was an impressive event that finally made the Synod a ‘site of memory’.

With the rise of modern historiography, research on the event that now came to be known simply as the ‘Convent of Wesel’ was intensified. Historians were intrigued by what Spohnholz calls the ‘mystery’ (passim) of the articles, that is to say, the lack of further archival evidence, and some even took refuge in alternative ascriptions to different years or places. But it was left to our author to draw the ultimate conclusion: that there never had been such a thing as the ‘Convent of Wesel’. Thus the present study not only solves a centuries-old mystery and corrects our notion of the origins of the Dutch Reformed Church, but can teach present-day historians vital lessons on history, methodology—and themselves.

WOLF-FRIEDRICH SCHÄUFEL is Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the University of Marburg. His research focuses on medieval
Historical research on the 1848 European revolutions experienced a promising boost in the late 1990s thanks to the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of that important year, but this brief flourish of scholarly activity soon gave way to two decades of relative scholarly inertia. The current edited volume seeks to reinvigorate the field by combining the conventional nation-centred approach with newer historiographical genres such as transnational and intellectual history (pp. 3–4). Contrasting the mid nineteenth-century revolutions with more recent events, such as the fall of Communism in 1989 and the Arab Spring of 2011, the contributors address topics of lasting significance: democratization and political representation as a counterweight to authoritarianism; nationalism as a driving force behind popular agitation; compatibility between national groups and supranational (imperial) entities; relations between the state and civil society, in particular, the challenge of the social question; the birth or consolidation of political ideologies (republicanism, socialism, anarchism); and, finally, the role of religion in the post-revolutionary order (pp. 6–13).

The opening essays on political representation focus on Paris, which in 1848 served as a laboratory for later ideological ferment. Thus in his essay on French republicanism after 1848 Thomas Jones argues persuasively that the Second French Republic (1848–51) was neither an accident nor a failure. Instead, he suggests, it offered a democratic apprenticeship to the generation that would go on to create the Third Republic after 1870 (pp. 70–2, 93). Popular demands, such as those for the abolition of slavery and censorship, the right to work, universal education, and even the granting of civil rights to women, were fervently debated in 1848, setting an agenda that would remain influential for many decades (pp. 72–5, 78–80, 85–7). Under these strained political conditions, socialist visions of direct democracy were also expressed. In her contribution Anne-Sophie Chambost links them to the legacy of Jacobinism (pp. 100–1). The problem of efficient representation tormented French socialists such as Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Louis Blanc, who saw contemporary parliamentary deputies not as the true representatives of the popular will,
but rather as the protectors of a tiny elite (pp. 105–10). For all their objections to the Second Republic, the socialists were unable to foresee or explain Louis Napoleon’s meteoric rise to power, much less resist him (pp. 111–13).

Even more ambivalent is the case of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. By analysing the latter’s unpublished notes dating from 1848, Edward Castleton highlights thus far neglected aspects of his political thought (pp. 40–1). Proudhon is conventionally considered the founding father of anarchism yet, surprisingly, provided no precise definition of it during or after the revolution (pp. 39, 67). This ideological confusion notwithstanding, Proudhon made practical and daring suggestions, such as the establishment of exchange banks where the use of money would be abolished; he even became a popular hero immediately after the June Days (pp. 50–5). The conservative regrouping following this bloody event and the rise of Louis Napoleon led to Proudhon’s imprisonment, which did not stop him disseminating his revolutionary ideas from prison (pp. 56–66). This polarization after the first revolutionary months and the withdrawal of moderate voices from French politics is investigated by Jonathan Beecher. He masterfully shows how a historical work can be used to support a political argument by examining Lamartine’s *Histoire des Girondins*, which was instrumentalized politically in favour of republican centrism in 1848 (pp. 14–20). Lamartine’s popularity during the early revolution collapsed swiftly during the June Days. His speedily written, self-congratulatory *Histoire de la Révolution de 1848*, which was published within the year, failed to secure his return to politics, or even to maintain his image as a successful statesman during the revolution, and its vanity was openly criticized (pp. 28–38).

Not only in France but also in the German states, moderate voices were lost amidst rising political polarization. This was the case with David Friedrich Strauss, discussed by Norbert Waszek. Strauss’s proposals as a parliamentarian in Württemberg in 1848 (Jewish emancipation, the establishment of a federal monarchy in Germany, the nationalization of industries, and so on), though hardly radical, failed to attract widespread support, resulting in his isolation and retirement from politics in late 1848 (pp. 244–53).

Looking beyond the spectrum of ‘great intellectuals’, Samuel Hayat offers a truly original piece on working-class socialism as a body of ideas produced by the workers themselves. The revolution
made a distinct contribution to the working-class movement because after it, workers distanced themselves from middle-class intellectual defenders of socialism (p. 127). More importantly, however, 1848 represented the labouring classes’ mass entry into democratic processes, and redefined what those processes meant for relations between citizens. Socialism was thus no longer regarded solely as a social science, but evolved into a unifying political force for the working classes, whose political role had been recently reinforced (pp. 132–9). Hayat argues that working-class socialism was a product of political and not economic developments. In the same spirit, Gareth Stedman Jones comes to similar conclusions concerning the July monarchy. Analysing the language of mid-nineteenth-century class struggle, Jones interestingly remarks that the ostensibly bourgeois regime of 1830 was bourgeois only in its rhetoric, and that the breaks with the pre-July past were in fact minimal (pp. 440–1). The label ‘middle-class government’ was actually used by both the right-wing and left-wing opposition. In this case, the language of class conflict enabled a discourse about a quasi-liberal regime which was both politically and economically fictitious. This, Jones insists, led to the defamation of ‘bourgeois’ rule as philistine and narrow-minded by its adversaries, a view perpetuated by subsequent generations (pp. 441–3).

The discussion concerning the social question is further reinforced by Douglas Moggach’s essay on the writings of Bruno Bauer, Ludwig Feuerbach, and Karl Marx before 1848. Bauer and Marx, in particular, began to articulate their critique of capitalism in the early 1840s, based on the leftist Hegelian principle of workers’ self-determination (pp. 227–8). Although their respective criticisms of early capitalism include similar points, their suggested solutions were markedly different. As with Feuerbach and Marx, 1848 once again acted as a catalyst. Bauer adopted a firmly republican position against the Prussian monarchy, while Marx saw the complete abolition of feudalism as the greatest priority. Marx believed 1848 to be nothing but the prelude to a much bigger future conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, which would come when they had grown more mature (pp. 233–4).

If Moggach’s piece focuses on the work of eminent socialist thinkers, the same is not true of Diana Siclovan’s essay on Lorenz von Stein. In describing him as ‘a now obscure theorist’ (p. 256), she neglects the plethora of monographs and smaller contributions focusing
on his writings, as well as the work of the Lorenz von Stein Institute in Kiel. Moreover, Siclovan’s lengthy overview of German socialism in the 1840s (pp. 256–67) adds little to the existing literature. Given the length of this section, Stein himself receives surprisingly little attention (pp. 267–71) and Siclovan offers merely a summary of his writings during this period.

Considering the pre-eminence of thinkers who problematized state authority, the state as such also receives relatively little attention. Widukind De Ridder incorporates Belgium into the wider framework of 1848, offering the reader insights largely unknown outside Belgian historiography (esp. pp. 190–200). Ridder demolishes several established convictions, such as the idea that language constituted a significant division in newly independent Belgium (p. 189). He describes the swift police and military reactions to any imminent danger in 1848; later, he insightfully explains how the legacy of ‘non-events’ in Belgium in 1848 functioned as a founding myth for the later Belgian socialist movement, and even fed into a conciliatory social policy in the twentieth century (pp. 208–14).

A contribution that focuses more systematically on state-building is that by Anna Ross on post-1848 Prussia. Although Ross relies mostly on secondary literature, she does frame a new narrative about the Prussian state after the revolution. She asserts that it was characterized not by reaction but by moderate conservatism, epitomized by the new minister-president Otto von Manteuffel, who enforced a pragmatic, centrist agenda to win back the Prussian people and avoid future upheavals. Ross then provides a brief overview of a number of policy fields, ranging from agriculture to criminal justice and the way in which the press and other forums for public debate were managed, a comprehensive approach that seems somewhat too ambitious given the limited space available (pp. 284–90). Although Ross tries to incorporate the 1850s into broader narratives of nineteenth-century Germany, her claim that the Manteuffel reforms were inherited by Bismarck is hardly followed up.

The contributions relating to east central and southern Europe are preoccupied with nationalism. In the Habsburg Empire and its neighbouring territories, questions of national consciousness and self-determination dominated the agenda throughout the revolutionary months. Alan Sked builds on his earlier work on Field Marshall Radetzky and pre-March (Vormärz) Austria in general to offer
insightful remarks on the nature of political authority and nationalism before 1848. He points out, in line with the most recent scholarly thinking, that in 1848 Vienna was threatened not by rising nationalism, but by a disgruntled provincial nobility (Poles, Hungarians, Italians) which felt politically marginalized (pp. 327–41). As regards the various ethnic groups, Sked notes the overstated emphasis on mid nineteenth-century nationalism as a destabilizing force, as well as the existence of pro-Habsburg peasant sentiment in Galicia and Italy before and during 1848 (pp. 327, 335, 343). Another myth that Sked debunks is that of the overwhelmingly absolutist tendencies of the Austrian leadership. Most generals quickly accepted the constitutional reforms, while minister-president Schwarzenberg was later willing to tolerate some form of constitution before it was overturned by an autocratic Franz Josef (pp. 342–4).

Axel Körner further addresses the meanings of nationalism in the Habsburg Empire by comparing the regional ethnic movements of 1848 in Bohemia and Lombardy. Taking a comparative approach, he focuses on local dynamics. Following the historiographical ‘imperial turn’, which is highly pertinent to Habsburg studies, he writes one of the strongest essays in this volume. Körner particularly examines the thought of František Palacký and Carlo Cattaneo, emphasizing that both faced aggressive nationalism and unitary national states (Germany, Hungary, Italy) with reluctance, if not with hostility. They supported the federalist reconstruction of the Habsburg Empire in order to safeguard provincial administrative and cultural autonomy (pp. 351–2, 358–68, 370, 374–9). Cattaneo’s lesser known argument against Piedmontese expansionism is possibly the most interesting part of this essay, allowing for more extensive reconsideration of how nineteenth-century nationalism interacted with regional identities.

Jean-Christophe Angaut and Maurizio Isabella offer additional reassessments of the Slavic and Italian national movements. Angaut concentrates on the cosmopolitan anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, who appeared in most major revolutionary theatres, including Paris and Posen in 1848, and Dresden a year later (pp. 409–13, 421–2). In his well-known texts from this period (Appeal, Apology, Confession), Bakunin argued that the forces of reaction were able to play the social and ethnic tensions of the various subversive groups off against each other skilfully in order finally to destroy them (pp. 417–20). Bakunin
was not spared prison after 1849, but he continued to spread propaganda against Prussia and Austria from the 1860s on. On the other hand, Isabella’s subjects, Cesare Balbo and Vincenzo Gioberti, enjoyed a better fate: they were among the most eminent mid-century Piedmontese intellectuals and agreed that 1848 accelerated the unstoppable process of democratizing Europe. The more conservative Balbo, however, saw the aristocracy as a stabilizing force in political life, acting as a counterweight to royal absolutism and providing more responsible societal leadership than the democratic and republican regimes, which were by definition unstable (pp. 389–95). Meanwhile, Gioberti supported the constitution and hoped for a ‘democratic monarchy’, in which the Savoy dynasty would achieve the Risorgimento in alliance with moderate democrats and the educated middle class (pp. 397–403).

The National Question in 1848 is also examined by Georgios Varouxakis, who modifies the popular assertion that Britain was entirely in favour of national self-determination. He persuasively points out that the British tended to support nations such as Greece and Italy that fulfilled certain preconditions (a glorious past, adequate resources to form a state, and so on). Nonetheless, these doctrines remained vague, and when they conflicted with the interests of the British Empire (as in the case of the French–Canadians or Irish) or the principle of stability in Europe, the British turned against the struggling nationalities (pp. 157–60).

In conclusion, this volume provides undeniably new evidence and ideas on numerous topics related to 1848. However, a few words of criticism are in order. Many of the contributors touch on already well-known intellectuals so that their precise contribution to the existing literature is not always clear. Moreover, the editors have chosen to focus largely on France, Austria, Germany, and Britain. Other areas, such as Hungary, central and southern Italy, the Iberian Peninsula, Russia, Scandinavia, and the Balkans, are rarely addressed, which prevents the project from being as genuinely European as the introduction claims. Finally, the more radical revolutions of 1849 (Baden, Rome, Hungary) are hardly mentioned, while a number of serious issues, such as Jewish and peasant emancipation, the impact of 1848 abroad, and the attitude of the Catholic and Protestant clergy, receive only scant attention. Of course, no book can cover everything, but let us hope that future contributions to the literature of
1848 will take into account not only the strengths of this volume—which are unquestionable, as noted above—but also its gaps, and use them as starting points for further discussion.

CHRISTOS ALIPRANTIS studied history in Athens, Vienna, and Budapest. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate in modern European history at the University of Cambridge, writing a dissertation on the international police activity of Prussia and Austria from 1848 to 1870. His research interests also include Enlightened Absolutism and its legacy in nineteenth-century Austria, and migration and state-formation in the Mediterranean during the long nineteenth century.
In recent decades the history of the German diaspora has become a key theme in German historiography, focusing especially upon those who fled the Nazis and, even more, upon the economic migration of the second half of the nineteenth century. Contemporaries recognized and railed against the pre-First World War emigration, regarding it as a haemorrhaging of population to the other parts of the world—including the British Empire—which fed into the debate about the necessity for German imperial expansion. The question of the loss of population remained dormant in the age of catastrophe during the first half of the twentieth century, as attention focused on the First World War and the rise and fall of the Nazis. By the 1980s and 1990s historians turned their attention both to the reasons for the emigration which took place before 1914 and to the German communities which developed throughout the world.

The key player in the German language historiography was Klaus J. Bade, who was driven by a desire to counteract the hostility which foreign workers faced in the Federal Republic of Germany by informing both historians and the wider public about the history of migration into and out of Germany. He pointed out that while Germany had become a country of immigration (despite attempts by government to deny this), it previously had the status of a land of emigration. Meanwhile, by the end of the twentieth century, studies appeared on the German diasporic communities which emerged in locations throughout the world, usually written by scholars living within those locations and often focusing upon the era of the First

1 See esp. Fritz Josephy, Die deutshe überseische Auswanderung seit 1871 (Berlin, 1912); Eugen von Philippovich (ed.), Auswanderung und Auswanderungspolitik in Deutschland (Leipzig, 1892); Wilhelm Mönckmeier, Die deutsche Überseische Auswanderung (Jena, 1912).

Most recently a number of books have emerged on the concept of German diaspora before the First World War.\textsuperscript{3} Volkard Wehner has also produced a volume on a specific German community, this time in the Australian state of Victoria, covering the period between 1850 and 1930. It further adds to our understanding of emigration and settlement, diasporic consciousness, inter-ethnic relations, and destruction and assimilation (where possible and where it had not already taken place) as a result of the Germanophobia which gripped the British Empire and those states that fought against Germany (and even those that did not, including Brazil and the USA before they joined the conflict in 1917) during the First World War. Wehner has produced a local portrait of a global story.

Although this was written as a Ph.D. for the University of Melbourne, the author has, for some reason, followed the German pattern of simply reproducing his work without making any changes, whereas the norm in the Anglo-Saxon environment is to use a Ph.D. as the basis for a book. Although the original thesis may have required little revision because of its quality, the fact that it looks exactly like a Ph.D. dissertation proves irritating. Wehner has not even changed the word ‘thesis’ to ‘book’ when referring to his own narrative within this study, and retains the numbered sections typical of German theses.

These irritations (which do blemish this work) aside, Wehner has produced an interesting contribution to the history of the German diaspora. We can identify the following strengths. First, perhaps precisely because he has written a Ph.D. thesis, he has immersed himself in the extant literature on German diaspora communities throughout the world, especially in the USA but also elsewhere. Writing local studies always raises the issue of whether the example under consid-

\textsuperscript{3} For the USA see Frederick C. Luebke, \textit{Bonds of Loyalty: German Americans and World War I} (De Kalb, Ill., 1974). See also id., \textit{Germans in Brazil: A Comparative History of Cultural Conflict During World War I} (Baton Rouge, La., 1987). For Australia see Gerhard Fischer, \textit{Enemy Aliens: Internment and the Homefront Experience in Australia, 1914–1920} (St Lucia, Qld., 1989). See also Panikos Panayi, \textit{The Enemy in Our Midst: Germans in Britain During the First World War} (Oxford, 1991); and id. (ed.), \textit{Germans as Minorities during the First World War: A Global Comparative Perspective} (Farnham, 2014).

eration is typical. Wehner helps to resolve this by constantly referring to other case studies as well as to more general publications, including that by Stefan Manz. One of the strongest features of Wehner’s work is that it looks at both rural and urban settlers in the period under consideration. This is possible because Germans in Victoria resided in both types of area, a situation typical of Australia, unlike for example, in Britain.\(^5\) Wehner therefore addresses the differences between those Germans who lived almost as isolated individuals and families in rural locations, those who lived in towns, and those who resided in Melbourne. He looks at their ability to maintain and develop German identity and how they interacted with the ‘Anglo’ community, both before and during the First World War, when Germanophobia gripped Victoria, Australia, and the whole of the British Empire.

Wehner has, in many ways, produced a complete history of the German diaspora in Victoria following the pattern of Manz’s urban study of Glasgow, which traced settlement, economic activity, ethnicity, and destruction and elimination.\(^6\) Wehner goes back to the origins of the migrants, especially in what he describes as the ‘East-Elbian provinces’ of Prussia, Mecklenburg, and Saxony. These were major providers of German emigrants in the second half of the nineteenth century, while those of the first half of the century tended to have come from Germany’s south-western states of Baden and Württemberg. Wehner investigates the contrasting occupations of the settlers, which included viticulture and goldmining, along with a variety of urban occupations. In some ways, those Germans who settled in towns and cities found it easier to maintain a sense of German identity because of their greater numbers.

Religion, especially in the form of Lutheranism, proved fundamental in the development of German identity in Victoria, as it did amongst the German diaspora all over the world, no matter how small the settlement. Following the Franco-Prussian War, the German diaspora in Australia became politicized as it did in other parts of the world, inspired by organizations in Berlin. Although assimila-


\(^6\) Manz, *Migranten und Internierte.*
tion had taken place from the first settlement of the immigrants in the 1840s, the First World War experience of the community here resembled that of Germans all over the world, especially in the British Empire. A combination of official measures and popular Germanophobia resulted in the persecution of the new enemy aliens, a process that included press vilification and internment. Wehner focuses on two German academics at the University of Melbourne, Walter von Dechend and Eduard Scharf. They lost their positions, a picture which was repeated in other parts of the British Empire, as academic institutions fell victim to rampant Germanophobia. Wehner chooses to end his story in 1930 rather than in the immediate aftermath of the First World War, the usual endpoint for studies of this nature. This allows him to examine the extent to which Germans and their institutions survived.

Wehner has produced an interesting, thorough, and useful study of all aspects of the history of the Germans in Victoria from the middle of the nineteenth to the middle of the twentieth century. Using a wide variety of sources, especially newspapers, he has added another piece to the jigsaw of the German diaspora of the nineteenth century. He contextualizes his research extremely well in the historiography which has emerged in recent decades.

8 Razak Khan, focusing simply on the Indian context, does not realize this when reviewing Panikos Panayi, The Germans in India: Elite European Migrants in the British Empire (Manchester, 2017), in German Historical Institute London Bulletin, 40 (2018), 107–11, at 110–11. The community which emerged and faced internment in India during the First World War had little to do with that which developed after 1918 and therefore deserves a separate history. Alan Malpass has begun to work on the Second World War experience of the Germans in India.
PANIKOS PANAYI is Professor of European History at De Montfort University, Corresponding Member of the Institut für Migrationsforschung und Interkulturelle Studien, University of Osnabrück, and Honorary Professor at Flinders University, South Australia. A leading scholar on the history of the German diaspora, his publications in this area include *The Enemy in Our Midst: Germans in Britain During the First World War* (1991); *German Immigrants in Britain during the Nineteenth Century, 1815-1914* (1995); ed., *Germans in Britain since 1500* (1996); ed., *Germans as Minorities during the First World War: A Global Comparative Perspective* (2014); and *The Germans in India: Elite European Migrants in the British Empire* (2017). He has just completed a manuscript with Stefan Manz entitled *Interning German ‘Enemy Aliens’ in the British Empire during World War I: Global, National and Local Perspectives* (forthcoming 2020).
During the process of reunification in 1989–90, the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) had high hopes of doing exceptionally well in Saxony. After all, Social Democratic memories of ‘Red Saxony’ were a bulwark of the left—with the SPD achieving extraordinary election results in Saxony in Imperial Germany and during the Weimar Republic. After forty years of ‘real socialism’ (real existierender Sozialismus), however, nothing was left of this legacy. The rival Christian Democratic Union (CDU) won the elections of 1989–90 handsomely, and today the SPD is struggling to get beyond 10 per cent, with the right-wing populist Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) gaining more than 40 per cent of the vote in some of the electoral districts of Saxony, rivalling the CDU as the strongest party in the Freistaat Sachsen. By comparison, in Imperial Germany the SPD in Saxony consistently polled well over 50 per cent of the popular vote after 1909, but never achieved power in a state where the rival political forces did everything to prevent the ‘Reds’ from taking over politically. And this brings us right into James Retallack’s story about democratization processes in Imperial Germany and the role of Social Democracy within them, one that is full of rich nuances, intriguing stories, and convincing analyses.

His is a strangely contemporary story about modernization without democratization (see China). Conceptually, Retallack distinguishes between social democratization (understood as the ‘fundamental politicization of German society’, p. 3) and political democratization (understood as the will to implement some degree of constitutional reform), while his main argument is framed in terms of the threat of social democratization holding up the process of political democratization in Imperial Germany. It was, according to Retallack, the fear of social democratization felt by Germany’s middle classes and their political representatives that prevented the onward march of political democratization in Imperial Germany. Saxony, for him, was a laboratory which revealed the anti-socialism, anti-liberalism,

---

1 Karsten Rudolph, Die sächsische Sozialdemokratie: Vom Kaiserreich zur Republik (1871–1923) (Cologne, 1995).
and antisemitism of the German middle classes as particularly acute due to the especially impressive successes of Social Democracy in that state. At national level, Bismarck had introduced one of the most democratic electoral systems in the world between 1867 and 1871, based on full manhood suffrage. He did so in the hope of being able to establish a popular Conservatism that would trounce his old opponents, the Liberals. Over time, however, it emerged that the main beneficiaries of this system were the Social Democrats who, by 1912, managed to attract roughly a third of the vote in national elections and had become by far the strongest party in the Reichstag. Saxony was one of their biggest strongholds, yet the electoral system there was geared against them in such a way that a majority of votes did not result in a majority of seats.

Retallack has spent many years in Saxon and German archives to piece together the fascinating story of why these mutually exclusionary processes were so strong in one of the most industrialized and populous parts of Germany, and why it produced the strongest Social Democratic bulwark in the Empire. Going down to the regional and often the local level of politics, he puts together the picture of a powerful anti-democratic consensus in the non-Social Democratic parts of German society before 1918. Much of what he has to say touches on the familiar story of the German Sonderweg, which has a slightly dated ring in 2018. Has it not long since been decided that the idea of a negative German Sonderweg, leading from the ‘failed revolution’ of 1848 straight to National Socialism, was politically motivated and intended to justify the division of Germany after 1945?

Retallack endorses many of the criticisms of the old Sonderweg thesis, which pointed to the strength of the bourgeoisie, the power of civil society, the fact that the rule of law was important in Imperial Germany, and that the agrarian elites were not as powerful as was often assumed. However, it is the question of democratization that interests him, and where he begs to differ with many of those critics of the Sonderweg idea who have argued that Imperial Germany was well on the way to becoming a democratic state. For him, the prism of Saxony reveals the illiberal, anti-socialist, and antisemitic side of the German middle classes. Their representatives tried everything to prevent political democratization because they feared that it would lead to social democratization and the victory of allegedly revolutionary forces. Retallack can back this up with an impressive amount
of evidence, so that the reader will put this book down rethinking at least those aspects of the Sonderweg idea that deal with German democratization.

In his desire not to judge but to understand the reaction of the German middle classes, Retallack at times goes too far, which is also why I find his conceptual distinction between social democratization and political democratization problematic. It may well not be the author’s intention, but it seems easy to construct from this concept an argument that puts the responsibility for the deficits of democratization at the door of those attempting to politicize German society in the name of genuine democracy, which in my view would be a grotesque reversal of responsibilities. It is as if the fear of a Social Democratic takeover somehow justified the anti-democratic actions of the middle classes. Yes, the SPD did speak the Marxist language of revolution and class war in Imperial Germany, and yes, it left no doubt that it aimed to overthrow the capitalist system of production. But were the Social Democrats still a party that instilled the fear of a revolutionary bloodbath, of ‘red terror’, of a complete turnaround of all social relations into middle-class hearts and minds? Did not those who wanted to see observe quite clearly that the SPD had long since become a political party willing to integrate into the mainstream of German society, to co-operate with other political parties and forces, and to pursue a parliamentary and reformist road to socialism under the banner of political democratization? To distinguish between political democratization and social democratization is, to my mind, opening too much of a gulf between democracy and Social Democracy in Imperial Germany. Retallack finishes his book by claiming that it ‘reminds us that dictatorship and genocide are also possible outcomes of social democratization’. This, in my view, is a problematically ambiguous statement, in that it could be read by some as attributing the Holocaust and rise of National Socialism to Social Democracy, rather than to those who wilfully misinterpreted the Social Democratic campaigns for genuine democratization.

The weakness of the concept that carries the main argument of the book is all the more unfortunate as Retallack in many ways presents a masterpiece of sober historical research. He patiently examines many agendas for historical reform, and analyses parliamentary and electoral histories as well as various strategies of exclusion at many levels—rhetorical, legal, and physical. He provides a whole host of
new electoral analyses and looks in depth at party politics, their presses, finances, and political leaders, always with a regional focus on Saxony. He analyses the motives of members of parliament and the civil servants who served the authoritarian Saxon state. By delivering in-depth studies of election and suffrage battles in Saxony, Retallack produces a cutting-edge, culturally inflected political history that combines a view from above with a view from below.²

Election and suffrage battles often resembled veritable wars of words and actions that were motivated, on the bourgeois side, by a desire to see the socialists as representatives of a terror regime of the future—something, as I have suggested above, that in the decade before the First World War could only be believed by anyone seriously lacking judgement. Retallack’s conclusion in relation to the path of democratization in Imperial Germany is a warning not to overestimate the will of the Bürgertum to go down the road of genuine democratization. It is shown beyond any reasonable doubt that the majority of the Saxon bourgeoisie was not liberal and had no truck with either parliamentarism or democracy. Indeed, the spectre of democracy that was connected with the French revolution of 1789, the events of 1848, the Paris Commune, and Social Democratic Marxism haunted the Saxon bourgeoisie and made many shy away from democracy, seeking to limit it and make it safe for bourgeois interests. Instead, the Saxon middle classes had a strong orientation towards order and authoritarian rule.

Political democratization in Imperial Germany was blocked not only by the Prussian agrarian elites, but also by the Saxon middle classes. The latter masterminded what Retallack calls ‘the most egregious example of suffrage robbery in the history of the Kaiserrreich’ (p. 622)—the electoral reforms of 1895–6. Anti-democrats, so the persistent refrain of the book, left no stone unturned in their many attempts to undermine parliamentarism and universal manhood suffrage between 1867 and 1918. Anti-socialists saw democracy as a threat to their own safety and that of the German nation, and therefore tried to curb it wherever they could. This worldview, however, was by no means peculiar to Germany, as a comparative European

research project on anti-socialism powerfully underlines.³ Thus at the end of the book, we come back to the beginning: national Sonderweg ideas, even if we restrict them to the issue of democratization, are not helpful in understanding the path of German history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Yet, as well as reconsidering aspects of Sonderweg ideas, we have undoubtedly learned a great deal from this book about the details of battles for democratization in Saxony between the 1860s and the end of the First World War.


STEFAN BERGER is Professor of Social History and Director of the Institute for Social Movements at the Ruhr University Bochum. His major publications include The British Labour Party and the German Social Democrats, 1900–1931 (1994); The Search for Normality: National Identity and Historical Consciousness in Germany Since 1800 (1997); Social Democracy and the Working Class in Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Germany (2000); Inventing the Nation: Germany (2004); with Norman LaPorte, Friendly Enemies: British–GDR Relations, 1949–1990 (2010); and with Christoph Conrad, The Past as History: National Identity and Historical Consciousness in Modern Europe (2015).

Birthe Kundrus’s new synopsis of National Socialist foreign policy, war, and genocide is the latest volume to appear in the series ‘The Germans and National Socialism’ edited by Nobert Frei. The series offers introductory accounts of aspects of the history of the ‘Third Reich’ that are informed to a greater or lesser extent by the general scholarly turn towards exploring the elements of popular consensus, participation, and affirmation which underpinned the politics of the regime. Previous volumes include a very readable account of the cultural life of National Socialism by Moritz Föllmer and an outstanding social history of the period by Dietmar Süß.1

Each volume opens with a vignette, centred on an image—in Kundrus’s case, it is that of a Jewish man staring back at the camera. Behind the Jewish man stands Hans Biebow, the head of the German administration of the Łódź ghetto; behind Biebow stand three unidentifiable members of the Jewish ghetto police. From the outset, contrasting subjectivities are placed at the centre of what is billed as an ‘Erfahrungsgeschichte’ of the regime.

Yet for all the foregrounding of ‘experience’ as the object of analysis and the driver of the account, Kundrus never leaves the reader in any doubt that this was a history shaped by an aggressive political and ideological drive that came from the top. Taking Hermann Göring’s statement in his speech of October 1942 that ‘this war is not the Second World War, this war is the great racial war’ (p. 10),2 she emphasizes from the outset that the National Socialist regime was driving at a brutal war of destruction from the start. In a refreshing statement of the obvious that bears the occasional repeating, she underlines of Mein Kampf that ‘in 1925 it had formulated a programme whose basic features were not far removed from what the Third Reich was to realize in foreign policy from 1933’ (p. 16).3

1 Moritz Föllmer, ‘Ein Leben wie im Traum’: Kulturgeschichte im Dritten Reich (Munich, 2016); Dietmar Süß, ‘Ein Volk, Ein Reich, Ein Führer’: Die Deutsche Gesellschaft im Dritten Reich (Munich, 2017).
2 German original: ‘dieser Krieg ist nicht der zweite Weltkrieg, dieser Krieg ist der große Rassenkrieg.’
3 German original: ‘1925 hatte die Gefängnisschrift ein Programm formuliert,
This is not to say that Kundrus is simply rehearsing an old-fashioned ‘intentionalist’ account. Rather, she takes the events of the years 1933 to 1939 to demonstrate how different factors shaped specific outcomes at particular moments. Thus the German withdrawal from the Geneva disarmament talks in 1933 is used to underline the agency of the conservative diplomatic elites in the early phase of the regime; the fact that in the following year Hitler broke with the traditional foreign policy agendas of the Wilhelmstraße is used to underline the difficulty for observers at the time of discerning any obvious pattern to events as they initially unfolded. The Stresa Front fell apart because of the ineptitude of the member powers—a noticeable constant in the narrative is Kundrus’s strident critique of British foreign policy—while the remilitarization of the Rhineland showed Hitler’s capacity for opportunism, coming as it did at a moment of French governmental paralysis. Later in the 1930s, as Kundrus shows, the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia was partly (though not totally) determined by economic ambitions centred on the presence there of prime industrial capacity and considerable foreign currency reserves.

Kundrus thus shows how the situational logics of each particular moment in the wider story were different, and worked to produce their outcomes in slightly different ways, so that each could be explained or rationalized by contemporaries as legitimate on their own terms. They unfolded in a manner that made seeing the bigger picture slightly harder at the time—perhaps—than it is in retrospect. Yet her account is driven, all the same, and as it should be, by the implicit insistence that with National Socialist foreign policy one has to see the wood despite the trees. Moreover, she is clear that foreign policy was underpinned by a broad degree of popular consensus, anchored in resentment of defeat in 1918, aggressive revisionism regarding the Treaty of Versailles, the appeal of German national revival, and a deeper seated nationalist arrogance, in all its variants, towards neighbouring others.

Despite its sometimes unpredictable quality, the regime’s foreign policy vision was also clear enough, and intuitively recognizable to those whose eyes were open, for people to know where things would
almost inevitably lead. It was certainly spelled out clearly enough from the outset to politically active and informed circles in government and administration. What mattered here, as Kundrus underlines, is that for all their occasional scruples, broad sections of the military and civilian elites shared the political agendas of the regime, and did so on the basis of considerable ideological affinities. This did not change as foreign policy began to merge more explicitly with the acting out of the racial vision. Thus when the regime moved towards its more overtly Pan-German expansionist phase with the annexation of Austria, the advent of the Einsatzgruppen (death squads) marked a significant, open escalation of anti-Jewish policy.

The real turning point, however, was the outbreak of war in 1939. From the outset—and, indeed, before—it was conceived and planned as a war of racial destruction. As German soldiers swiftly registered during the invasion of Poland, the distinctions between soldiers and civilians that were central to the customary rules of war were no longer to apply. The fact that the first theatre of war was in the east, and that the war was thus initiated against people who were the object of deep-seated nationalist, colonialist, and racist arrogance on the part of many Germans, meant that the moral barriers to indiscriminate, widespread violence were flimsy at best. Kundrus describes vividly how ideological imperatives set at the top, a permissive broader context, and tacit encouragement from local commanders interacted with racist and nationalist mentalities that were widespread among the rank and file to facilitate a swift normalization of excessive violence. The growing realization among ordinary Germans out in the killing fields that there would be no punishment for ‘excesses’ did more to encourage the dismantling of any remaining inhibitions.

At all times, however, Kundrus is at pains to emphasize the framing agency of the regime itself, and of a substructure populated by a cadre of committed ideologues who drove the war and genocide from within organizations right at the heart of the Nazi polity. The annexation of western Poland created a space in which these actors could model the creation of the racial ‘New Order’. Kundrus offers a magisterial overview of the complexities of the unfolding of the occupation and genocide that is underpinned by a clear command of a now voluminous scholarship. But while one of the many strengths of the book is that it gives full treatment to the German occupation of
northern, western, and south-eastern Europe too, Kundrus leaves the reader in no doubt that the territories of Poland and the Soviet Union were where almost all key developments occurred. In the case of the Soviet Union in particular she insists (rightly) that ‘even before a single German tank had reached Crimea, a single German plane had bombed Leningrad and the Red Army had responded to the German attacks, the war against the Soviet Union had already started as a war of annihilation in the imaginations of the Nazi leaders’ (p. 141). The escalation of violence was thus not primarily a product of brutalization on the ground after June 1941: ‘To this extent the crimes committed by the Wehrmacht did not arise out of the combat situation, nor were they deeds that were the responsibility of individual soldiers. These happened anyway. Rather, from the outset the German army conceived of this war as the most serious break with international law—thereby granting carte blanche for murder’ (pp. 141–2).

As Kundrus also makes clear, the war against the Soviet Union and the escalation of violence it entailed also had consequences for the persecution of the Jews in the rest of Europe. Here, an image of a more provisional, step-by-step intensification of the persecution emerges. The key moment for Germany’s Jews was the ban on their further emigration in October 1941. The embrace of mass murder in the Soviet Union merged with an increasing Europeanization of the practice of deportation; the creation of the Operation Reinhard camps over the winter of 1941–2 produced the infrastructure of murder that would be unleashed on Poland’s Jews; as Operation Reinhard wound down in 1943 Auschwitz emerged as the pre-eminent site of mass murder. Yet while all this unfolded in a piecemeal manner, carried out by a central cast of actors and institutions who were feeling their way into the unfolding possibilities at each moment, the parameters

4 German original: ‘noch bevor ein deutscher Panzer die Krim erreicht, ein deutsches Flugzeug Leningrad bombardiert und die Rote Armee auf die deutschen Angriffe reagierte, war in der Vorstellungswelt der NS-Spitze der Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion schon als Vernichtungskrieg angelaufen.’

and shared assumptions were, again, defined clearly by the overarching vision of racial war. It is in the account of the Holocaust that some of the most compelling eye-witness accounts in the book give texture to the narrative. Throughout, diary extracts provide the perspectives of a variety of observers. Victor Klemperer and good old Luise Solmitz play their obligatory cameo roles, but the range of less well-known voices adds freshness to even the most familiar aspects of the story. Thus Kundrus gives us the voice of a German army adjutant in Kaunas who describes how, as a group of Jews were murdered in public, a crowd gathered that included women who held their children aloft so they could see, or stood on stools for a better view. According to the witness, the scene was accompanied by shouts of ‘bravo!’. If, for some, murder provided a spectacle, for others it was a business opportunity. Such was the case with a German sculptor in Riga who sought to appropriate the marble, granite, and stone of the local Jewish cemetery for his needs, helpfully offering ‘to cleanse the city of Riga from tasteless Jewish monuments and emblems, and to raze the Jewish cemeteries to the ground’ (p. 233).6

As the war went wrong, the regime doubled down on its commitment to completing its self-imposed historical mission. Indeed, the prospect of defeat only confirmed the sense that Germans were victims of a global conspiracy that needed to be destroyed. Even as defeat loomed, the deportations were thus pursued with a ferocity that could only have been driven by irredeemable hatred. And as the military campaign turned into a desperate retreat, Germans continued to fight. An ingrained hostility towards Bolshevism combined with a knowledge of what Germans had done in the previous three years to provide much of the motivation in the eastern theatre; here, and in the west too, the absence of meaningful alternatives often gave them little choice anyway. Yet even in the autumn of 1944 Germany still controlled much of Europe, and even if the outcome was almost inevitable, the war still had to be won. Sustaining the narrative right to the end, Kundrus gives the same authoritative treatment to the liberation of Europe, the Battle of the Ardennes, the death marches from the camps, and the final maelstrom of violence visited on Germany

6 German original: ‘die Stadt Riga von den geschmacklosen jüdischen Denkmälern und Emblemen zu säubern und die jüdischen Friedhöfe mit der Erde zu ebnen.’
as the Wehrmacht collapsed, German cities were razed to the ground by bombing, and the mass movement of refugees began.

Again, these stories have been told before, but Kundrus integrates them with narrative clarity, interpretative balance, and scholarly authority. The study is a model of how a familiar history can be told in a fresh and engaging manner, and shows how new historiographical insights and emphases can be integrated into the account without an excess of revisionism or the gratuitous pursuit of novelty for its own sake. It is thus a model of how to communicate such histories to a non-expert readership in an accessible, reliable, and yet still powerful way.

NEIL GREGOR is Professor of Modern European History at the University of Southampton. He is an expert in twentieth-century German history and the topic that consistently runs through his work is the impact and legacies of war on modern German society. His most recent book is Dreams of Germany: Musical Imaginaries from the Concert Hall to the Dance Floor, co-edited with Thomas Irvine (2019).

The subject of Astrid Zajdband’s doctoral dissertation, completed at the University of Sussex, is those German-speaking rabbis who fled Germany to escape Nazi persecution between 1933 and 1939. The second part of its title, ‘From “Heimat” into the Unknown’, accurately reflects the author’s interest in the painful journey of these refugees from initial flight to eventual integration into British society. Unsurprisingly, therefore, much of Zajdband’s methodological approach focuses on questions of ethnicity and identity, the idea of cultural transfer, and network analysis.

However, a closer look at the title also reveals one of the main unresolved difficulties of this book. Zajdband argues convincingly in her introduction that ‘German rabbis in British exile’ should be seen as a discrete group among refugees, with their own specific characteristics, warranting a more explicit analysis of their life in exile. For example, she pays close attention to the way in which rabbis represented a link between religious practice and questions of ethnicity—two areas which are key to understanding German Jewry. She also rightly underlines the difficult duality of their position; rabbis were victims of Nazi persecution, yet at the same time, bore the responsibility for supporting and comforting other Jewish emigrants. But unfortunately, it is never entirely clear whom Zajdband is talking about. The reader is never quite sure whether ‘German rabbis’ here means only rabbis who were German citizens, or all rabbis who spoke German. This may seem a minor quibble, but in fact, several of the rabbis who appear in her study were born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and studied or worked, at least for some of the time, in an Austrian or Czechoslovakian context, where Jewish communities, especially the more liberal among them, were influenced by different reform traditions. It was not unusual for German-speaking rabbis between the wars to have worked in Germany, Austria, and the German-speaking communities in Czechoslovakia, which leads us to ask what Zajdband actually means when she speaks of a ‘German rabbinate’. Clearly, it included *Doktorrabbiner* from the great

Trans. Emily Richards (GHIL).
seminaries in Breslau or Berlin, as well as others entitled to bear a
doctoral title or who had served as rabbis to Jewish soldiers at the
Front during the First World War. It would have been helpful to have
a more explicit and more rounded definition of the ‘German rab-
binate’, which would have added some much-needed depth to Zajd-
band’s subsequent analysis of the cultural transfer that rabbis in the
United Kingdom experienced.

This difficulty, however, is closely bound up with the author’s
methodological approach. Zajdband chooses a traditional structure
for her dissertation, with the four main sections preceded by a
‘Literaturbericht’ and a note on method. The latter is used to explain
central concepts such as ‘exile’ or the idea of ‘Jewish leadership’ based
on the model of the three ‘Ketarim’ (crowns) developed by Daniel J.
Eleazar and others. This model offers a differentiated perspective on
the various and changing areas in which rabbis exercised authority or
carried out tasks within the remit of their individual communities.
Zajdband also comprehensively discusses various aspects of ‘ethnici-
ty’ and ‘identity’, giving particular consideration to the process of
ethnogenesis. This process, according to Zajdband, was responsible
for groups of migrants splitting off into various subgroups based on
ethnic and/or linguistic differences; but on the other hand, the even-
tual reversal of the process helped the refugees to become more inte-
grated in the diverse society of their new country. If one is to believe
the author, this was a relatively linear process, offering little room for
a multifaceted concept of identity, or for a situative self-view of the
actors concerned. This is shown, for example, when Zajdband dis-
cusses the fact that most German rabbis were only able to become
British citizens after the war, when they were no longer ‘German’
and were therefore no longer ‘caught between two identities’ (p. 227).
Nationality here is seen not as just one facet of identity but as its focal
point—a point of view that the reader is likely to stumble over, given
the almost exaggerated weight given to questions of identity and
identities in current research.

It is perhaps this somewhat rigid theoretical approach that in-
hbits Zajdband from fully engaging the reader with her otherwise
extremely interesting subject. We learn, for example, that communi-
ties in the early 1950s began to reject traditional German-style ser-
mons that were characterized by a learned and ‘lofty style’ (p. 251).
This led to the younger generation of rabbis—who had generally left
Germany for the UK immediately after completing their training—gradually replacing their older, German-speaking colleagues. Zajdband ascribes this to the fact that the younger rabbis, thanks to their skills in English and their military service during the war, knew far more about British society than the older rabbis and therefore, she argues, saw no reason to take up the mantle of their German preaching heritage. Ultimately, so her argument, the British Jewish majority were therefore responsible for the break with this tradition.

But this is not an entirely satisfying argument, as it fails to go into the subject matter in as much depth as one could wish. For example, one could ask whether certain elements of the ‘German’ preaching style became incorporated into its later English equivalent; a question that cannot be answered without a comparison of different sermons, which would admittedly be extremely difficult to carry out given that most sermons were never written down. The author could also have turned to the members of the communities themselves for help on this point, as it may be assumed that such changes in tradition did not go entirely unnoticed. Finally, it would have been helpful to have even a brief comparative discussion of the situation in the USA, where German-speaking rabbis were present in greater numbers than in the UK.

Overall, however, Zajdband’s work contributes many important insights on the continuance of the German-speaking rabbinic tradition in Anglo-American countries, for example, in her discussion of how German-speaking rabbis helped build new communities in Britain and Ireland (chapter 4). She also provides a well-informed overview of rabbinic activity in Germany before 1938 (chapter 1), a detailed description of the experience of flight and exile based on numerous ego documents written by the émigrés themselves or their descendants (chapter 2), and an analysis of the difficulties they encountered starting over in a new country (chapter 3). The period she chooses for her study is also convincing; the book’s closure with the death of Leo Baeck, the most important representative of (liberal) German-speaking Jewry, in 1956, makes sense in the context of the author’s inclusionist approach, as it gives the work a perspective transcending the war and immediate post-war years.

It is a shame, therefore, that the publishers did not take a little more care with the editing process; the book includes numerous minor errors such as sentences that begin with minuscule letters or
missing punctuation (as on p. 103), and more distressingly (at least for a German reader), the repeated unreflected use of ‘Machtergreifung’ instead of a more neutral equivalent (e.g. p. 58 and p. 261). A more attentive editor could easily have ironed out these problems. Nonetheless, Zajdband’s study is well worth reading. We may hope that it will encourage more readers and researchers to engage with a German(-speaking)/British/Jewish history that can be described, in the best sense, as truly transnational.

MARTINA NIEDHAMMER is a historian of Jewish and Eastern European history with a growing interest in European history. She is a Research Fellow both at the School of History, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich and at Collegium Carolinum, Research Institute for the History of the Czech Lands and Slovakia in Munich. Her main publications include Nur eine ‘Geld-Emancipation’? Loyalitäten und Lebenswelten des Prager jüdischen Großbürgertums 1800–1867 (2013), a group biography of five Jewish upper class families in Prague, which was awarded the Max Weber Prize by the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities.