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REVIEW ARTICLE

THE HIDDEN TRANSCRIPT:
THE DEFORMATION OF THE SELF IN GERMANY’S
DICTATORIAL REGIMES

BERND WEISBROD


This is an ambitious book. It comes on top of a number of outstanding contributions by Mary Fulbrook to the history of the GDR, the other German dictatorship, in which she claims a political reading of private lives and the ‘normalization’ of rule in a regime which had to rely on the support of reluctant citizens.¹ In many ways, her new book reinforces that interpretation, yet is much broader in range, more daring in analytical scope, and unsettling for a number of well-established readings of modern German history. It sidesteps the systemic comparison of the German dictatorships by looking at private experience and changing subjectivities, and takes leave of the well-laboured notion of political and intellectual generations by asking about generational opportunity structure and life course choices in ‘sore-thumb generations’ or ‘cohort clusters’ (p. 7). In doing so, it challenges the usual assumptions about the German Volksgemeinschaft. This is also, as will be argued here, the reason for a scathing review of her book by one of the protagonists of this debate, whose historical imagination seems to be limited by the numbers game of Nazi organizations.²

Numbers do play a part in Fulbrook’s wide-ranging study. But what matters most to her argument is the experience and meaning of private exposure to life chances and choices in a century disrupted by violence and political upheaval. She is interested in the way in which real people, high and low, male and female, young and old, negotiated this exposure in all sorts of ego-documents, contemporary diaries and letters, and ex post questionnaires and interviews, but she also takes into account, at least to some degree, how this process was reflected in official sources. Yet this is neither a book about ‘oral history’—many private stories reappear in the text and can only be put together with the help of the index—nor about the top-down effects of dictatorial rule, such as the dilemmas of political mobilization in symbolic rituals of belonging. It is about the historically contingent construction of the ‘social self’ as far as it is accessible to modern historians, about the ambivalent experience of disrupted and remade life chances in war and political turmoil, and ultimately about the deconstruction of moral and political ‘identity’, the secret hobby-horse of those who seem to mistake performing by the rules in dictatorships for the confession of a closed community of believers.

Interestingly, historians have always been reluctant to accept this notion for GDR society which, of course, also had to develop ways of accommodating the private needs of its citizens, especially when voiced in terms of labour demands, despite all the ruthless practices of political suppression and police surveillance. It is one of the great merits of Fulbrook’s new book that, on the basis of overwhelming evidence, this ambivalence of belonging is also granted to those who were wrapped up in the Nazi mobilization and still felt in two minds about the Volksgemeinschaft. More is involved, therefore, in the concept of ‘dissonant lives’ than meets the eye, and little is gained if this argument is discarded simply because it was used in post-war exoneration and self-victimization. It is, in fact, much more helpful in explaining the radical escalation of the first German dictatorship and the long life of the second one than any notion of ideological cohesion or community spirit, even in a racially defined or politically homogenized society.

The argument about generation as a ‘hidden factor in historical experience’ (p. v) is set out in detail in the first chapter, where gener-

3 Andrew I. Port, Conflict and Stability in the German Democratic Republic (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
ational ‘sense’ is defined neither as a matter of political or intellectual claim for leadership nor as a conscious taking of sides in a cultural conflict, but simply as a private way of navigating a typical condition of twentieth-century German history, that is, to be young at times of complete social and political reorientation. This ‘cultural and structural availability for mobilization’ alone, Fulbrook argues, makes the two war youth generations into ‘sore-thumb generations’ and this is also why these generations are compared in the two dictatorial setups and not in that of West Germany. It is, perhaps, not surprising that the stronger half of the book (chs. 6 to 11) deals with the prominence and fixation of the 29ers, as Fulbrook prefers to call the war youth generation, in the GDR whereas the first half (chs. 2 to 5) tries to establish the basic pattern of ‘age-related challenges’ from the late nineteenth century to 1945. Here, the lines are drawn out less consistently, certainly with regard to the firmly established reading of the political generation of ‘heroic realism’, which may offer an explanation for the high priests of Nazism but not necessarily for the broad church of believers.

Instead, three aspects which carry the full weight of the argument are highlighted: a) generational experience is ambivalent and always challenged by individual choices and political chances; b) there is no foregone conclusion in the way in which political and economic crises impact on the life stories of a ‘divided generation’, left or right; and c) the mobilization of the war youth generation for the Nazi experiment set the pattern for ‘dissonant lives’ which re-emerged in the second German dictatorship as lives which had to be lived in ‘two worlds’, the world of public performance and the world of private knowledge. The generational analysis, therefore, aims to detect ‘patterns of accommodation to dictatorial regimes of opposing political colours, and the shifts across major moments of historical rupture’ (p. 5).

When looking at ego-documents as evidence, working with rules of collage and narrative plausibility to flesh out the argument is almost unavoidable, especially when such a long story line has to be sustained. Different sorts of private evidence are, therefore, artfully crafted together—letters, interviews, questionnaires, and so on— without giving prominence to the individual life story as such but to the way in which the construction of the ‘social self’ can be detected in the multiple layers of self-questioning and self-delusion in
breadth, not in depth. This may be considered problematic for in-depth stories of changing subjectivities over time, but it makes sense for clustering evidence in historical patterns of self-perception. Some personal stories, therefore, reappear at different points in the book, where they are regrouped with other sources and, unfortunately, lose some of their individual clout. A good example of this methodology and argument a) is provided by the life story of Hans Paasche as told in chapters 2 and 3. A practitioner of colonial violence, Paasche rather unexpectedly embraced pacifism under the influence of the youth movement. In line with contemporary assumptions, this could only be regarded as a mental condition, especially in a privileged member of the officer class. But he persisted, and eventually fell victim to political murder. This intimate and well-documented story is closely interwoven with a number of life stories, collected in an essay competition by some Harvard professors in 1939-40, which show the full range of experience before and after 1933. This approach allows Fulbrook to conclude that ‘generational experience’ was not a foregone conclusion:

We should, therefore, not simply read backwards from the carriers of the Nazi regime, appealing to some ‘generational experience’ which allegedly mobilized significant numbers to the right-wing cause. Rather, it was the specific historical constellation of 1933 which determined that those who had been mobilized for radical causes and who now took a disproportionate role in the historical record were on the right rather than on the left (p. 81).

Clearly, this is not about generational homogenization, but the importance of personal choices and political opportunity structure in life stories punctured by violence.

The Paasche case can be said to set the tone of the whole narrative: personal stories, although patterned, are far from consequential. The same is true of the ‘class of 1935’ (ch. 4, II) as seen through the lens of the letters exchanged by the girl graduates of Augusta High School in Charlottenburg. Despite the common excitement about the new political beginning coinciding with their own start in adult life, they show the full range of options available for self-experience, depending on political affiliation, personal friendships, and racial denomi-
nation. This evidence keeps popping up throughout the book to give added value to these different options and to show the consequences of personal choices in a system which, in general, left little option but to learn how to play by the new rules. What matters to Fulbrook is the high degree of ambiguity and self-delusion in the process of mobilization. ‘Enactment’ of these rules should not be mistaken for ‘commitment’, she argues, as long as it was sufficient for most of the people to behave ‘as though they believed in the cause’, with a substantial windfall for ‘those who rode the Nazi tide’, and devastating results for those oppressed by Nazi politics (p. 99). In many of the ego-documents ideology hardly plays; rather, enacting the Nazi script seems to have suspended judgement on whatever was claimed as the appropriate belief system, however internalized, played out, or simply ‘mimed’. Under conditions of violence, personal ties could easily be dissolved and decent behaviour suspended. Nonetheless, it would be wrong to count all these cases as recruits to the Volks-gemeinschaft: ‘Outward conformity was for many people clearly compatible with a sense of inner distance’ (p. 115).

This interpretation is endorsed by a close reading of the ‘class of 1935’, which makes use of the collection of Old Girls’ letters in public and private family archives. Hans Paasche’s daughter was one of them. The generational bond may have helped them to play by the rules and take on board racial prejudice in their daily lives but, strikingly, as would be expected from ambitious girls with a middle-class education, they also displayed a considerable amount of soul-searching and a muted sense of obligation. Not so in one particular case, where the marriage bond tied one of the girls to Udo K., a Silesian SA fighter and government official who ended up as Landrat in annexed Upper Silesia, also in charge of the Auschwitz region. His personal story is a favourite plot, already lined up by Fulbrook for another book project, as a typical case of unavoidable involvement with Nazi violence in pursuit of a ‘normal’ career, eventually ending up in the Wehrmacht.4 Here it serves as a prop for the ‘availability for mobilization’ of those who were also ‘psychologically available’ because of their early start in adult life through male activism. Yet, here again, with ever increasing pressures to conform, it was far from clear whether such outward behaviour was always free from ‘duplicity’,

especially in cases where private standards could only be upheld by leading a ‘double life’ (p. 142). As Fulbrook points out, it is almost impossible to establish precisely what performing to the public role model actually reveals about inner engagement. For example, young people seem to have been less ready to confess to being ‘ashamed to be German’ because of excessive violence during the Anschluss or Kristallnacht. Yet enacting the Nazi script often came with some sense of unease and ‘dissonance’, despite the very real longing for national belonging and personal advancement (p. 165).

Detailed cases like these are, of course, hard to come by. But Fulbrook manages to bring together enough evidence to give her argument cohesion and to break it down into individual and convincing stories. This is not just about adding colour to the general story; it is about painting a complex and adequate picture for a history ‘from within’, in which the ‘social self’ is negotiated between outer behavioural patterns and the ‘inner self’. This is neither an ‘oral history’ nor a ‘collective biography’; it is, she claims, a ‘completely new perspective on history’ (p. 477). Fulbrook, of course, is aware that ‘changing subjectivities’ cannot simply be read straight from sources such as, for example, letters home from the front during the war. In fact, such private documents, she argues, often merely reflect an established code of conduct and a fairly deep-seated ‘nazification of mentalities’. When following up the story of Udo K. in Upper Silesia again (pp. 184–5), it appears that the very real ‘two worlds’ which had opened up physically between Jews and non-Jews in the wake of Einsatzgruppen killings and ghettoization did, in fact, eclipse any ‘humanist education’ which his wife had acquired at Augusta High School. Kattowitz sources give some texture to this argument, which is expanded in other letters home from the collection of the Bibliothek für Zeitgeschichte in Stuttgart. The question here is not who did what and why, but what it did to people’s perceptions of their own selves when it happened. The war which had placed the community over the individual submerged private hopes and aspirations and enforced a belief in some sort of common destiny, as Fulbrook argues: ‘Commitment to a wider sense of community and purpose was arguably the only way to deal with the deprivations of the self’ (p. 189). Private sources like letters are, therefore, replete with ‘dissonant rationalizations’ which somehow bring the actual evidence of brutality and danger into line with the public script of
national duty and personal character, but not necessarily with the holy grail of the Nazi activists, that is, redemption by killing the Jews. Even in the innermost circle of SS killers, Heinrich Himmler found a way, in his famous Posen speeches, to acknowledge the ambivalence in their ruthlessness (p. 218). But, in general, Fulbrook is not concerned with the individual motivation or social psychology of perpetrators. Rather, she is interested in the sense of subjectivity in ‘normal’ lives when almost everybody seemed to be ‘enacting’ a script over which they had little command.

It has to be said that when it comes to the horrors of war, or the ultimate human catastrophe of the Holocaust, unanimous voices are not to be expected anyway, as Nick Stargardt has shown.5 These horrendous facts are hardly reflected in what could be said privately, never mind publicly. In the relevant chapters of the book, the general narrative is only punctuated by a few personal stories—a family correspondence involving the euthanasia of a daughter, some reflections on fighting on without belief in the Führer, or the experience of shock in bombed-out cities—as if private voices were muted and ‘enforced silence’ the only possible answer to the degree of self-delusion which had made all this horror possible. More could certainly be said about this shock transfer in the post-war generation, another of Fulbrook’s projects,6 but for the second part of her book all she needs to highlight is the sense of loss in the mobilized young, who felt betrayed not just by the regime, but also by their very own selves.

It is a mainstay of the argument on which the whole book turns that this pattern of self-delusion in public acts of mimicry not only provided the legacy for the mobilization of the second war youth generation in the GDR, but was also the same pattern of dissonance which likened the GDR Aufbaugeneration to the equally delusive self-mobilization of the first war youth generation in the Third Reich. Both were structurally available for mobilization, both had to some degree found their emotional and professional chances of identification in the new regime, and both had to pay for this with a measure of delusion and insecurity in their very private selves. As a structural interpretation this can be nicely put to the test in the analysis of the cohort of ‘29 in the GDR’s Who is Who? (ch. 6). In contrast to the rela-

6 ‘Reverberations of the Second World War’; see p. 485, n. 10.
tive silence of the ‘not-quite’ generation of those born in 1949, the prominence of the 29ers is indeed remarkable. It was the East German generation of social climbers who filled the vacant positions in the career structure of the new state, which provided openings, especially for newly qualified teachers and functionaries, and expected full loyalty in return. A brief comparison with the ‘sceptical generation’ in the West only suggests that it was not just the pre-1945 experience which shaped the post-war generations, but the generational dynamics of the post-war opportunity structure, East and West (pp. 257, 292).

It may be doubted whether the newly labelled 45ers in the West were, indeed, equally ready to mobilize for democracy at the time, or even ‘available for conversion’ in the way much of the GDR Aufbaugeneration fell for the new regime. They found their private aspirations and political ambitions blocked by the generational inertia of a political system which kept ex-Nazi functionaries on board, as shown by the second life of Udo K., who even avoided denazification (pp. 277–8). This is certainly one of the reasons for the 68er revolt. In the East, on the contrary, the generational inertia of a political system dominated by the Aufbaugeneration blocked the way for the post-war generations which, according to Lutz Niethammer’s ‘oral history’ team, eventually contributed to the collapse of the regime. What Fulbrook adds to this well-known story is the importance of ambivalence, even in the life stories of those who could claim ‘conversion’ and personal success. In fact, she claims, the sense of ‘normlessness’ which was left behind in 1945 spoke of the destruction of any sense of community, or any continuity of the Volksgemeinschaft for that matter—to the extent that there ever had been (p. 265)—so that the newly established socialist community needed even more convincing.

There were, she argues, basically three ways of renegotiating the ‘presented self’ in the new socialist regime: ‘claimed conversion’, ‘claimed consistency’, or, most likely, the excuse of a ‘life with little agency’ (pp. 280–1). It is, therefore, more than unfair to level the.

charge of tacit approval at this analysis of post-war transformations, as Armin Nolzen does in his review, since Fulbrook is fully aware of the political self-delusion involved in this apology:

As far as an individual’s sense of self was concerned, there clearly was a degree of dissonance between inner views and regime constraints at the time, providing a degree of plausibility, even a sense of authenticity, to this later defence. In terms of denazification, however, this sort of testimony was clutching at straws! (p. 283).

It is to the great credit of Fulbrook that her far reaching analysis goes beyond deconstructing this obviously flawed justification. For her, it is the dissociation of the self which not only provided a ‘degree of plausibility’ in denazification but, in fact, the basis of the whole Volksgemeinschaft delusion in the first place, which later reappeared in the second German dictatorship as the spectacle of a socialist community under police observation. Like the Nazi regime and for the same reasons, it could never really rely on the formation of an authentic personality streamlined by a scripted community spirit. The re-making and un-making of identities thus did not just serve the purposes of denazification, but was a basic condition of dictatorial regimes, both before and after 1945, and it showed most clearly in the young of both war youth generations because they were asked and given a chance to make the leap.

The post-war shock of non-identification was thus transformed into a sense of shame, as can be made out in a number of school-leaving essays from Schleswig-Holstein. Or, as in the case of Christa Wolf, it was transformed into a longing for the new anti-fascist utopia, particularly in those who were young enough and, anyway, forced to remake their lives under the new regime. The New Teacher programme served as an ideal script for the new engaging ‘socialist personality’, but here again, even for the ‘winners’ in this social revolution, an ‘atmosphere of mutual suspicion’ (p. 315) was unavoidable in a system which always distrusted its own efforts at mobilization. Given the exodus of about 3 million people before 1961, ever more organizational ‘gestures of belonging’ were required and, for that very reason, were hardly convincing, even for the party faithful. Official reports about widespread resentment against resettlement on
the border, remilitarization, the publicly proclaimed friendship with wartime enemies, and the hero-worship of anti-fascist fighters in the camps all seem to confirm this, although more could be said about how such bureaucratic over-exposure actually contributed to the pervasive sense of a fake reality (pp. 319–24).

The generational dynamics in the East thus had more to do with the structural opportunities for young social climbers in key areas of administration and politics than with any war experience, which should have made their counterparts in the West equally ‘culturally available’ for mobilization (p. 333). But character (de)formation under the conditions of the new dictatorship only replayed the scenario which had lured the first war youth generation into the same pretence of a simulated community of believers in the first place. To detect this ambivalence between private objectives and official expectations Fulbrook makes use of interviews which she conducted only a few years ago. They are, of course, tainted. What could be said after reunification had made these life stories almost obsolete. Yet again, she is very good at deconstructing the self-delusion in what people have to say in order to adapt to the new requirements, and in what they cannot hide from themselves in their own pasts. Their ‘normal’ lives even produced the illusion of some real agency and allowed for a more or less reluctant adaptation and routinization (p. 343). The official paranoia, for example, with regard to youth culture, hardly makes it into such accounts of ‘normal lives’. But it is likely that a more stringent set of oral history rules might have revealed the same sort of ambivalence about multiple realities if applied to a closely defined set of interviews. Instead, Fulbrook again and again tries to give the whole background story—the youth campaigns, Cold War culture, generational differences in the response to the Wende, and so on—in order to make the personal stories in her interviews stick. She also refutes recent efforts to see the different regime stages in terms of a succession of model generations for lack of any other distinctive generational formation like the 29ers, which, she insists, was ‘the relatively most homogenous generational group of the entire century’ (p. 397).

It is clear that most of her post-unification stories have to do with renegotiating insecure or lost identities of the 29ers. They bring back

the major point which runs through the whole argument about genera-
tions, that is, that defining past selves has a lot to do with future
expectations, especially when previous selves have to be redefined in
terms of present opportunity structures. This is why, understand-
ably, in the case of the 29ers, Ostalgie comes into play when taking
stock of ‘normal’ lives under less than normal conditions (p. 463).
This ex post romanticism reinforces the major story line, since projec-
tions of the past also made up much of the fantasies about the Volks-
gemeinschaft. But sometimes this fundamental bias is almost buried in
the plethora of life stories and general arguments about the character
of SED rule in which the threads of the argument tend to get lost,
especially when the defence of Fulbrook’s ‘normalization’ thesis
takes centre stage, as in the final chapters of the book. 10

Despite this criticism it is no small feat for Fulbrook to have
stepped back from the well-trodden paths of interpretation and start-
ed from the assumption that for both war youth generations, the
lived-in world was characterized by the ‘ambivalence’ of ‘the two
worlds’ (young) people had to live in when (self-)mobilized for dic-
tatorial regimes. As she states at the beginning of her book: ‘The
apparent antinomy between repression and enthusiasm—giving rise
to repeated debates about the balance of consensus, conformity, and
coercion in Nazi Germany—is dissolved once we realize the extent to
which people were able to dissociate their inner reservations from
outward accommodation to both the perceived and the undeniably
real and unavoidable demands of the regime’ (p. 19).

There is one caveat, however, at the end of the book which seems
to give prime place to ideological persuasion in an argument which
otherwise highlights behavioural and attitudinal patterns in the gen-
erational opportunity structure of dictatorial regimes. When compar-
ing the two sets of accommodation, both embraced by and forced on
the young in the two German dictatorships, she argues, older East
Germans, even after two decades, ‘had apparently “still” not internal-
ized the new dominant rules of the game to quite the same degree
that, in the 1930s, Germans had “learned” the racist practices and

10 For the multiple uses of these interviews by Mary Fulbrook see also her
essay, ‘Living Through the GDR: History, Life Stories and Generations in East
Germany’, in Caroline Pearce and Nick Hodgin (eds.), The GDR Remembered:
Representations of the East German State Since 1989 (New York, 2010); see p. 360,
n. 7 and p. 441, n. 2.
beliefs in “German superiority” that were so rapidly acquired in the Nazi period’. For all the belief in the powers of socialist persuasion, Fulbrook argues, ‘it seemed increasingly unlikely that most East Germans would ever become quite as enthusiastic for communism as many had been for Hitler’ (p. 373).

This may be just a function of the relative longevity of the SED regime, or of the violent surge for war in the case of the Third Reich. It may also allow for a more nuanced interpretation of the strength of ideological socializations in the two war youth generations, however adaptable they might have been in the situation of fully re-scripted life chances. But, on the whole, this does not distract from the true merit of this book. From her vast experience with the coping mechanisms needed to survive in the GDR with some sort of self-respect Fulbrook also adds to our understanding of the Volksgemeinschaft, not just as an ideological propaganda performance or a symbolic shambles of mass belonging, but as an enticing double act which allowed people to live in ‘two worlds’, a simulated social self and an insecure inner self. In the end, this subjective experience, which Fulbrook culls from hundreds of private stories, is the hidden transcript which destroyed not just the ‘public sphere’ but also the idea of an authentic self in both German dictatorships.

BERND WEISBROD retired as Professor of Modern History at Göttingen University in 2011 and was Gerda Henkel Visiting Professor in German Studies at Stanford University in the spring quarter of 2012. His main research interests are political culture and political violence, post-dictatorial transitions and the public sphere, cultures of poverty and welfare reforms, the history of generations, and the politics of memory. Among his many publications are (ed. with Alf Lüdtke) No Man’s Land of Violence: Extreme Wars in the Twentieth Century (2006) and (ed.) Historische Beiträge zur Generationsforschung (2009).
This edited volume comprises twenty-five papers delivered in Durham in 2007 at a conference held to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the death of Wilhelm Levison (1876–1947). In keeping with Levison’s academic lifework, most notably his celebrated lecture series *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century*, the international authors contributing to this book set out to investigate the political, ecclesiastical, legal, economic, and cultural relationships between Anglo-Saxon England and the Continent in the tenth century. As editor Conrad Leyser points out in his introduction, the aim of the 2007 conference and its proceedings was ‘to set down in writing the oral “lore” of Levison—a living tradition for the postwar generation of medievalists, but by no means self-evident to their twenty-first-century successors’ (p. 1). Leyser goes on to establish that the explicit intention of this volume is to combine contemporary currents in Continental and especially English history with more ‘traditional’ approaches to the period under consideration, thereby perpetuating Levison’s seminal work in what is now the second decade of the twenty-first century.

The book is structured into five sections, each of which contains between three and eight essays pertaining to a specific aspect of the cross-Channel relationship during the tenth century. The first, and by far the largest, section is dedicated to examining the different ‘Route-ways, Contacts, and Attitudes’ which connected England and the Continent at the end of the early Middle Ages. In their opening essay, Stéphane LeBecq and Alban Gautier investigate the economic and naval aspects of these routeways by looking at the existence of merchants’ relationships between England, Scandinavia, and mainland Europe (predominantly late/post-Carolingian Francia). They argue that in the period under consideration trading activities were renew-
ed, with the city and harbour of London representing a vital focal point. John Insley presents a detailed study of Continental Germanic personal names which resurfaced in tenth-century England, drawing attention to the need to consider distributional and chronological factors very carefully before reaching conclusions concerning the dialectal provenance of such naming phenomena. He nevertheless concludes that the majority of moneyers’ names occurring in tenth-century England betray a West Frankish typology.

Andreas Bihrer’s contribution on Anglo-Saxons in the tenth-century Reich eventually shifts the geographical focus away from England, mainly by highlighting the crucial role played by English exiles, abbots, wives, and messengers on the Continent in establishing what he calls a ‘mid-distance relationship’ between England and the Reich. Steven Vanderputten’s study of Flemish monasticism and its contacts with tenth and early eleventh-century England, in particular, with the archbishopric of Canterbury, persuasively reassesses former trends in scholarship by placing the surviving sources in their original regional context. He considers the Flemish monasteries as attempting to establish, and consolidate, functional networks on an international scale. An even closer look at the written sources and their composition is provided by Richard Gameson, who meticulously traces the work of an itinerant English illuminator towards the end of the tenth century, considering both monastic and secular backgrounds. He convincingly suggests the possibility that the itinerant master was, in fact, a layman rather than a cleric. In similar fashion, albeit taking a rather different methodological approach, Michael Wood develops an insightful personal and professional profile for a Carolingian scholar, working and teaching at King Æthelstan’s court. This essay is particularly valuable in adding specific and tangible evidence to a period of which, as Wood points out, we often only have fragmentary knowledge.

Francesca Tinti presents a more general view of the relationships between England and the Roman papacy during the tenth century, based primarily on a series of surviving papal letters. According to Tinti, relationships between the Curia and England in the period under consideration by and large remained rather affectionate. Concluding the first section is Marco Mostert’s intriguing case study of relations between Fleury and England during the period under consideration, which he bases on both discursive arguments and the surviving manuscript evidence. Despite its inventorial nature, Mostert’s
essay is one of the strongest contributions to the volume, employing an inductive approach which allows for compelling arguments based on a selection of pertinent examples.

The second section of the volume is entitled ‘Kingship, Royal Models, and Dynastic Strategies’, and offers a somewhat more concise focus than the preceding section. Its five essays interrelate very well and offer a broad perspective from both sides of the English Channel. Veronica Ortenberg begins by asking why the involvement of the English King Æthelstan would have mattered in tenth-century Continental affairs, especially considering intermarriage and dynastic ties. She regards Æthelstan as having been, ‘culturally and ideologically, an English Carolingian, if not even an English Charlemagne’ (p. 235). Just how important such cross-Channel affairs and shared Anglo-Frankish ideologies were in securing the standing and prestige of Anglo-Saxon royal families on the Continent is further underlined by Sarah Foot’s compelling investigation of West Saxon dynastic strategies and heritage politics. Foot demonstrates that intermarriage was among the most essential means by which Æthelstan sought, and indeed managed, to make a name for himself beyond the Channel.

The study of monastic reform and royal ideology offered by Simon MacLean dovetails neatly with this topic, as he also chooses examples associated with the female members of Æthelstan’s lineage and their relationship with important families and institutions on the Continent to underpin his analysis. He argues that there was a strong interdependence between the influential monastic institutions and their secular patrons, both male and female. A more direct comparison between royal circles in England and on the European mainland is provided by David A. Warner in his study of Anglo-Saxon and Ottonian coronations and the specific ideology which underlay them. He concludes his argument by advocating a more comparative perspective on coronation rituals for future research. This comparative approach is maintained in the next and final contribution to this section, in which Janet L. Nelson offers a more general, yet highly convincing, view of visions and practices of tenth-century kingship on both sides of the Channel.

The third section comprises three papers dealing with the dynamics of ‘Law and the Working of Government’. Thomas Zotz opens the section with an essay on kingship and royal palaces in the Ottonian
realm, which he considers in direct comparison with the situation in England around the same time. Zotz concludes that, in terms of the practice of government, little difference existed between the two realms. David Pratt’s discussion of written law and the communication of authority in tenth-century England once again draws attention to royal circles in the reign of King Æthelstan, emphasizing the importance of written legal contracts for maintaining the king’s peace. Charles West closes the section with a study of legal culture in tenth-century Lotharingia, thus adding a valuable Continental perspective to the topic, whilst also discussing a selection of manuscripts. He arrives at the conclusion that, on a larger scale, Lotharingia and England in the tenth century represented loosely connected yet mutually related societies.

The fourth section offers an investigation of ‘The Church: Organization and Culture’. The first of five papers is Wendy Davies’s enquiry into the organization of the Spanish church in the tenth century, and the ways in which it differed from its Anglo-Saxon counterpart. Whilst demonstrating how England in many respects represented a ‘case apart’, Davies also provides persuasive evidence of a number of striking similarities between the English system and the ecclesiastical organization of medieval Spain. Stefan Brink provides a view of Scandinavian forms of pastoral care, with a strong focus on Sweden’s early ecclesiastical organization. Sarah Hamilton’s essay on the early English pontificals then moves on to compare Anglo-Saxon and Continental evidence on her chosen subject. Jesse D. Billet’s contribution looks at a somewhat later period, that is, late Anglo-Saxon England, and concentrates on the secular clergy and its members’ provision of the divine office. Based on a substantial number of manuscripts, Billet’s essay concludes that amongst the more important innovations achieved by the monastic reform movement was the liturgical adoption of the Benedictine *cursus*. The last essay in this section is, again, a more specialized case study by Brigitte Meijns, who considers relic relations as a potential key to Anglo-Flemish relations during the late ninth and early tenth centuries.

The final section of the volume is entitled ‘The Vision of the Past’. It brings together different studies of how people during the period under consideration conceived of, as well as used, their past in historical and historiographical discourse. Thomas F. X. Noble opens the section with a discussion of a number of tenth-century historians
and their respective interest in, and treatment of, the past. Julia Crick’s paper is concerned with the role of forgeries in reconstructions of a distinctively ‘English’ past during the tenth century. Concluding the section, and the book, is Yann Coz’s insightful investigation of how Roman history was perceived and utilized in Anglo-Saxon England.

In conclusion, the volume’s broad topical horizon, combining various aspects of the complex relationship between England and its neighbours beyond the Channel, is laudable indeed. Moreover, the editors and contributors have maintained a careful balance between specialized case studies and more general overviews throughout. This is a particularly judicious approach, considering this volume’s ultimately successful attempt to provide an interdisciplinary discussion aimed at a period which, as Conrad Leyser aptly puts it in his introduction, ‘must still play Cinderella to her sisters, the ninth and eleventh centuries’ (p. 10). Perhaps, however, more attention could have been paid to broadening the chronological horizon just a little further to include later developments of the early to mid eleventh century. Some of the contributors actually do adopt this approach and the benefit is evident: it facilitates a broader comparative perspective on the period under consideration and helps to bring out with greater precision specific differences and similarities with later centuries, especially with regard to the Norman/Anglo-Norman period. In addition, the interdisciplinary approach could arguably have been taken even further to include a wider range of, for example, philological, archaeological, or theological papers. Overall, however, these are relatively minor criticisms, and it is important to acknowledge that the volume makes an immensely valuable contribution to a scholarly tradition that still owes much to, whilst also developing in various important directions from, the remarkable work of Wilhelm Levison.

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The night, too, has a history, one that can cast a different light on many of the things that happen during the day. Craig Koslofsky’s *Evening’s Empire* attempts nothing less than a description of the European early modern period in terms of a process of ‘nocturnalization’. What does this mean? The author defines this concept as ‘the ongoing expansion of the legitimate social and symbolic uses of the night’ as found in spiritual and political expression, public space, and the use of daily time among poets, princes, courtiers, burghers, and common people (pp. 1–2). Koslofsky’s investigation is devoted less to the night as such than to the opposition between day and night, which is of historical interest because during the early modern period it began to lose its congruence with the opposition between light and dark. The subject of this stimulating and informative book is the multilayered, symbolic, and ever more dynamic relationship between day and night which arose out of the increasing illumination of the darkness of night by street lighting and fireworks at court. Thus the night is presented not only as a *subject* but also a *category* of analysis, which makes it possible to bring together approaches drawn from the history of everyday life and cultural history: physical illumination on the one hand and on the other the symbolic revaluation of the night wherever religious–moral illumination, and thus a new social order, was to be created.

Early modern astronomers had discovered that the cosmos was filled with darkness, not light. It was not least this insight that brought home to contemporaries that light could not exist without darkness. The result (and precondition) of nocturnalization was an awareness of the constitutive complementarity of light and dark. This also means that in the early modern period the night lost some of its traditional menace while holding out new dangers. This should not be understood dialectically. When the Enlightenment undertook to illuminate the whole world, it also produced new darknesses, but unintentionally and only in a metaphorical sense. In the early modern period, by contrast, the complementarity of light and dark opened up space for complex positive references to the night in blueprints for social and cultural order.
Koslofsky starts with religion (chapters two and three). For the pious, the night was not only a place of physical menace but increasingly also a time of temptation and contestation. It was easiest for the devil at night. This is why demonologists located not only the witches’ Sabbath but also Hell itself at night—both the place of transcendental punishment and the repentant conscience of the individual: the knowledge of sin in one’s own heart.

In the early modern period, therefore, the night continued to be a time of terror and fear, and in the context of the history of salvation, its menacing aspects were, if anything, enhanced. Unlike in the Middle Ages, however, the increased dangers were accompanied by new chances for salvation. The night provided a field of activity not only for the devil, but also for his master. At a time of interdenominaional violence, the darkness of night could be deployed as a rhetorical instrument for demonizing the enemy. It could also, however, provide a refuge in which religion could be pursued without danger; a foundation for Nicodemism in the positive sense, as practised by the Anabaptists, for example. Going beyond this material dimension, it also led to God in a spiritual sense. In mystical contexts, darkness was no longer reduced to the absence of light, advancing instead to become its complementary counterpart. Theologians knew that there was no path to the light of divine justice without the darkness of sin. Only the night of the self, the denial of sensuality and reason, led to knowledge of God and oneself; only the knowledge of the ineffable nature of a God concealed in the dark made it possible to say anything about Him; it was only at night that the soul found the freedom to seek for God and unite with Him.

In a word, darkness did not drive out the light; it was understood not merely as the negation of light, but as the condition that made it possible. In the early modern period the things of the world were recognized through their opposites. This epistemological principle was also expressed in religion. The God of early modern Christianity acted in concealment; He led people into the darkness of sin so that He could lead them out again, into the light of His salvation. That is, in God opposites came together. Mystics, in particular, pushed this thought as far as it could go, but they were not the only ones to share it. Thus Koslofsky concludes that in contrast to the late medieval mystical estimation of the night, ‘the early modern night opened up greater heights and lower depths for the Christian soul, epitomizing
the formation of the early modern Christian subject’ (p. 86). In the second half of the seventeenth century when, in addition to an apocalyptic darkening of the world, natural philosophers made more attempts to illuminate the divine word, these also produced the insight that no light could shine without darkness.

In chapter four Koslofsky moves from the places of religious practice and reflection to the political sphere, that is, initially, the court. The monarch underlined his claim to spiritual and political sovereignty by reinforcing its traditional confessional sources with the ‘natural’ authority of the Sun King. What was new was not the symbolic language of the sun as such, but the increased intensity of the ruler’s radiance through a deliberate contrast with darkness. This was achieved by illuminating the night with fireworks and a court theatre which in this way discovered the stage technique of perspective and could be drawn upon for the metaphorical characterization of human, earthly existence. The bourgeois and the pious found new nourishment for their criticism of the court in this shifting of the everyday life of the court into the night. At court itself, however, the Sun King represented, legitimated, and created his dominion by overcoming darkness. He invoked the darkness of denominational disputes, and led his royal household into the night in order to allow the light of his divine right to shine all the brighter. Not only because of the sovereign’s dissimulation, deception, and awe-inspiring incontestability: the Sun King was always also a prince of darkness.

The introduction of street lighting in many European cities during the last forty years of the seventeenth century is the subject of the fifth chapter. It describes both the physical installation of lighting and its changing function. The purpose of street lighting was not only to maintain law and order, but also to adorn the cities and to represent aristocratic rule locally. This form of nocturnalization also had religious antecedents. In the eyes of Christian utopians, the physical illumination of the night also freed it from moral darkness. A respectable and profitable night life could be created by driving out the students, apprentices, servants, prostitutes, frequenters of inns, and soldiers who traditionally populated the urban night.

There was no lack of resistance to the programme of street lighting (chapter six), not only from the local town authorities who were not prepared to finance the stage on which aristocrats could represent themselves, but especially from the traditional cultures of the
night. Again and again, newly installed lanterns were smashed, the attempt to prevent crime at night thus engendering a new form of criminality. Against the background of this resistance, the installation of street lighting became an act of ‘colonizing’ the urban night. It created a new public sphere at night, for example, by making it possible for not only men, but also ‘women of quality’ (but not middle-class women) to visit coffee houses late. In this way, street lighting sharpened the contrast between the lives of respectable young people, and those who endangered order. In the long term, however, it not only secured the power of the authorities, but led to their destabilization. Coffee house gatherings generated criticism of those who had made night time meetings there possible in the first place.

The colonization of the rural night was pursued by church and state, and directed less at promoting trade and consumption (chapter seven). Its intention was not to extend daytime activities into the night, but primarily to banish traditional activities (such as extramarital sex, for example) from the night. Young people in the countryside also resisted this, and they were considerably more successful than their city counterparts because they had the tacit support of the village elders. These did not see traditional night time activities such as the charivari or village marriage customs as disrupting order, but rather as creating it. Only the Catholic reform brought new night time activities to rural areas, for example, the practice of forty hours devotion. Such forms of lay piety did not fall victim to the suspicion of the clergy until the end of the seventeenth century. Given the differential success of the drive to suppress night time youth culture, the two-track colonization of the night ultimately produced a new opposition between town and country. From now on, the country stood for ‘the absence of nocturnalization’ (p. 230).

Enlightenment voices associated this absence with a belief in ghosts, witchcraft, and Hell (chapter eight). Attempts to bring light into this darkness were similarly unsuccessful for a long time, and not only because of the rural population’s deeply ingrained beliefs. Given the challenges of natural philosophy, theologians had themselves raised the bad spirits again and conferred new meanings upon them. By the second half of the seventeenth century, spirits and witches had mutated from instruments of the devil into ‘empirical’ proof of the immortality of the soul and the existence of a God who used the devil for his own purposes. Thus here, too, we find a specif-
ically early modern theological recourse to the night. At Protestant courts in particular, it was tied to the representation of a rule which, in its belief in the majesty of God and its anxiety about its own dethroning, trusted in the opposition between light and dark. Given this background, Hell itself was granted a long life. Even those who exposed a belief in Hell as ‘superstition’ were unable to dispense with it entirely, using it for the purposes of social disciplining by analogy with the manipulative and deceptive game played with darkness in the court theatre. Thus Koslofsky places the Enlightened discourses which contested the existence of ghosts, witches, and Hell in localities where nights were furthest opened up: the illuminated cities. These discourses declared darkness the opposite of reason, and thus located it in all ‘non-civilized’ peoples and cultures (but, it should be added, always also found it in the depths of the Enlightened self).

The light metaphors used by the Enlightenment, Koslofsky concludes, followed on from those of Christianity, but no longer shared the religious high regard for darkness (p. 281). The author of the book underlines continuities here; this reviewer, on the other hand, prefers to emphasize change. In Enlightenment thinking, the contrast between light and dark became a binary opposition, which it had not been in the early modern period. The darkness of night, through which Enlightenment reason had constituted itself, was thus transformed into something not only predominantly negative, but also purely metaphorical. The development of Enlightenment light metaphors, therefore, cannot be adequately understood as a secularization of Christian illumination. Here the limits of the term ‘nocturnalization’ become apparent. Koslofsky’s account suggests that there were, in essence, two early modern responses to the night: first, physical illumination driving out the night; and secondly, the religious and political instrumentalization of its darkness. The two processes, the book suggests, were not congruent, and nor did they follow on from each other seamlessly. The fact that the term ‘nocturnalization’ suggests that they did, however, is due to its authoritarian and thus ultimately modern perspective, in which the Enlightenment is presented as both the completion and the overcoming of the process under discussion. The problems which the concept raises are most obvious where nocturnalization was not only not achieved, but not even attempted: that is, in the rural areas where, according to
Koslofksy, we can observe at best a failed de-nocturnalization. However catchy the term, it orients the religious and courtly treatment of the night by the end point of an Enlightenment which, at the same time, accompanied, continued, and criticized this treatment. The paradigm of nocturnalization not only prevents the inclusion in the investigation of phenomena such as dreams, for example, which are genuinely and a priori associated with the night; it also suggests that the historical development being described was one-dimensional and linear in a way that this highly readable book itself refutes in its demonstration of tension-filled and often paradoxically complex responses to the early modern night, of the dislocations in the practical everyday and symbolic relationship of day and night, light and dark.

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This is a timely and challenging book. It deals with a problem that first structured, then complicated the historiography of the nineteenth century: the assumption that the ‘bourgeoisie’ was responsible for the evolution of economic, political, and cultural ‘modernity’. Once an immensely popular field, the historiography of the nineteenth-century European middle classes has lost much of its lustre in recent decades. Just as it displaced the history of the working classes in the 1980s, it has had to give way to studies that focus on what are now considered social loci of political power and economic influence: aristocracy and monarchy.

This state of affairs is admittedly somewhat curious. An immense amount of effort directed at reconstructing the social history of the middle classes, motivated by the assumption that this could explain the political development of European countries, has resulted in the conclusion that their direct political importance was relatively limited. Yet middle-class studies took their predictions from significant representatives of nineteenth-century public opinion, who considered the middle classes a social phenomenon of growing importance that did shape the present and future of European countries.

One response to this state of affairs has been to rephrase the question: to consider talk of middle-class dominance either as an aspiration for the future or as a collective social illusion, and therefore to ask why people convinced themselves that the middle classes were not just crucial, but permanently on the rise. In this vein, David Cannadine and Dror Wahrman have produced fascinating narratives that describe the uses and abuses of simplified descriptions of society as a function of political struggles for (in-)equality.

Seigel’s approach is very different. The question he formulates is not why the middle class loomed larger in political and social observation than in reality, but what made the future seem bourgeois, and why the bourgeoisie appeared particularly modern. Seigel offers a way around the dilemma that there is no particularly strong proof that all modern practices had a bourgeois social origin by arguing
that this is not the relevant criterion. He argues that what was important was something else: middle-class peculiarities were intrinsically modern because they all resulted from integration into a ‘network of means’ which he defines as ‘a chain or web of people and instruments that links distant energies and resources to each other, allowing individuals and groups to draw them together, create synergies between them, and employ the capacity they generate for some particular purpose or goal’ (pp. 7–8). Seigel identifies three networks of means relevant to the topic: ‘1. markets, 2. the state and other administrative structures; and 3. webs of information and communication’ (p. 8). The market was, of course, the arena in which the bourgeoisie was first observed and in which bourgeois capitalists operated. The other two arenas produced the other parts that made up the Bürgertum: administrators and professionals. Thus, nineteenth-century observers were correct in pointing out that something was happening that was at once bourgeois, forward-looking, and innovative.

All three networks of means depended on a medium of exchange that facilitated communication between individuals unknown to each other across great distances. The medium was most clearly visible in the marketplace: (paper) money. For the second sphere, Seigel describes it as legitimacy; in the third sphere, the currency of exchange was ‘communicative competence’ (p. 14).

The first part of Seigel’s book is devoted to tracing the evolution of the three networks of means in the three spheres in each of the countries named in the title (England, France, and Germany). Three chapters are devoted to the period before 1850, three further chapters to the years up to (roughly) 1900. Seigel argues that all three countries witnessed the replacement of local relationships based on prior acquaintance and rank by modern networks of means open to anyone able to obtain the currency required. He seeks to document that the decisive transitions occurred everywhere only after 1850 (thus siding with interpretations that place the modernization of the British economy in the 1870s), but that the three countries did differ in the relationship between the three networks. Market integration came first in England, but politics and the cultural sphere continued to rest on old-style relations longer than in France or Germany. Political integration was the key in France, where the state created a national market and a national public sphere. Germany was the latecomer with regard both to market integration
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and the political sphere, but precocious in terms of cultural integration.

Part two discusses ways in which the currencies of interaction became standardized after 1850: national bank notes replaced metal coins of different values and types; time became a quantity that was easily and uniformly measured; relationships between men and women were less focused on marriage and reproduction, and there were fewer constraints on the expression of sexuality. The final chapter in this section focuses on ‘Jews as bourgeois and network people’.

The book’s last part leaves behind a systematic consideration of networks of means and a comparative focus on England, France, and Germany in order to look instead at the arts in the ‘culture of means’ that shaped the (late) nineteenth century: museums, music and musicians, education as a means of integration and class distinction, and, finally, the depiction of bourgeois life in modern art, with French artists’ impressions of the USA and Gustav Klimt’s paintings of Austrian scenes and people looming quite large. The conclusion seeks to demonstrate the salience and relevance of the book’s approach by casting the internet as the present-day equivalent of the networks of means that revolutionized the nineteenth century.

Seigel’s text is clearly based on a lifetime of reading and thinking about the problems it treats. His approach is comprehensive, and he refers to the literature on the bourgeoisie’s social profile and intellectual world view as effortlessly as to specialized studies of the social makeup of German provincial towns or the artistic production of individual members of the European avant-garde. The book is refreshingly free of a marked preference for traditional or postmodern approaches, general studies, or particular cases. Seigel places considerable importance on artistic interpretations of the nineteenth century in novels, paintings, and historiography without, however, losing sight of their context or perspectives. The theory he expounds is fascinating and likely to move the debate out of the dead end in which it has remained for some time, although it is, at some levels, similar to the Bielefeld School’s emphasis on Bürgerlichkeit, that is, a bourgeois culture, not a bourgeois position in the economy or a middle-class income, as the key nineteenth-century class distinction.

A few critical observations are, of course, inescapable in response to such a wide-ranging book. One can quibble about a few details. For example, the Kleinbürgertum, which Seigel places after the 1850s
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(pp. 248–9), was introduced into German social and political discourse via radical interpretations of the 1830 revolution in France about twenty years earlier. As with other grand interpretations of the nineteenth century, it is possible to wonder whether Seigel’s book could have done without some of the narratives of well-known facts or interpretations to make room for the systematic exposition of the ‘networks of means’ he postulates. The general observations about the economic and political itineraries of England, France, and Germany summarized very briefly above are unlikely to be disputed, but take up space that could have been used more profitably for a more systematic exposition of what the various networks of means accomplished, how they were structured, and how (or why) they related to the bourgeoisie. Perhaps for reasons of space, the treatment of the three networks is very uneven, and the book’s topics become less focused as the text progresses. While the account is fairly systematic with regard to the economy (particularly concerning money), and broad, though more impressionistic, with regard to the arts (which serve as the key example of networks of information and communication), it is extremely parsimonious in following up the fascinating ideas about ways of documenting ‘legitimacy’ set out in the introduction and, indeed, in its treatment of politics.

My second query relates to the way in which Seigel appears to frame his story, at least in the first two parts of the book. There it seems that the networks of means operate primarily within national boundaries. They serve to enhance national integration and thus contribute to the mobilization of energies and potentials within and for states. Framing the argument in this way strikes me as potentially problematic, especially as it is not always entirely clear whether Seigel’s networks are an empirical reality or a theoretical and in some ways normative description. This is apparent, for instance, in the discussion of railways’ impact on market integration or communication, which implicitly assumes that the integrative effect was national, not regional or transnational, even though very few railway lines stopped at borders. It is worth pointing out that Paris was linked to Cologne by rail much sooner than to the rest of France, and that the chronology of political conflict in the Rhineland was thus perhaps not accidentally more closely influenced by Paris than by Berlin in the early nineteenth century. Perhaps the absence of a national focus (and thus of pronounced national cultural distinctions) was a feature
of bourgeois modernity enhanced by transnational networks of means. If so, this could go far towards explaining its crisis or its end in the twentieth century.

The problem also appears in Seigel’s treatment of the British Isles. That he has chosen to look at England is clear, for example, in the treatment of the evolution of national paper money, where the examples given apply neither to Scotland nor to Ireland. But networks governed by legitimacy or communicative competence surely failed to exclude Scotland, Ireland, or the Empire, so that the network boundaries appear to be blurred rather than clear. However, the book’s final chapters, which place the bourgeoisie in a more global context, implicitly make this point, thus complementing the nation-state focus of the earlier ones in an interesting way.

In a field characterized by many simplistic assumptions about the relationship between classes, nations, states, and economic development, a framework that avoids every questionable unit of analysis is obviously not possible. By providing alternative ways of thinking about the relationship between social class and cultural change, Seigel’s magisterial account of the relationship between modernity and bourgeoisie is one of the most interesting books on the subject for decades, and therefore likely to spark debate, provoke responses, and serve as a starting point for research agendas for a considerable time.

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Our memory of German emperor Frederick III today is almost completely limited to the tragedy of his illness and ensuing brief rule of only ninety-nine days in 1888. Closely linked to the fate of this beacon of the liberal minded is one of the main questions of counter-factual history: how would Germany have developed if Frederick had ruled for longer? Would he, as many argued, have transformed Germany into a parliamentary monarchy and steered a course in foreign politics avoiding confrontation with Germany’s neighbours? The implications are obvious: they come down to the question of whether German history in the twentieth century would have taken a completely different, much more positive, course if Frederick III’s personal fate had been more fortunate.

Frank Lorenz Müller, in what is the first scholarly biography of the Second Reich’s second emperor, does not dismiss these considerations as unhistorical. Rather, he deploys the intriguing if–then problem intelligently to structure his narrative into much more than a biographical account. He transposes the subjunctive into the question of how Frederick William, as the future emperor was known as a crown prince, could develop as an individual in the Prussian dynastic context in which he grew up. Secondly, Müller asks what leeway the crown prince had, and a longer ruling emperor would have had. Müller thus opens up what he refers to as the political culture of the Reich, making relevant the long period when Fredrick had little direct political significance.

After all, Frederick’s years in waiting were spent just one step away from the throne during the decisive period when Prussia was transformed from an ailing semi-great power into the dominant force on the European Continent in its new capacity as a German nation-state. The crown prince was in his early thirties when his father, William I, ascended the throne and, encouraged and pushed by Otto von Bismarck, abandoned his liberal credentials, sidelining parliament in favour of an unchecked expansion of the military. Müller shows that the conflict between father and son broke out as early as this, describing it as a situation in which the son’s prospects depended on his father’s life.
The crown prince made public the strong reservations he held about the conservative course taken by his father, and deliberately stopped attending the council of ministers. Yet his opposition did not go beyond these rather symbolic acts. He almost never questioned his loyalty to his father, although their relationship was often troubled. Frederick William explicitly approved of reforming and enlarging the army, and he later never questioned the military’s relevance and position. This pattern was repeated at a number of critical moments in Prussian–German history, when Frederick William found himself close to the centre of decision-making but with few means of really exerting power. He clearly held liberal views, at least in his diary, but was neither able nor willing to give his convictions political expression. His lack of talent for politics might have played a part in this. Yet Müller demonstrates that Frederick William actually shared many of the key assumptions underlying the Hohenzollerns’ raison d’être: the unquestioned role of a strong monarch backed by a strong army and a belief in the Hohenzollerns’ superiority over all other German states because of their alleged historical mission and achievements.

Müller lays out his interpretation in thematic chapters. He starts by describing the defining personal relationships between Frederick William and his father William I, his wife Victoria (known as ‘Vicky’ and daughter of Queen Victoria), and his opponent Otto von Bismarck, although Müller questions this characterization. The image of Vicky obsessed contemporaries and later commentators alike. Müller does not choose the easy option of denouncing the dark myth of the later Empress Frederick as motivated solely by xenophobia and conservative narrow-mindedness. While stressing Vicky’s talents and intelligence, he points out that she almost obsessively took every opportunity to let the Prussians and Germans know how inferior she considered everything in her new home by comparison with Britain. Against the background of growing Anglophobia in Germany, this insensitivity increasingly also harmed her husband’s public image. He appeared to be a weakling in his wife’s hands and, given the close connections which Vicky maintained with her native Britain, also a potential security risk. The latter contributed to the fact that in later years Frederick William was sidelined politically, losing out against his own son.

The crown prince’s relationship with Bismarck, Müller points out, was more complex than is commonly assumed. Both believed, or at
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least accepted, that a continuation of Bismarck’s chancellorship would work under the new emperor. Tellingly, the question of whether the chancellor would stay on was one of the few points on which Frederick William disagreed with his wife who, of course, fiercely opposed this notion. On the one hand, the crown prince clearly understood that Bismarck’s almost unchecked executive power and public standing threatened to overshadow the Hohenzollern dynasty; on the other, he had to admit that Bismarck’s political experience made him ‘more necessary’ than the crown prince himself. This was much more than just the question of a personal relationship. Müller provides clear evidence that Frederick William’s acceptance of Bismarck meant that the crown prince would not introduce a parliamentary system, the great hope of liberal-minded contemporaries and counter-factual historians alike.

In a chapter entitled ‘Liberalism and Empire’ Müller looks at how substantial these liberal hopes were. He provides ample evidence that Frederick William shared the liberal, often left liberal (freisinnig in the German terminology) convictions of his time and generation. Publicly, the most marked expression of this may be found in the clear stance he took against the growth of anti-Semitism in the 1870s. He did not, however, question the essentials of Hohenzollern rule. The crown prince made it very clear that he considered it a bad idea to appoint party leaders as ministers, which would establish the link between democratically elected politicians and the government so desperately lacking in Germany. He also held strong views about the necessity of strong monarchical rule and wanted to see the restricted influence of the Reichstag curtailed even further. Both the chancellor and the German princes were to be strictly subordinated to the office of German emperor.

In opposition to his father, Frederick William enthusiastically endorsed the main ideas of developing Reich nationalism, at least after 1870. This culminated in hyperbolic but concrete plans to evoke the medieval empire and place the Hohenzollern dynasty in an artificial line of continuity. In this, he was even more detached from modernity than his more sober, Prussian-minded father. The crown prince saw himself as a future Frederick IV in succession to the medieval emperor Frederick III rather than the Prussian king Frederick II. While this plan was eventually deflected by Bismarck, the crown prince certainly played a large part in the whole concep-
tion of the new German Kaisertum. He initiated a number of specific projects to commemorate Hohenzollern glory which were later taken up by his son. In stark contrast to his son, however, Frederick William evoked strong loyalties in southern Germany based on his command of Bavarian troops during the French campaign of 1870. There he was seen as the embodiment of Germanness rather than as a Prussian prince and later king, thus demonstrating the potential of the new office of German Kaiser.

It is a strength of Müller’s study that he points to the strong but often still neglected resources of monarchical power upon which Frederick William could draw. This gave him popular appeal, summed up in the almost mystical figure of ‘Our Fritz’, a public persona shaped largely on the battlefields of Bohemia (1866) and Alsace (1870) and further enhanced by many anecdotes about how easily the crown prince related to his subjects from all strata of society. All this added up to Frederick William as a ‘paragon of bourgeois virtue’ and made him, as Müller puts it, a true ‘super-Bürger’ (p. 121). Personal character traits and talent certainly played a crucial part here, but the transfer of monarchical knowledge from Victorian England, where such patterns had been established successfully, and references to the powerful myth of Queen Louise, Frederick William’s grandmother, also played an important role. Bourgeois devotion certainly helped the monarchy, but it also reflected growing Hohenzollern dependence on the support of the Bürgertum—plus the new phenomenon of the media.

The public success and high-flying plans of Frederick William, who had given up hope of ever exerting political influence long before he fell victim to cancer, eventually came to nothing with his tragic end in 1888. The ninety-nine days to some extent encapsulated the many frustrations of preceding decades. Müller highlights the petty role played by those at the centre of power, in particular, the new strong man of the Hohenzollern dynasty, William II. Frederick III and his wife, trying to seize the opportunity, were limited to taking negative action against conservative politicians with almost no opportunity to put through their own schemes. Müller shows that Bismarck retained full control of political affairs throughout Frederick III’s short reign.

Müller provides new details of the last, dramatic phase of Frederick III’s life and their political implications. So far, we have mainly
been aware of these from the perspective of Bismarck or, through the works of John Röhl, William II. Yet even more than the many new insights gleaned from the meticulous reading of a vast array of sources, their interpretation in context makes for the high quality of this book. During Frederick III’s last days, committed supporters offered to donate their healthy larynxes as transplants to save their political hero. Here, as in many other instances, Müller links biographical detail with a more complex discussion of the transformation of the Hohenzollern monarchy from Prussian to German, from mid-nineteenth-century detachment to the intense public interchange of unleashed modernity. While some familiarity with nineteenth-century German history is assumed, Müller presents complex matters in an admirably accessible and elegant style. Had ‘Our Fritz’ lived longer, he would, according to Müller, almost certainly not have been a great reformer working towards a more liberal Germany. Yet there is much to suggest that he might have been a more effective monarch than his son, perhaps addressing the many internal cleavages with greater ease and tact.

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It is more than an act of professional self-flattery to argue that historians have played a crucial role in state-building. Among the scholars who have recently provided compelling confirmation of this proposition are Lutz Raphael, Peter Schöttler, who has written of history as a *Legitimationswissenschaft*, and Matthias Middell, who supervised the dissertation of Anne Friedrichs, which is under review here. Friedrichs has extended the proposition to the colonial empires of Great Britain and France during the twentieth century. Studying the impact of colonial empire on French and British historiography, she seeks to explore the ways in which historians constructed ‘ordering narratives’ (p. 17) or ‘master narratives for their societies’ (p. 21). To this end the author focuses on the ‘communicative nodal points in the historiographical field’ (p. 20), that is, historical handbooks and leading professional journals in the two countries (particularly the book reviews in these journals). She calculates that this literature not only represented current historical thinking, but was also the most likely to influence the practice of colonialism via the training of British and French colonial officials. This approach then guides the historiographical survey through its three phases: the ‘challenges’ to colonial empire between 1919 and 1945, the attempt to establish colonial ‘partnerships’ between 1945 and 1956, and the putative end of empires thereafter.

The result is an extended survey of this historical literature, together with biographical information about some of the principal authors, most of whom were academics and retired colonial officials, and an account of institutional changes that bore on the historiography of colonialism, in the first instance, new professorships, institutes, and journals. Friedrichs shows that despite the blows inflicted by the First World War, French and British historians alike remained confident in the colonial project. While the French wrote of assimilating colonial peoples and insisted anew on a civilizing mission as the rationale for empire, their British counterparts wrote approvingly of the renewal and liberalization of empire, particularly the growing autonomy of the dominions (if not India) as it found form in the
British Commonwealth. The British view modulated but little in the aftermath of the Second World War, as historians began to treat the history of the British empire in the light of the worldwide promotion of freedom. French historians, on the other hand, found discussion of overseas empire painful after 1945 and preferred to say little about the Union française. Then, in the 1960s, the historiographical focus turned in both countries to the states that had emerged from colonial empire, although historians in neither country had done much to champion decolonization.

If the results of this study are a little meagre, the fault is not entirely the author’s. The survey is devoted in the main to describing chapters in handbooks. To judge from the sources that she has chosen to use, colonialism was not a controversial subject among professional historians in Britain or France, particularly at the elite universities. Debates over the fundamental causes and historical significance of imperialism did not make it into the leading journals or historical surveys, where the views of Lenin, Luxemburg, Hilferding, or, for that matter, J. A. Hobson, had no supporters. More echoes of a socialist critique of imperialism found their way into the French literature after the Second World War, because Marxist historians there enjoyed more access to the standard works that Friedrichs surveys. Despite the intentions initially signalled in Past and Present, British Marxists were not much interested in the history of empire. The only debate of significance that surfaces in Friedrichs’ survey is the controversy over Gallagher’s and Robinson’s ideas about free-trade imperialism, which primarily occupied younger British scholars at the red-brick universities. It must remain a matter of conjecture, however, whether this debate, which emphasized the economic roots of imperial expansion, touched on deeper issues in a ‘general theory of imperialism’.

As if to concede that the historiography of colonial empire did not generate a lot of heat, the author wanders off in several directions in search of additional issues. Extended portions of the study treat the parliamentary politics of colonial empire, the historiography of international relations and Vichy France, and the development of world history, economic history, the Annales school, and area studies. It is not always clear, however, how these broader subjects bore on the historiography of colonial empire. Braudel gets credit for introducing a ‘global historical approach’ (p. 287) by virtue of his including the
Ottoman Turks in his work on the Mediterranean. The resulting diffusion of the subject matter is compounded by frequent repetitions, so the argument is difficult to follow in places. In the end, the principal value of the study resides in its description of the standard historical literature on colonial empire in the two countries and its survey of the institutional landscape in which this literature was composed.

In order to understand John Grenville’s message one has to be acquainted with the street map of Hamburg. On p. 257 we find the following description: ‘A grocer at the end of the Rothenbaumchaussee heaped a cart filled with vegetables and pushed it to the [Jewish] hospital while it was still in the Johnsallee. Unfortunately he was spotted as he passed the former Jewish community premises at the Rothenbaumchaussee 38, which has been taken over by the Gestapo.’ For those who know these surroundings the picture is clear. The grocer was spotted as he was only 10 metres away from the Johnsallee and about 100 metres from the small building left as the Jewish Hospital after the big building in St Pauli had been ‘Aryanized’ (pp. 123, 153). Rothenbaum, a neighbourhood which had been densely populated by Jews since the turn of the century, passed through the process of ‘Aryanization’ from 1933 and most Jews either emigrated or, starting in October 1941, were deported to the East. This little episode also tells the reader about the fate of the few who tried to help. Another example: ‘October 1941 . . . Between the Sternschanze and the Dammtor stations a young woman, Gisela Solmitz, was travelling on the U-Bahn that day. Casually looking out, she caught a glimpse of an unusual sight as the train passed the small triangular Moorweide Park . . . A thousand people . . . were all standing about holding bundles’ (p. 1). These people were Jews about to be deported, and the train (an S-Bahn, by the way, not an U-Bahn) was travelling 5 metres above street level and only 30 to 40 metres from the scene, which took place next to the university, one block away from the Rothenbaumchaussee. Each and every passenger could have had a close look at the last step before the ‘final solution’.

Grenville thus sketches a ‘topography of terror’ in order to explain the ‘lapse into barbarism’ in Hamburg. Grenville (Hans Guhrauer before leaving Germany for England on a Kindertransport) was motivated by his friend Werner Jochmann to research the fate of the Jews of Hamburg. He presents the reader with a history of everyday life, paying special attention to the ‘subtle shades of grey’ between black and white (p. xi). He hurls questions at his reader in a didactic style,
some of them rhetorical and others real. His research relies to a large extent on archival documents like the diary of Gisela’s mother, Luise Solmitz, referred to above. But a cautious historian must be on the alert. Should we accept this kind of documentation at face value? If, for instance, Max Plaut, the leader of the Hamburg Jews during the war, concludes in his memoirs that he knew as early as September 1940 that concentration camps ‘meant death in the worst way’ because by then he had learned of the ‘euthanasia’ killing by poison of 200 Jewish victims (p. 214)—do we believe him? If we do, how should we interpret the correspondence between Plaut and an ‘Aryan’ whose wife was ‘sent to the East’ in June 1943? Plaut told the poor husband that the camp to which the woman had been sent was ‘a work camp’, just before the husband received news from Auschwitz that his wife had died there (pp. 245–6). What did Plaut really know and why did he react in this way? The text itself cannot supply the reader with answers.

The title of the book addresses the source of all evil. While in their own eyes the Jews were 100 per cent Germans—‘Be glad you are a German’ was the title of an essay written by pupils of the Jewish Talmud Tora school (p. ix)—the non-Jewish population regarded them as ‘others’, and not only after 1933. As Grenville concentrates on the history of the destruction of a civilization, as suggested by the book’s subtitle, the first two chapters, dealing with the years 1790 to 1933 serve only as an introduction to German–Jewish civilization in Hamburg between these years, without going into detail or extensively consulting the relevant historical literature. Some of the leading figures whose offspring will play a major role at the time of catastrophe appear in this introduction, just to show how far integration had gone before 1933: the Wohlwill and Warburg dynasties, Kaiser Wilhelm’s friend Albert Ballin, the man in charge of Hamburg’s finance, Leo Lippmann, and so on. Anti-Semitism, Grenville reminds us, was not the primary motive behind support for Hitler (or the reason for the Nazi party’s success up to 1933) among the established Hamburg bourgeoisie; on the other hand, it did not turn this bourgeoisie away from Nazism either. And from the moment that Hitler came to power in Berlin, it was only about a month before the Nazis took over Hamburg too. Gauleiter Karl Kaufmann, City Mayor Carl Krogmann, and Police Chief Bruno Streckenbach became Hamburg’s leading figures. True, by November 1933 support for Hitler was less
The Jews and Germans of Hamburg

than the German average of 90 per cent, but still more than 80 per cent (p. 68).

Grenville believes that the process of squeezing the Jews out of Hamburg had more to do with economic considerations than a specifically radical anti-Semitic attitude. One of the earliest examples: the Karstadt department store chain was so afraid of disfavour from the new regime that its board decided to dismiss all Jewish employees as early as 1 April 1933. Firms owned by non-Jews learned very quickly to use the fact that their competition was ‘Jewish’ in order effectively to fight it and, if possible, take it over, as in the case of Queisser, producer of Lovana, against Beiersdorf, producer of Nivea (p. 85). Indeed, the merchant elite did not have to wait long to find out how advantageous cooperation with the new regime could be. With the help of the regime even a strong institution with excellent international connections like the Warburg bank could be taken over by ‘Aryans’ after only half a decade of Nazi rule (p. 161). No wonder that the administration had no problems getting rid of the Jewish head of the financial department, Leo Lippmann, or that the university quickly expelled such prominent figures as Ernst Cassirer and William Stern. Mayor Krogmann, who after 1945 re-invented himself as a protector of his city against the ‘real’ Nazis and, indeed, went unpunished, was an important instrument of this process of Nazification, Aryanization, and exclusion of the Jews. Warburg’s definition of Hamburg’s ‘Jewish policy’ before Kristallnacht as a ‘cold pogrom’ (p. 129), for which he held Krogmann especially responsible, is very much to the point.

Hamburg, Germany’s ‘gate to the world’ was, of course, a ‘respectable’ city. It did not like the widespread vandalism of Kristallnacht (p. 173). Gauleiter Kaufmann openly agreed that such pogroms ‘make no sense’ (p. 186). Even its SS was relatively restrained compared with that in other cities or the concentration camps. The chief of the Gestapo in Hamburg even ‘gave orders not to maltreat the Jews during the process of deporting them’ (p. 240). The fact that Hamburg’s welfare institutions supported Jews well into the war, however, is attributed not to good will but to the conviction that people dying in the streets was a sight that might upset the general population (p. 154). But there is no doubt that the majority of the population approved of the persecution of the Jews and knew what was going on. Not only the people on their way to work on 10 November
1938 or those who travelled by S-Bahn to the Dammtor station knew in real time what was happening to the Jews. The readers of the Hamburg Tageblatt learned as early as February 1942 that the ‘Jewish pest has been exterminated’ (p. 230).

Time and again Grenville refers to the difference between the majority of Mitläufer and the minority of courageous opponents of the system, such as school teacher Fräulein Eberhard, who lost her job because she proposed banning the Stürmer from her school (p. 100), Frau Flügge, who remained in contact with Jewish pupils during the war (p. 219), Frau du Bois-Reymond, who in 1938 was brave enough to openly express regret as Warburg left his bank (p. 167), and those who hid Jews during the November pogrom. On the other hand, Grenville’s story supplies ample information to support Goetz Aly’s thesis expressed in Hitlers Volksstaat: Raub, Rassenkrieg und nationaler Sozialismus (2005), which posits the perpetrators as ordinary and corrupt villains, Gestapo men and others who robbed and looted the Jews of Hamburg in every possible way, and average Hamburg citizens who profited from the auctions of Jewish property (p. 250).

The diary of Luise Solmitz, found in the archives of the Institute for Contemporary History in Hamburg, runs through the whole book. It shows how a woman who was basically a German nationalist—in 1931 she still believed that the Jews had stabbed Germany in the back during the First World War (p. 56)—herself became a victim of the Nazi regime. As time passed, Solmitz learned that her Christian husband was considered a ‘racial Jew’ in the eyes of the regime. Their daughter, therefore, who was 13 years old when Hitler came to power, became an outcast, had to leave the Bund Deutscher Mädel (p. 98), and was betrayed by her best friends (p. 136). A remark in her diary, right after Kristallnacht, in which she uses the term ‘final solution’ to describe the general mood in the public sphere is very important (p. 177). Solmitz’s story is representative of a group that gains much exposure in the book, ‘non Aryan’ Christians and Mischlinge who were considered Jewish by the racial system, but not by themselves (p. 123). But the reader should be reminded that this was not representative of the larger group of ‘full’ Jews.

Most depressing, of course, is the chapter about Hamburg’s Jews during the war and especially at the time of the deportations. Raul Hilberg and Hannah Arendt raised the question of collaboration between the Jewish leadership and the Nazis, one that has since irritat-
ed many historians. Grenville takes a closer look at this issue. He focuses on four Jewish personalities: Max Plaut, Leo Lippmann, Joseph Carlebach, and Max Warburg. Warburg was able to leave before the war. The other three remained in Hamburg, serving their community. On 6 December 1941 Rabbi Carlebach, with 800 fellow Jews, was deported to Riga where he was murdered. Lippmann remained until he was to be deported in June 1943; he committed suicide instead (p. 253). Plaut was in charge of community matters until, in 1943, he was able to emigrate on a special transport to Palestine.

The degree of cooperation shown by each of the four was very different. No doubt Plaut was the more typical case of ‘cooperative’ Jewish leadership. Grenville’s explanation concentrates on what he calls the ‘sense of duty’ of the Jewish leaders in Hamburg and elsewhere (p. 198, 209). Since the leaders had to follow the authorities’ orders for the sake of their communities, he rightly argues, contacts with the representatives of Nazi rule were unavoidable. These contacts required great courage on the part of the Jewish functionaries. The story of Dr Spier, principal of the Talmud Tora school, who went into the lion’s den, that is, to the Chief of the Gestapo in charge of the Jewish community, Claus Göttscbe, in order to free a teacher from prison (p. 107), serves as a good example. Lippmann’s success in getting half the expenses of the transfer of the Jewish cemetery from Grindel to Ohlsdorf paid was also an example of cooperation beneficial to the Jewish community under siege (p. 153). The question becomes more complicated when it comes to the close relations between the same Göttscbe and Max Plaut. But here again, under the extreme conditions of the war, what would have been the alternative? Plaut’s main concern was to get as many Jews as possible out of Germany with the connivance of the local Gestapo (p. 151). Half of Hamburg’s 20,000 Jews were saved. Of the 3,163 deported to the East in 1941, only about 2 per cent survived. The question of whether Plaut should have gone so far as to agree to a deportation of the Jews to the district of Lublin in autumn 1939, allegedly in order to create ‘a more tolerable future’ for them (p. 208) is, of course, difficult to answer. And Grenville himself, when describing Plaut’s role in the transports from October 1941, cannot be sure whether he was doing his best for the Jews who were about to be deported or ‘had also become an arm of the Gestapo’ (p. 239).
A most frustrating chapter in the history of the Third Reich is the one dealing with the punishment of the Nazi criminals. Most of the perpetrators in Hamburg got off without punishment. Some of them evaded being put on trial by committing suicide, like Gestapo chief Götsche. Others fled to distant parts of the world, or got off with a light punishment, if at all. Krogmann remained unharmed. The first Gestapo commander of Hamburg, Streckenbach, died unpunished in 1977. On the other hand, it was no rarity for the wrong men to be punished. The man in charge of the education system, Wilhelm Oberdörffer, who was helpful to the Jews, was removed from his position by British military rule because he had been a member of the Nazi party (p. 110).

This book is both informative and moving; it is an impressive piece of research, sometimes close to a detective story, contributing to our understanding of the dynamics of the Third Reich. 1

1 It is a pity that the work done in Hamburg by Yfaat Weiss on Jewish education in Nazi Germany (1991) and the book written (in Hebrew) by Elieser Domke about the Hamburg Jews in the years 1928 to 1933 (1995) were not consulted.

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The topic of Kershaw’s book is, no doubt, of the utmost historical significance. For one, there is the stark discrepancy between the end of the First World War and that of the Second World War: armistice and revolution in November 1918 with the German army still occupying large tracts of enemy territory, and unconditional surrender in May 1945, after the whole of the Reich had been conquered by the victorious powers. More disturbing still is the statistical evidence for the extent of destruction produced by the senseless struggle up to the bitter end during the final phase of the war. After the Western allies had established a firm foothold in Normandy as a result of their invasion on 6 June 1944 with overwhelming forces and resources, Germany’s defeat was only a matter of time. Yet the agony of the Nazi regime dragged on for another ten months, accompanied by ever growing misery for the German people. There were more civilian casualties than during the preceding four years of the war, mainly because of area bombing and the chaotic flight of millions from the Eastern territories; as many soldiers lost their lives (2.6 million) as during the whole war up to July 1944 (2.7 million). Towards the end of the war, between three and four hundred thousand soldiers were killed in action every month, mostly on the Eastern Front. The question WHY is so obvious that one wonders why no German historian so far has felt the need to tackle this problem comprehensively. The interest of the ordinary reader is, apparently, rarely at the forefront of German academic historians’ minds. In the development of history as a modern discipline in Germany, the idea that historiography is nevertheless the art of storytelling has been eclipsed. Since British historians have never forgotten this lesson, they now have the edge over their German colleagues in explaining German contemporary history to the German reader. Ian Kershaw’s present book demonstrates once again that this approach is perfectly compatible with the highest standards of research.

Kershaw is fully aware of the many books on specific, often regional, aspects of the military struggle. But there was no plausible explanation linking the military disaster with both the power structure of the Nazi regime and the reaction of the German people under stress. Above all, no interpretation presented in a narrative style was
available that could have explained to the reader of a later generation how and why it was possible for the Nazi regime to turn its murderous war machine against its own people at the very moment when the war was lost. For Hitler and many of his generals, preventing a break-down in military discipline was the most important lesson to be learned from the end of the war in 1918. This obsession with the experiences of only twenty-five years ago was widespread, even in Britain. John Maynard Keynes felt that ‘Ministers should not suppose that the chief thing that matters was to avoid the mistakes made last time’. This time German troops, utterly exhausted and demoralized, were seized by a widespread fatalism. Nor was there a conspiratorial network of organized resistance left after the plot of 20 July 1944 had failed. What motivated the officer corps towards the end of the war was a misguided sense of duty and a desperate desire to defend their homeland, especially against the Red Army in the East. Although Kershaw is aware of the ordinary German’s narrow-minded resilience in the face of incredible hardship, he does not believe that the much hyped idea of the Volksgemeinschaft explains the survival of the regime against all odds. Nor does Hitler’s personal charisma furnish a satisfactory answer; by the end of the war most Germans had lost faith in their Führer. For Kershaw, however, the regime’s extraordinary power structure, culminating in Hitler’s authority and his final word, as it were, which remained unchallenged until his suicide at the end of April 1945, provides a convincing answer to an otherwise incomprehensible phenomenon.

The title of the concluding chapter says it all: ‘Anatomy of Self-Destruction.’ Here Kershaw offers a final analysis of his findings. He is quite right to dismiss the Allied demand for unconditional surrender as an explanation for the continuation of the war, or, for that matter, as a crucial handicap to the German resistance movement. After all, Italy accepted the same terms without suffering unduly. It is important to stress this point because after the war unconditional surrender served the German officer corps as a useful alibi, a timely excuse, in that it seemed to blame the Western Allies for extending the war unnecessarily. Not loyalty to Hitler and his government motivated the Germans to carry on, but sheer fear of the ever more brutal henchmen of the Nazi regime, which at the end of its life showed no mercy, thus displaying its true character to its own people. That the role of terror can hardly be overestimated is one of
Kershaw’s most crucial explanations. The levée en masse (Volkssturm) introduced in the final months of the war resulted in the total militarization of society and the widespread application of martial law; summary justice, or rather injustice, was a daily experience. The Nazi Party ruled supreme in organizing a last stand wherever an enemy attack was to be expected. Kershaw singles out four leading characters whose grasp on power and administrative efficiency kept the regime on the road to disaster longer than necessary: Martin Bormann, Heinrich Himmler, Josef Goebbels, and Albert Speer representing the Nazi Party, the police (especially the Gestapo), the propaganda machine, and the war economy. Apart from party stalwarts who knew what was in store for them, there were two other groups which helped to prolong the agony by their misguided sense of duty: the civil service, right down to the last postman, which made sure that the machinery of state kept functioning right up to the last hour, that is, until the handover of power to the new masters; and the officer corps, many of whom felt bound by their oath of loyalty to Hitler regardless of whether they trusted him or not, as though the Führer represented the monarch of earlier times.

Ian Kershaw established his reputation with his outstanding biography of Hitler, in the same way as his fellow countryman John Röhl has done with his three volumes on Wilhelm II. Kershaw’s concluding remarks therefore touch upon Hitler’s role in prolonging the war. In the end, his authority was so undisputed that he could even appoint his own successor, Admiral Karl Dönitz. The four leaders mentioned above were neither united by a common goal, nor in command of a power base strong enough to prevent Hitler from leading Germany to disaster. The Führer was no doubt driven by his obsession with avoiding a sudden collapse as in 1918; no ‘stab in the back’ this time. This is Kershaw’s final verdict and I would not disagree with it. But perhaps there is room for further speculation as to why so many Germans followed their leader to the bitter end. They belonged to a generation of Germans who still read Felix Dahn’s Ein Kampf um Rom, which ends with the heroic downfall of the Ostrogoths at Vesuvius. Nazi propaganda had encouraged a mythical view of history which honoured those who would dare to make a last stand and go down with flying colours. It is to Kershaw’s credit, however, that he refrains from all explanations which might link the final disaster with the idea of a German national character influenced
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by the morbid Nibelungen saga. Historians have to content themselves with the evidence available to them. In this case, the sources do not allow Kershaw to claim that Nazi ideology motivated ordinary soldiers to fight on. He demonstrates, however, that they acted as much out of fear of an increasingly repressive regime as of the enemy.

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The reports of British correspondents continue to fascinate historians. Orlando Figes has recently captured the atmosphere of the Crimean War as a major turning point in modern history. He sees the war as ‘the earliest example of a truly modern war—fought with new industrial technologies, modern rifles, steamships and railways, novel forms of logistics and communication like the telegraph, important innovations in military medicine and war reporters and photographers directly on the scene’.¹ In this context of rivalries and increased communication in the ‘modern world’, historians have focused particularly on German–British relations. A number of studies in recent years have addressed issues of German–British press relations from the Daily Telegraph affair to the First World War and the Cold War.

Against this background, Antje Robrecht has studied the role of British and German correspondents after the Second World War, from 1945 to 1962, and has managed to unearth a number of interesting documents. She had access to the papers of The Times correspondent Charles Hargrove and the letters of the Daily Telegraph staff in Berlin. She was also able to use the private papers of a number of journalists from Die Welt, Die Zeit, and the Observer, as well as various memoirs and interviews. One wonders, however, whether Robrecht was really satisfied with the evidence she obtained. Some of the interviewees seem to have been overly positive. The correspondents refer to the ‘importance’ of their reports, the significance of their work for ‘peace’, and the ‘great time they had in London’. It would have been interesting if Robrecht had included more in-depth reflections on the general problems of sources. The lack of proper archiving practices, for example, is a central issue in modern press history, exacerbated by the conditions correspondents face while travelling, when written evidence is often heavily compressed and not necessarily stored after the article has been wired back to the newspaper’s headquarters.

Robrecht’s general take on her subject is to compare the role of foreign correspondents with that of diplomats. Thus the title of her book asks whether journalists were ‘Diplomaten in Hemdsärmeln?’ (diplomats in shirtsleeves?). The transnational approach of her dissertation was inspired by the work of her supervisor, Eckart Conze, and by Dominik Geppert’s and Frank Bösch’s research on British-German press relations. Conze has recently stirred up a lively debate on the history of the Nazi-tainted German diplomatic service after 1945. Given his interest in the reconstruction of diplomatic affairs and the title of Robrecht’s book, some overlap might have been expected here, but Robrecht’s dissertation was finished some time before Das Amt was finalized and published. Her book focuses closely on German and British press correspondents in the 1950s. This is a great strength of the book, but also a limitation.

In the first part of her study, Robrecht looks at the biographies of German and British correspondents of the 1950s, including Charles Hargrove (The Times), Louis Heren (The Times), Alistair Horne (Daily Telegraph), Reginal Steed (Daily Telegraph), Terrence Prittie (Guardian), Hans Scherer (Die Welt), Fritz von Globig (Die Welt), and Heinz Höpfl (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung), and comes to interesting conclusions. She shows that the group of German correspondents in the years immediately after the war contained both German emigrants, such as Heinz Gustav Alexander (Der Spiegel), and Nazi-tainted correspondents such as Höpfl, who had worked for the Völkische Beobachter. Her results tally with recent research on the development of the German press and diplomacy after 1945. The second part of her study deals with the working conditions and daily routines of the correspondents. While this reveals interesting details, developments in the German press and diplomatic sector are only briefly referred to. It would have been useful if the author had included further information on the development of newspapers in Germany and compared working conditions in Paris and Washington in order to help the reader understand the bigger picture behind the resumption of

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2 Frank Bösch und Dominik Geppert (eds.), Journalists as Political Actors: Transfers and Interactions between Britain and Germany since the late Nineteenth Century (Augsburg, 2008).

3 Eckard Conze, Norbert Frei, Peter Hayes, and Moshe Zimmermann, Das Amt und die Vergangenheit: Deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik (Munich, 2010).
West German foreign news and diplomatic relations in the early 1950s.

Robrecht’s book has been criticized for relying too much on the intertwined logics of diplomatic and press relations in the 1950s. However, the opposite is the case. Robrecht does not make enough of the interesting overlaps between diplomacy and press relations in the late 1940s and 1950s. She could have used her fascinating findings more extensively for an even closer analysis of press and diplomatic relations in the Cold War. The extensive historiography on media and politics in the Cold War, however, is hardly mentioned. A more detailed account of Britain’s changing global outlook in the 1950s would also have better explained the career paths of the British correspondents who are at the centre of the study. Hargrove had postings in Asia and Paris and Heren reported from Singapore, Delhi, Bonn, and Washington in the 1950s.

It was not only the legacy of war, political reports, and ‘gentlemanly’ diplomacy, but also travel and war reports, literary novels, and colonial adventures that shaped the genre of international news and reporting in Britain and the USA until the 1950s, contributing to the rise of publications such as Merian and Stern in West Germany. Pictures of exotic princesses, former colonial possessions, and apparently ‘ideal’ travel destinations contributed to the great interest in newspaper reports from abroad in the 1950s. The spirit of international Anglo-American news reporting was rekindled in 1954 when Ernest Hemingway received the Nobel Prize for Literature. Robrecht is interested in the diplomatic side of a profession that was not necessarily limited to this aspect. Perhaps Thomas Mann, who is mentioned several times in the book, is not the best point of reference either. One might instead think of Klaus and Erika Mann and their chaotic friendship with the travelling Swiss reporter Annemarie Schwarzenbach in the 1930s and 1940s. Moreover, Britain, the Empire, and the Commonwealth are perceived mainly through the lens of German–British diplomacy in London and Bonn. Britain’s global agenda and legacies of exotic adventurism deserve closer attention in the book, along with some earlier German international reporters, such as Margret Boveri, who were still active in the 1950s.

Nonetheless, Robrecht’s book really comes alive when she analyses the interaction of journalists with the political, social, and historical context of the time. The third part of the book examines the networks linking diplomats and journalists. There are interesting additional observations, in particular, on the Lenz affair in Germany, interviews with Adenauer, and journalists’ relations with East Berlin. It is a shame that the third part is quite short and that the book lacks an index and detailed references to the correspondents’ actual reports. Robrecht’s book, however, has opened up an important area for further study, one that historians have taken too much for granted so far. As Figes argued in Crimea, the foreign correspondent is often seen as the epitome of modern international relations in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. To have shed new light on this neglected aspect of international history is one of the great achievements of Robrecht’s study.

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