

Imperial Germany Revisited: Continuing Debates and New Perspectives. Edited by Sven Oliver Müller and Cornelius Torp. New York: Berghahn Books, 2011. Pp. 348. Cloth \$120.00. ISBN 978-0857452528.

In the genre of collected essays, *Imperial Germany Revisited* is exemplary. Its editors chose the topics well; its authors contributed comprehensive, coherent, and useful essays; its overall tone is authoritative and thoughtful. The volume was assembled from papers at a conference organized on the occasion of Hans-Ulrich Wehler's seventy-fifth birthday and came out in its English version in time for his eightieth. After at least two decades in which the twentieth century has dominated the historical debates of German historians, its focus on Imperial Germany redirects our attention back to what editors Sven Oliver Müller and Cornelius Torp dub the "favorite child" (3) of Wehler's generation of social science historians. This volume enfolds their earlier attention to the structures of German politics and economy in an embrace that encompasses the histories of both Europe and the world. Somewhere in that wide field a *Sonderweg* ("special path") may still exist, but the path markers are gone and even its ultimate destination is unclear.

This volume also maintains its distance from the polemics that marked the Wehlerian refashioning of older understandings of Germany's *Sonderweg*, as well as the critique of that refashioning in the 1980s. The authors in *Imperial Germany Revisited* emphasize diversity in methodology, perspective, and subject matter: "the present state of the historical research," write the editors, is "open, pluralistic and innovative" (9). In this "revisiting," the sightseers include cultural historians as well as social scientists, internationalists as well as "internalists." Some practice comparative history, and some consider long-term continuities—though of a different character than those of the Wehler generation. The only master narrative in evidence—that of modernization in "dark tones" (biopolitics, institutional disciplining, pathologies of difference)—jostles for attention within talk of multiple modernities, ruptures and variations, resistance and negotiation. Michel Foucault's influence is much in evidence, but Max Weber's has not dissipated; Alexander Gerschenkron, Hans Rosenberg, Thomas Nipperdey, David Blackbourn, Geoff Eley, Detlev Peukert, and others, including of course Wehler himself, make occasional appearances, and the historians in this volume have found their bearings in the company of these fertile minds.

The most intellectually ambitious essays come at the beginning and at the end: the starters ("The Place of Imperial Germany in German History") mull over long chronologies and basic concepts; and the anchors ("The German Empire in the World") cross the finish line triumphantly, with all the confidence of scholars who are establishing the new dominant paradigm for modern German history, namely its entanglement in the world. In between, others profitably address particularities: of class, gender, religion, politics, culture, and, in a separate section, war and violence.

As in a good relay team, all of the contributions are strong, worthy of more attention than they can receive in this brief review.

The first section begins with Helmut Walser Smith's striking essay on "when the *Sonderweg* Debate left us." Distilling the main argument of his recent *Continuities in German History* (Cambridge, 2008), he challenges German historians to think again about what is distinctive about Germany's path to "twentieth-century horrors" (23). We are "bereft of a sense for the deeper continuities of German history," he argues, and we need to recover this if we are to recognize the "powerful [Gershenkronian] currents in the causal stream" that constituted "German singularity" over the course of centuries (33). Productive though the Blackbourn and Eley critique of Wehlerian continuities may have been, he suggests, it (and related work, such as those of Peukert) had the half-unintended consequence of hurling us into the twentieth century via the crucial point of transformation in the 1890s, in order to pursue a history of the conjunctures and crises that brought about the Third Reich. The whole history of post-1945 history could be understood as well in the same mode of conjuncture, crisis, and response. Say goodbye to the nineteenth century, said Paul Nolte in 2006. Smith retorts, not so fast. In a less sweeping way, the essays of Benjamin Ziemann (on social differentiation and longing for community), Dieter Grimm (on sovereignty), and John Breuilly (on nationalism as "cognitive orientation under modern conditions") also reassert the salience of the nineteenth century beyond the negative *Sonderweg* paradigm. This first section thus sets up the rest of the volume to answer the question posed by Smith: by what means are we to create a more "convincing way to connect twentieth-century German history to the long nineteenth century" (23)?

The essays that follow provide a plethora of possibilities, expanding the spatial dimension of historical research through Europeanization and globalization of contexts, and considering more of the nineteenth century than just its last decade. With respect to the latter, James Retallack shows how the political mass market, with all its implications of mobilization and radicalization, was emerging already in the 1860s. Stephan Malinowski provides a masterful account of crucial political-economic divisions that developed within the Prussian nobility after 1870, and Manfred Hettling walks us through the "difficult relationship" between social historians and the bourgeoisie. Olaf Blashke's sharp analysis of the concept of "culture wars" takes into account the "prolonged era" of the nineteenth century, when "church and secular forces, clerical and anti-clerical, Catholic and anti-Catholic camps" struggled with each other through waves of re-Christianization and confessionalism (130). Müller tracks the emergence of musical performance as power play over the course of the nineteenth century, and MacGregor Knox provides a vigorous analysis of how another kind of cultural tradition—that of the Prussian military—embedded itself in institutions and minds, and thus determined how Germany confronted new challenges. The similarly impressive essay by Thomas Mergel on the Kaiserreich as a "Society of

Migration” gives us a brisk but magisterial account of a society literally teeming with movement, in and out and all about from midcentury onwards.

The other essays pursue a variety of strategies for breaking down the walls that contained previous histories of the Kaiserreich. Birthe Kundrus’s “On the Significance of Colonialism for the German Empire” is in turns thoughtful, skeptical, and sharp in its assessment of the current “academic ardor” (260) for the German colonial periphery. Sebastian Conrad again provides an eloquent argument for how “deeply” the Kaiserreich was “implicated in global conjunctures” (293); as with Smith’s essay, this one will not surprise those familiar with his other works, but provides an important—and for this volume crucial—summary of how “the nation was defined, understood, and practiced” in “the global context in which it was constituted” (293–94). The remaining essays by Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, Ute Planert, Jorg Echterkamp, Roger Chickering, Dirk Bönker, Alan Kramer, Cornelius Torp, and Volker Berghahn all provide glimpses of what comparative, multiperspectival, and transnational writing about German history can achieve.

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A Duel of Nations: Germany, France, and the Diplomacy of the War of 1870–1871.
By David Wetzel. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2012. Pp. xvi + 310. Paper \$26.95. ISBN 978-0299291341.

A decade ago, David Wetzel published an important study of the political origins of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870–71, in which he offered a welcome counterpoint to the Prusso-centrism of most accounts of the outbreak of that war (*A Duel of Giants: Bismarck, Napoleon III, and the Origins of the Franco-Prussian War* [Madison, 2001]). With *A Duel of Nations*, Wetzel has now published the long-awaited sequel. It offers a multilayered analysis of the diplomacy of the war itself, focusing on the key French and Prussian decision makers, yet also extending to the statesmen of the other leading powers in Europe, from Britain to Austria-Hungary and the Russian Empire. The analysis covers the span of the entire war, ranging from its declaration in July 1870 to the collapse of the Second Empire and the subsequent formation of a new Republican government in France, to the armistice in late January 1871 and the ratification of the preliminaries of peace by the French National Assembly on March 1, 1871. Like its predecessor, the book is an impressive piece of scholarship. Well written and incisively argued, it is based on a clear command of the available secondary literature and printed primary sources, as well as vast multinational archival research, mostly involving diplomatic records and personal papers.

Two issues emerge as central to the diplomacy of this mid-nineteenth century war of nation and empire: first, the question of international intervention and the