



Jörg Echternkamp, Sven Oliver Müller, eds. *Die Politik der Nation: Deutscher Nationalismus in Krieg und Krisen 1760-1960*. München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2002. viii + 294 pp. EUR 34.80 (cloth), ISBN 978-3-486-56652-9.

Reviewed by Andreas Huether (Department of History, Albert-Ludwigs- Universität Freiburg)
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The Adaptability of Nationalism in Germany

This edited volume investigates the changing faces of German nationalism in times of war and crises over a period of two hundred years. Its aim is to isolate and uncover the carriers and recipients of nationalism discourse at a given time. The novelty in the approach lies in the attempt to marry the structural approach of German historiography with that of the cultural approach. Additionally, the adaptability of national discourse to almost any argument and situation becomes evident when investigating these changes over a longer period of time. This method also reveals the success and ultimately the hollowness of national discourses.

This volume is the result of a workshop held by the Militärgeschichtliche Forschungsamt (MGFA) in 1998. Ute Planert, Hans-Ulrich Wehler, and John J. Breuilly aside, the volume represents the work of several young historians connected to the University of Bielefeld. The editors,[1] however, aim to extend the Bielefeld school's approach of "Nationalismus als strukturelle politische Erscheinung" (p. 3). By marrying the structural approach with the currently dominant cultural turn for studying nationalism the editors hope to reach a "Verschränkung von Politik und Kultur" (p. 4) and relocate the *national*, from the purely symbolic, to the *real* world of politics and discourse of German elites.

In a theoretical piece, Ute Planert criticizes the assumption that the so-called Wars of Liberation jump-started German nationalism in the early nineteenth century. Planert argues convincingly that the founding principles of German national sentiment, the so-called Nationale Sattelzeit had already been laid out in the second half of the eighteenth century. Planert's arguments challenge the small-German historiography since Heinrich von Treitschke and Friedrich Meinecke, which separates the pre-nationalism area prior

to the French Revolution from the nationalization of the masses against Napoleon. She defines twelve cultural, political, and social criteria with which modern nationalism can be distinguished from "pre-modern" nationalism. Applying these criteria, Planert establishes that integral components of modern German nationalism were already established well before the French Revolution of 1789.

The contribution by Andreas Etges concentrates on the link between national sentiment and economic interest in the German *Vormärz*. The establishment of the German Customs Union on January 1, 1834, stirred the sense that Germany was finally becoming a "real" nation rather than one of sentiment. Rather than France or England, it was the cities of the Hanseatic League that were understood as the main antagonists in the economic struggle toward German nationhood. Etges can thus show the versatility of the national and its discourse. Hedda Gramley follows by questioning the role Protestant religiosity played in the national discourse of theology professors and historians after 1848.[2] She argues that in the second half of the nineteenth century Protestantism was increasingly equated with liberal German nationalism. Only a minority of professors—the only one Gramley cites is Theodor Mommsen—voiced uneasiness about growing intolerance towards Catholic Germans. In his article on citizenship concepts of the liberal left, Vito F. Gironde returns to "realpolitische Prozesse" (p. 107). He argues that citizenship was not only defined by *völkisch* attributes and ethnoculturalism but that the legal concepts of *ius soli* and *ius sanguinis* were just as prevalent. For the Wilhelmine era, Peter Walkenhorst shows that *Nationaldarwinismus* became an important addition to the national discourse. This discourse again and again proved flexible enough to be absorbed in contempo-

rary discourses and could be adapted easily into colonial debates and racial discourses.

With Sven Oliver Müller's, article the collection arrives firmly in the twentieth century. Müller charts the emptiness of the term "national" during the First World War, in which every group and organization used the term indiscriminately. National rhetoric was used to support both anti-democratic movements and reform attempts. During the Weimar Republic, various corps organizations from left to right used the term "national" in their propaganda. Sven Reichardt focuses on the blood-and-death cult of the SA and the desperate attempt of the Reichsbanner to include the national in rhetoric towards the end of the Republic. In a survey of the development of German nationalism, Hans-Ulrich Wehler removes National Socialism from its *Sonderweg* position and postulates a new comparative analysis including National Socialism as a form of radical nationalism. Warning that it might crop again, Wehler closes his article with the words: "der nationalsozialistische Rassismus ist die Asche von gestern" (p. 217).

Jörg Echternkamp ventures into the almost uncharted territory of post-1945 German nationalism. He argues that in both Germanies a collective identity was initially established without referring to "the nation"; a new definition of the "national" had to be established. Obviously, this new "national" narrative excluded the twelve years of the Nazi regime, dividing the "national" into "authentic" and "bogus." The main proponents of a new national discourse were often conservative historians who had already been professionally active prior to the Nazi regime.

John Breuilly concludes the volume with a review of the essays included. He positions the approach put forward in the articles as lying between the radical position of Foucault and older positivistic historiog-

raphy, labeling the contributions as a "relative kulturelle Konstruktion" (p. 248). Breuilly argues along the lines of the editors that "the national" cannot be looked at solely as discourse. Such discourses must be placed within particular periods in order to understand why one discourse was more prevalent and successful than another. This approach, he concludes, is the strength of the volume. Its weakness, from my perspective, is its stringent focus on small-German elite groups from within the power center of Germany. In this respect, its approach is somewhat less comprehensive than the previous work carried out by Dieter Langewiesche, for example, as well as the more recent survey by Stefan Berger.[3]

Notes

[1]. Both editors have written well-received monographs on the development of German nationalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Jörg Echternkamp, *Der Aufstieg des deutschen Nationalismus (1770-1840)* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 1998), and Sven Oliver Müller, *Die Nation als Waffe und Vorstellung: Nationalismus in Deutschland und Großbritannien im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002).

[2]. See also her monograph, *Propheten des deutschen Nationalismus. Theologen, Historiker und Nationalökonomien, 1848-1880* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 2002).

[3]. Dieter Langewiesche, "Föderativer Nationalismus als Erbe der deutschen Reichsnation. Über Föderalismus und Zentralismus in der deutschen Nationalgeschichte," in *Föderative Nation. Deutschlandkonzepte von der Reformation bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, ed. Dieter Langewiesche (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2000), 215-242; Stefan Berger, *Germany: Inventing the Nation* (London and New York: Arnold, 2004).

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