

Konrad H. Jarausch, Christoph Kleßmann, Martin Sabrow, eds.. *Zeithistorische Forschungen*. Volumes 1-4. Studies in Contemporary History. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004-2007. 1,931 pp. No price, e-book, ISSN 1612-6041.

Reviewed by Andrew I. Port

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Commissioned by Susan R. Boettcher

Let me begin with a candid confession: I have not read all 1,931 pages that make up the first four volumes of this new journal. But I did read enough of them to get a good sense of whether *Zeithistorische Forschungen* successfully lives up to the promises made by its editorial staff in the 2004 inaugural volume: first, to deal with the legacy of the two German dictatorships while "transcending the national paradigm" (p. 7) and, second, to "respond to and shape" (p. 7) the variety of changes brought about by the demise of state socialism, the process of globalization, the historiographical "shift toward popular culture and the media," and the way in which the Internet has revolutionized communication. The editors (Konrad Jarausch, Christoph Kleßmann, and, since 2006, Martin Sabrow) promise something entirely "new and different" as well, namely a hybrid publication consisting of an online version of the printed journal (www.zeitgeschichte-online.de) that contains additional pictures, film clips, and Web links: "Both versions ought to be understood as mutually complementary" (pp. 7-8). Each issue has four main sections--articles, debates, sources, and reviews, as well as an occasional interview--and includes contributions in German as well as a few in English (based on my calculations, fewer than 10 percent).

The most conventional component of this unconventional publication is the first section of each issue, which consists of four to five scholarly articles and essays that combine, according to the editors, "solid empirical research ... with theoretical and methodological reflections" (p. 8). While noting that "the content of this section will not differ greatly from already existing journals," they nevertheless suggest that it will "provide a broader scope by selecting less conventional topics and presenting the material with more illustrations" (p. 8). Do they deliver? In seven of the first eleven issues, the articles are organized around a single unifying theme: "Zeitgeschichte heute," "Mediengeschichte(n)," "Europäisierung der Zeitgeschichte?," "Kriege nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg," "Migration," "Imperien im 20. Jahrhundert," and "Die 1970er Jahre--Inventur einer Umbruchzeit." What is most refreshing about the choice of topics, as well as the articles themselves, is the commendable effort to get beyond a "Germano-centric" approach--not usually a forte of the German academic establishment. While many of the articles and essays are exclusively about or have some (often "transnational") connection to modern Germany itself, especially during the postwar period, a significant number deal with other countries and regions outside of

Europe. These contributions include impressive pieces on the post-World War II colonial wars in Indochina, Malaya, and Kenya, for example, as well as on migration patterns and minorities in Poland, France, and the United Kingdom. The authors rely on a variety of non-German-language sources, both primary and secondary--no great surprise, perhaps, given the themes of these and similar articles. With some exceptions, however, those who focus on more exclusively German themes characteristically tend to neglect the important work on their country's recent history by foreign scholars writing in languages other than German.

The articles in the second main section--"Debatte"--are more essayistic in nature and are intended to spur discussion by placing "contemporary political and social issues into a historical context" (p. 8). Each issue has a specific focus that is occasionally related to the articles in the first section, and the first four volumes cover a variety of themes, ranging from historiography (the promises and pitfalls of *Weltgeschichte*, for instance, *Militärsgeschichte als Zeitgeschichte*, and--a favorite German theme--*Geschichtsdidaktik*) to contemporary topics of a controversial nature, such as the "American empire" and the postwar expulsion of Germans from the East. In addition to lively discussions about Michel Foucault's concept of "governmentality" as well as the fourth volume of Hans-Ulrich Wehler's *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte* (2003)--one assumes that a discussion of the even more controversial fifth volume is in the works--two of the most engaging *Debatten* focused on exhibitions: "Der Streit um die geplante RAF-Ausstellung" and "Zwischen Event und Aufklärung: Zeitgeschichte ausstellen."

It is, in fact, the considerable attention that the journal gives to exhibitions and other "non-textual" material that is arguably its most innovative contribution. The fourth and final section, *Besprechungen*, includes reviews of pertinent Web sites, films, DVDs, CD-ROMs, and current exhibi-

tions related to contemporary history. No book reviews in the conventional sense are included, but rather new readings of old "classics," such as Franz Neumann's *Behemoth* (1944), Eugene Kulischer's *Europe on the Move* (1948), Frantz Fanon's *Les damnés de la terre* (1961), Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's three-volume *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973), and Rudolf Bahro's *Die Alternative* (1977).

[1] As this sample suggests, the subsection "Neugelesen" makes a conscious effort to be both international in scope, as well as wide-ranging in its thematic and temporal coverage. The same is true of the journal's third section, *Quellen*, which includes analyses of primarily non-written sources--above all photographs, including the work of August Sander, Robert Capa, and *Stern's* Robert Lebeck. A remarkable interview is also included in one issue with Barbara Klemm, the renowned photojournalist who worked for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* for more than four decades beginning in the late 1950s. Equally interesting are analyses of "unorthodox" primary sources such as the Ivar and Billy shelves sold by IKEA, or the military motifs found on Afghani rugs following the Soviet invasion. The accompanying illustrative material is extremely rich, and supplemented--at least in theory--by additional material on the companion Web site. But I could only find one (not particularly helpful) link to additional material for the current issue, and none for past ones: As far as I could ascertain, the online archive only includes the tables of contents of past issues. To that extent, the editors' aspiration to make the printed and online versions "mutually complementary" is an admirable idea, but one with a potential that has not yet been fully achieved.

Given the flood of scholarly journals already on the market, is there any justification for yet another one? None of the innovative features described above is entirely novel *per se*: The themes covered--including the "cultural" ones--are not altogether unconventional, and other journals have also begun to give greater attention to audio and

visual sources. But *Zeithistorische Forschungen* is the first journal I know of to incorporate so many of them simultaneously, and at such a high scholarly level. Moreover, the concept of a hybrid journal, even if not yet fully realized, is certainly highly original. Still, one must wonder: Why the need for a printed version? Would not an expanded version of the online edition suffice? That is something the editorial staff might consider. At the same time, they might think of ways to increase the number of articles and essays in English (and perhaps also French), given their commitment to "provide access to authors who do not write in the German language" (p. 9). The editorial board is impressively European in character, with members from the United Kingdom, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Poland. But this journal is still very much a German effort, both in its primary focus as well as its working staff, which is closely tied to the Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschungen in Potsdam. That connection is not a bad thing, of course, but its ambition to be a new journal for the globalized world could be realized even more fully if it encouraged greater involvement by those living outside of Germany and the rest of Europe.

Note

[1]. In lieu of traditional print reviews, the reader finds a list of links to recent reviews on H-Soz-und-Kult—but not to those on H-German, which is disappointing given that they would, no doubt, be of equal interest to the readership of this journal. A list of *Wichtige Neuerscheinungen* is also included—at least important ones that have appeared in German: For some reason, only a handful of non-German-language publications is included.

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