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Otto Teigeler offers a refreshingly new perspective on Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf’s education and formation that is rooted in meticulous archival research, and future studies of Zinzendorf should take this book into account. There has not been a serious examination of Zinzendorf’s school days in nearly a century, and Teigeler challenges many assumptions in older works. He draws on modern critical evaluations of the pedagogy at Halle, which reflected August Hermann Francke’s belief that strict discipline and hard work were necessary to curb the sinful tendencies of children. He argues that Zinzendorf arrived at Halle as a curious, intelligent, and self-confident boy, but these very qualities were often viewed as evidence of the boy’s sinful pride and self-will. Zinzendorf’s mother agreed with Francke that the boy’s natural tendencies needed to be curbed.

Teigeler corrects earlier historians who claimed that it was Zinzendorf’s grandmother, the baronness Henrietta Catherina von Gersdorf, who sent him to Halle. It was actually his mother and step-father (Fieldmarshal Dubislav Gneomar von Natzmer) who made the decision to place Lutz (Zinzendorf) in Francke’s care over the objections of his uncle and guardian. Natzmer was a high-ranking officer in the Prussian army and had direct access to the King Frederick William I, who was supportive of the almost militaristic discipline of Halle. Teigeler is clearly sympathetic to the young count who was taken from his grandmother’s estate when he was ten and left in the care of selfish tutor who was more concerned about his own position than about the health and happiness of his young charge. Young Zinzendorf was too pious to join in the frivolity and sexual antics of his peers, but he also objected to the rigorous Pietist discipline in the school.

Zinzendorf worked hard and excelled in languages at Halle, and he was chosen to be part of an elite study group led by Francke himself; however, Teigeler claims that Zinzendorf was never really close to Francke and that he rejected many aspects of Francke’s theology and pedagogy. The author examines all of Zinzendorf’s surviving writings from his school days, including addresses he gave in Latin. He shows that the adolescent Zinzendorf was appreciative of the early French Enlightenment, especially the writings of Rene Descartes and Pierre Bayle, both of whom critiqued the prevailing philosophical schools of thought in their day and challenged the authorities. Zinzendorf rejected Aristotelianism and was an early advocate of eclecticism. Teigeler also demonstrates that Zinzendorf brought his grandmother’s “philadelphianism” with him to Halle, and that he was deeply disturbed by theological
controversy and conflict. Zinzendorf’s fundamental ecumenism was far from “indifferentism”; it was a deeply held belief that church doctrines, like philosophical schools of thought, are inherently flawed and relativistic. Violence over differences of opinion is irrational and immoral. Teigeler sees the roots of Zinzendorf’s controversial notion of *tropoi paideia* in his adolescent writings.

Although the title indicates that the book is primarily about Zinzendorf’s time in the Halle pedagogium, Teigeler carries his investigation beyond Halle to include the count’s university experience and his *Wanderjahr*. I found the latter sections of the book to be the most important. Teigeler demonstrates that Zinzendorf fundamentally rejected the approach at Halle and instead argued for a more humanistic, naturalistic approach to early childhood education. Even though there is no evidence that Zinzendorf had read Jan Amos Comenius prior to 1726, Zinzendorf’s understanding of education was similar to that of Comenius, who was opposed to the use of force and fear in education. Teigeler also offers the intriguing suggestion that the “choir system” of Herrnhut was a compromise between Zinzendorf’s preference that children be educated at home and the type of boarding school he experienced at Halle. The children’s choirs adopted a “family structure,” with the choir leaders serving as surrogate parents. Teigeler’s discussion would have been strengthened had he said more about the Moravian boarding schools themselves and how they differed from the Halle model.

One of the most refreshing things about Teigeler’s study is that he situates Zinzendorf both in the Pietist movement and the early Enlightenment. He suggests that Zinzendorf was more influenced by Christian Thomasius than has been generally acknowledged, and he examines the *Dresden Sokrates* as an example of Enlightenment social criticism. In stripping young Zinzendorf both of the patina of hagiography (in his followers’ biographies) and the tarnish of heresy (in the writings of his opponents), Teigeler portrays the young count as a sensitive, intelligent boy who studied hard and was inspired by some of the leading intellectuals of the era. Zinzendorf might have become a luminary of the German *Aufklärung*, but instead he became one of the most creative and controversial religious leaders of the early modern period.

This book is a model of historical research that opens new avenues for exploring the complexities and contradictions of Zinzendorf. It also offers a fresh evaluation of the Halle pedagogium and its influence on Prussian social discipline.
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