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**History**

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**Review of German Nationalism and Religious Conflict: Culture, Ideology, Politics, 1870-1914 , by H.W. Smith**

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social, political, moral, and technological marginality as well as such issues as Russian and Soviet “nationality” policies and the problems of ethnicity and identity in general.

While the book does speak to those themes, it would be an exaggeration to claim that it actually *analyzes* them: the material is heavily focused on the case and, except for the introduction and the brief conclusion, the presentation is somewhat on the reserved and elusive side when it comes to indulging in the theoretical implications. This makes for writing that is extremely enjoyable, rife with fascinating, ironic, and complex detail and ranging from references to early Soviet modernist experiments with conductorless orchestras through a description of the politics of the construction of the Latin-versus-Cyrillic-based Nivkh script, to the content of the Stalinist Nivkh schoolbooks or a complete list of slogans for the May 1, 1935, celebration in Rybnoe, northern Sakhalin, to the devotion with which the Nivkhi watched the Czechoslovak soap opera *Suburban Hospital* in 1990. Chronology provides a loose structure for this exercise: following an introduction and a socioeconomic snapshot of Nivkh life in 1990, the bulk of the text reports on the social history of colonial life as reflected from a number of perspectives (with those speaking in the voice of the Nivkhi among the more weakly documented) and the local impact of various colonial policies during the imperial Russian and the early, Stalinist, postwar, Brezhnevite, and more recent periods of Soviet rule.

If read as a Soviet area studies work, this book is a delight. It is remarkably free of the crude Cold War, modernizationist, or market-salvationist dogma that cripples much of the tradition in Soviet and post-Soviet area studies scholarship. The book also escapes what is aspiring to replace those, an equally *Verstehen*-impaired, postmodern attitude of cynicism. If the purpose of this effort is to avoid such ideological ballast, it is quite an achievement. It is particularly successful in providing evidence to show how any monolithic image of colonialism and of Soviet colonial policies is a gross oversimplification (hence the subtitle’s reference to perestroikas in the plural). Read in the context of recent theoretical work on the substantive, comparative-historical poverty of modernizationism—an issue raised by the material but not quite addressed by the text—however, the reader is left, like a Chekhov character, with an odd, gloomy sense of a subtle longing for something more breathtaking.

*German Nationalism and Religious Conflict: Culture, Ideology, Politics, 1870–1914.* By Helmut Walser Smith. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995. Pp. xiii+271. \$39.50.

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Theoretical work in the politics of identity and the creation and reproduction of community have, in recent years, provided social scientists with

a most important interdisciplinary forum for the exchange of methodological discussion and research. In particular, classic as well as more recent contributors (e.g., Clifford Geertz, Victor Turner, Benedict Anderson, and Etienne Balibar) have revitalized the discussion of national identity. Increasingly, historians have demonstrated a keen interest in this broad literary corpus, and many have produced innovative and thoughtful work informed by it. The monograph reviewed here represents a welcome contribution to the discourse and an additional impetus to the integration of this theoretical literature into investigations of social, cultural, and political development as societies face the strains introduced or aggravated by modernization.

Helmut Walser Smith's focus is the tensions that emerged in the process of constructing—influenced by Anderson, he employs the concept “imagining”—the German nation-state from its unification in 1871 to the emergence of a provisional consensus with the outbreak of the First World War. Smith places his work squarely in the dynamic of Roman Catholic versus Protestant confessional conflict and its relationship to national sentiment. Although “official nationalists” advocated a shared sense of Germanic identity on the basis of common language, common history, and the unifying element of Hohenzollern dynastic rule, Smith argues that highly politicized Protestant and Catholic agitators, intellectuals, as well as broad elements of the faithful harbored—indeed, fostered—confessionally constructed memories of civil conflict dating from the Reformation.

Smith explores this dynamic, introducing a concept of popular nationalism consisting of two distinct categories. The first he designates as an *integral* tradition of nationalism, whose proponents, in the case of Germany, claimed to speak for the Protestant majority. Committed to the “absolute purity of the citizen’s commitment of the nation,” integral nationalists envisioned a community in which “the common bonds of language, high culture, tradition, and blood” provided an alleged source of strength and unity, an organic body engaged in a Darwinian struggle with other nations, incapable of tolerating any provincialism “whether cultural, economic, or political” that “represented [an] intermediary attachment between the individual citizen and the nation” (p. 9). The second category is that of a *romantic* expression of popular nationalism, in Germany associated with those who argued that nations (conceived of as “communities of language and culture” [p. 9]) could coexist peacefully with one another. Romantic nationalists, whom Smith associates with German Catholics intent upon defending their Germanic identity from their position as a confessional minority, advanced that different subtraditions within a national community should be tolerated and nurtured. Such liberality did not extend to all subcultures, however, as general Catholic attitudes towards Jews and social democrats manifested amply. Smith’s model offer these two expressions of popular nationalism as “ideal types to be plotted on opposite poles of an axis,” although he acknowledges that specific representations of “national ideology usually

fell between the two poles and often shared elements of both positions” (p. 10).

An impressive series of case studies, based on painstakingly thorough research into a wide range of German federal, municipal, and church archives, forms the body of Smith’s narrative. From Bismarck’s repressive measures against the Catholic Church inside Germany, through a rigorous examination of the collective memory of religious conflict and its mobilization by Protestants and Catholics in politicized confessional organizations, to a careful social history of participation in religious rites and the trend towards secularization, Smith explores the tension between official and competing popular nationalisms within the parameters of domestic politics and issues of colonial expansion and international security. Regarded suspiciously by the fiercely integralist Protestant League, German Catholics found themselves caught between their ultramontanist and the exclusive allegiance to Germany demanded by their anti-Catholic detractors. Smith concludes with a deft investigation of the political and symbolic complexities of religious/cultural and nationality conflict in Polish-settled areas within the Reich, where German Catholics were forced to choose between their national identity and solidarity with a coreligious minority in regions distinguished by fervent anti-Slavic sentiment.

Despite the strength of Smith’s work, three points of criticism must be noted. First, he states that religious conflict represented a central element in “the general process of modernization” and that in Germany between 1871–1914, as in other societies during the late 19th and 20th centuries, the principal dilemma was one of “national unity in a polity with a divided memory” (p. 235). Other case studies, including contemporary examples such as Ireland, the Balkans, or Afghanistan, would confirm the author’s point, yet his understanding of the category of modernity and the modernization process are implied rather than stated. Second, Smith’s working concept of ideology is underdeveloped, reduced to a rather vaguely suggested sum total of the components of imagined solidarity. Finally, a stronger theoretical stand in the question of the social reproduction of competing cultural discourses would have been welcome. These criticisms notwithstanding, the author offers a valuable contribution to the study of national identity formation that historical sociologists and historians alike should find suggestive for their own work.

*Democracy from Below: New Social Movements and the Political System in West Germany.* By Ruud Koopmans. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995. Pp. xii+282. \$60.00.

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How can one explain the rise and development of individual movements, the dynamics—the strength, intensity, and political effectiveness—of