Germany's Second Reich: Portraits and Pathways by James Retallack (review)

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erfordert. Die "harte Fügung" setzt Hellingrath als zukunftsweisend von der "glatten Fügung" ab, die das Wort dem syntaktischen Gesamtzusammenhang unterordnet, sich nur als bloßen Verweis auf den vorgeordneten, gedanklichen Inhalt und Träger gefühlshaft-bildlicher Assoziationen betrachtet und besonders in der überkommenen Dichtung der Romantik vorkommt. Die Entdeckung der "harten Fügung" dagegen liiert Hölderlin mit der Überwindung der Sprachkrise um 1900 und den Montagetechniken der europäischen Avantgarde, wobei die Deutung der Hölderlinschen Sprachverfremdung als Zeichen des Wahnsinns in positiv-poetische Leistung umgewertet werden kann (Jürgen Brokoff, Joachim Jacob, Gunilla Eschenbach, Gerhard Kurz, Jutta Müller-Tamm, Yvonne Wübben).

Den Abschluss des Bandes bilden eine ausführliche Dokumentation von Hellingraths Verhältnis zu Hugo von Hofmannsthal (Klaus E. Bohnenkamp) sowie die Edition von Hellingraths Referat über Georges Verlaine-Übertragungen aus seiner Studentenzeit (Maik Bozza). Bei mehreren Aufsätzen, wohl bedingt durch das ursprüngliche Format als Tagungsvorträge, ergeben sich Überschneidungen und Wiederholungen, die man vielleicht hätte kürzen können. Auch fehlt, wie leider bei Veröffentlichungen aus dem deutschsprachigen Raum so oft, ein gerade bei der hier dargebotenen Themenfülle nützliches Sachwortregister. Zudem hätte vielleicht eine synoptische Zeittafel zu Hellingraths Biographie und den zahlreichen Zeitströmungen und Persönlichkeiten die chronologische Orientierung erleichtert. Aber das sind verhältnismäßig unerhebliche Mängel im Vergleich zu den Verdiensten dieses Bandes. Er dokumentiert die nachhaltige Wichtigkeit Hellingraths für das Verständnis der poetisch richtungsweisenden wie politisch verstörenden Gegenwart Hölderlins in der klassischen Moderne und europäischen Avantgarde auf anschauliche und eindringliche Weise.

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Germany's Second Reich: Portraits and Pathways. By James Retallack. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015. Pp. 347. Cloth $85.00. ISBN 978-1442650572

James Retallack is one of the foremost historians of imperial Germany. He has written important studies on the *Kaiserreich*, regional history of Saxony, elections, and political conservatism. In this essay collection, Retallack sets out to "rethink real or alleged discontinuities" in Germany's modern history (xi). He finds that many recent histories are "off-kilter, skewed toward a more positive appraisal of the Second Reich than the historical evidence warrants" (xiv). In eleven essays, Retallack examines some of the most important of these debates about domestic politics and some new sources that one might use to reappraise them. He offers an engaging and insightful look at the effect of Otto von Bismarck's methods of unification and subsequent

governance on German society and the development of its political culture. This volume is a sprightly, critical introduction to the recent historiography of imperial Germany's domestic politics.

The first chapter is a concise summary of the Bismarckian period, which emphasizes its regional diversity, continuing religious, class, and cultural divisions, and the consolidation of a type of nationalism that by 1890 had outgrown the limits in which Bismarck had tried to contain it. Retallack concludes that by Bismarck's departure, Germans "had diminished themselves. They had done so by making existing cleavages of wealth and rank even deeper, by attacking the rights of minority groups, by driving a wedge between the working classes and the rest of society, [and] by compromising the prerogatives of parliament" (30–31). These techniques of repressive governance "encumbered" the future by blocking "parliamentarization, democratization, and a tolerance of diversity" (31). A lengthy bibliography, organized into rubrics, will help readers focus on the recent literature and controversies behind this conclusion.

The rest of the volume explores different aspects of imperial Germany's political culture. Along the way, readers will be entertained by a graceful tour of the diplomats—British, American, and German—who provided such helpful observations on regional political life; a close reading of the satirical description of Saxony by Nathaniel Hawthorne's son, Julian; an insider's look at how a major documentary and photo database available to the public was assembled by the German Historical Institute; a nice appraisal of the "moral universe predicated on domination, violence, and struggle" (188–189) that united those arch foes Bismarck and Friedrich Engels; an appreciative remembrance of Ralf Dahrendorf's classic, *Society and Democracy in Germany* (1967); and a series of analytical sketches on Prussia's occupation of Saxony in 1866, the relations between the two preeminent Conservative Party leaders Ernst von Heydebrand und der Lasa and Kuno Westarp, and three analyses of voting and its repression since 1871.

The consequences, intended and unintended, produced by the simultaneity of a democratic suffrage in an authoritarian system were many. Retallack nicely summarizes the pact with various devils that Conservative Party leaders made in order to garner votes: Heydebrand's by adopting Pan-German language in 1911, though he afterwards strove unsuccessfully to mute their wild wartime annexationism; and Westarp's by applauding the fact that the Conservatives had helped to change "the 'Jewish Question' into a matter of race" (224), but who struggled in vain to distinguish conservatives from antisemites thereafter. The radicalism of Pan-Germans and antisemites delegitimized traditional conservatism, which seemed timid and old-fashioned by comparison. A chapter on "electioneering without democracy" examines three interconnected issues: "exclusionary strategies targeting socialists and Jews, efforts to hold back the tide of democracy, and mendacious campaign tactics that succeeded in turning the weapon of universal manhood suffrage against

revolutionaries and reformers" (240). The latter happened because of the "spiral of escalating radicalism" (247) unleashed by electoral campaigns operating inside an authoritarian system. Retallack spiritedly defends "authoritarian" as an accurate term to define imperial Germany's constitutional setup and the kind of civil society that thrived inside it (261–265). In the end, his data show that democratization actually hindered parliamentarization, rather than furthering it (265).

Retallack reminds us that there was much broader support for a coup d'état from above to rid Germany of the national democratic suffrage and reduce even further the weak power of the Reichstag. Saxony's king, apparently other royal colleagues, and at least two post-Bismarckian chancellors favored such a move in principle but believed that it could be successful only if done decisively. They recognized that Kaiser Wilhelm II, known to some as Wilhelm the Sudden, was not the man for the job. That, rather than genuine opposition, was why they hesitated. Their fallback position—"coup d'état on the instalment [*sic*] plan" (309)—was to make suffrage laws more regressive so as to hinder growing popular support for Social Democracy. They were successful in many municipalities and in Saxony, Hamburg, Anhalt, and Braunschweig. Worse, repressive measures of this type met with widespread approval among the bourgeoisie and their various parties.

Retallack's essays are a convincing rejoinder to the rosy revisionism of recent historiography—convincing not just because of Retallack's erudition, his sources, and his many examples but because he is neither a drummer for the Sonderweg thesis nor an opponent of cultural, transnational, or other types of historiographical approaches—indeed, such approaches are quite in evidence in this essay volume. But he knows the politics of the Kaiserreich too well to overlook its baleful legacies for politics, governance, and society.

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Murder & Counterrevolution in Mexico: The Eyewitness Account of German Ambassador Paul Von Hintze, 1912–1914. Edited by Friedrich E. Schuler. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015. Pp. xi + 281. Paper $30.00. ISBN 978-803249639.

Scholars have paid little attention to Germany's interests in Latin America before the eruption of World War I. Schuler's book of primary source material is hopefully one of many that will fill this gap. It focuses on Admiral Paul von Hintze, whom Kaiser Wilhelm II appointed as ambassador to Mexico during the Mexican Revolution. Schuler translated three major sources: diplomatic daily reports, Hintze's diary focusing on the coup against President Francisco Madero, and a second diary concerning Victoriano Huerta's last months in office. One of the strengths of Hintze's account