

Book Reviews

fundamental to Freud's later work. She also stresses the importance of Freud's six-month stint in 1883 as junior houseman in Theodor Meynert's Institute of Cerebral Anatomy. In his teaching at that time, and in his *Psychiatrie* (1884), Meynert placed great weight on the first and third principles of Darwin's *Expression of the emotions* which Freud was to apply in *Studies on hysteria* (1893–95). Brücke, the third of Freud's great Vienna teachers, is downgraded from his primacy as scientific mentor of Freud in favour of Claus. Ritvo presents Brücke as a physiologist neither particularly averse to, nor particularly interested in Darwin. Brücke's importance for Freud, she argues, is that his Institute provided a suitable environment in which Freud, in the best Darwinian way, could adapt and evolve as a scientist.

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MICHAEL BURLEIGH and WOLFGANG WIPPERMANN, *The racial state: Germany 1933–1945*, Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. xvi, 286, illus., £45, \$29.95 (hardback, 0–521–39114–8), £12.95 (paperback, 0–521–39802–9).

The central historiographical issue for historians of modern Germany is probably the question of uniqueness. Was the historical trajectory leading to the Holocaust distinctive, or does it share most features in common with that of other industrialized nations? In the case of the Third Reich, some historians have argued that National Socialism brought about structural changes in German society which were similar to “modernizing” trends elsewhere, while others have insisted that the regime was distinctively racist and reactionary. Burleigh and Wippermann declare themselves firmly in the latter camp. Their aim in this book is to demonstrate that those Nazi social policies which superficially appear to have been “modern” were in fact prompted by racist and altogether unmodern aims.

In Part I the authors discuss the historiographical literature which has dealt with the “uniqueness” question, summarize the history of racist theory and eugenics in Germany, and outline the Party and state agencies involved with Nazi racial policy after 1933. The chapters comprising Part II sketch in depressing detail the ways in which three social groups were systematically persecuted: Jews, gypsies, and those individuals thought to be hereditarily unfit (homosexuals, the mentally ill and “anti-socials”). Part III shifts away from Nazi racial policy in order to reveal the racist-eugenic strand running through even general social policy (e.g., towards youth and women).

The book is well-written and richly illustrated, and although its discussion of the German eugenics movement is neither extensive nor especially novel, it offers a useful account of Nazi racial policies and their impact upon everyday life in the Third Reich. The book's main thesis, however, is strangely undeveloped. Although the authors wish to refute the claim that Nazism was a “modernizing” force, their failure to define what they mean by “modern” undermines their attempt to show convincingly that Nazi policies were thoroughly *unmodern*. Alternatively, they might have begun by outlining those competing historical accounts which they reject, indicating which Nazi social policies are alleged by others to have been “modern”, and then showing that such policies were instead inherently racist and reactionary. This route, too, is not pursued. Although they often seem reluctant to acknowledge it, the authors, in fact, show that the Third Reich was both a “racial state” *and* a modernizing one. While the *aims* behind various Nazi policies were racial-eugenic, the actual policies often resembled those in democratic countries (e.g., welfare measures, meritocratic procedures in industry, equal educational opportunity). Nevertheless, if one discounts the (modernizing) consequences of Nazi social policy and focuses merely upon the (eugenic) aims behind it, are the authors justified in claiming that the Nazi state was “a singular regime without precedent or parallel”? I would be happier with this conclusion, had the authors demonstrated that the aims informing comparable social policy in other countries were quite distinct from the Nazis'. Had they attempted to do this, however, the authors might have discovered that eugenic concerns also shaped “modern” legislation elsewhere, not least in the Scandinavian welfare states.

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