

THE KAISERREICH RECAST? CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN MODERN GERMAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

As every student of the origins of the First World War knows, the Anglo-German naval rivalry was crucial in exacerbating political tensions in all of Europe in the decade and a half before 1914. British and German naval experts suspiciously counted cruisers and battleships, and their obsessions reflected popular perceptions in both countries.¹ There is an unavoidable irony in the fact that the historical interpretation of the German Kaiserreich, so colored by this conflict, is at the center of a new Anglo-German rivalry, which pits leading representatives of a post-war generation of German scholars against English critics, trained in the late 1960s. Perhaps history does repeat itself. Of course, the proliferation of monographs and articles does not have the ominous overtones of an arms race, and battles of the footnotes can never lead to a shooting war. Moreover, this time around, roles have been reversed, and an English response challenges the front-runner position of the Germans. But the acrimony on both sides of the confrontation reflects the importance of this discussion within the community of German historians. This essay critically presents both sides of the debate, attempts to negotiate between them, and identifies a broad range of concerns common to both, at present obscured by the exaggeration of what divides them. Underlying the differences which do separate the main protagonists are important questions about the nature, form and function of collective action and the political articulation of socio-economic interests in modern industrial societies. Thus, the implications of the controversy extend beyond Germany's borders to all who study those points at which society and politics meet.²

I. The Peculiarities of the Germans

An understanding of the present debate requires a brief review of modern German historiography, at least since the early 1960s.³ A crucial moment in the development of this historiography was, of course, the appearance of Fritz Fischer's *Germany's Aims in the First World War*. Fischer's subject was the growth of rabid nationalism in the Wilhelmine period which could explain Germany's eagerness to go to war in 1914, but as he readily admitted, he also intended his book "as a contribution towards the problem of continuity of German policy from the First World War to the Second."⁴ From the perspective he offered, the transitions from Kaiserreich to Weimar, from Weimar to Third Reich, represented no major discontinuities. The "uncanny gulf" which Friedrich Meinecke and others sought to place between Hitler's "demonic self and the world about him" evaporated in the bright sun of Fischer's analysis.⁵

The story of the "Fischer controversy" is too familiar to bear recapitulation in the present context. What is important for our discussion is the fact that Fischer's emphasis on the long-term origins of the First World War, and by implication, the Second, initiated a wave of research into the history of the Kaiserreich. From this work, a full agenda of fateful German peculiarities emerged, a distinct *Sonderweg*, leading from the creation of the German nation to 1933.⁶ Germany had been unified by a military-political "revolution from above," not popular revolution from below. This underlined the historic importance of an authoritarian state

(*Obrigkeitsstaat*), dominated by conservative east Elbian estate owners, the Junkers, and their allies, "feudalized" heavy industrialists. Bismarck permanently crippled parliament by concentrating political decision-making in the conservative civil service and the Prussian-dominated Federal Council (*Bundesrat*). Economic interests thus expressed themselves not through political parties but through pressure groups. The "marriage of rye and iron," the turn to protection in 1878/79, galvanized the agrarian-industrial alliance, and vows were confirmed in the *Sammlungspolitik* of Miquel and Bülow. The middle classes, deprived of any real political power and unwilling to fight for it, succumbed to the rule of "preindustrial" elites. The petty bourgeoisie mobilized readily behind "throne and altar," accepting promises of protection from a growing industrial working class, a corporative alternative to democracy, and a "place in the sun," to be secured by a powerful fleet. A late but rapid industrialization generated severe social tensions, and no parliamentary institutions were there to defuse them. The culmination of all these forces was Germany's aggressive drive for territorial expansion, particularly into eastern Europe. An incomplete revolution in 1918-19 could not jettison the baggage of the past, and 1933 became another revolution from above in a nation with a long history of failure at establishing liberal, democratic institutions.

The catalogue was not entirely new. Indeed, many elements in this description of the *Sonderweg* had been set pieces in German historiography at least since the 1920s.⁷ Conservative Weimar historians had cared little for the sordid business of economic interests, but they recognized Germany's lack of conformity with the pattern set by western, parliamentary democracies, particularly England. Of course, what for them constituted German virtues became for Fischer, German vices. Fischer's work complemented the efforts of intellectual historians and political scientists who, after 1945, had critically scrutinized elements of Germany's "divergence from the West."⁸ He took this critique an important step further by sketching out a material basis for this history of ideas and institutions.

Certainly, Fischer's move to stand on its head a conservative historiographical tradition which glorified the *Sonderweg* marked a break with the past. Methodologically, however, his approach was far less innovative. Like those he criticized, his attention was focused at the top of the social order on decision-making elites. To be sure, for Fischer, men now had economic interests, not simply abstract desires for national security and political power. On this score, Fischer learned much from Eckart Kehr, a left-wing Weimar historian who had died in emigration in the United States in 1933. Kehr's major work on the naval-building program at the turn of the century had challenged the Rankean "primacy of foreign policy" with an alternative, the "primacy of domestic policy." From this new perspective, foreign policy decision-making was located securely in the context of domestic political struggles.⁹ Still, for the most part, neither Fischer nor the most enterprising of his followers moved below the level of political and economic elites. With the exception of socialist workers, most Germans seemed passively to accept the decisions of conservative protectors of the status quo.¹⁰

The publication of Hans Rosenberg's *Grosse Depression und Bismarckzeit* in 1967 advanced this reexamination of the Kaiserreich immeasurably.¹¹ In his account, great men and conservative elites did not disappear, but they were now confronted by structural economic changes beyond their control or understanding. At center stage in Rosenberg's account was the "Great Depression," the years of declining prices and low rates of economic growth, 1873-1896, wedged in between the prosperous periods, 1848-73 and 1896-1914.

The “Great Depression” constituted half of a “long wave,” those periods of roughly twenty-five years of economic growth followed by a phase of retardation equally long, first discerned in the economies of western industrial countries by the Russian economist, N.D. Kondratieff.

Rosenberg proposed the “long wave” as a possible framework for understanding social and political phenomena in the early history of the Kaiserreich. From this perspective, key parts of the *Sonderweg* took on new meaning. The political bankruptcy of German liberalism could be traced to the apparent bankruptcy of liberal economic theory, following the onset of the depression in 1873. The radicalization of the organized working class movement and its commitment to the Marxism of the 1891 Erfurt Program reflected not only the bitter legacy of the anti-socialist laws, but the firsthand experience of economic crises which seemed to justify the predictions of capitalism’s demise. The “marriage of rye and iron” was clearly linked to the first in a series of recessions, and agriculture’s continued cries for tariff increases came in the wake of later downturns. The frantic search for colonial markets was a response to reductions in international trade. Moreover, colonial enthusiasm was seen as the means to divert attention from sources of domestic discontent. The susceptibility of lower middle-class groups — peasants, artisans and retailers in particular — to anti-semitic appeals with strong “proto-fascist” overtones reflected the attempt by the old *Mittelstand* to fathom the economic crisis. Even intellectual trends appeared in a new light. Cultural pessimism mirrored years of apprehension and uncertainty, a general sense of gloom, shaped in turn by the ailing economy.

Rosenberg’s work was completely consistent with the studies undertaken by Fischer and his followers. By providing a structural, economic dimension to the Kaiserreich, he did not discard the *Sonderweg*; he gave it depth. His book also resounded with other key elements in the intellectual climate of the late 1960s: the revival of interest in the best German tradition of historical sociology in the work of Marx, Weber and the Frankfurt School, and the importation into the German academy of other strands of sociological theory, particularly modernization theory;¹² the neo-Marxist discussion of alternatives to State Monopoly Capitalism, the theory offered by the brand of Marxism-Leninism which West German historians could find across their eastern border;¹³ and the demands of the student movement for innovative approaches to the origins of fascism. This was a heady political and intellectual combination. Its profound historiographical impact was evident in the mountain of scholarship which it generated within a very few years.¹⁴

By the early 1970s, it was time to review the state of the art and move toward synthesis. The strands of a redefined Imperial Germany were pulled together in Hans-Ulrich Wehler’s textbook study, *Das deutsche Kaiserreich*.¹⁵ Building on the work of Rosenberg and others who had emphasized the weighty legacy of the Kaiserreich and elements of continuity from the last third of the nineteenth century to 1933, Wehler made explicit his intent to identify the sources of German fascism. He warned against any “naive, reductionist equation”¹⁶ of economic change and political outcomes, but he still could fully endorse Hans Rothfels’ judgment that “‘however long and circuitous,’” the “fateful *Sonderweg* of the Germans” led from Bismarck to Hitler.¹⁷ In Wehler’s account, the path had few bends. Rosenberg’s outlines became a description of pathology. The infant Kaiserreich had suffered through a depressed and unhappy childhood, dominated by an authoritarian father. Even after 1896, a prosperous adolescence was not enough to undo the ravages of youth or loosen the repressive

mechanisms of “preindustrial” elites. A cowardly bourgeois adult remained incapable of overthrowing the “pre-industrial” father, succumbing rather to abnormal “feudalization.” The trauma of Weimar, though never fully described by Wehler, was foreshadowed in the Kaiserreich, and represented a recapitulation of many of these youthful experiences.

By the time Wehler’s book appeared, the new perspectives on the Kaiserreich which it summarized were so clearly defined that a one-time revisionism could be heralded as a “new orthodoxy.”¹⁸ Wehler’s *Kaiserreich* was not without its German critics. Those sympathetic to his general approach nonetheless charged that the choice of 1933 as a vantage point potentially obscured positive elements in Germany’s past.¹⁹ They warned that Wehler had overstated his case. Structures became straitjackets, robbing political struggle in the Kaiserreich of all its dynamism. Moreover, by passing judgment on the past, Wehler ran the risk of replicating the gravest errors of the apologetic historiographical tradition which he so forcefully rejected.²⁰ From the conservative establishment came an allergic response to the Marxist overtones of the “new orthodoxy” and its structural approach to political history.²¹ But however one viewed these developments, it was clear that the level of discourse about the Kaiserreich and the nineteenth century origins of National Socialism had been shifted to a far more sophisticated, critical level, and driven irreversibly into new directions.

**II. Once the land of poets, seers and sages,
Who enchant us with their deathless pages**

. . .
**Now the Prussian *Junker*, blind with fury,
Claims to be God’s counsel, judge and jury.²²**

This verse from *Punch*, written at the height of the pre-World War I Anglo-German rivalry, comes close to summarizing the critique of Wehler and the “new orthodoxy” which has emerged in the last seven or eight years. The criticism of Wehler’s *Kaiserreich* and other parts of the “new orthodoxy” offered by a number of English historians — particularly Richard Evans, Geoff Eley and David Blackbourn — goes well beyond the internal German discussion, and it is a tribute to the influence of the “new orthodoxy” that it can now generate a “new revisionism.” *Society and Politics in Wilhelmine Germany*, a collection of essays edited by Evans, aptly introduces the vanguard of the English attack. In his introduction to the volume, Evans offers a critique of the “new orthodoxy” which can be found with variations in the work of Eley and Blackbourn.²³ While they are careful to acknowledge their debts to Rosenberg, Wehler and others among the group which Eley has labelled the “Kehrites,” their principle business is critique.²⁴ According to Evans, despite its claims to leave behind the Rankean “primacy of foreign policy,”

The new approach to German history still concentrates on high politics . . . Political process, changes and influences are perceived as flowing downwards — though now from the elites who controlled the state rather than from the socially vaguer entity of the State itself — not upwards from the people. The actions and beliefs of the masses are explained in terms of the influence exerted on them by manipulative elites at the top of society.

This perspective, charges Evans, is distorting. It places too great an emphasis on elite groups. It overemphasizes the importance of Prussia and neglects regions not subject to Prussian hegemony. Particularly misleading is its emphasis on Germany’s “preindustrial” past. Evans, Eley and Blackbourn reject this category

as capable of explaining German susceptibility to proto-fascist appeals or Germany's "flawed" development. The misperceptions of the "new orthodoxy," they charge, come from writing German history backwards from 1933. The Imperial period should be understood on its own terms, not as the prehistory of the Third Reich. Through English eyes, argues Evans, these shortcomings of the "new orthodoxy" are immediately apparent. English historians have learned the art of history from "below" and "have come increasingly to emphasize the importance of the grassroots of politics and the everyday life and experience of ordinary people." Evans reassures us that these concerns do not mean the exclusion of politics, but rather the enlargement of politics to include its intersection with society. "When the history of Wilhelmine Germany is approached from below, in this way, familiar features appear in unfamiliar light."²⁵

Eley and Blackbourn, in two lengthy essays published in German translation in 1980, have taken these points one step further. In *Mythen deutscher Geschichtsschreibung*²⁶ they contend that the peculiarities of the Germans are not so peculiar after all. Their starting point is the critical scrutiny of what they see as a cornerstone of much recent writing in German history in general and the "new orthodoxy" in particular, the "myth" of the failed bourgeois revolution of 1848, that fatal "sin of omission," as Blackbourn calls it, of modern German history. In their presentation, this interpretation wrongly emphasizes the revolution's defeat as central to understanding the subsequent absence of a liberal movement capable of pushing for parliamentary, democratic reform and the acquiescence of a "feudalized" bourgeoisie to an authoritarian regime. Behind this analysis, they charge, is a normative conception of capitalist development, an ideal vision in which industrial expansion and the development of parliamentary institutions go hand-in-hand, and in which the industrial bourgeoisie has certain prescribed tasks. Blackbourn and Eley argue that from this myopic perspective, Germany is wrongly measured on the yardstick of the English experience, where political and economic change allegedly proceeded in the proper fashion. Indeed, at the heart of their critique is an attack on modernization theory which they see as infecting the advocates of the "new orthodoxy" as well as many other misguided historians of modern Germany. If anything is "flawed" for these British authors, it is not German development but this theory. Viewed critically, according to Eley and Blackbourn, it offers a sadly distorted picture of England, and only compounds confusion if used as a standard of comparison for developments in Germany. In its stead, they advocate a Marxist perspective which treats in a comparative framework different forms of national adaptation to and bourgeois hegemony within a capitalist order. From this vantage point, they conclude that by the late nineteenth century, the *forms* of bourgeois domination in England and Germany may have differed. More importantly, however, the *fact* of bourgeois domination was in both cases undeniable. With one sweep, the authors thus claim to vanquish not only benighted adherents of modernization theory, but also, implicitly, any advocates of a teleological, tunnel-vision Marxism which allows no room for national differences and varieties of forms of bourgeois domination within the capitalist order. Theirs is a potent one-two punch.

Evans, Blackbourn and Eley also raise important questions about the model of political mobilization which underlies the "new orthodoxy." The politics of Wehler's *Kaiserreich* are determined by a limited number of actors: conservative elites, the defenders of the status quo, on the one hand, and on the other, the socialist enemy, left politically powerless by the impotence of parliament, caught

between revolutionary ideology and reformist practice, and “negatively integrated” into the Kaiserreich. According to this scenario, as it is summarized by Eley and Blackbourn, bourgeois liberals are conspicuous only by their absence and their failure to define a democratic middle. Their natural constituents, the lower middle classes, find no political home. Unable to define their own position, they are at best organized into narrowly sectional interest groups. Threatened by the social dislocation of rapid socio-economic change, they seek protection from the red peril, and in the case of artisans, peasants and small-scale retailers, from the encroachments of a capitalist market on their outdated forms of production. They become willing recruits in the campaigns of proto-fascist generals. This pattern of easy manipulation of the petty bourgeoisie in the Kaiserreich foreshadows developments in Weimar. The emphasis on the lower middle class as overzealous and over-represented backers of National Socialism is not particularly novel, but the “new orthodoxy” locates proto-fascistic tendencies among the lower middle classes in the Kaiserreich.²⁷ Particularly for Eley and Blackbourn, this leaves the petty bourgeoisie faceless, without a voice of its own.²⁸ It is their project to define its physiognomy, to give it speech.²⁹

III. The View From Below?

Evans, Eley and Blackbourn are hardly uninformed critics. Their extensive original research into the Kaiserreich has yielded a string of important monographs and piles of journal articles. Evans has added gender to Wilhelmine politics in his studies of the bourgeois women’s movement and the organization of women in the SPD. His work represents an important addition to our understanding of groups marginalized socially, economically and politically in the Kaiserreich, and until very recently, marginalized by historians of the Kaiserreich as well. In his study of the Center Party in Württemberg, Blackbourn focuses his attention on another group marginalized in Wilhelmine society, Catholics. Eley’s work on the German right has offered an important reinterpretation of Miquel’s *Sammlungspolitik* and in addition, has outlined a decidedly new perspective on the nature of German politics after Bismarck. The combined efforts of these three English authors go far toward filling the research agenda implicit in their criticism of the “new orthodoxy.” In order to assess just *how far*, it is important briefly to review their findings.

Evans’ study of bourgeois feminism, *The Feminist Movement in Germany 1894-1933*,³⁰ is primarily an institutional history of the *Bund deutscher Frauenvereine* (BdF). Created in 1894, it was a national umbrella organization which included a broad spectrum of women’s organizations, and Evans describes its leadership, programs and policies. Before its establishment, organized feminism, according to Evans, “Like the liberalism which inspired it . . . had been bludgeoned into submission by the successive defeats of 1848, 1866, 1871 and 1878.” (p. 30) Central in Evans’ analysis is also a highly restrictive Prussian Law of Association, established in 1851, which excluded women from political participation, and limited their activities to ostensibly non-political associations. Outside of Prussia, opportunities for greater activity existed, and Evans uses sources from Hamburg to outline developments there. “Radical” feminists organized around the fight for an expanded suffrage and an end to police restriction of prostitution. For Evans, this clearly represented a move beyond a narrow concern with social welfare reform and a limited vision of individual emancipation.³¹ The Hamburg “radicals,” joined by similarly minded sisters from Berlin, were able to exercise a determining influence in the early history of the

BdF.³² However, they confronted opposition from those “moderates” who feared that suffrage reform for women might threaten the class-based Prussian franchise. Divisive as well were thorny questions of sexual reform, in particular, proposals for the abolition of Section 218 of the Reich constitution which prohibited abortion. It was the debate over Section 218 which unified the opposition of moderates and conservatives at the BdF conference in 1908. This coincided with a liberalization of the Prussian Law of Association which encouraged many conservative bourgeois women’s groups to affiliate with the BdF, swelling membership ranks with large numbers of moderate and conservative women.³³ In control of a majority, moderates were able to defeat the “radicals” and assume control over the BdF. Following the “radical collapse,” the organization moved steadily rightward.

The war only deepened divisions in the women’s movement as pacifist supporters of domestic reform confronted conservative opponents of an extension of the franchise. In Weimar, a revived BdF cast off all radical appearances, and the “Bitter End” of the bourgeois women’s movement was characterized by the amplification of pre-1914 right-wing tendencies — an emphasis on women’s role in family life, a rejection of support for equal rights, a preference for a *Volksgemeinschaft* over the divisiveness of parliamentary politics. This leads Evans to conclude that “Five years of Nazi rule did more in some ways to help professional women than a decade of feminist pressure in the Weimar Republic.”³⁴

In Evans’ analysis, a major problem for bourgeois feminists in the Kaiserreich was the unbridgeable gap between the BdF and the SPD, the one political party which consistently supported demands for social and political reforms to improve the status of women. The SPD’s attitude toward the “woman question,” often implicitly in the background of Evans’ treatment of the bourgeois women’s movement, is at the center of *Sozialdemokratie und Frauenemanzipation im deutschen Kaiserreich*.³⁵ Here too, Evans’ approach is largely institutional. He begins with theory, tracing the SPD’s commitment to women’s emancipation in August Bebel’s *Woman Under Socialism*. In contrast to bourgeois feminists, Bebel saw capitalism, not men, as the source of women’s oppression, and the “woman question” could be understood only as part of the “social question.” Theoretical commitment, however, often diverged from political practice, and in Evans’ account, women in the SPD consistently confronted the covert and overt opposition of their male comrades. They also faced both the same restrictive laws of association which hampered the political organization of bourgeois women, and until 1890, the even more oppressive sanctions of the anti-socialist laws. Evans places particular emphasis on the role of leadership in the SPD women’s movement, and in his narrative, the “era” of Clara Zetkin (1896-1908) brought light into this darkness. Zetkin’s belief in a socialist revolution as the only answer to the “woman question” paralleled the general radical mood within the party leadership at the turn of the century. Her ability to maintain her position was predicated on the consistency of her program with that of the entire party. As the party moved more in the direction of reformist practice, Zetkin found herself out of step. The ascension of Luisa Zietz, politically within the party’s “orthodox ‘left center’” (p. 163) thus mirrored the general evolution of the SPD in the decade before the war. Zietz was also an extremely effective organizer, and by 1914, nearly 175,000 women had joined the SPD, fully 16% of party membership.

Although precise breakdowns of the occupational backgrounds of women members are not available, Evans speculates convincingly that the overwhelming

majority of female comrades were not employed outside the home and were wives of SPD husbands. Contrary to socialist prophecies that women's work in social production would heighten their political consciousness and bring them to the party, Evans argues that working women did not find their way into the SPD. The organization of the wives of SPD men, however, represented an important part of a distinctly socialist subculture in the Kaiserreich as the SPD evolved from a "working class movement into a movement of working class families." Evans suggests that socialist husbands and wives found themselves engaged in the renegotiation of gender roles within socialist families. He speculates that at this level socialist paternalism was subject to significant challenges, and gender relations within proletarian families, at least SPD families, were no vague shadows of their bourgeois counterparts.³⁶

The war marked the end of any unified socialist women's movement, and by 1918, socialist women had split in as many directions as the party. Even after the revolution, they continued to confront the lukewarm support for suffrage reform from their male comrades. Only the pressure of the revolutionary "masses" guaranteed that women would finally get the vote, in Evans' analysis, an expression of a "new . . . political balance of power between the sexes," dating from the Kaiserreich.

The general ground which Evans covers is not entirely unknown,³⁷ but there is no question that his research clearly presents important outlines of organized feminism in the Kaiserreich. Eley does not set out to illuminate a neglected dimension of German history, and his book, *Reshaping the German Right*, pushes into a field already overpopulated. He does not have to discover a German right. Rather, he undertakes to redefine it. In the process, he resolutely chisels away at several of the most important pillars of the "new orthodoxy." Eley builds on earlier research in which he critically reevaluated Kehr's work on the naval-building program, arguing that grassroots support for the fleet had decidedly anti-agrarian overtones. He also develops his critique of "social imperialism" as a description of colonial policy in the Kaiserreich, a direct assault on a central thesis in Wehler's analysis. The association of colonial enthusiasm with industrial expansion and the implicit rejection of pro-agrarian policies did nothing to divert attention from or relieve domestic tensions. Indeed, it exacerbated those tensions and made a bad situation worse.³⁸

Eley's book on the right is far more than an elaboration of these themes.³⁹ Moreover, though in those earlier pieces Eley's intent was not to "deny the general validity of the continuity thesis,"⁴⁰ in his monograph, he moves from critical acceptance to outright rejection of the "new orthodoxy." Grafted onto his initial critique of Kehr and Wehler is a discussion of the varieties of popular political mobilization in the 1890s, the nature, function and membership of right-wing "National Associations," the response of conservative elites to these developments, the complete collapse of agrarian-industrial cooperation after the dissolution of the Bülow Block, and after 1912, the reconstitution of a right-wing coalition with widespread lower middle-class support, symbolized by the 1913 creation of the Cartel of Producing Estates. This is an extremely full agenda, but Eley traverses these broad expanses with confidence and ease.

Eley is most concerned to illustrate that Wilhelmine politics are inadequately and improperly understood if they are reduced to the conflict between socialist advocates of parliamentary reforms and a conservative ruling elite, manipulating the lower middle class in an ultimately vain defense of the status quo. In Eley's account, "hostility to the independent politics of the Social Democratic working

class" remains a key determinant of the "politics of the bourgeoisie," but it is joined by a "growing impatience with the remaining aristocratic survivals of the Prusso-German monarchy." (p. 16) Discontent with the status quo among peasants and the urban lower middle classes was also manifest in the "self-activation of subaltern groups and the unprecedented demagogic campaigns they waged against the authorities during the 1890s, invariably *against* the counsels and sometimes the vigorous opposition of older-style Conservatives." (p. 218)

This "vital decade of political flux in which one pattern of politics began to be replaced by another" (p. 16) had profound implications for the parties which had found support in rural areas and small towns: the Center, Conservatives and National Liberals. Left unchecked, discontent might even flow into Social Democratic channels. Center and Conservative Party leaders successfully responded to this populist pressure, changing their political style and adopting the demagogic language of mass politics. Unwilling to learn the harmonies of "politics in a new key,"⁴¹ the National Liberals were far less successful. They remained committed to a form of notable politics, predicated on assumptions of deference no longer consistent with the realities of a mass society. Eley's National Liberals still might share liberal historian Johann Gustav Droysen's 1860s assessment that "The people is little or nothing. Under the best of circumstances it is a cloud of dust filling the air and obscuring the view, until a gentle rain settles the whirling mass into the thick and sticky form which we commonly call mud."⁴² In Eley's account, storm clouds opened in the 1890s, and in the landslide that followed, National Liberals, caught totally unprepared, were washed away, not just bogged down.

A range of nationalist pressure groups rushed in to fill the void left by the National Liberals. It is the redefinition and radicalization of the right in such organizations as the Pan German League, the Society for Eastern Marshes, and above all, the Navy League, outside of the party political arena and the control of the state, which is central to the "'vital reconstitution of the nation,'"⁴³ so crucial to Eley. The state may have hoped to channel this groundswell, but "once a license was conceded to independent propaganda agencies in the name of 'national integration,' an ideological space was created in which alternative political programmes might be advanced, not always to the advantage of the government." (pp. 176-77) What caulked the cracks was a populist putty, the belief that "'virtue resides in the simple people'" and their "'collective traditions.'" Eley sees such ideological strains not as part of a retreat to a particularly Germanic, conservative, *völkisch* vision of harmony. Rather, "to invoke the legitimacy of the people was implicitly to query the government." (p. 195) The nationalist associations, substitutes neither for political parties nor for narrowly conceived interest groups, played a central role in articulating a right-wing political ideology, the "*Primat des Nationalen*," which expressed these populist elements and transcended the conflicting economic interests of lower middle-class groups.

In Eley's account, radical nationalism never actively engaged more than a small portion of the *Volk* whose interests it claimed to represent, but it was symptomatic of the absence of a governing coalition, a stable "power bloc." "From an inadequate material base it raised in ideological terms the need for a massive populist offensive if that long-term disunity was to be overcome." (p. 204) Radical nationalism could not determine the shape of the new "power bloc," but it could define the "terrain" on which that bloc would form. The emergence of a newly defined right followed the collapse of the Bülow Block in 1909, a "moment

of fission in German politics.” (p. 254) The explosive chain reaction it sparked fragmented the government’s parliamentary support and fused a new right-wing alliance of heavy industrialists, “chastened conservatives,” troubled by Bethmann-Hollweg’s moderation, the “native organizations of the petty-Bourgeoisie,” and National Liberals who found a constituency among the “new petty bourgeoisie” of white-collar workers. Taking shape in the Cartel of Producing Estates, this new alliance incorporated the rhetoric of “national opposition” and radical nationalism, supported constitutional revision, and openly attacked universal suffrage and the “creeping legitimacy of parliamentary reforms.” In Eley’s analysis, for the old elites, this represented a “novel descent into the political arena.” (p. 330) He concludes, “In the longer term, one might say that the possibility of a German fascism became inscribed in the political and ideological structures of the power bloc at that moment when the struggle to recompose its unity became displaced on to populist terrain. Here radical nationalism made a vital preliminary contribution.” (p. 205)

The tune of “politics in a new key” in the south German state of Württemberg was a variation of Eley’s theme, but the significance of the 1890s for the redefinition of Wilhelmine politics also assumes a central role in David Blackbourn’s *Class, Religion and Local Politics in Wilhelmine Germany*. Blackbourn’s study is, moreover, not only a major addition to our understanding of “new political forms in the Wilhelmine period,” but also, it is the first major social history of the Catholic Center Party in the Kaiserreich.⁴⁴ His investigation clearly reveals the shortcomings of analyses which characterize that party as politically opportunistic and shaped by narrowly confessional interests, or pushed rightward by “traditional clerical obscurantism or by the strength of aristocratic influence within the party.” (p. 58) Rather, Blackbourn demonstrates that the right of middle, anti-socialist politics of the party reflected the pressure from its lower middle-class constituents. Appeal to the “residual Catholicism” of the *Kulturkampf* was no substitute for programs which responded to, articulated and defended the material interests of the party’s electoral supporters. The confessional nature of the party, of course, meant that it might potentially include quite diverse interests, from Ruhr miners to Silesian mine owners, from agricultural wage-earners to aristocratic land-owners. In defining its position along this socio-political spectrum, the party emphasized the concerns of the “middling interests.” Even among these groups, objectives might easily collide as peasants clamored for tariffs which artisans and retailers would be forced to pay.⁴⁵ In Blackbourn’s analysis, “no hidden hand guided the interests of German Catholics into a harmonious balance: they were, rather, orchestrated by a leadership which overcame successive contradictions in its policy by successive injections of demagoguery.” (p. 60)

These general outlines are borne out quite convincingly in Blackbourn’s detailed analysis of Württemberg. Here, the Center Party was not the creation of the *Kulturkampf* and was formed only in the 1890s. The glue cementing the party was thus not confessional in the first instance, but rather the bond of the socially conservative economic interests of the “middling” classes — small businessmen, peasant farmers, and small-scale retailers and artisans, integrally tied into the rural economy. The socio-economic landscape of this south German state was defined by “two distinct economic units . . . : one industrialising fast and largely Protestant, the other agricultural and mainly Catholic.” (p. 81) Catholics worked in “traditional occupations,” and a separate Catholic subculture had its roots in “economic backwardness.” Until the 1890s, the liberal *Volkspartei* had served as

a vehicle for Catholics to express anti-Prussian, anti-militarist sentiments. The impact of the agrarian crisis of the 1880s and early 1890s, however, left rural constituents at odds with liberal advocates of free trade. A newly created Center could offer a “bulwark against the excesses of liberal individualism.” (p. 92) The Center was able to champion a “politically radical but socially conservative” cause, “in effect putting itself forward as the true heir to the spirit of 1848.” (pp. 97-98)

The interaction of a group of legally trained “‘natural leaders,’” conforming largely to the profile of national party leadership, on the one hand, and local leaders, emerging from the grassroots, on the other, defined the contours of Center politics. The party’s attempts to “modernise the politics of deference” (p. 114), to create strong party structures without expanding the framework of party decision-making, confronted the resistance of back-benchers, who defended the specific economic and political demands of their constituents. Reconciling conflicting interests was no easy matter. A real *Mittelstandspolitik* was “often self-defeating, for the gains of one group cancelled out those of another.” (p. 155) The resolution of these contradictions lay “more in the sphere of politics than the sphere of economics” and the Center’s ability to “re-work the old small-town, petty-bourgeois bogey of 1848 into a new idiom which could articulate the grievances of such people at the turn of the century.” (p. 159) This was accomplished by adopting a demagogic tone and emphasizing issues which could transcend conflicting interests, in short, by the same descent onto the new terrain of populist politics which Eley describes. Such tactics eroded any common ground on specific issues with the SPD or the *Volkspartei*, and pushed the Center closer and closer to the Conservatives. The Conservative Party’s transformation from an exclusive elite to an “anti-governmental party with a demagogic appeal to the ‘small man’” (p. 115) created an even broader basis for cooperation between it and the Center. The insistence on autarky, an economic plan to guarantee something for everyone within the “Center Fortress” and the “protection of national labor” also unified the two camps. For Blackbourn, the orientation toward the right was thus a “reflection of Catholic economic backwardness,” (p. 233) and indicated the extent to which the Center was a “typical Wilhelmine party in the attention it paid to particular material interests.” (p. 235) Attempts to reconcile conflicting interests, however, defined a dangerous course, since “Agrarian and small-town appetites were fed rather than satisfied by the party.” Ultimately, the party was thus “the victim of its own demagogy,” (p. 238) left only with political allies on the right.

IV. Attempt at a Balance Sheet: The Kaiserreich Recast?

The works by Evans, Eley and Blackbourn all represent major contributions to the history of the Imperial period. When Evans’ monographs appeared, there existed few other scholarly discussions of the organized women’s movement in this period. In addition, his insistence on understanding the SPD women’s movement within the general outline of the party’s development suggests the limitations of the alternative which would isolate women’s activities from the rest of the party’s history. Eley’s reexamination of the dimensions of right-wing politics amply supports his thesis that an understanding of the particular form of fascism in Germany, “its longer-term conditions of possibility,” demands careful analysis of “the terms under which the petty-bourgeoisie was admitted — or compelled its own admittance — to the political system.”⁴⁶ This emphasis also suggests an important perspective on continuity in German history after 1945. If

popular support for National Socialism is seen as part of a pattern of "manipulation from above," that pattern is broken when principal agents of manipulation — those "preindustrial" elites — leave the scene at the end of the Second World War.⁴⁷ If, however, as Eley argues, National Socialism is "merely the most recent in a succession of conservative redefinitions,"⁴⁸ reflecting and incorporating the pressure from below exerted by a disgruntled petty bourgeoisie, it need not be the last of its kind. 1945 is less easily identified as "zero hour" (*Nullstunde*). Blackbourn would surely agree. Like Eley, he is concerned with determining the ways in which lower middle-class mobilization can influence the tactics and programs of political parties, and the ways in which they can be absorbed by demagogic, not democratic means. Both Eley and Blackbourn locate the attempt to reconcile and transcend conflicting *economic* interests in the realm of *politics*. For both, the right-wing radical quality of these political formulae is determined by pressure from below.

Illuminated from this variety of new directions, does the Kaiserreich of the "new orthodoxy" remain recognizable? Has the *Sonderweg* been transformed into one path to capitalist development, hardly discernible from others? Can the English assault deliver the methodological insights which allow us to read those points at which society and politics intersect? Certainly, the prescription for a social history of politics, the challenge to descend with Eley's converted conservatives onto the "terrain of popular politics," represents an important modification of the institutional approach and the concentration on organized interests of the "new orthodoxy." Good prescriptions are, however, not always easily fulfilled. Particularly in Evans' case, the focus remains on organizational forms and leadership fights. From this vantage point, Evans describes the definition of ideology, program and tactics within the women's movement, but he is almost exclusively concerned with those exceptional women who participated actively in public life. Even when he descends to the level of local politics, his gaze is fixed primarily on leaders, not the rank-and-file, and only very seldom on that silent majority which chose to join no organization. Evans thus has little to say about women's material lives — the structure of the labor market for women and patterns of women's employment, gender-based pay differentials, demographic patterns, or the nature of family life and community for bourgeois and working-class women. At least the barest of these objective dimensions can be abstracted from published statistics,⁴⁹ and others are at least partially documented in the growing literature on the social history of the Kaiserreich.⁵⁰ Such information would certainly enrich Evans' analysis of the definition of policy at the top, and in addition, could provide a fuller sense of the formidable impediments to women's participation in organizations of any description. His focus on the leadership ranks provides little insight into the participation of bourgeois women in associational life below the national level of the BdF or of working-class women in the trade union movement. Particularly in an environment where women's participation in national politics was limited by male prejudice and legal restrictions, it seems quite possible that these seemingly non-political organizations were a principal arena for feminist politics. Indeed, Evans skirts any systematic attempt to define a uniquely feminist political perspective, either for bourgeois or working-class women, and precisely this endeavor has been central to much of the best recent writing in women's history. The project of seeing women's history from this perspective is no ahistorical search for relevance, but rather the conceptual attempt to place women's perceptions of their own experience at the center of historical investigation.⁵¹ The left, center and right, the radical, moderate and conservative

of Evans' political spectrum remain largely those defined by men.

Evans admits the dangers of his top down approach. He concludes his treatment of bourgeois women by warning that "there are risks in generalizing about an entire class — still more about an entire sex — from the organizations which claim to represent it, for in some ways at least (even in their willingness to take action) the members of political organizations and social movements are atypical of the larger social groups from which they came."⁵² In a similar vein, he leaves his provocative discussion of the increasingly familial quality of the SPD subculture at the level of speculation, inviting social historians to begin where his hypotheses end. These recommendations are well taken, but they do little to fulfill the objectives outlined in Evans' critique of the "new orthodoxy." "Approached from below," Evans promised there, "familiar features appear in unfamiliar light." In his work on women in the Kaiserreich, it is the features he chooses to illuminate which are relatively unfamiliar. The methodological light which he employs to do it rarely shines from below and would certainly not blind the advocates of the "new orthodoxy."⁵³

Eley does much more than apologize for neglecting the grassroots. Indeed, one senses that his dissatisfaction with his analysis of politics at the top in his initial research on the Navy League led him ineluctably to follow the right-wing politicians he describes into the arena of popular politics. In the process, a largely institutional history of one part of the Wilhelmine right became a far-ranging study of the transformation of Wilhelmine politics. Many of the issues which Eley raises along the way about the nature of petty bourgeois political mobilization cannot be addressed adequately at the national level where his study originated. Where possible, he offers suggestive evidence from his own research, and he also is extremely successful at exploiting a broad range of local studies for his own purposes. Nonetheless, the lower middle classes, so crucial for his analysis, often remain elusive. He grasps them most securely when they enter the Navy League, but he also shows quite clearly that few found their way to this organization.⁵⁴ Even for those who did join, the Navy League "probably made little constructive contribution to the mental formation of the mass of members whatever their social origin. The political consciousness of the bourgeois strata from which the latter was mainly recruited was formed elsewhere, in family, school, Church, Army and Navy, university, professional life, and in negative definition against the uncomfortable pressures exerted by the subordinate classes."⁵⁵ Thus an unhappy petty bourgeoisie drives a wedge into the Bismarckian system in the 1890s, but cannot itself fill the ideological space it creates. Rather, the gap is filled by nationalist pressure groups which do not themselves directly address the material interests of the lower middle classes. As James Sheehan observes, "Nationalism offered no real answers to the questions which beset German political and social life."⁵⁶ In Eley's analysis, answers come not from the nationalist associations, but rather from "Organizations like the trade unions or the economic defense leagues of the peasantry and *Mittelstand* [which] were located at the very centre of their members' social existence, with a variegated practice clearly attuned to their social needs . . ."⁵⁷

An even closer look at the petty bourgeoisie may resolve some of the questions which Eley's study raises but cannot fully answer: What are the long-term origins of the petty bourgeois discontents which erupt in the 1890s? Does the early introduction of universal male suffrage in Germany, that gamble of the "*Herrenmensch* with democratic gloves," affect the form of petty bourgeois mobilization?⁵⁸ Is the Bismarckian "power bloc" which shatters in the 1890s as

stable before then as Eley suggests, or can cracks in its surface be discovered earlier?⁵⁹ How can we demarcate the petty bourgeoisie in terms other than those of very rough occupational groupings or the negative definition as the group holding “an intermediate position between the bourgeois and the proletarian?”⁶⁰ How are interest groups able to quiet the roaring petty bourgeois beast in the 1890s and why does it slumber so peacefully from the late 1890s until 1909? Is it possible to identify different forms of political expression, a range of “apolitical politics,” in Rudy Koshar’s words, appropriate to different forms of petty bourgeois organization?⁶¹ Answers from local and regional research will provide the means to test and refine Eley’s macro-model; they lie beyond the scope of his analysis. This lends Eley’s book an intentionally open-ended quality, which may annoy readers who prefer a tightly woven cloth. For those willing to think along with Eley, however, this book has much to offer.

Eley’s frequent approving references to Blackbourn’s research are ample evidence of the cross-fertilization which has shaped their efforts. Blackbourn’s work reveals clearly that a regional focus can alter perceptions of national affairs, and at the level of the region, he can systematically pursue many of the questions which Eley can only raise. Blackbourn’s book represents a model regional study of the social history of political change. Still, although such careful research at the local level can offer a blueprint for other similar studies, its findings cannot be read back into national politics quite so readily as Blackbourn would have it. Indeed, the history of the Center in Württemberg is quite unusual on a number of counts. In other parts of Germany, where the Center emerged from the *Kulturkampf*, the party could more readily resort to that “residual Catholicism,” long after conflicting economic interests within the “Center Fortress” had begun to erode confessional cement.⁶² Württemberg was also exceptional in its lack of an indigenous Catholic aristocracy, that political leavening which had lasting influence on the pre-1914 Center, particularly in Prussia.⁶³ The parallels between confessional, geographic and occupational splits clearly distinguished Württemberg from areas like the Ruhr, where the Center was far less “typical” a Wilhelmine party.⁶⁴ If Blackbourn’s conclusions should thus be generalized at the level of the Reich only with some care, his work does fulfill the promise of a framework for studying the social history of politics. Thus, together with Eley, he shows ways to move beyond the understanding of Imperial politics embodied in the “new orthodoxy.”

Nonetheless, this impressive body of research leaves much of the old picture of the Kaiserreich intact. Important elements of German peculiarity reappear clearly in the English work, and others are never addressed. On balance, despite their eagerness to reveal the limitations of the “new orthodoxy,” the revisionists remain tied to it at many crucial points. This is particularly the case with Evans whose study of the bourgeois women’s movement is explicitly placed in the tradition which he so roundly rejects. The German bourgeois women’s movement is measured on the model liberal emancipation of the American and English feminist movements. The turn to a conservatism, laced through with racist social Darwinism, is linked to the repressive Prussian climate, and the triumph of National Socialism is clearly foreshadowed in the failures of political liberalism in pre-1914 Germany and the incomplete revolution of 1918.⁶⁵

In the case of Eley and Blackbourn, the “terrain” is more directly contested, but the fight is over a common ground which unites them with proponents of the “new orthodoxy.”

What landmarks remain recognizable?

1) No matter how great the political ferment at the bottom, it never bubbles through to the surface in the form of revolutionary potential. Revolutions in Germany, even in the recast Kaiserreich, are still made from above. Although Eley and Blackbourn argue convincingly that a successful bourgeois revolution constitutes no sine qua non for successful capitalist development, they never address the importance of a tradition of "revolution from above" for defining attitudes toward the state and forms of political expression within the German variant of capitalism.⁶⁶ The absence of a "'normal revolutionary puberty crisis'"⁶⁷ need not lead to a deviant adulthood, but a state with a history of successful "revolutions from above" will surely engender attitudes toward political decision-making and the possibilities for change which differ from those in a country which has experienced a thoroughgoing social transformation from below.

2) Closely related to this is Germany's long history of a strong interventionist state and its agent, a firmly entrenched civil service.⁶⁸ Demands by petty bourgeois groups for protection in the 1890s were not entirely new and reflected a long history of state intervention into the economy. A consideration of this history is particularly important for evaluating petty bourgeois political attitudes since, as Suzanne Berger has argued, the petty bourgeoisie defines itself according to those rules "that identify them as a political and social entity." The state is limited by the imperatives of capitalist development but "does not simply constrain, reward and protect those groups it discovers before it. Instead, politics models and channels social and economic processes." In turn, "Political crystallization of interest and value creates out of an economic domain with rather weak elements of cohesion a class with stable contours." As Berger observes, "The central fact is that the cohesion and power of the traditional middle classes depend on a certain common relationship to the state more than on common economic interests."⁶⁹ Weighing the long-term legacy of historic patterns of state intervention is a complicated matter, but precisely this remains essential for understanding the different forms of political development under capitalism in general and the self-perception of the lower middle classes in particular.

3) Much the same can be said for the role of political parties of the bourgeois middle. Eley and Blackbourn rightly reject the equation of liberal political dominance with bourgeois hegemony. The measure of bourgeois hegemony in a given national context is moreover not solely numbers of smokestacks and captains of industry, but should include the development of those legal forms appropriate to capitalist expansion, the emergence of new forms of political association, cultural and intellectual life, and a changing consciousness of gender relations within the family.⁷⁰ Nonetheless, both Eley and Blackbourn still place tremendous emphasis on the extent to which the absence of a liberal response to pressure from below in the 1890s leaves discontented lower middle class elements searching for other alternatives. "Why they failed," Eley concedes, "is a massive question,"⁷¹ beyond the scope of his own enquiry, but still clearly worth asking. The long-term consequences of liberal failure, of course, are still open to discussion.⁷² This characteristic of the *Sonderweg* remains, nonetheless, deeply embedded both in the "new orthodoxy" and in the work of its English critics.

4) A strong, ideologically orthodox Marxist working class is as central to the "new orthodoxy" as a politically weak liberal bourgeoisie, and the SPD continues to define an important political dimension for Evans, Eley and Blackbourn as well. Indeed, for understanding the political behavior of the lower middle class, the SPD is key not only as a negative bogey, but also for its inability to capture the

ambivalent discontent of peasants and artisans in the 1890s. Eley correctly identifies the political ambiguity of populist radicalism, but he overstates the SPD's success at capitalizing on it.⁷³ The party's clear commitment to the Erfurt Program with its gloomy prophecies of the imminent disappearance of the petty bourgeoisie meant that the lower middle classes confronted neither a liberal nor a clearly formulated social democratic analysis of their problems.⁷⁴ The ability of French socialists to win at least some lower middle-class recruits in the same period provides an informative contrast.⁷⁵ Conservatives, the Center Party and radical nationalists were not winners by default in Germany, and they worked hard for their gains. Their task was, however, made much easier by the absence of a serious socialist challenge.

5) The English critique has repeatedly questioned the usefulness of "preindustrial" as a descriptive or explanatory category. Forms of political expression and interest group organization should be seen, Eley advises, "in the determinate context of the Wilhelmine conjuncture itself," not as points on a linear continuity of authoritarian traditions.⁷⁶ Still, if "preindustrial" elements are expunged from the newly formulated Kaiserreich, in their stead appear Eley's "aristocratic survivals," and "real anti-modernists" who defend a "traditional way of life," as well as Blackbourn's "backward" Catholics, "caught between parochialism and half-completed modernization," and couching "very real" grievances in a "personalised and atavistic form of expression."⁷⁷ Eley and Blackbourn admit the problematic nature of such language, but their resort to it nonetheless suggests that their differences with the "new orthodoxy" are perhaps ones of degree, not kind.

6) "Who ruled in Berlin? The question," as Mr. A.J.P. Taylor remarks, 'baffled contemporaries and has baffled later observers.'" The answer provided by J.C.G. Röhl — "an oligarchy of some twenty men"⁷⁸ — would satisfy Evans, Blackbourn and Eley no more than the model of a manipulative elite which they discover in the "new orthodoxy." The message that in modern, industrial societies, politics are not made exclusively at the top but reflect the pressures at the bottom resounds throughout their work, and yet, the importance of the top remains. The case is clearest in Evans' studies where the bottom is seldom seen or heard. Eley and Blackbourn provide a far more nuanced approach, but like the peasantry of mid-nineteenth century France, which Marx so disdainfully described, their lower middle classes "are incapable of enforcing their class interest in their own name . . . They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented."⁷⁹ Representation need not be manipulation, but Eley nonetheless concedes that "To identify the real contribution of the naval movement to the political life of the Kaiserreich we must turn to a very specific group of highly conscious politicians who comprised a small minority of the overall membership," a collection of "ambitious ideologues," "paid functionaries," and "freebooters" who "did the work." It is "the particular engagement of those who tried to exploit the opportunities of the nationalist pressure groups for some more concrete purpose"⁸⁰ which is of significance. Blackbourn's Center spokesmen always have their finger on the lower middle-class pulse, but their successes reflect the "leadership's dexterity in exploiting popular discontent and using it to overcome the latent tensions which existed between themselves and Centre supporters in the localities."⁸¹ Thus, "The real Centre success was in the realm of appearance rather than substance, in the way it managed to persuade its followers of the party's solicitude for the cause of the small man by a public stance of support for economic measures which often had only a cosmetic effect."⁸² For

Eley and Blackbourn, an emphasis on the rank-and-file clearly does not mean elimination of the leadership. In their work, the composition of political elite groups changes. They are sometimes pushed and buffeted. "Profound seismic shifts" move the ground under their feet. But they continue to play a central role in the articulation of political ideologies.

7) Finally, there is no question that the English critics share the "new orthodoxy's" fascination with identifying lines of continuity in modern German history. They correctly warn against drawing a straight line from 1871 or 1878/79 to 1933. Nor, they argue, should German fascism be identified in terms of divergence from a norm of parliamentary democracy.⁸³ Still, as Blackbourn insists, the question is not whether the search for continuities is important, but rather how it is to be conducted. He proposes no clear prescription in his work on the Center, but elsewhere he suggests that the "war years . . . constituted a watershed," and "gave a cutting edge to *Mittelstand* discontent." Finding expression neither in traditional conservatism or on the left, "it was subsumed finally by the National Socialists, appealing deftly to a class which had drifted from the 'old politics' of the Right and found no anchorage on the Left."⁸⁴ Recently, Eley has emphasized a similar alternative. "The dramatic conjuncture of war and revolution between 1914 and 1923," he argues in a review of literature on lower middle-class support of fascism, represented a major crisis "which brought domestic unity, foreign mission and territorial integrity of the nation all into question . . ." Crucial as well was the fact that "the postwar situation was dominated by the public accommodation of labor, whose political and trade union aspirations appeared to be in the ascendant . . ."⁸⁵ In his book on the radical right, this kink in the line from the last quarter of the nineteenth century to 1933 is less pronounced. Indeed, the "Cartel of Producing Estates" represents an alliance which "already anticipated the basic scenario of the Weimar Republic." His claims that the "only fundamental continuity . . . was the unevenly developing capitalist mode of production" notwithstanding, he is still "looking back from the vantage point of 1933," and from here, he joins the "new orthodoxy" in locating the origins of German fascism in the Kaiserreich.⁸⁶ Escape from the long shadow of January, 1933 seems to be rare for historians of Imperial Germany. The attempt to locate this date within the continuity of German history may lead historians in different directions, but it nonetheless defines an important common dimension to their endeavors.

8) This string of common concerns and in many cases shared perceptions unites Evans, Eley and Blackbourn with Wehler and other defenders of the "new orthodoxy." So too do their prescriptions for the study of the Kaiserreich. Eley and Blackbourn enthusiastically recommend comparative work as a tool well suited to specify the *Sonderweg*, and the "Kehrites" have moved in the same direction.⁸⁷ Their efforts to date, limited primarily to England and the United States, should extend to countries like France, with strong, politically powerful petty bourgeois groups,⁸⁸ and Italy and Japan, which share with Germany not only a history of fascism but also a tradition of "revolution from above."⁸⁹ The English critique of modernization theory parallels its critical reexamination by their German colleagues.⁹⁰ The call to reopen a discussion of Marxist methodology, common in Eley and Blackbourn, should also unite them with the "Kehrites," who have played a major part in the struggle to win legitimacy for Marxist and neo-Marxist historiography in the Federal Republic.⁹¹

To outline this common ground is neither to downplay those important differences which do separate the "new orthodoxy" from its English critics, nor to

denigrate the considerable achievements of Evans, Eley and Blackbourn. Their clearly formulated attacks on Wehler and others have brought into sharp relief established articles of faith which demand critical reevaluation. However, now that the smoke from initial salvos has cleared, the outlines of the Kaiserreich are still distinguishable. Perspectives have shifted, but the object under examination has remained the same. Why both sides have denied this and tended instead to stress their differences is puzzling to the outside observer, particularly given that yet another element unites these English scholars with the defenders of the "new orthodoxy." All share a common ideological concern to use an understanding of the past in the service of a critical examination of the present. This leaves them in a minority of those who study German history, but provides a firm underpinning for that broad expanse of shared assumptions on which the discussion of the Kaiserreich should proceed. It also insures that the debate over the *Sonderweg* will continue to offer much to all those who study the social history of politics in advanced industrial societies.⁹²

Columbia University
Fayerweather Hall
New York, NY 10027

Robert G. Moeller

FOOTNOTES

My thanks for the critical comments on an early draft of this paper offered by James Cronin, Molly Nolan, Ronald Ross, Ioannis Sinanoglou, the members of Columbia's Departmental Seminar in Modern European Social History, the editor, and in particular, Lynn Mally. I have also benefited greatly from lengthy discussions of the *Sonderweg* with David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley. My thoughts here are intended as another contribution to that ongoing discussion.

1. See the excellent study of Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism 1860-1914* (London, Boston, Sydney, 1980).

2. This essay develops themes only sketchily outlined in Robert G. Moeller, "Die Besonderheiten der Deutschen? Neue Beiträge zur Sonderwegsdiskussion," *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 4 (1982): 71-80.

3. See, in general, Wolfgang J. Mommsen, "Gegenwärtige Tendenzen in der Geschichtsschreibung der Bundesrepublik," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* (hereafter *GG*) 7 (1981): 149-87; Georg G. Iggers, *New Directions in European Historiography* (Middletown, Connecticut, 1975), pp. 80-122; and Theodore S. Hamerow, "Guilt, Redemption, and Writing German History," *American Historical Review*, 88 (1983): 53-72.

4. New York, 1967 (first published 1961), p. xxii.

5. Friedrich Meinecke, *The German Catastrophe. Reflections and Recollections*, trans. by Sidney B. Fay (Boston, 1963), p. 59. That this interpretation lives on is evident in Gordon A. Craig, *Germany 1866-1945* (New York, 1978), p. 543.

6. The most important reexaminations of the Kaiserreich, conducted under Fischer's supervision, include: Helmut Böhme, *Deutschlands Weg zur Grossmacht. Studien zum Verhältnis von Wirtschaft und Staat während der Reichsgründungszeit 1848-1881* (Cologne, 1966); Peter-Christian Witt, *Die Finanzpolitik des Deutschen Reiches von 1903 bis 1913. Eine*

Studie zur Innenpolitik des Wilhelminischen Deutschland (Lübeck and Hamburg, 1970); Dirk Stegmann, *Die Erben Bismarcks. Parteien und Verbände in der Spätphase des Wilhelminischen Deutschlands. Sammlungspolitik 1897-1918* (Cologne, Berlin, 1970); Klaus Saul, *Staat, Industrie, Arbeiterbewegung im Kaiserreich. Zur Innen- und Sozialpolitik des Wilhelminischen Deutschland 1903-1914* (Düsseldorf, 1974); and Iris Hamel, *Völkischer Verband und nationale Gewerkschaft. Der Deutschnationale Handlungsgehilfen-Verband 1893-1933* (Frankfurt a.M., 1967). Other pathbreaking studies of interest groups, not supervised by Fischer but quite consistent with the tendency of these works include Hans-Jürgen Puhle, *Agrarische Interessenpolitik und preussischer Konservatismus im wilhelminischen Reich (1893-1914). Ein Beitrag zur Analyse des Nationalismus in Deutschland am Beispiel des Bundes der Landwirte und der Deutsch-Konservativen Partei* (Hannover, 1966), and Hartmut Kaelble, *Industrielle Interessenpolitik in der Wilhelminischen Gesellschaft. Centralverband Deutscher Industrieller 1895-1914* (Berlin, 1967).

7. Bernd Faulenbach, *Ideologie des deutschen Weges. Die deutsche Geschichte in der Historiographie zwischen Kaiserreich und Nationalsozialismus* (Munich, 1980). Indeed, such concepts as "revolution from above" had roots reaching far back into the nineteenth century. See Laurence Dickey, *Hegel in Context: Protestantism, Christian Reform and Secularization* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1981), esp. pp. 1-53.

8. See, e.g., Leonard Krieger, *The German Idea of Freedom. History of a Political Tradition* (Chicago and London, 1957); George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology. Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York, 1964); Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair. A Study in the Rise of German Ideology* (Garden City, New York, 1965) (first published 1961); Helmuth Plessner, *Die verspätete Nation. Über die politische Verführbarkeit bürgerlichen Geistes* (Stuttgart, 1959); Hajo Holborn, "Der deutsche Idealismus in sozialgeschichtlicher Beleuchtung," in Hans-Ulrich Wehler, ed., *Moderne deutsche Sozialgeschichte* (Cologne, 1973), pp. 85-108; Ernst Fraenkel, *Deutschland und die westlichen Demokratien* (Stuttgart, 1964).

9. See Kehr, *Schlachtflottenbau und Parteipolitik 1894-1901. Versuch eines Querschnitts durch die innenpolitischen, sozialen und ideologischen Voraussetzungen des deutschen Imperialismus* (Berlin, 1930), and *Economic Interest, Militarism, and Foreign Policy. Essays on German History*, ed. Gordon A. Craig, trans. Grete Heinz (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1977).

10. See the lucid discussion in Dan S. White, *The Splintered Party. National Liberalism in Hessen and the Reich 1867-1918* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1976), p. 12.

11. *Grosse Depression und Bismarckzeit. Wirtschaftsablauf, Gesellschaft und Politik in Mitteleuropa* (Berlin, 1967). The early essays from which this study emerged are now republished in *Machteliten und Wirtschaftskonjunkturen. Studien zur neueren deutschen Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (Göttingen, 1978). For critical assessments of Rosenberg's discussion of "long waves," see Volker Hentschel, *Wirtschaft und Wirtschaftspolitik im wilhelminischen Deutschland. Organisierter Kapitalismus und Interventionsstaat?* (Stuttgart, 1978), pp. 205-211, and White, pp. 51-56.

12. In particular, Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany* (Garden City, New York, 1969) (first published, 1965).

13. For a useful summary, see Helga Nussbaum, "Was ist staatsmonopolistischer Kapitalismus?" in Dieter Baudis and Helga Nussbaum, *Wirtschaft und Staat in Deutschland vom Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts bis 1918-19* (Vaduz/Liechtenstein, 1978), pp. 39-50. The extent to which historians in the Federal Republic were reacting explicitly against this is clear in several of the contributions in Heinrich August Winkler, ed., *Organisierter Kapitalismus. Voraussetzungen und Anfänge* (Göttingen, 1974); and, Jürgen Kocka, "Preussischer Staat und Modernisierung im Vormärz: Marxistisch-Leninistische Interpretationen und ihre Probleme," in Hans-Ulrich Wehler, ed., *Sozialgeschichte heute* (Göttingen, 1974), pp. 211-27.

14. Among the most important, Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Bismarck und der Imperialismus* (Cologne, 1969); Puhle's comparative study, *Politische Agrarbewegungen in kapitalistischen Industriegesellschaften. Deutschland, USA und Frankreich im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1975); the contributions by Kocka and Wehler in Winkler, ed., *Organisierter Kapitalismus*; Shulamit Angel-Volkov, *The Rise of Popular Antimodernism in Germany. The Urban Master Artisans, 1873-1896* (Princeton, 1978); Jürgen Kocka, *Unternehmensverwaltung und Angestelltenschaft am Beispiel Siemens 1847-1914* (Stuttgart, 1969); Dieter Groh, *Negative Integration und revolutionärer Attentismus. Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie am Vorabend des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Frankfurt/M, Berlin, Vienna, 1973); and Heinrich August Winkler, *Mittelstand, Demokratie und Nationalsozialismus. Die politische Entwicklung von Handwerk und Kleinhandel in der Weimarer Republik* (Cologne, 1972).
15. *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich 1871-1918* (Göttingen, 1973). Wehler's book has not been translated into English. For a satisfactory ersatz which faithfully follows the general lines of his argument, see Martin Kitchen, *The Political Economy of Germany 1815-1914* (London, 1978).
16. Wehler, "Der Aufstieg des Organisierten Kapitalismus und Interventionsstaates in Deutschland," in Winkler, ed., *Organisierter Kapitalismus*, pp. 51-52.
17. Wehler, *Bismarck und der Imperialismus*, pp. 501-02.
18. The term was first used in a review by James J. Sheehan, *Journal of Modern History* 48 (1976), p. 567. Richard J. Evans picks it up in "Introduction: Wilhelm II's Germany and the Historians," in Evans, ed., *Society and Politics in Wilhelmine Germany* (London, 1978), p. 16.
19. In particular, Thomas Nipperdey, "Wehlers 'Kaiserreich.' Eine kritische Auseinandersetzung," *GG* 1 (1975): 539-60; Nipperdey, "1933 und Kontinuität der deutschen Geschichte," *Historische Zeitschrift* 227 (1978): 86-111; Hans-Günter Zmarzlik, "Das Kaiserreich in neuer Sicht?" *Historische Zeitschrift* 222 (1976): 105-126; and the responses of Volker R. Berghahn, "Der Bericht der Preussischen Oberrechnungskammer. 'Wehlers' Kaiserreich und seine Kritiker," *GG* 2 (1976): 125-36; and Wehler, "Kritik und kritische Antikritik," *Historische Zeitschrift* 225 (1977): 347-84.
20. Nipperdey warns that Wehler runs the risk of becoming a "Treitschke redivivus." See "'Wehlers Kaiserreich,'" p. 542.
21. See the references in Wehler, "Kritik und kritische Antikritik," and the ongoing debate with Andreas Hillgruber in Wehler, "Moderne Politikgeschichte oder 'Grosse Politik der Kabinette?'" *GG* 1 (1975): 344-69.
22. Quoted in Kennedy, p. 463.
23. See in particular, Evans, "Introduction," as well as Geoff Eley, *Reshaping the German Right. Radical Nationalism and Political Change after Bismarck* (New Haven and London, 1980), pp. 1-16; and David Blackbourn, *Class, Religion and Local Politics in Wilhelmine Germany. The Centre Party in Württemberg before 1914* (New Haven and London), pp. 1-18.
24. The term "Kehrite" was first coined by Wolfgang Mommsen, "Domestic Factors in German Foreign Policy before 1914," in Sheehan, ed., *Imperial Germany* (London, 1976), p. 228. Eley adopts it and greatly extends its use in "Die 'Kehrites' und das Kaiserreich: Bemerkungen zu einer aktuellen Kontroverse," *GG* 4 (1978): 91-107. See also the critical response by Puhle, "Zur Legende von der 'Kehrschen Schule,'" *ibid.*, 108-19.
25. Evans, "Introduction," pp. 23-24.
26. *Mythen deutscher Geschichtsschreibung. Die gescheiterte bürgerliche Revolution von 1848*

(Frankfurt/M, Berlin, Vienna, 1980). It is this book which has provoked the strongest response, particularly from Wehler, Puhle, Winkler and Kocka. See the general discussion with references in Moeller, "Die Besonderheiten der Deutschen?" and most recently, Jürgen Kocka, "Der 'deutsche Sonderweg' in der Diskussion," *German Studies Review*, 5 (1982): 365-79.

27. See the references to literature in Richard F. Hamilton, *Who Voted for Hitler?* (Princeton, 1982), pp. 9-36; Adelheid von Saldern, *Mittelstand im "Dritten Reich." Hardwerker-Einzelhändler-Bauern* (Frankfurt, New York, 1979), pp. 9-15; and Kocka, *White Collar Workers in America 1890-1940. A Social-Political History in International Perspective*, trans. by Maura Kealey (Beverly Hills, 1980), pp. 1-11.

28. See the references in note 23 and Blackburn, "The Mittelstand in German Society and Politics, 1871-1914," *Social History* 2 (1977): 409-33.

29. The "new orthodoxy" had of course not completely neglected the lower middle classes. They were central in Kocka's work on white collar workers and the studies of Angel-Volkov and Winkler. The peasantry also appeared in Puhle's comparative work on agriculture. In addition to the works cited in note 14, see Winkler, "From Social Protectionism to National Socialism: The German Small-Business Movement in Comparative Perspective," *Journal of Modern History* 48 (1976): 1-18; and Puhle, "Die Entwicklung der Agrarfrage und die Bauernbewegung in Deutschland 1861-1914," in Karl Otmar Freiherr von Aretin and Werner Conze, eds., *Deutschland und Russland im Zeitalter des Kapitalismus 1861-1914* (Wiesbaden, 1977), pp. 37-54.

30. *The Feminist Movement in Germany 1894-1933* (London and Beverly Hills, 1976). All page references in the next two paragraphs are from this book. Its central themes are presented in Evans, "Liberalism and Society: The Feminist Movement and Social Change," in Evans, ed., *Society and Politics*, pp. 186-214.

31. See also, Evans, "Prostitution, State and Society in Imperial Germany," *Past and Present* 70 (1976): 106-29.

32. Evans sees the radical nature of these demands as being inversely proportional to the repressive quality of the Wilhelmine state. See the parallel arguments about working class protest in Dick Geary, *European Labour Protest 1848-1939* (New York, 1981), pp. 68-69, 94, 107-17.

33. This theme, the paradox that a liberal reform of the Association Law dilutes the "radicals'" influence, is stated even more forcefully in Evans, "Liberalism and Society."

34. A discussion of this controversial point exceeds the boundaries of this essay. For a very different assessment see Tim Mason, "Women in Germany, 1925-1940: Family, Welfare and Work. Part I," *History Workshop Journal* 1 (1976): 74-113 and "Part II," *History Workshop Journal* 2 (1976): 5-32; also, Frauengruppe Faschismusforschung, ed., *Mutterkreuz und Arbeitsbuch. Zur Geschichte der Frauen in der Weimarer Republik und im Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt a.M., 1981).

35. *Sozialdemokratie und Frauenemanzipation im deutschen Kaiserreich*, trans. by W.G. Sebald (Berlin, Bonn, 1979). Central parts of Evans' argument are available in English in "German Social Democracy and Women's Suffrage 1891-1918," *Journal of Contemporary History* 15 (1980): 533-57; "Politics and the Family: Social Democracy and the Working-class Family in Theory and Practice Before 1914," in Evans and W.R. Lee, eds., *The German Family. Essays on the Social History of the Family in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Germany* (London, 1981), pp. 256-88; and "Introduction: the Sociological Interpretation of German Labour History," in Evans, ed., *The German Working Class 1888-1933* (London, 1982), pp. 15-53. Page references in the next three paragraphs are from *Sozialdemokratie und*

Frauenemanzipation.

36. This is the focus of "Politics and Family."
37. His bibliographies provide extensive listings. See in particular Molly Nolan, "Proletarischer Anti-Feminismus. Dargestellt am Beispiel der SPD-Ortsgruppe Düsseldorf 1890 bis 1914," in *Frauen und Wissenschaft. Beiträge zur Berliner Sommeruniversität für Frauen, Juli 1976* (Berlin, 1977), pp. 356-77; Werner Thönnessen, *The Emancipation of Women. The Rise and Decline of the Women's Movement in German Social Democracy 1863-1933* (London, 1973); Amy Hackett, "The German Women's Movement and Suffrage, 1890-1914: A study of National Feminism," in Robert J. Bezucha, ed., *Modern European Social History* (Lexington, Mass., Toronto, London, 1972), pp. 354-86; and in addition, most likely not available to Evans before the publication of his book on women in the SPD, Ute Gerhard, *Verhältnisse und Verhinderungen. Frauenarbeit, Familie und Rechte der Frauen im 19. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt a.M., 1978); and Gisela Loseff-Tillmanns, *Frauenemanzipation und Gewerkschaften* (Wuppertal, 1978).
38. Eley, "Sammlungspolitik, Social Imperialism and the Navy Law of 1898," *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 15 (1974): 29-63; "Defining Social Imperialism: Use and Abuse of an Idea," *Social History* 1 (1976): 265-90; and "Social Imperialism in Germany: Reformist Synthesis or Reactionary Sleight of Hand?" in Immanuel Geiss and Joachim Radkau, eds., *Imperialismus im 20. Jahrhundert. Gedenkschrift für G.W.F. Hallgarten* (Munich, 1976), pp. 71-86. On this point, see also Walter Struve, *Elites against Democracy. Leadership Ideals in Bourgeois Political Thought in Germany, 1890-1933* (Princeton, 1973), esp. pp. 71-73, 90-107.
39. References in this and the next four paragraphs from *Reshaping*.
40. Eley, "Sammlungspolitik," p. 62.
41. This apt phrase was used by Blackburn as the title for a seminar paper presented at the University of California, Davis, March, 1981. It comes from Carl E. Schorske, "Politics in a New Key: Schönerer," in Leonard Krieger and Fritz Stern, eds., *The Responsibility of Power. Historical Essays in Honor of Hajo Holborn* (Garden City, New York, 1969), pp. 251-70.
42. Quoted in Theodore S. Hamerow, *The Social Foundations of German Unification 1858-1871. Ideas and Institutions* (Princeton, 1969), p. 164.
43. Eley credits Blackburn with the phrase. See *Reshaping*, p. 354.
44. In contrast, see e.g., the recent general history of the Party, Ellen Lovell Evans, *The German Center Party, 1870-1933* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, 1981). An alternative view from the "bottom up" is offered by Jonathan Sperber, "The Transformation of Catholic Associations in the Northern Rhineland and Westphalia 1830-1870," *Journal of Social History* 15 (1981): 253-64; Sperber, "Roman Catholic religious identity in Rhineland-Westphalia, 1800-70: quantitative examples and some political implications," *Social History* 7 (1982): 305-18. See also Ian Farr, "From Anti-Catholicism to Anticlericalism: Catholic Politics and the Peasantry in Bavaria, 1890-1900," *European Studies Review* 13 (1983): 249-69. Page references in the next three paragraphs are from Blackburn, *Class, Religion*.
45. Blackburn makes these arguments at length in "The *Mittelstand*."
46. Eley, "The Wilhelmine Right: How it Changed," in Evans, ed., *Society and Politics*, p. 130.
47. For one variant of this argument which points to continuities in economic forms in the Federal Republic but stresses these important discontinuities, see Jürgen Kocka, "1945:

Neubeginn oder Restauration?" in Carola Stern and Heinrich August Winkler, eds., *Wendepunkte deutscher Geschichte 1848-1945* (Frankfurt a.M., 1979), pp. 155-66.

48. Eley, "The Wilhelmine Right," p. 131.

49. See the demographic information summarized in Gerd Hohorst, Jürgen Kocka, and Gerhard A. Ritter, *Sozialgeschichtliches Arbeitsbuch II. Materialien zur Statistik des Kaiserreichs 1870-1914* (Munich, 1975); on wage differentials, see Gerhard Bry, *Wages in Germany 1871-1945* (Princeton, 1960), pp. 93-101. For the interwar period, see Renate Bridenthal, "Beyond *Kinder, Küche, Kirche*: Weimar Women at Work," *Central European History* 6 (1973): 148-66. For other examples, subsequent to Evans' books, of attempts to fill in these outlines, see: Loseff-Tillmanns, esp. pp. 48-65, 89-101; Jean H. Quataert, *Reluctant Feminists in German Social Democracy, 1885-1917* (Princeton, 1979), pp. 18-45; Arthur E. Imhof, "Women, Family and Death: Excess Mortality of Women in Child-bearing Age in Four Communities in Nineteenth-century Germany," in Evans, ed., *The German Family*, pp. 148-74; Robyn Dasey, "Women's Work and the Family: Women Garment Workers in Berlin and Hamburg Before the First World War," in *ibid.*, pp. 221-55; Stefan Bajohr, "Uneheliche Mütter im Arbeitermilieu: Die Stadt Braunschweig 1900-1930," *GG* 7 (1981): 474-506 (now in translation in Evans, ed., *The German Working Class*); Angelika Willms, "Modernisierung durch Frauenarbeit? Zum Zusammenhang von wirtschaftlichem Strukturwandel und weiblicher Arbeitsmarktlage in Deutschland, 1882-1939," in Toni Pierenkemper and Richard Tilly, eds., *Historische Arbeitsmarktforschung. Entstehung, Entwicklung und Probleme der Vermarktung von Arbeitskraft* (Göttingen, 1982), pp. 37-71; Stefan Bajohr, *Die Hälfte der Fabrik. Geschichte der Frauenarbeit in Deutschland 1914 bis 1945* (Marburg, 1979); Sabine Richebächer, *Uns fehlt nur eine Kleinigkeit. Deutsche proletarische Frauenbewegung 1890-1914* (Frankfurt a.M., 1982), esp. pp. 17-99; and Heinz Niggemann, *Emanzipation zwischen Sozialismus und Feminismus. Die sozialdemokratische Frauenbewegung im Kaiserreich* (Wuppertal, 1981), esp. pp. 15-38. A fascinating perspective is also offered in the collection of autobiographical excerpts, Friedrich G. Kürbisch and Richard Klucsarits, ed., *Arbeiterinnen kämpfen um ihr Recht. Autobiographische Texte zum Kampf rechtloser und entrechteter "Frauenpersonen" in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* (Wuppertal, 1981) (second edition).

50. In addition to Nolan, "Proletarischer Antifeminismus," see, e.g., Erhard Lucas, *Zwei Formen von Radikalismus in der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* (Frankfurt a.M., 1976), pp. 46-108; and Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann, *Die deutsche Familie. Versuch einer Sozialgeschichte* (Frankfurt a.M., 1974).

51. In general, see Gerda Lerner, "Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges," in Lerner, *The Majority Finds Its Past. Placing Women in History* (New York, Oxford, 1979), pp. 145-59 (first published, *Feminist Studies* 3 [1975]: 5-14). Examples of this sort of research are by now quite numerous. One excellent case in point is Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society. Women, class, and the state* (Cambridge, 1980). Evans rightly calls attention to gender struggles within the family, but as much recent research indicates, there are also problems with this focus. See the interesting comments of Rayna Rapp, Ellen Ross and Renate Bridenthal, "Examining Family History," *Feminist Studies* 5 (1979): 174-200; also Ross, "'Fierce Questions and Taunts': Married Life in Working-Class London, 1870-1914," *Feminist Studies* 8 (1982): 575-602; and Ross, "Survival Networks: Women's Neighbourhood Sharing in London before World War One," *History Workshop Journal* 15 (1983): 4-27. On the possibilities of defining a politics of everyday experience, see the comments of Alf Lüdtkke, "Erfahrung von Industriearbeitern. Thesen zu einer vernachlässigten Dimension der Arbeitergeschichte," in Werner Conze and Ulrich Engelhardt, *Arbeiter im Industrialisierungsprozess. Herkunft, Lage und Verhalten* (Stuttgart, 1979), pp. 494-512.

52. Evans, *The Feminist Movement*, p. 275. Evans has emphasized the same point in his

criticism of the work of other historians of modern European women's history. See Evans, "Women's history: the limits of reclamation," *Social History* 5 (1980): 273-81; "The History of European Women: A Critical Survey of Recent Research," *Journal of Modern History* 52 (1980): 656-75; and "Modernization Theory and Women's History," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 20 (1980): 492-514.

53. Evans, *Sozialdemokratie*, p. 331. Evans does move in this direction himself in "'Red Wednesday' in Hamburg: Social Democrats, police and Lumpenproletariat in the suffrage disturbances of 17 January 1906," *Social History* 4 (1979): 1-31. He has also been instrumental in promoting research of this sort in his collections, *Society and Politics*, *The German Family*, and *The German Working Class*.

54. Eley, *Reshaping*, p. 137.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

56. James J. Sheehan, *German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago and London, 1978), p. 278.

57. Eley, *Reshaping*, p. 137.

58. The phrase is from Hans Rosenberg, *Bureaucracy, Aristocracy, and Autocracy. The Prussian Experience 1660-1815* (Boston, 1966), p. 24. See also Theodore S. Hamerow, "The Origins of Mass Politics in Germany 1866-1867," in Immanuel Geiss and Bernd Jürgen Wendt, eds., *Deutschland in der Weltpolitik des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* (Düsseldorf, 1973), pp. 105-120. As Dan White points out, in the period 1877-80, 20.6% of the German population could vote, compared to 8.8% in England and 2% in Italy. Even after the passage of the Third Reform Act in 1884, only 40% of all adult males could vote in England. See White, p. 201.

59. E.g., Rosenberg hears rumblings from below long before the 1890s. Already in the "Great Depression," in his words, "Das politische Gegenstück zur Demokratisierung des Verbrauchs bildete die Demokratisierung der gesellschaftlichen Fundamente des Parteiwesens." *Grosse Depression*, p. 120. See also, J.C.G. Röhl, *Germany without Bismarck. The Crisis of Government in the Second Reich, 1890-1900* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967), pp. 45-50; Röhl, "The Disintegration of the Kartell and the Politics of Bismarck's Fall From Power, 1887-90," *Historical Journal* 9 (1966): 60-89; Robert M. Berdahl, "Conservative Politics and Aristocratic Landholders in Bismarckian Germany," *Journal of Modern History* 44 (1972): 1-20; Wolfgang J. Mommsen, "Das deutsche Kaiserreich als System umgangener Entscheidungen," in Helmut Berding, et al., eds., *Vom Staat des Ancien Regime zum modernen Parteienstaat. Festschrift für Theodor Schieder* (Munich, Vienna, 1978), pp. 243-45; Ernst Rudolf Huber, *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte seit 1789*, vol. IV Struktur und Krisen des Kaiserreichs (Stuttgart, 1969), pp. 40-44, 146-51; Margaret Lavinia Anderson and Kenneth Barkin, "The Myth of the Puttkamer Purge and the Reality of the *Kulturkampf*: on the Historiography of Imperial Germany," *Journal of Modern History* 54 (1982): 647-86; and on the emergence of political anti-semitism before the late 1880's, Paul W. Massing, *Rehearsal for Destruction. A Study of Political Anti-Semitism in Imperial Germany* (New York, 1967) (first published 1949), pp. 21-47; P.G.J. Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria* (New York, London, Sydney, 1964), pp. 88-107; and Richard S. Levy, *The Downfall of the Anti-Semitic Political Parties in Imperial Germany* (New Haven and London, 1975), pp. 17-42.

60. Eley, "The Wilhelmine Right," p. 188. For thoughts on this definitional problem, see in addition to the references in note 27, the theoretical suggestions in Arno J. Mayer, "The Lower Middle Class as Historical Problem," *Journal of Modern History* 47 (1975): 409-36; Peter N. Stearns, "The Middle Class: Towards a Precise Definition," *Comparative Studies in*

Society and History 21 (1979): 377-96, and Lenore O'Boyle, "The Classless Society: Comment on Stearns," *ibid.* 397-413; Frank Bechhofer and Brian Elliott, "Persistence and Change: the petite bourgeoisie in industrial society," *Archives européennes de sociologie* 17 (1976): 74-99; Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, "La petite bourgeoisie, une classe inconnue," *Le mouvement social* 108 (1979): 11-20, and the other articles in this special issue devoted to the petty bourgeoisie; the comparative perspectives offered by Geoffrey Crossick, "The Emergence of the Lower Middle Class in Britain: A Discussion," in Crossick, ed., *The Lower Middle Class in Britain 1870-1914* (New York, 1977), pp. 11-60; Suzanne Berger, "Regime and interest representation: the French traditional middle classes," in Berger, ed., *Organizing interests in Western Europe. Pluralism, corporatism, and the transformation of politics* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 83-102; and Berger "The traditional sector in France and Italy," in Berger and Michael J. Piore, *Dualism and Discontinuity in Industrial Societies* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 88-131.

61. Rudy Koshar, "Two 'Nazisms': the social context of Nazi mobilization in Marburg and Tübingen," *Social History* 7 (1982): 35. The work of Sperber, cited in note 44, points in the direction indicated by Koshar as does Hansjoachim Henning, *Das westdeutsche Bürgertum in der Epoche der Hochindustrialisierung 1860-1914. Soziales Verhalten und soziale Strukturen, Teil I: Das Bildungsbürgertum in den preussischen Westprovinzen* (Wiesbaden, 1972). See also the comments of James J. Sheehan, "What Is German History? Reflections on the Role of the Nation in German History and Historiography," *Journal of Modern History* 53 (1981): 15-16; Mack Walker, *German Home Towns. Community, State, and General Estate 1648-1871* (Ithaca and London, 1971), pp. 109-110; and the suggestive comparative perspective offered by Suzanne Berger, *Peasants against Politics. Rural Organization in Brittany, 1911-1967* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972).

62. The case of the Rhineland and Westphalia, described by Sperber in the works cited in note 44, provides a good comparison. A different sort of contrast is offered by Ian Farr, "Populism in the Countryside: The Peasant Leagues in Bavaria in the 1890s," in Evans, ed., *Society and Politics* pp. 136-59.

63. See, e.g., Heinz Reif "'Erhaltung adligen Stamms und Namens' — Adelsfamilie und Statussicherung im Münsterland 1770 bis 1914," in Neithard Bulst, Joseph Goy and Jochen Hooch, eds., *Familie zwischen Tradition und Moderne. Studien zur Geschichte der Familie in Deutschland und Frankreich vom 16. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1981) pp. 275-308; Reif, *Westfälischer Adel 1770-1860. Vom Herrschaftsstand zur regionalen Elite* (Göttingen, 1979); and, in general, David Warren Hendon, *The Center Party and the Agrarian Interest in Germany, 1890-1914* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Emory University, 1976).

64. See the interesting contrast provided by Mary Nolan, *Social democracy and society. Working-class radicalism in Düsseldorf, 1890-1920* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 32-56, 99-125, 156-66; and the discussion in Ronald J. Ross, *Beleaguered Tower: The Dilemma of Political Catholicism in Wilhelmine Germany* (Notre Dame, London, 1976), pp. 106-18.

65. Blackbourn comments on this in *Mythen*, p. 71. The point is made as well in the recent work of Barbara Greven-Aschoff, *Die bürgerliche Frauenbewegung in Deutschland 1894-1933* (Göttingen, 1981), p. 13. Although this study covers much the same ground as Evans' book on the bourgeois women's movement, it presents its findings from a much different perspective and can profitably be read together with Evans' work. See also Greven-Aschoff, "Sozialer Wandel und Frauenbewegung," *GG 7* (1981): 328-46.

66. In fact, Blackbourn places a great emphasis on the importance of liberal reforms from above in the creation of a fully developed "*staatsbürgerliche Gesellschaft*," which he discovers in Germany in the 1860s and posits as the essential precondition for capitalist expansion. See *Mythen*, pp. 91-94. This theme is most fully developed in Reinhard Koselleck, *Preussen zwischen Reform und Revolution. Allgemeines Landrecht, Verwaltung und soziale Bewegung von*

1791 bis 1848 (Stuttgart, 1967). See also, Barbara Vogel, ed., *Preussische Reformen 1807-1820* (Königstein/Ts., 1980).

67. Wehler quoting Rudolf Stadelmann in *Moderne deutsche Sozialgeschichte*, p. 109.

68. In addition to the work of Rosenberg and Koselleck on the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see John R. Gillis, *The Prussian Bureaucracy in Crisis 1840-1860. Origins of an Administrative Ethos* (Stanford, 1971); and Jane Caplan, "'The imaginary universality of particular interests': the 'tradition' of the civil service in German history," *Social History* 4 (1979): 299-317, which provides an excellent critique of the "new orthodoxy's" approach to the civil service and outlines an agenda for research on this group.

69. Berger, "The traditional sector," p. 93, and Berger, "Regime and interest representation," p. 83. Kocka argues this point consistently in his work on white collar workers.

70. In addition to Blackbourn's comments in *Mythen*, see Dirk Blasius, "Bürgerliches Recht und bürgerliche Identität. Zu einem Problemzusammenhang in der deutschen Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts," in Berding, et al., eds., *Vom Staat des Ancien Regime*, pp. 213-224; Karin Hausen, "Family and Role-division: The Polarisation of Sexual Stereotypes in the Nineteenth Century — an Aspect of the Dissociation of Work and Family Life," in Evans, ed., *The German Family*, pp. 51-83; and Norbert Horn and Jürgen Kocka, eds., *Recht und Entwicklung der Grossunternehmen im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert. Wirtschafts-, sozial- und rechtshistorische Untersuchungen zur Industrialisierung in Deutschland, Frankreich, England und den USA* (Göttingen, 1979), particularly the articles by Norbert Horn, Gerhard Dilcher and Rudi Lauda.

71. Eley, *Reshaping*, p. 39.

72. See, in addition to the recent works of Sheehan, *German Liberalism*, and White, the useful reviews provided by Wolfgang J. Mommsen, "Der deutsche Liberalismus zwischen 'klassenloser Bürgergesellschaft' und 'Organisiertem Kapitalismus.' Zu einigen neueren Liberalismusinterpretationen," *GG* 4 (1978): 77-90; Mommsen, "Wandlungen der liberalen Idee im Zeitalter des Imperialismus," in Karl Holl and Günther List, eds., *Liberalismus und imperialistischer Staat. Der Imperialismus als Problem liberaler Parteien in Deutschland 1890-1914* (Göttingen, 1975), pp. 109-47. Fundamental for party organization and structure is Thomas Nipperdey, *Die Organisation der deutschen Parteien vor 1918* (Düsseldorf, 1961), pp. 42-240. A useful regional case study and an excellent complement to Blackbourn's work is James Clark Hunt, *The People's Party in Württemberg and Southern Germany, 1890-1914. The Possibilities of Democratic Politics* (Stuttgart, 1975). See also Eley's suggestions for future research into political liberalism in "James Sheehan and the German Liberals: A Critical Appreciation," *Central European History*, 3 (1981): 273-88.

73. Eley, *Reshaping*, p. 24. Eley bases his comments on Hellmut Hesselbarth, *Revolutionäre Sozialdemokraten, Opportunisten und die Bauern am Vorabend des Imperialismus* (Berlin, 1968), pp. 241-250. Hesselbarth counts 300,000 votes in the 1898 Reichstag elections in areas which are predominantly agricultural, about 1/7 of all SPD votes, but these figures do not allow any precise statements about how many of these voters were actually peasants, part-time peasants employed in industry, agricultural laborers, or workers outside the agricultural sector altogether. More work will be necessary to establish the extent of SPD electoral success among the peasantry, and the degree to which the right's fears of peasant defections to the SPD were based on an accurate assessment of reality.

74. See William Harvey Maehl, "German Social Democratic Agrarian Policy, 1890-1895, Reconsidered," *Central European History* 13 (1980): 121-57; Hans Georg Lehmann, *Die Agrarfrage in der Theorie und Praxis der deutschen und internationalen Sozialdemokratie. Vom*

Marxismus zum Revisionismus und Bolschewismus (Tübingen, 1970); and Eugen Sinner, "La politique de la social-démocratie allemande vis-à-vis de l'artisanat à la fin du XIXe siècle," *Le mouvement social* 114 (1981): 105-23.

75. See the interesting comparative perspective offered by Tony Judt, *Socialism in Provence 1871-1914. A Study of the Origins of the Modern French Left* (Cambridge, 1979), and the comments on Judt by Edward Berenson, "Socialism in the Countryside?" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23 (1981): 278-84.

76. Eley, *Reshaping*, p. 161.

77. Blackbourn, "The Problem of Democratization: German Catholics and the Role of the Centre Party," in Evans, ed., *Society and Politics*, p. 167, and Blackbourn, *Class, Religion and Local Politics*, p. 197.

78. Röhl, *Germany without Bismarck*, p. 271.

79. Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York, 1963), p. 124.

80. Eley, *Reshaping*, pp. 139, 107.

81. Blackbourn, *Class, Religion and Local Politics*, p. 140.

82. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

83. On this point, Eley in particular makes good use of the work of Gareth Stedman Jones, "Society and politics at the beginning of the world economy," *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 1 (1977): 77-92; and Bob Jessop, "Capitalism and Democracy: The Best Possible Political Shell?" in Gary Littlejohn, et al., eds., *Power and the State* (New York, 1978), pp. 10-51. That this false yardstick is used in the "new orthodoxy" is perhaps no surprise given that a vision of normative development is common to liberal modernization theory and certain varieties of Marxism, and both approaches have profoundly influenced the "new orthodoxy." See the lucid discussion in Berger, "Discontinuity in the politics of industrial society," in Berger and Piore, *Dualism*, pp. 133-35.

84. Blackbourn, "The *Mittelstand*," p. 433. This suggestion is confirmed in much recent research on the decade of war and inflation, 1914-23. See the essays in Gerald D. Feldman and Oto Büsch, eds., *Historische Prozesse der deutschen Inflation. Ein Tagungsbericht* (Berlin, 1978), and Feldman, et al., eds., *Die deutsche Inflation. Eine Zwischenbilanz/The German Inflation Reconsidered. A Preliminary Balance* (Berlin, New York, 1982).

85. Geoff Eley, "What Produces Fascism: Pre-Industrial Traditions, or a Crisis of the Capitalist State?" *Politics and Society* 12 (1983), pp. 71, 78. Eley should be careful to specify this latter argument, since it can be understood in more than one way. See, e.g., Knut Borchardt, "Zwangslagen und Handlungsspielräume in der grossen Wirtschaftskrise der frühen dreissiger Jahre. Zur Revision des überlieferten Geschichtsbildes," *Jahrbuch 1979 der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Munich, 1979), pp. 1-47.

86. Eley, *Reshaping*, p. 353, and "The Wilhelmine Right," p. 125. The case for a continuity from the Kaiserreich to 1933 is most clearly stated in the latter piece.

87. See, e.g., the essays by Gerhard A. Ritter in *Arbeiterbewegung, Parteien und Parlamentarismus. Aufsätze zur deutschen Sozialgeschichte und Verfassungsgeschichte des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen, 1976), which, in *Mythen*, Eley all too summarily dismisses as "naïv" and "formalistisch." Moreover, other defenders of the "new orthodoxy" have pursued systematic comparisons of Germany and the USA, and their efforts reflect no

uncritical acceptance of this other paradigm of liberal democracy enshrined in modernization theory. See, e.g., in addition to the comparative work of Puhle and Kocka, cited above in notes 14 and 28, Heinrich August Winkler, ed., *Die grosse Krise in Amerika. Vergleichende Studien zur politischen Sozialgeschichte 1929-1939* (Göttingen, 1973); Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Der Aufstieg des amerikanischen Imperialismus. Studien zur Entwicklung des Imperium Americanum 1865-1900* (Göttingen, 1974); and the implicit comparative perspective in Winkler, ed., *Organisierter Kapitalismus*, and Hans-Ulrich Wehler, ed., *Klassen in der europäischen Geschichte* (Göttingen, 1979). Among other recent attempts to place Germany in a comparative perspective see John A. Garraty, "The New Deal, National Socialism, and the Great Depression," *American Historical Review* 78 (1973): 907-44; Shearer Davis Bowman, "Antebellum Planters and Vormärz Junkers in Comparative Perspective," *American Historical Review* 85 (1980): 779-808; Hanna Schisler, "Die Junker. Zur Sozialgeschichte und historischen Bedeutung der agrarischen Elite in Preussen," in Hans-Jürgen Puhle and Hans-Ulrich Wehler, eds., *Preussen im Rückblick* (Göttingen, 1980), pp. 89-122; Fritz K. Ringer, *Education and Society in Modern Europe* (Bloomington and London, 1979); Gerald D. Feldman and Irmgard Steinisch, "Notwendigkeit und Grenzen sozialstaatlicher Intervention: Eine vergleichende Fallstudie des Ruhreisenstreits und des Generalstreiks in England," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 20 (1980): 57-117; Steinisch, *Acht Stunden sind besser als Zwölf: Die wirtschafts- und sozialpolitischen Probleme sowie politischen Implikationen des Kampfes um die Einführung des achtsündigen Dreischichtsystems in der deutschen und amerikanischen eisen- und stahlerzeugenden Industrie vor und nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg. Eine vergleichende Studie* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Munich, 1981); and Frank B. Tipton, Jr., "Government Policy and Economic Development in Germany and Japan: A Skeptical Reevaluation," *Journal of Economic History* 41 (1981): 139-50; Hartmut Kaelble, *Historical Research on Social Mobility. Western Europe and the USA in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, trans. Ingrid Noakes (New York, 1981); and Wolfgang J. Mommsen, ed., *The Emergence of the Welfare State in Britain and Germany 1850-1950* (London, 1981).

88. The work of Judt, cited in note 75, offers an excellent starting point. See also the special issue of *Le mouvement social*, cited in note 64, and, in addition, Philip Nord, "Le mouvement des petits commerçants et la politique en France de 1888 à 1914," *Le mouvement social* 114 (1981): 35-55. This issue is also devoted to the petty bourgeoisie.

89. Eley, "What Produces Fascism," shows the possibilities of comparisons between Italy and Germany. See also, John A. Davis, ed., *Gramsci and Italy's Passive Revolution* (London, 1979); and David D. Roberts, "Petty Bourgeois Fascism in Italy: Form and Content," in Stein Ugelvik Larsen, et al., eds., *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism* (Bergen, Oslo, Troms, 1980), pp. 337-347. On comparative possibilities with Japan, see Tipton, cited in note 87.

90. See, e.g., the trenchant critique of modernization theory by Hanna Schisler, "Theorien des sozialen Wandels," *Neue politische Literatur* 19 (1974): 155-89; Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Modernisierungstheorie und Geschichte* (Göttingen, 1975); and Horst Matzerath and Heinrich Volkmann, "Modernisierungstheorie und Nationalsozialismus," in Jürgen Kocka, ed., *Theorien in der Praxis des Historikers* (Göttingen, 1977), pp. 86-102, followed by the discussion, among others, by Puhle, Wehler, Kocka and Winkler, pp. 102-16.

91. A particularly good example is Jürgen Kocka, *Klassengesellschaft im Krieg. Deutsche Sozialgeschichte 1914-1918* (Göttingen, 1973). Indeed, when W.J. Mommsen first coined the term "Kehrite," he accurately observed that "at times their approach has rather strong Marxist undertones." See "Domestic Factors," p. 228.

92. See e.g., the discussions by Volker Berghahn, "Politik und Gesellschaft im Wilhelminischen Deutschland," *Neue politische Literatur* 24 (1979): 164-95; Dieter Langewiesche, "Das Deutsche Kaiserreich — Bemerkungen zur Diskussion über Parlamentarisierung Deutschlands," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 19 (1979): 628-42; and

Wolfgang Mock, "'Manipulation von oben' oder Selbstorganisation an der Basis? Einige neuere Ansätze in der englischen Historiographie zur Geschichte des deutschen Kaiserreichs," *Historische Zeitschrift* 232 (1981): 358-75. An English-language publication of *Mythen* is planned for the near future by Oxford University Press.