

the contradiction between apparently indifferent masses and a colonialist consensus is crucial for understanding the workings of colonialism in German society. Colonialists produced “the masses” as distant, irrational, and dependent in order to erase the logical flaws in their own arguments for colonial modernity, to authorize their enjoyment of mass culture, and to establish their position as a rational and privileged elite. But lower-class Germans were actively interested in colonialism in ways that colonialists gave them little credit for and could not contain. Most were similarly drawn to exoticized pleasures, but many, including colonial opponents, also appropriated the enlightenment on offer in the name of scientific objectivity and modern progress. In this way, Short argues, colonialism divided the nation by reproducing class boundaries that were being eroded by mass politics and mass culture. At the same time, a new consensus developed out of these tensions, a consensus not around visions of the nation but rather around visions of the global.

This compact book is well organized. Short begins by surveying the elitist structures of the colonial movement and explains colonialists’ focus on commodities. He then moves on to “subaltern colonialisms,” alternative forms of popular activism that ran counter to the priorities laid down by colonialist leaders. From here Short explores colonialists’ ambivalent embrace of mass culture’s enchantments and working-class readers’ surprising enthusiasm for colonial enlightenment. Finally, he examines the 1907 elections to illustrate both the growing consensus around a colonial political economy and the persistence of strident anti-colonialist alternatives among socialist activists at the grassroots.

Short contextualizes the organized colonial movement more effectively than any other scholar, treating colonialists not as an atavistic force but rather as active and sometimes creative players in a very fluid environment. He also demonstrates the importance of taking seriously other strains of colonial activism and interest. Bringing lower-class Germans into the story as agents allows him to present colonialism as a field of tension, a site for competing publics to produce and contest the social order. Finally, integrating mass culture into his analysis of social and political developments allows him to point out the flights of fancy, the enchantments, embedded throughout the colonial public sphere, as in the bourgeois public sphere more generally.

Let me raise one question. Does Short’s focus on class push him to overlook other social divisions that might complicate the consensus around a market-based modernity? Religion, for example, is a constant background presence here, whether in the form of Center Party critiques of colonialism or the integration of missionary organizations into the colonial movement. Yet religion could cut across class. More to the point, it also activated different tensions and provoked different responses to the problems of modernity both at home and overseas.

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JEAN-NUMA DUCANGE. *La Révolution française et la social-démocratie: Transmissions et usages politiques de l'histoire en Allemagne et Autriche (1889–1934)*. (Histoire.) Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes. 2012. Pp. 361. €20.00.

The Marxist interpretation of the French Revolution of 1789 was a Teutonic and not a Gallic child. When Jean Jaurès’s *Histoire socialiste de la Révolution française* appeared in 1901–1904, its Marxist credentials were measured and found wanting, both in France and Germany, by the then-already authoritative yardstick of Karl Kautsky’s *Die Klassegegensätze von 1789 (The Class Conflicts of 1789)*, published in 1889. Kautsky’s work sparked admiration among self-styled French Marxist socialists around Jules Guèsde, who welcomed its French translation in 1901.

Jean-Numa Ducange offers an *histoire croisée* or intertwined history, not just of how the French Revolution figured importantly in the self-conception of German and Austrian Social Democracy but of the influence in France—and in Russia too—of German Marxist interpretations. As late as 1936 the French Communist Party still relied in its cadre schooling on Kautsky’s classic “in the absence of a [French] Marxist textbook on the French Revolution.” Ducange concludes: “such an example shows well how a foreign historiography can . . . form an authoritative interpretation (*la référence*) of an event, lacking an equivalent production in the country concerned” (p. 334).

Pondering the French Revolution was crucial to German socialism, both because the German lands could claim no successful insurrectionary tradition and because the 1789 revolution, “though understood as bourgeois, was celebrated as the only one to have fulfilled the tasks of its epoch” (p. 329). The question for Kautsky, as later for the revisionist socialists around Eduard Bernstein, the leftist “party of movement” around Rosa Luxemburg, and the postwar communists, was how—or whether—the French Revolution could be understood as a model of the socialist revolution to come. At the pulsing heart of the matter was the specter of bloody violence: must the Terror rise again?

Ducange emphasizes the powerful impulse within pro-revolutionary French historiography to view the process inaugurated in 1789 as the birth not only of bourgeois liberalism but more importantly of a popular democracy whose transformation through plebeian mobilization into democratic proto-socialism was the guiding star of later moderate socialists such as Jaurès. He and other leftist historians, notably Albert Mathiez, defended both the revolution’s crowd violence and the Robespierrean guillotine as righteous necessities in face of implacable enemies.

Kautsky and other influential pre-1933 German interpreters of the French Revolution—Wilhelm Blos, Franz Mehring, Heinrich Cunow, Hermann Wendel, and the admirable, ill-fated Hedwig Hintze—followed Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels’s lead in insisting that the events unleashed in 1789 France constituted a spe-

cifically bourgeois revolution whose triumph in its day left the transition in the twentieth-century future from capitalism to socialism as the unsolved riddle facing all Marxists. Kautsky and Mehring, especially, scorned the fetishism of pre-1914 populist democracy they ascribed to Jaurès, Bernsteinian revisionists, and apostles of Americanism. It would require a decisive victory of the ever broader phalanxes of social democracy over its liberal and reactionary rivals to seal the Marxist triumph. Yet, in contrast to the French Revolution, terroristic violence need not accompany it, for social democratic mass organization would overwhelm its opponents with minimal bloodshed. From the German perspective, French revolutionary terror was ascribable in part to the imprinting on popular culture of the bloody-handedness of the *ancien régime* and in part to the revolutionary leadership's own efforts to discipline the plebeians and fight the revolutionary wars.

After 1914, Kautsky's stance changed from condemnation of Robespierrean stifling of the liberal-democratic revolutionary dynamic to acquiescence in the quelling of paranoid mass violence even by means of the guillotine. But a major theme of Ducange's work is to show how, from the 1870s to the 1930s, German social democrats recoiled from Maximilien Robespierre and the bloodshed he symbolized, favoring Georges Danton as the icon of a bourgeois revolution in which the apostles of a future socialism—in the figures of Jean-Paul Marat, the Hébertistes, and Gracchus Babeuf—were fated to be overpowered (and who themselves were understood to oppose terrorism). By contrast, pro-revolutionary French historians rallied to Robespierre's defense. Ducange illustrates this point interestingly in recounting Mathiez's—and later Georges Lefebvre's—rejection of Weimar-era German socialist accounts of the 1789–1794 revolution that were increasingly negative toward political violence.

Bolshevik triumph in Russia—like the earlier failure of the 1905 revolution there—convinced Kautsky and other German social democrats that the age of bourgeois revolution in the West had ended. “The idea that the Bolsheviks comprised a conspiratorial minority among the uncontrollable masses reminded the Social Democrats all the more of a sterile imitation of the Jacobin past in that the actors”—V. I. Lenin and party—“themselves laid claim to the comparison” (p. 332). As for Joseph Stalin: was he Napoleon Bonaparte's ghost or Benito Mussolini's brother? Yet the Soviet communists proselytized their own view of the 1789 revolution, drawing on (increasingly unacknowledged) German social democratic texts. Kautsky inspired Chinese and Japanese communists as well. The East German comrades pantheonized Mehring's Marxist (and rudely anti-Jaurèsian) historiography, stealing a march on their French communist friends by publishing in 1953 the first collection of documents on the *sans-culottes*, the French Revolution's demotic foot-soldiers.

Ducange challenges the thesis that grassroots social democratic militants showed little interest in Marxist theory, tracing exemplarily the circulation in the for-

midable socialist mass media of the party intelligentsia's debates on the French Revolution. His book underscores the social democrats' commitment to the advancement of culture (*Bildung*) and civilized society. It is another reminder of what was lost to Adolf Hitler's national socialism. Ducange's book, well-grounded in the recent German-, French-, and English-language literature, is an illuminating and valuable work, especially for scholars of European socialism, German social democracy, and the historiography of the French Revolution.

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RUSSEL LEMMONS. *Hitler's Rival: Ernst Thälmann in Myth and Memory*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky. 2013. Pp. ix, 428. \$50.00.

Ernst Thälmann was more useful in prison than at liberty, and still more useful when dead. Somewhat mis-titled, Russel Lemmons's book is less about Thälmann as Adolf Hitler's rival than about carefully crafted propaganda that made of him a resolute victim of Nazi oppression until 1939, and later the leading “saint” in East Germany's (GDR) pantheon of martyrs. Lemmons's analysis uses the “prism of political religions” developed by Eric Voegelin in the 1930s and most prominently reflected today in the work of Michael Burleigh. Although the approach is often paired with totalitarian theory, Lemmons declines to become deeply involved with that contentious paradigm, choosing to focus on the hardly disputable religious elements of Marxist-Leninist propaganda.

After an introduction stating that the purpose of the book is to provide “an analysis of a major theme in the propaganda of German communism, traced over the course of more than sixty years,” Lemmons begins with a sketch of Thälmann's career as Joseph Stalin's loyal German acolyte before 1933 (p. 15). The next fifty pages recall the orchestrated worldwide campaign to “free Ernst Thälmann” between 1933 and 1939, although Stalin and the Comintern were more interested in using him to build “common cause with socialists, radicals, fellow travellers, and even liberals” than in bringing him to Moscow (p. 109). Stalin surely could have made the 1939 Nazi-Soviet pact conditional on Thälmann's release, but neither he nor Walter Ulbricht's clique in Moscow were interested in having him among them.

The book's core, the following 240 pages, covers the Thälmann myth in the GDR. After reviewing Thälmann's role in the GDR's founding mythology, chapters focus on the two major Thälmann films produced by the GDR, the Buchenwald concentration camp, and the youth (the Hitler Youth became the Thälmann Pioneers). A further, and particularly interesting, chapter considers the contortions GDR historians went through to produce ostensibly scholarly biographies that could pass the review of the not always consistent Central