

**Russia in the German Global Imaginary: Imperial Visions and Utopian Desires, 1905–1941.** By *James E. Casteel*. Pitt Series in Russian and East European Studies. Edited by *Jonathan Harris*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016. Pp. xii+252. \$28.95 (paper).

**Between Yesterday and Tomorrow: German Visions of Europe, 1926–1950.** By *Christian Bailey*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2013. Pp. xiv+260. \$120.00 (cloth); \$34.95 (paper).

The need to contextualize and integrate explanations of politics in an international, transnational, and global sense has long been accepted by historians. James E. Casteel's investigation of Russia in varying instances of a "German global imaginary" and Christian Bailey's transnational study of German "visions of Europe" exemplify two of the most popular contemporary approaches and their limitations. Although they cover similar periods, spanning the traditional historical boundaries between the prewar *Kaiserreich*, Weimar Republic, National Socialist dictatorship, and the postwar era and founding of the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, the volumes address contrasting questions and rely on different types of evidence. Despite the overlapping themes of the two books, there are few indications of how their subject matter might be connected. Casteel refers to travel accounts, the press, fiction, and popular and academic literature in order not merely to analyze "the important role that Russia played as an Other in the construction of German national identity and as a force in shaping German politics" but also to explore "the changing place of Russia in Germany's global imaginary in an age of intensive imperial rivalry" within "an increasingly interconnected world" (6, 8). The intellectual hinterland of—and practical foil for—the study is a more or less explicit national paradigm of historical inquiry. By contrast, Bailey's goal is "to move away from teleological histories and understandings of European integration," such as that of Wilfried Loth, which had—in 1987—sought to define and bring to life a particular version of the Continent; namely, that of "Europe as an integrated whole" (1–2). Bailey's book seeks to problematize what is often treated as "a linear and solely post-war process" (2). His transnational account of European history is pitted against a supranational paradigm of integration.

Casteel's research follows that of Lev Kopelev's multivolume project on *West-Östliche Spiegelungen*, which examines two-way cultural transfers and relationships between Russia and Germany, and Gerd Koenen's *Der Russland-Komplex*, which rejects Ernst Nolte's controversial thesis about a causal nexus between Bolshevism and Nazism by pointing to the roots of Germany's putative "Russia complex" in a "long-standing

image of the ‘Russian peril’” that “morphed into ‘anti-Bolshevism’” (8) after the Russian Revolution. As a result, the “Nazis did not need to invent an image of Russia from scratch since they could draw on well-established cultural discourses within German society and exploit them for their own purposes” (8). Casteel adapts and extends such approaches in order to examine Russia’s changing role in a global imaginary that was “emerging out of national formation and imperial competition” (8). Thus, although Russia was situated in “the East” within Edward Said’s wider schema of “Orientalism,” it was also linked to cultural encounters and informal economic domination in which “cultural representations of other parts of the world took on a greater significance as expressions of power as they worked to expand the space available for German activity in the world” (9). The countervailing imperatives and imagery to which this repositioning gave rise served to highlight the “uncertainty” of the border between Europe and Asia, which made “the construction of Eastern Europe . . . a paradox of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion” (Larry Wolff) and helped to reinforce the “oscillation between megalomania and angst” as the “very essence of the myth of Germany’s eastern borderlands” (Gregor Thum, 10). Casteel’s aim is not to provide a comprehensive survey of German representations of Russia but to ask “why Russia occupied such a prominent place in German imaginings of its imperial rival in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries” (11), placing due emphasis on continuities across periods characterized by different political regimes. His intention is to explain how and why “Russia was viewed as Asiatic *and* Europeanizing, barbaric *and* civilizing, backward *and* modernizing all at the same time” (10).

Such objectives are difficult to achieve. Casteel looks at popular and academic accounts of Russia, summarizing their contents under broad headings (“Siberia” as “America in Asia,” the “rhetoric of colonization,” and depictions of ethnic Germans in the Soviet Union). Often, the discursive context and relative significance of the accounts are not fully established. This is particularly the case in the first two “background” chapters (out of six in total) about the centuries before 1905. In chapter 3, on Siberia and German experts on Russia during the late Wilhelmine era, well-known commentators such as Theodor Schiemann, Otto Hoetzsch, and Paul Rohrbach are introduced alongside more obscure observers such as Otto Auhagen (“an agricultural expert on Russian Asia for the German consulate in St Petersburg” [58]), Max Sering (known within the field of economics but not as a Russian specialist), Otto Goebel (a trade attaché in St. Petersburg from 1905 to 1910 who published two book-length studies under the auspices of the Interior Ministry), Kurt Wiedenfeld (a little-known economist who gained a professorship at Halle in 1914), Richard Pohle (“a former conservator in the Botanical gardens in St Petersburg, later a lecturer at the University of Berlin” [78]), and Alfred von Gossler (head of the military district of Courland during World War I). In chapter 4, on German travel accounts during the interwar era, the work of the travel writer Colin Ross is investigated beside that of the Bohemian-born Communist Otto Heller, the conservative Austrian writer Franz Krotzsch, the left-wing journalist Otto Corbach, the pacifist Arthur Holitscher, the nationalist publisher Georg Kleinow, the socialist statistician Emil Julius Gumbel, the sexologist Max Hodann, the Bohemian-born nationalist Hermann Ullmann, the Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg, the Communist writer Franz Jung, the unknown traveler Walther Allerhand, the conservative publicist Karl Prinz Anton Rohan, the Austrian socialist and novelist Lili Körber, and the German agricultural attaché Otto Schiller. Such commentators asked themselves different questions, contributed to separate debates, and had diverse readerships. As observers of Russia, they were influenced by other studies of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, which they typically sought to deploy in wider debates about agricultural reform, systems of government, imperial expansion, and so on. In order to show exactly how, when, and why Russia was a “subject capable of challeng-

ing the (Western) European order itself” (174), Casteel would have to provide more detail and analysis of both sets of discourses and of their interrelationship. The great merit of this study is its exploration of the patchwork of assumptions about Russia that cut across temporal and party-political boundaries and contributed to the imagination in the German public sphere of a “world” in which Germany was located. Its main weakness is that it spends too little time discussing—if only then to discount—potential divergences between distinct political milieus, together with shifts brought about by changing political regimes in Germany and in Russia or the USSR.

Bailey’s approach to Germany’s supposed position in the world is, in some respects, a mirror image of that of Casteel. Whereas the latter extends an analysis of “othering” and “Orientalism” to the imagining of world empires in a global setting, the former concentrates on networks of policy makers, activists, and closely associated publicists who were attempting to overcome a history of Continental oppositions and enmity through European integration as a set of actions—rather than imaginings—and a form of organization. Bailey aims to show “how integration became an important cause for civil society organizations and how it fitted in with their wider intellectual and political programmes and agendas” (199). Much of the research derives from earlier studies of transnational networks and groupings of Christian Democrats (Wolfram Kaiser) and of the internationalism (Rolf Steininger) and exile of Social Democrats (Werner Röder, Ludwig Eiber). Yet it also attempts to demonstrate how the European policies of Social and Christian Democrats shaped domestic policy, “rather than the other way round” (201), and to investigate how civil society organizations campaigning for European cooperation produced “widely read journalistic analysis, and helped to revive party political life between the mid-1920s and the early post-1945 period,” at the same time as cultivating “associational life between European elites” and developing “an integrationist policy within socialist and Christian political parties” (199). In these respects, Bailey’s objectives are close to those of Vanessa Conze in *Das Europa der Deutschen: Ideen von Europa in Deutschland zwischen Reichstradition und Westorientierung 1920–1970*. Through a forensic reconstruction of the contacts, interactions, and writings of journalists and politicians connected to the periodical *Merkur* (and its forerunners the *Neue Rundschau* and the *Europäische Revue*), and to the organizations of *Das Demokratische Deutschland* and the *Internationaler Sozialistischer Kampfbund*, Bailey meets most of these objectives, crafting a careful, original account of the persisting relevance among the parties and groupings of the center-left and center-right of arguments for a “Third Force” and an integrated “Central Europe” (*Mitteleuropa*).

Bailey is arguably less successful—in ways that echo the difficulties encountered by Casteel—in tying the pre- and “post-war trajectories of European federalism” (chap. 6) and “the rise and fall of a socialist Europe” (chap. 4) to the main debates and policy decisions facing the Social Democratic Party and Christian Democracy. How were regionalism, particularly that of Bavaria and the German South, and the “Central European” perspectives of Wilhelm Hoegner, Heinrich Ritzel, Alfred Loritz, Jakob Kindt-Kiefer, Joseph Wirth, Walter Fliess, and Willi Eichler related to the different priorities of other Social and Christian Democrats and to wider—and ultimately successful—processes of Westernization? “German socialists did not lose their commitment to an integrated Europe that cut across the Cold War divide, even if Kurt Schumacher’s policy has often been regarded as more nationalist than pro-European” (137), writes Bailey, but without explaining fully how the various sets of imperatives intersected. Christian and Social Democrats’ motivations in pursuing European integration were “not always uncomplicatedly nationalist” (as Alan Milward is held to have suggested in *The European Rescue of the Nation-State*) but “could emerge out of long held regional loyalties, particularly in areas such as Bavaria,

where politicians had sought to mobilize support by highlighting the state's perceived marginalization in a united Germany" (193), yet how were security, national interests, and regional loyalties combined? These are questions that Bailey cannot answer, given the periodization and focus of his study, which relies on evidence produced by networks and organizations strongly in favor of European integration and by advocates of *Mittleuropa* or a German-inflected *Abendland*. It is one of the strengths of his research, however, that it raises the questions in a stimulating way.

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