

Richard Bessel, ed. *Life in the Third Reich*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987. Pp. xix, 124. Cloth, \$24.95; paper, \$7.95.

In *Life in the Third Reich*, Richard Bessel edits and contributes to a collection of essays on the Nazi experience. The contributors, eight of them, have written brief, undocumented essays on subjects to do with Hitler's Germany. In the majority of cases those authors have written on the same or allied subjects at greater length elsewhere, and thus the lack of footnotes and bibliography (except for a brief "Suggestions for Further Reading") is not disabling.

The essays cover such varied subjects as political violence, village life, youth, Hitler's public image, the nature of the Nazi state, the treatment of Jews, and the treatment of other social outcasts (*gemeinschaftsfremd*). The final one examines how ordinary people remember the Third Reich. The essays, as a group, therefore, do not attempt to present the Third Reich in any sort of full view, but only to illuminate some of its corners.

All the authors agree that one of the characteristics of the Nazi state was its lack of coherent organization or policy. When they look at the Nazi bureaucracy, several of the authors use, correctly, the analogy of feudal barons struggling for dominance. In fact, some go so far in this view that it is hard to imagine how the Germans did as well as they did in World War II.

Bessel's writers are uniformly interesting, particularly when they discuss matters that are seldom looked at in more general writings on the Third Reich. For example, Detlew Peukert describes rebellious youth, the "Edelweiss Pirates" and the "Swing Youth," who flouted their distaste for authority even in the early war years. Gerhard Wilke looks at life in a small village in northern Hesse and the effect that Nazism had on life there. The least satisfactory of the essays is that by Ian Kershaw, who attempts to explain the creation of Hitler's image, the Fuehrer cult; the deficiencies in his essay stem more from the inability of research tools to explain political leadership than from any shortcoming on Kershaw's part.

The book requires a substantial amount of background information to read and some degree of sophistication to interpret. Thus, it would serve very well as a subject for discussion in a seminar setting or in a course that focused strongly or exclusively on the Third Reich, but it would be less satisfactory as collateral reading in a more general course.

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Barbara Marshall. *The Origins of Post-War German Politics*. London, New York, and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1988. Pp. 221. Cloth, \$57.50.

In this monograph, Barbara Marshall, a Senior Lecturer in European History at the Polytechnic of North London, examines how the post-World War II political, social, and economic order developed within the Germany occupied by the western Allies. Expectations raised by its title notwithstanding, *The Origins of Post-War German Politics* focuses on British occupation policies in Hanover between the city's capture in April 1945 and the economic merger of the British and American zones in January 1947. Divided into two sections, it treats respectively the interregnum between April and August and the post-Potsdam period. After an opening chapter, which summarizes British preparations for the occupation and the establishment of the Military Government in Hanover, the next two describe local life and political developments before Potsdam. The three following chapters analyze British policies and practices regarding the democratization of local government, Works Councils and Trade Unions, and the revival of political parties, especially the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

Defeat of Hitler's Third Reich gave the Allies unprecedented opportunities to create new institutions in Germany, especially during a brief period immediately subsequent to the end of hostilities. A radically democratic and egalitarian order, however, did not emerge, and Marshall investigates, using Hanover as a case study, not only the role of the British and the Germans in this putative failure but also the question of whether the Allies actually prevented its creation, imposing instead a bourgeois and capitalistic democracy. Marshall finds that British occupation policy, especially prior to Potsdam, lacked clearly articulated goals, other than security for the occupying forces, the restoration of law and order, the provision of food and other basic services, denazification, and the democratization of German institutions. Confronted with the staggering problems of a Hanover in ruins, the understaffed Military Government adopted a pragmatic approach, postponing questions of long-term reform. British delegation of administrative responsibilities to Germans also