effectiveness, especially on mayors in rural areas. Only after 1855, for example, did the Mosel (at the time navigable only five months out of the year) enjoy regular postal delivery. She demonstrates that the penetration of the state into the countryside did not simply flow from the top down, but also responded to local initiative.

Finally, in a joint essay Wolfgang Foit and Rudolf Seising trace the development of telegraphic systems (from the so-called optical telegraphy or the transmission of messages by semaphores) beginning in the French Revolution through electrical means of transmission by mid-century. They discuss various publicists for the telegraph, scientists and inventors (Carl Friedrich Gauss, Alexander von Humboldt, Franz von O'Etzel, among others), the technical advances, and establishment by royal order of a commission in 1844 to look into telegraphy for Prussia. In 1849 Europe's first long distance line opened between Frankfurt and Berlin, operated not by the military, but the Ministerium für Handel, Gewerbe und öffentliche Arbeiten. The nation was on its way to being bound together by modern means of communication.

Collectively, these essays clearly point to the value of detailed, empirical examination of the realities of the power of the Prussian state, as opposed to its organization on paper and in law. Most essays inform their studies with reference to communications theory, but not at the expense of good history. A few fruitfully compare their conclusions with research by non-German historians. Their primary sources are state archives, which is to be expected, but their accounts may have benefited from more use of literature, diaries, newspapers, and other nonofficial sources, especially for the later periods. That caveat aside, these essays merit reading by anyone interested in pre 1870 unification of Germany.

LOYD E. LEE
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, NEW PALTZ

Vision Europa: Deutsche und polnische Föderationspläne des 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts. Edited by Heinz Duchhardt and Malgorzata Moraviec. Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern. 2003. Pp. xiv + 137. EUR 80.00. ISBN 3–8053–3268–8.

The collection of essays, published under the aspects of the prestigious Institut für Europäische Geschichte, raises the question: how important are ideas, no matter how worthy, which have had virtually no impact on the contemporaries to whom they were addressed, and which, despite the claims of the authors of those essays, are of little more than historical interest today.

Already in the book's first essay, Wolf Gruner's discussion of European plans

in the air surrounding the Congress of Vienna, the author concedes that he had sought out conceptions and models whose significance was not recognized at the time and was only rediscovered at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These plans were primarily concerned with the problem of how a permanent peace might be achieved, and Gruner contends that, developed further and fine-tuned in later years, they provided the building blocks for contemporary European institutions, "nämlich das Parlament, den Ministerrat, die Kommission, and den Gerichtshof" (p. 35).

A second essay by Malgorzata Moraviec allegedly deals with the changes in Polish discussion of the European question in the nineteenth century. In fact, however, after a brief discussion of the policies proposed by Alexander I's foreign minister, Adam Czartoryski, she deals largely with only two Polish political theorists, Wojciech Jastrzebowski and Stefan Buszczyski. The ideas of both are interesting, but the author tells us that they aroused little excitement or debate among contemporaries. The publication of Jastrezebowski was immediately confiscated by the tsarist censors, whereas the works of Buszczynski were never even discussed in Poland. The author sees the significance of both of their formulation of detailed plans for a European structure, complete with constitution and regulations governing all aspects of public life, which she describes as original, and, for their time, unique contributions.

Even more limited is Heinz Duchhardt's essay on German political theories before World War I, which deals exclusively with a sixteen-page pamphlet, "Die Vereinigten Staaten von Europa," published in Darmstadt in 1912, the work of an obscure writer named Franz Heinrich Plötzer. In this pamphlet, his only known contribution to the subject, Plötzer put forward a detailed proposal for a united Europe that might best be realized under the administration of the Nobel committee or the Norwegian Storting. Though he presented his ideas to the Nobel committee, nothing more was heard of them.

Dealing with far broader subjects of Polish policies after World War I, Stephanie Zloch discusses rival theories over the position Poland should take in a postwar European order. She concentrates on the distinguished but small number of Polish idealists who believed that Poland's security in Europe as a whole might best be served through the formation of a pan-European union, an idea that foundered over the indifference/hostility of Polish public opinion and the adoption of more parochial policies favored by Polish nationalists.

The discussion of Polish concepts of a European federation is carried on by Wieslaw Bokajlo, who takes the story to 1949 when the Soviets squashed all consideration of such projects. Polish concepts fluctuated between the idea of a union dedicated to perpetual peace and the more pragmatic program of a pan-European security system. Analyzed in some detail are Feliks Koneczny's concepts of a United States of Europe which he believed would further the development of "Latin" civilization and guarantee its security against rival civilizations; and the ideas of the musician-statesman Ignasy Paderewski, Jozef

Pilsudski, and Polish Social Democrats, who all favored some kind of Eastern European confederation. But whereas Paderewski and Pilsudski thought largely in terms of a security system dominated by Poland, leading idealists among Poland's Social Democrats hoped to extend the confederation on a European and ultimately global scale dedicated to the preservation of international peace.

In a final essay on German concepts of a new European order in the era between the two World Wars, Jürgen Elvert contends that German theorists looked to a revival of German fortunes through political and economic domination of Mitteleuropa. He sees fundamental differences between champions of a "Germanic" and an "imperialist" model (differences which he fails to define with any precision), but he dismisses both policies as a production of an inhuman totalitarian vision and concludes that German concepts of *Mitteleuropa* must be seen as an *Irrweg* (p. 137). On this subject, the reader would do better to refer back to the older work of Henry Cord Meyer.

NORMAN RICH
BROWN UNIVERSITY

Saxony in German History: Culture, Society, and Politics, 1830–1933. Edited by James Retallack. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. 2000. Pp. xviii + 392. $59.50. ISBN 0–472–11104–3.

In the past few years, regional history has become a central concern of historians as they search for more nuanced views of the German past. The old approaches, quarrels, and generalizations no longer seem as compelling as they did twenty years ago, and we are in a period of reevaluation. Prussocentric history that culminated inevitably in Bismarck's *Kleindeutschland* missed complex, open-ended developments; the Marxist telos of DDR scholarship has collapsed; the *Sonderweg* thesis no longer persuades or inspires; and modernization theory has been buried under qualifications. With easier access to archives in the former DDR, we now have a wealth of new material, much of it on Saxony. This volume takes advantage of that new wealth by collecting the contributions to a conference on the history of Saxony held in Toronto in 1998.

The individual contributions are excellent, but most of the twenty essays are more about Saxony itself than about "Saxony in German history," as the title suggests. And as is typical of conference-based collections, the editor must stretch to find common themes. In a yeoman's effort in his introduction, Retallack locates "three central themes" of the collection — "the way that regions are discovered, constructed, forgotten, and remade in history"; the