

Between Heimat and Hatred: Jews and the Right in Germany, 1871–1935 by Philipp Nielsen. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2019. 328pp. \$74 (hardcover). ISBN 978-0190930660

A Prussian bureaucrat committed to expanding Germanism in the East; an organization promoting a return to agricultural settlement and connection with the soil; military rabbis hopeful about the interreligious “community of the trenches” of World War I—three examples of German Jewish involvement in projects of the Right portrayed in Philipp Nielsen’s *Between Heimat and Hatred: Jews and the Right in Germany, 1871–1935*. The book provides a novel and engaging look at the political involvement of right-of-center German Jews. It traces the increasing tension between their Jewish and their political identities leading up to the Nazi regime.

The book comprises five core empirical chapters, organized chronologically, beginning with the German Empire and ending with the first two years of Nazi rule. The analysis is primarily built around the experiences of about ten German Jews on the political Right. The Right is understood in broad terms, including mostly anyone opposed to democratic politics involving general franchise—monarchists, right liberals, and conservatives. By defining the Right in this way rather than by shared antisemitism, as others have done, Nielsen argues that it should not be surprising to find bourgeois German Jews on the Right. Rather, he examines how the involvement of Jews in projects of the Right was just one choice among many, and asks at what point tensions between their Jewish and their political identities became untenable. Nielsen does that and much more by allowing the reader to see the evolution of the political Right in the sixty years leading up to the Nazi regime from a new and uniquely fruitful perspective.

Nielsen’s analysis speaks to four broader topics that make the book one of interest not only to fellow historians but to a wide range of social scientists and humanities scholars. First are the issues of conditional whiteness, respectability politics, and the limits of inclusion in political spaces marked by racism and white supremacy (see Higginbotham 2003; Schraub 2019). Several of the main characters portrayed in *Between Heimat and Hatred* attempted to demonstrate their loyalty to nation and state and highlight their German identity in an effort to be included in increasingly racialized spaces on the political Right. While at least partially successful through WWI and early Weimar, the increasing rallying of the Right around the idea of the *Volk* thwarted their efforts and showed the incompatibility of their Jewish and political identities. In addition, the analysis includes classic instances of minorities being stereotyped and their loyalties questioned, such as Hindenburg’s response to concerns about intensifying antisemitism against Jewish WWI veterans raised by a decorated military rabbi. Hindenburg, referring to Jews on the Left, shifts the blame away from the military and to Jews themselves, writing, “See to it that your decent co-religionists distance themselves from these ills... Then one will stop blaming an entire race...” (Nielsen 2019, 127).

A second topic is the geopolitics of race and racism, and with it, of inclusion and exclusion (see, for example, Skarpelis 2019). As Nielsen demonstrates, one of the projects of the Right that German Jewish conservatives were actively involved in was the promotion of Germanism in the East. Geopolitical interests mixed with anti-Russian sentiment led to, among other things, the dispute that Jewish communities in the East were more proximate to German than to Slavic culture and their presence and need for protection used as a justification for expanding German territory towards the East. Germany was portrayed as the liberator of Jews from antisemitic Russia. Especially in light of the Holocaust a mere decade or two later, it is apparent just how the Right instrumentalized these communities and considered them expendable for geopolitical purposes.

Third is the role of conservatives in a polarizing political environment where the Right is increasingly defined by racism and nativism—a topic also of interest to scholars of current politics. As Paxton (2004) and others have demonstrated, it was chiefly the decision by conservative elites to support the fascists and their agenda that ultimately paved the way for Hitler and the Nazi regime.

Nielsen's book illuminates this process in a new way by looking at it through the lens of German Jewish conservatives. Positioned as simultaneous insiders and outsiders, their perspective offers unique insights (Collins 1986; Merton 1972; Simmel [1908] 1950).

Lastly, many stories in the book are about political imaginaries and imagined futures of belonging. By guiding the reader chronologically and showing the shared and divergent paths of German Jewish conservatives from 1871 to 1935, Nielsen's analysis shows that it is too easy to dismiss their ideas of what could become of Germany and the political Right as merely naive. Indeed, tracing their stories through periods of immense ruptures and upheaval, when almost any future for state and nation seemed possible, contributes to a de-essentialization of German Jewish political identity. Nielsen's analysis further questions the inevitability of the path the political Right took during the Weimar Republic. It does so by shedding light on the alternative imagined futures of a country where belonging would be defined in civic rather than ethnic ways and the country held together by the state rather than the nation. The stories of German Jewish conservatives and their political imaginaries highlight the tragedy and inevitability of conservatives opting to side with fascists.

The book would have benefitted from more explicit discussions of the role of gender and class. While Nielsen acknowledges in the introduction that the history he tells is almost exclusively one of (upper-) middle-class men, the empirical chapters largely miss gender and, to a much lesser degree, class dimensions in their analyses. The chronological organization of the book, meanwhile, has both benefits and drawbacks. It allows the reader to recognize generational differences and trace the characters' experiences over time, thereby facilitating a better understanding of their often conflicting experiences with the Right and their growing frustrations. The downside of the chronological, as opposed to thematic, organization of the book, however, is that most themes surface in multiple chapters, thus complicating access for readers interested in specific issues, such as the role of land, bureaucracy, or religion.

In summary, *Between Heimat and Hatred* provides a novel and illuminating analysis of the evolution of the political Right from the German Empire to the early years of the Nazi regime through the eyes of German Jewish conservatives. The book will be of great interest not only to scholars of German and modern Jewish history but also to those studying politics on the Right, racism and antisemitism, and the evolution of political identities in other contexts.

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