
Abstracts

Lisa Gmeiner, Bevölkerungspolitik im Nationalsozialismus: der Verein „Lebensborn“

This text analyses the role of “Lebensborn e. V.,” a Third Reich institution founded by Heinrich Himmler in 1935 to serve National Socialist population policy. Its aim was to promote “racially valuable” offspring. The essay analyses the effects of “Lebensborn e. V.” on the individuals associated with it in three main categories: Vergemeinschaftung, Kinderraub and “Ausmerze”. By analysing sources from the Arolsen Archives and the archives of the district of Upper Bavaria, the practice of Lebensborn and the reactions of the people involved are illuminated. From a micro-historical perspective, the text reflects on the leeway of the staff and the population. Overall, it shows how Lebensborn tried to shape the National Socialist “Volksgemeinschaft” and how it influenced the lives of those concerned.

Engelbert Tacke, Die Barmer Ersatzkasse und der Nationalsozialismus. Öffentliche Äußerungen vor und nach 1945. Erste Archivbefunde

Barmer Ersatzkasse is one of the largest companies in Germany’s statutory health insurance. Yet, apart from their own commemorative brochures published for anniversaries, little is still known about its history. An initial exploration of the available sources shows the extent to which Barmer was involved in the National Socialist politics of forced sterilisation and in the persecution of “enemies of the state“, Jews and members who disagreed. While Barmer supported forced sterilisation in the early phase of National Socialist rule in terms of propaganda, it played an active role with regard to Jewish doctors and members: It was more consistent than other health insurance funds

when it came to exclusion and harassment. The regime could rely on a National Socialist management and a corresponding company organisation. The proximity to National Socialism was disguised in commemorative publications in the post-war period until 1984. Since then, the fund has remained silent about its National Socialist past.

Christiane Mende, Den Betrieb übernehmen. Belegschaftsinitiativen in der Mundglasbranche nach „1968“

Workers' takeovers and workers' self-management of companies have usually taken place in times of crisis, as in many Western European countries in the 1970s. West Germany saw fewer takeovers than Italy, France or Spain. In this article, the workers' initiatives in the German glassblowing industry are analysed not only as a crisis phenomenon, but also as an offshoot of the grass roots democratic awakening in the world of work around 1968. Common assumptions about the passivity of workers saturated with prosperity or structurally determined from the outside are being challenged. Five case studies from the glassblowing industry are used to analyse the reasons why workers' takeovers were so rare and so seldom successful in the West German context. Finally, the implications of these historical experiences are discussed for current disputes, for the intensifying struggles around distribution and about workers' takeovers' potential as an emancipatory means of industrial action.

John Holloway, Freiheit, eine Reflexion

The author argues that the terror of the economy, which sees the progress of capitalist development as inevitable, creates one kind of totality. Orthodox Marxism attempted to abolish this totality – the negation of freedom – by replacing it with another totality. The approaches of autonomous Marxism, on the other hand, sought to negate the totality itself, i.e. to combine liberation from the totality with the construction of a different society. This text shows that freedom can

only really exist in the de-totalisation and the creation of a world in which there is room for many worlds.

Urs Lindner, Dringlicher denn je: Was ist Antisemitismus?

The article reviews the volume “Was ist Antisemitismus? Begriffe und Definitionen von Judenfeindschaft” edited by Peter Ullrich, Sina Arnold, Anna Danilina, Klaus Holz, Uffa Jensen, Ingolf Seidel and Jan Weyand (Göttingen 2024). The book is lauded for its innovativeness and comprehensiveness: This is the first German volume on the epistemology and politics of defining antisemitism. It covers basic concepts, topics and approaches in the conceptualisation of anti-Jewish enmity followed by an in-depth theorisation by one of the editors. Although the volume by and large has a clear inclination towards the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism, it also highlights the blind spots of this definition. Its sole weakness is an entry on “postcolonial antisemitism”, where typically German prejudices about postcolonialism are reproduced.

Gerhard Hanloser, Ideologische Leinwand? Die Präsentation jüdischer Erfahrung mit dem Nationalsozialismus im DEFA-Spielfilm

This review essay on the presentation of Jewishness, antisemitism and the Holocaust in DEFA films examines the results of a monograph by Lisa Schoß. By discussing a selection of well-known and rather unknown GDR films on the subject, the author concludes that antisemitism, the persecution of Jews in the Third Reich and Jewish ways of life and existence were portrayed and honoured in a remarkable way in various DEFA films. Some negative portrayals and interpretations as well as Schoß’ storytelling are criticised.

Kolja Lindner, Rassismus und Hegemonie. Die lange Normalisierung der extremen Rechten in Frankreich

France's political landscape is characterised by a constant electoral rise of the far right. This shift has often been attributed to increased unemployment. In his much-discussed book "Des électeurs ordinaires", sociologist Félicien Faury dives into the social representations of right-wing voters and observes that things are much more complicated: race is the modality in which a comprehensive crisis of capitalist society is lived. Hence the importance of antiracism in struggles against the far right, a conclusion that also speaks to the current German situation.