

History 866
Seminar in European Social History: National Identity and
Nationalism
R. Koshar
Semester I, 1994-95
Tuesday, 3-5

This is a graduate research seminar on some of the most significant social and cultural attributes of national identity in modern European history. Contemporary history throughout the world has demonstrated that scholarly and government predictions of the decline of nationalism and national thinking were shortsighted. In the last two decades wars in Indochina between Communist nations, national and religious fundamentalism in the Middle East and North Africa, tribal and national warfare in Sub-Saharan Africa, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc, and the revival of national and racist thinking generally in the Euro-American world--all have revealed either the persistent or newly acquired salience of the nation as a fundamental aspect of contemporary political identity. Indeed, contemporary European history has raised the question of whether current nationalisms are renewals of or departures from earlier periods of nationalist activity.

This course does not attempt to fix a narrative of European national identities, but rather discusses several key components of national identity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It ranges from general theoretical and historical concerns to more specific issues of how Germany, a particularly contested and therefore revealing example of nation-thinking, has spoken the national "we." One of our immediate goals will be to gain a better understanding of key words such as nation, national identity, nationalism, society, state, and culture. Beyond this, we consider three main questions: What have been some of the most significant social and cultural fundaments of nationalism and national identity? What has been the relationship between images of the past and national identities, or more specifically between the uses of "tradition" and national thinking? How has the Holocaust, the most barbaric act of modern national histories, worked in German views of past and future?

The main goal of the course will be to have students write a 20-25 page research paper on a subject closely related to the general themes of the course. The first nine weeks of the course will be devoted to discussions of required and recommended readings that can serve as a conceptual and historical basis of student research. Each week a group of several students will be responsible for circulating discussion questions pertaining to

both required and recommended readings. This group will also serve as discussion leaders for each seminar. All students should be prepared to discuss the required readings as well as significant parts of the recommended readings. In addition, in the week following the end of each two-week section of readings, each student should submit a short, critical essay (about three pages) responding to class discussions--a total of four short (but pithy!) essays.

The last six weeks of the course are devoted to student presentations of their research in progress. Students should be prepared to make a 15-20 minute oral presentation outlining the research problem, the relevant literature and sources, methodology, and anticipated arguments and findings. Seminar participants will have the opportunity to discuss each presentation in class. In the past these discussions have gone somewhat longer than expected, and thus any one of the last six seminars may exceed the two-hour limit. Research papers are due December 20.

*indicates required readings

1. Introduction (Sept. 6)

2. Nation, Nationalism, and Society (Sept. 13, 20)

John Breuilly, Nationalism and the State (St. Martin's, 1982), 1-89.

Karl Deutsch, Nationalism and Social Communication (MIT, 1953)

*Geoff Eley, "Nationalism and Social History," Social History 6, 1 (January 1981): 83-107.

*Ernest Gellner, Nations and Nationalism (Cornell, 1983)

Michael Hughes, Nationalism and Society: Germany 1800-1945 (Edward Arnold, 1988), 130-163.

Miroslav Hroch, Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups Among the Smaller European Nations (Cambridge, 1985), 3-30, 125-191.

James Sheehan, German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago, 1978), 79-119.

Susan Cotts Watkins, From Provinces into Nations: Demographic Integration in Western Europe, 1870-1960 (Princeton, 1991)

3. The Politics and Culture of Nationhood (Sept. 27, Oct. 4)

Celia Applegate, A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat (California, 1990), ix-xi, 1-107.

*Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism (Verso, 1983, 1991)

Linda Colley, Britons. Forging the Nation 1707-1837 (Yale, 1992), 11-100, 237-319.

Harold James, A German Identity 1770-1990 (Routledge, 1989), 1-87.

Elie Kedourie, Nationalism (Blackwell, 1960)

George Mosse, The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars Through the Third Reich (NAL, 1975)

Anthony D. Smith, The Ethnic Origins of Nations (Oxford, 1986)

Eugen Weber, Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France 1870-1914 (Stanford, 1976), 66-114, 485-496.

4. Nation and "Tradition" (Oct. 11, 18)

*David Cannadine, "The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the 'Invention of Tradition', 1820-1977," The Invention of Tradition, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge, 1983), 101-164.

*Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," and "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914," Invention of Tradition, eds. Hobsbawm and Ranger (see above), 1-14, 263-307.

Rudy Koshar, "Building Pasts: Historic Preservation and Identity in Twentieth-Century Germany," Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity, ed. John Gillis (Princeton, 1994): 215-238.

David Lowenthal, The Past is a Foreign Country (Cambridge, 1985), 263-412.

George Mosse, Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars (Oxford, 1990), 34-50, 70-156, 201-225.

Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," Representations 26 (Spring 1989): 7-25.

Daniel Sherman, "Art, Commerce, and the Production of Memory in France after World War I," Commemorations, ed. Gillis (see above), 186-211.

Bruno Tobias, Una Patria per gli Italiani (1991)

5. Nation and Memory in Contemporary Germany: Nazism and the Holocaust (Oct. 25, Nov. 1)

Peter Baldwin, Reworking the Past: Hitler, The Holocaust, and the Historians' Debate

*Elisabeth Domansky, "'Kristallnacht', the Holocaust and German Unity: The Meaning of November 9 as an Anniversary in Germany," History & Memory 4, 1 (Spring/Summer, 1992): 60-94.

Anton Kaes, From Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film (Harvard, 1989), 3-72.

Alf Lüdtke, "'Coming to Terms With the Past': Illusions of Remembering, Ways of Forgetting Nazism in West Germany," Journal of Modern History 65, 3 (September, 1993): 542-572.

*Charles S. Maier, The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity (Harvard, 1988)

James E. Young, "The Counter-Monument: Memory Against Itself in Germany Today," Critical Inquiry 18, 2 (Winter 1992): 267-296.

6. Research Presentations (Nov. 8, 15, 22, 29; Dec. 6, 13)

Research papers due December 20