



**Michael Kellogg.** *The Russian Roots of Nazism: White Russians and the Making of National Socialism, 1917-1945.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. xiv + 327 pp. \$75.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-521-84512-0.



**Reviewed by** Annemarie Sammartino (Department of History, Oberlin College)

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This book is a published version of Michael Kellogg's 2002 dissertation and a provocative attempt to rewrite the intellectual origins of the National Socialist movement. Kellogg draws attention to intellectual and practical links between the early Nazi movement and focuses especially on a group of hard-line Russian émigrés in Munich in the early 1920s. In 1998, Johannes Bauer published a book on this same population; yet, while Bauer focused on the émigrés themselves, Kellogg is more interested in their collaboration with the German far Right in the city.[1] Kellogg begins by examining Russo-German right-wing contacts in the Baltics and Ukraine, but the bulk of his study concentrates on Aufbau, a group dedicated to the "national interests of Germany and the Russian area of reconstruction" and consisting of a wealthy membership of White émigrés—mostly Russians, Ukrainians and Baltic Germans (p. 123). Aufbau, Kellogg argues, exercised a crucial intellectual influence on the young Adolf Hitler and was the source of two of the ideological concepts most commonly associated with Nazism: the idea of Jewish Bolshevism and an apocalyptic world view. Kellogg deserves praise for taking anti-Bolshevism seriously, and for looking at the Russian émigrés not merely as a historical footnote, but rather as political actors in their own right. His choice of Aufbau as an organization quixotically dedicated to a Russian-German anti-Bolshevik alliance allows him a

good vantage point from which to witness both the crisis of conservatism after the success of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and the Socialist Revolution in Germany, and the unlikely (and unstable) coalitions and fantasies that this crisis inspired. However, Kellogg's lack of contextualization within the relevant historiographies, his shaky command of the history of the period and his overstated and unsubstantiated claims make this book much less useful than his promising choice of topic suggests.

Kellogg's discussion of the development of German nationalism during World War I early on reveals the weaknesses of his approach throughout. Kellogg places inordinate weight on a mention by Heinrich Class (the leader of the Pan-German League) to Ludendorff that he should replace Kaiser Wilhelm II in a coup, and argues that Ludendorff's reluctance to do so demonstrates the failures of the German Right during the war (p. 30). The fact that Ludendorff already controlled either indirectly or directly many of the reins of government is unmentioned. Kellogg also does not have anything else to say about World War I, although the story of the rise of the German Fatherland Party, the coordinated propaganda efforts by conservatives inside and outside the government, the fracturing of the *Burgfrieden* and the German military occupation regime of *Ober Ost* in the Baltics all have much to bear on the story that Kellogg is try-

ing to tell. For example, in spring 1918, a wide variety of Germans celebrated Germany's victory in the East—even the socialist newspaper *Vorwärts* printed paeans to Germany's military victory, although the socialists notably refrained from the Right's annexationist aims. This enthusiasm and the bitter reversal of the defeat several months later surely played a role in the conflicted approach to eastern Europe displayed by Germans across the political spectrum. Furthermore, although Kellogg sees Nazi-era plans for the remaking of eastern Europe as a direct result of White émigré influence, these plans also can claim to have inherited much from long-standing ideas of a German *Drang nach Osten*, *Ober Ost* and World War I era "Russian experts," none of which appear in Kellogg's text.[2] At the same time, Kellogg states that there was an "official German alliance with the Bolshevik regime" after Brest-Litovsk; however, considering the highly punitive terms of that treaty, it is hardly surprising that no such alliance actually existed (p. 56).

Kellogg's neglect of the secondary literature and his contextual omissions often lead him to overstate his claims. For example, Kellogg argues that the "the fact that early Nazis praised the spirit of the Baltikumer and that both the Freikorps and the White Russians were anti-Semitic" is evidence of Nazi connections with and sympathies for the struggles of the White Russians (p. 176). However, the "spirit of the Baltikumer" that so impressed the early Nazis was not necessarily the highly problematic collaboration between the German Freikorps and the White Russians, but rather their sense of adventure and risk-taking, as well as the attempts to claim German territory in the Baltics. Kellogg might have been aware of this had he reviewed any of the substantial literature on the Freikorps. Moreover, antisemitism was hardly a trait shared solely by the White émigrés and the Freikorps. Kellogg also makes the startling claim that "no White émigré-backed invasion of the Soviet Union materialized in the early 1920s, largely because of the jealous rivalries among White émigrés" (p. 137). The White émigré community was indeed riven by political divisions and jealousies; however, there were plenty of reasons why the West did not risk a military intervention in Soviet Russia, not least the failure of anti-Bolshevik military actions in 1919 and 1920. Kellogg's contention that Hitler's "telling" name for his plan for the remaking of eastern Europe ("Aufbau Ost") was intended as an homage to their early collaboration with Aufbau is not based on any evidence, aside from the fact that the name "Aufbau" is repeated (p. 260).[3] Errors of this sort mar this book throughout.

Kellogg's lack of contextualization is evident not only in the details of his argument, but also in the framing of the book as a whole. For example, Kellogg claims that the German Right required contact with White Russians in order to develop an apocalyptic ideology (pp. 1, 238 and passim). However, as Roger Chickering has demonstrated, an apocalyptic worldview was crucial to the nineteenth-century Pan-Germans.[4] Kellogg also fails to consider Michael Geyer's argument that plans for a bloody insurrection to avoid the humiliation of a negotiated peace at the end of World War I inspired apocalyptic rhetoric that cast a long shadow on both Weimar and Nazi Germany, particularly for Germans on the Right.[5]

Kellogg's case for émigré influence on the fledgling NSDAP rests on the notion that a coherent "White" ideology emerged from the turbulence of the Russian Revolution. At the same time, Kellogg is well aware of the complexities of both émigré politics and nationality politics in Czarist Russia. The very political divisions and jealousies that Kellogg recounts speak to the inability of these groups to agree with one another; however, he elides these complexities under the heading of "White" émigrés. This decision is particularly a problem considering that Kellogg's own evidence points to the disproportionate role of Baltic Germans such as Alfred Rosenberg and Max von Scheubner-Richter as the "White" émigrés with the most important connections to Hitler and the nascent Nazi Party. The role of Baltic Germans in the German Right long predates the Bolshevik Revolution. Their particular situation as "Russian experts" and sometimes collaborators with the Pan-German Right in the years before World War I is not discussed in this book.[6]

Kellogg's most sensational claim—and also his most problematic—is his argument that the very fear of Bolshevism and the idea of a connection between Judaism and Bolshevism (which lay at the heart of Nazi ideology) were legacies of the close collaboration between White Russians and early National Socialists. First of all, considering the wave of revolutionary energy that subsumed the European continent in the years 1917-19, the German Right hardly needed the Russian émigrés to inform them of the dangers of Bolshevism. In Germany itself, the SPD was by no means foreign to expressions of hysterical anti-Bolshevism, despite the fact that they were hardly friends of the Russian émigrés. Indeed, one did not have to live in Germany or have an intimate contact with the émigrés to fear Bolshevism—consider the American Palmer Raids of 1919. Furthermore, Kellogg's supposition that the equation of "Bolshevik" with "Jewish" is a

consequence of the Russian émigrés' combination of antisemitism and anti-Bolshevism ignores a long history of rhetorical connections between left-wing activism and Judaism. Even Bismarck stated in one of his first public speeches in 1847 that the Jews were "prone to political subversiveness"[7]; and stereotypes of "Jewish Bolsheviks" permeated not merely the discourse of the Nazis and Aufbau but also found their way into countless government documents of the post-World War I period.[8] Germany, moreover, had enough of its own Jewish communists, including Eugen Leviné and Rosa Luxemburg, to provide fodder for the paranoid fantasies of German antisemites without requiring the assistance of the Russians. That the Russian Revolution could be used as evidence for the perfidy of Jews is indisputable and unsurprising, but it is also not proof that Russian émigrés were the ideological forefathers of the Nazis.

Unfortunately, in writing this book Kellogg has missed a chance to tell a much more interesting story. The end of World War I and the revolutions across the European continent bore witness to a reshaping of the political and ideological map of Europe. Kellogg's history of Aufbau is the story of a fantasy of anti-Bolshevik international collaboration in the wake of this reconfiguration. The seemingly ridiculous claim by communists of an international "counter-revolution" with its headquarters in Munich gains a certain amount of plausibility when one reads this book. Furthermore, one might fruitfully reopen the question of what effect World War I and the Russian (and German) revolution had on German conservatism. There was clearly a radicalization of the Right after World War I, but, as Kellogg notes, it is insufficient to say that this development was merely a result of the defeat or other factors internal to Germany. Rather, the Right's radicalization needs to be understood in the context of European-wide political and ideological shifts. One does not need unsubstantiated claims about the influence of Russian émigrés on National Social-

ism to recognize that there is a story worth telling here.

#### Notes

[1]. Johannes Baur, *Die russische Kolonie in München 1900-1945. Deutsch-russische Beziehungen im 20. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1998).

[2]. On "Ober Ost," see Vejas Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity, and German Occupation in World War I* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); on the "Russian Experts" see Troy Paddock, "Historiker als Politiker," in *Russen und Russland aus deutscher Sicht. 19./20. Jahrhundert: Von der Bismarckzeit bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, ed. Mechthild Keller (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2000), pp. 298-348.

[3]. Kellogg's citation on this point refers to a book that merely discusses the establishment of "Aufbau Ost," but makes no mention of the early 1920s Aufbau. If Kellogg has other reasons to suspect that "Aufbau Ost" was indeed named for Aufbau, he does not mention them.

[4]. Roger Chickering, *We Men Who Feel Most German: A Cultural Study of the Pan-German League, 1886-1914* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1984), pp. 81-86.

[5]. Michael Geyer, "Insurrectionary Warfare: The German Debate about a *Leve en Masse* in October 1918," *Journal of Modern History* 73 (2001): pp. 459-527.

[6]. Robert C. Williams, *Culture in Exile: Russian Émigrés in Germany, 1881-1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), pp. 32, 39.

[7]. Jack Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers: East European Jews in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 24.

[8]. Trude Maurer, *Ostjuden in Deutschland 1918-1933* (Hamburg: Christians, 1986), pp. 110, 128-145.

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