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Forschungsstelle für Zeitgeschichte in Hamburg. *Hamburg im "Dritten Reich".* Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2005. 792 S. EUR 29.90 (cloth), ISBN 978-3-89244-903-4.

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Vaterstadt Hamburg?

In the early 1930s, Party officials embarked on a widespread campaign to convert Hamburg into a majestic, modern and welcoming entryway to the Third Reich that would greet visitors arriving by ship. In fact, the NSDAP envisioned the great northern city on the harbor as the gateway not only to Germany, but to the world as well. The propagandistic and meticulously well-promoted dream never materialized. The National Socialist party did not ultimately fulfill its vision of turning Hamburg into one of its planned FÃ¼hrer-cities. This comprehensive, richly detailed book contains a series of well-researched, well-presented essays that offer insight from a number of disciplinary perspectives into the factors, conditions and party tactics that caused nearly an entire city to offer its unquestioned support to the Nazi party. Resistance operations were simply absorbed into the party-dominated atmosphere; the essays contained in this invaluable resource indicate that nothing short of the Allied bombings in 1943 could break apart the sense of cohesiveness and dedication that the party fostered in the city and that the people of Hamburg consistently defended. For anyone who believes they already know a lot about the history of Hamburg in the Third Reich, this immense volume will prove that much more remains to be learned and researched.

The nineteen essays contained in the volume detail the time before Germany's defeat, when Hamburg supported the rise of the Third Reich more than any other German city. The essays explain from different perspectives how Hamburg illustrated in miniature the national trends and movements that bolstered the NSDAP's popularity. Each chapter is well researched and thorough, despite the variety of subjects addressed. Whether speaking about the university system, the public service sector or the church, the authors depict Hamburg as a densely populated region in which overarching nationalistic tendencies were able to germinate and intensify rapidly (p. 14). With the support of detailed statistics and the supplemental inclusion of anecdotal information, the authors demonstrate how Hamburg successfully promoted the Third Reich and willingly embraced the ideals the party injected into virtually every aspect of civic and private life.

Although volumes about the history of the Third Reich and the history of Hamburg could fill several rooms of

bookshelves, this collection of essays contributes to the current inventory by concentrating on one German city from an historical or socio-historical, perspective (p. 9). As the volume's introduction and its subsequent essays confirm, the Party's groundwork had already been laid in the "nationalistischer, vÃ¶lkischer, and antisemitischer Gruppierungen" that had characterized Hamburg prior to 1933 (p. 15). The overarching question that the book as a whole seeks to answer concerns the motivation for such widespread complicity in a liberal and relatively enlightened city (p. 16). Despite these apparent contradictions, which theoretically should have presented the party with insurmountable organizational difficulties, the essays all corroborate, though from different perspectives and varied disciplines, that Hamburg's large population, which was confined to a relatively small area, allowed nationalistic tendencies to become more rapidly exaggerated than in perhaps more rural areas (p. 17).

Each of the diverse essays, which represent a variety of research fields ranging from military history to *Alltagsgeschichte* and historical accounts of labor and education, essentially follows the same basic structure. First, individual authors describe the Hamburg population's proven willingness to espouse various party programs fervently. Second, the authors view the heightening degree of popular support for the party against the seemingly paradoxical context of the party's waning power. Finally, each chapter discusses the ostensibly instant dissolution of the nationalistic ideals and party support after the repeated Allied bombings of Hamburg in 1943. The volume seeks to enhance the current selection of historical studies, which often offer an "official" perspective, by concentrating instead on the paradoxical behavior of the general and ordinary population.

Admittedly, in some of the essays, it is not immediately evident what differentiates Hamburg's activity from nationwide tendencies, or what made Hamburg distinctive from any other German city at the same time. In the majority of the essays, however, the authors explain why they view Hamburg as different from other cities of the same size and political make-up. Perhaps the most Hamburg-specific chapter is Uwe Lohalm's "Modell Hamburg: From Stadtstaat zum Reichsgau," which claims at the outset that no other city in the German Reich experienced comparable political and organizational changes. Its author's claims are supported by the comprehensive essay, "Jenseits der Politik? Aspekte des Alltags," in which Axel Schildt highlights a list of Hamburg-specific programs whose great successes by all logical calculations should have quickly turned the *Hansestadt* into the envisioned world city. A prominent example of one such program is the "Kraft durch Freude" cruises, designed to promote the harbor city as peaceful, pleasant, and one that effectively synthesized German tradition and big-city modernity (p. 286). These two chapters also emphasize Hamburg's later years when the NSDAP persisted with its promises for the premiere German city even after the mass bombings of Project Gomorrah.

The book's lead article, "Der Aufstieg der NSDAP," illustrates very clearly a Hamburg ripe for radicalism. It further details the party's successful strategy of starting small with familiar neighborhood groups, and then expanding from there after gaining these smaller pockets of support. The author, Ursula BÃ¼ttner, claims that a widespread tendency to underestimate the party combined with significant support from nearly all levels of society, including a special appeal to young voters, resulted in the unusual victory for the NSDAP. BÃ¼ttner explains that the party successfully convinced large groups of people to view their rise to power as a completely normal phenomenon. In other words, the people of Hamburg voted favorably for a party that gradually, if not entirely unexpectedly, transformed itself into one marked by unchecked aggressiveness. Another key text for those interested in researching Hamburg's role in the NSDAP's rapid rise to power is Frank Bajohr's "Die Zustimmungsdiktatur." Here Bajohr introduces the major player Karl Kaufmann, whose chief tactic involved building up principal areas and cities like Hamburg (p.78). His methods subsequently produced a forcefully political electorate not before seen in the history of Hamburg. Bajohr articulates the main tactic for success: "Ohne den geballten Einsatz von Terror gegen Andersdenkende, fuer den Kaufmann politisch verantwortlich zeichnete, wÃ¤re freilich die MachtÃ¼bernahme der Nationalsozialisten 1933 in Hamburg nicht mÃ¶glich gewesen" (p. 71). Examining Kaufmann's methods and learning about his successes makes it relatively easy to see how Hamburg became the Reich's model for conformity and *Volksgemeinschaft*.

Besides the perhaps predictable areas of government, city planning and building, the book also offers insight into areas such as public service that might otherwise get much less attention in a study of the "Rise of the Third Reich" in a major German city. Not surprisingly, although perhaps obscurely, political cleansing and incentive systems took place in public service just as it had in higher ranks of government (p. 156). The public service sector, therefore, became a particularly powerful personal instrument of the party, stacked with over 80 percent party

members (p. 164). True to NSDAP form, even in the face of the destruction, Kaufmann still staunchly claimed the full functionality of all offices (p. 174). Readers will be interested to learn that despite the city's ultimate demise in the final years of World War II, Hamburg's public services could still claim that they had achieved a nearly perfect politically formed system. Hamburg officials implemented a nearly uninterrupted process of removing opponents and Jews from key positions; public services became like political offices with plenty of special privileges for party members. Many of the chapters emphasize that the process of gaining NSDAP support happened with virtually no resistance from inside Hamburg or otherwise (p. 187).

Readers may also be fascinated to learn about other intriguing aspects of Hamburg history, namely university and church life. Institutions of higher education and their administration represent another area where resistance to the regime was noticeably lacking. Many universities and university officials found themselves convinced by Party doctrine. With a kind of *Selbstgleichschaltung*, universities offered little resistance when colleagues were removed from the faculty and the traditionally humanistic ideals of the university rapidly transformed into political ideals (p. 339). The author reports that this process went much more smoothly than in many other cities (p. 342). Similarly, Hamburg's churches registered a noticeable lack of protest as well. In a relatively short period, the church experienced the loss of its democratic nature, with all decisions now being made by the newly created *Landesbischof* (p. 358). It is not surprising how rapidly these changes occurred in the church when one realizes that one of these bishops, Franz TÃ¼gel, openly supported the deportation of Jews (p. 368).

As mentioned above, the book not only concentrates on the party's early and steady successes, but also conveys Hamburg's story after the caesura "Operation Gomorrah" caused in July and August 1943. A telling photograph introduces the book's last section of chapters about the city's status as a repeated target for Allied bombing. The photograph shows one of the tracks leading into Hamburg's main train station, which we can imagine as one of the so-called gateways to the intended glorious city before the summer of 1943. In the photograph, railway cars, railroad ties and the surrounding building lay in ruins below a disproportionately large clock. This result certainly marked the breaking point of the heavily populated city; its dense population and housing structures made it a strategically important target for enemy fire (p. 617). The fact that 80 percent of the victims of Hamburg's bombing died reinforces in grim terms the reality that its residents now had little energy to support rumors of uprising against the party with concrete actions (p. 623).

Photographs of the rubble from Hamburg's most beautiful buildings as well as thorough texts describing the destruction attest to the changes that Hamburg residents underwent: once eager inhabitants of an imagined leading world metropolis, they now became the victims of a regime that had gravely disappointed them (p. 684). Just as nationalistic tendencies and party support were able to grow and intensify at a rapid rate in the big city, so did discontent in light of the NSDAP's failed strategy and shortcomings. Allied fire along with the party's eventual loss of power changed Hamburg from a world city bathed in optimism to a hopelessly weakened and deadened state (p. 633). All of the book's chapters leave us with the same impression about this proud metropolis. If the bombings caused the people of Hamburg to understand finally the consequences of their vigorous party support, viewing the rubble of the once splendid city only magnified their disenchantment.

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