



Nathalie Damesme. *Öffentliche Schulverwaltung in der Stadt Köln von 1794-1814.* Cologne: Böhlau, 2003. xxi + 243 pp. EUR 34.90 (cloth), ISBN 978-3-412-12602-5.



Delphine Prade. *Das Reismann-Gymnasium im Dritten Reich: Nationalsozialistische Erziehungspolitik an einer Paderborner Oberschule.* Paderborner Beiträge zur Geschichte. Cologne: SH-Verlag, 2005. 214 pp. EUR 19.80 (paper), ISBN 978-3-89498-155-6.

Christoph Sturm. *Das Elementar- und Volksschulwesen der Stadt Münster 1815-1908: Eine Fallstudie zu Modernisierung und Beharrung im niederen Schulwesen Preußens.* Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2003. 330 S. EUR 49.00 (gebunden), ISBN 978-3-402-06645-4.



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German Schools from Napoleon to Hitler: Three Local Studies

Local histories of German education are especially welcome because schools have differed so much, not only by region, but also according to the religion, class, and gender of the pupils. All three of these books detail local efforts to preserve traditional practices and authority when confronted with state efforts to increase central

control over the organization and content of schooling. While focusing on periods ranging from the Napoleonic era to the Third Reich, all three works examine educational continuities and ruptures in times of political change. Even when faced with drastic interventions, such as the French closure of Cologne's schools in the

1790s, Prussian Protestants' attacks on Catholic education during the *Kulturkampf*, and the Nazis' deployment of schools for the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the same teachers generally carried on, teaching many of the same subjects in the same school buildings.

Christoph Sturm's *Das Elementar- und Volksschulwesen der Stadt Mönster 1815-1908* is the most broadly cast of these books, both chronologically and conceptually. As the subtitle indicates, this revised dissertation traces almost a century of "Modernisierung und Beharrung" in Mönster's overwhelmingly Catholic and chronically under-funded elementary schools. Sturm's narrative shows that only after decades of failed reform did the Prussian state adopt measures that reduced class sizes from well over one hundred to closer to eighty. Because, for most of the nineteenth century, the schools' stakeholders were unable to agree on a formula for funding the schools adequately, Sturm is justified in his assertion that "die finanziellen Voraussetzungen" are the key to "ein angemessenes Verständnis der Schulwirklichkeit des Elementarschulwesens im 19. Jahrhundert" (p. 101). Until the 1890s, each school depended on resources provided by parents and other taxpayers within the neighborhood served by the school, leaving schools in poor parishes particularly impoverished. Given the centrality of financial struggles to the story Sturm tells, it is fitting that he concludes his study with the Prussian *Volksschulunterhaltungsgesetz*, which finally, in 1906, mandated a basic level of community funding for elementary schools and regularized use of property and business taxes to support Mönster's schools.

Closely related to the central theme of school finance was the persistent tension between church and state over control of the elementary schools. For most of the nineteenth century, Catholic clergy insisted that school districts within the city coincide with parishes, and religious instruction remained the centerpiece of the curriculum. The same law that established state supervision and local funding for elementary schools also affirmed their confessional identities. Sturm also shows how public funding and class privilege gave Mönster's Protestant minority a school that by the 1840s was already "years if not decades ahead" of the Catholic schools (p. 107). In addition to analyzing elementary education in terms of religion, Sturm also considers issues of class, describing efforts to remove both the poorest and the richest children from the regular *Volksschule*. Yet another important thread in Sturm's book traces the difficult circumstances of teachers, who for decades endured unprofessional treatment and inadequate salaries and living con-

ditions.

Placing Mönster's elementary schools within the framework of administrative developments in Prussia, Sturm illustrates the paradox of schooling that was simultaneously progressive and reactionary, traditional and bureaucratic, Christian and national. Relying on extensive collections of documents in city and state archives, he shows how slowly Mönster's elementary schools truly became part of a Prussian school system. Despite this valuable achievement, Sturm is somewhat less successful in his ambitious aspiration to approach a "histoire totale" (p. 22) or capture the "reality" of life at school. Perhaps an expanded focus on pedagogical texts, teachers' periodicals and textbooks could have enhanced his treatment of the methods and content of schooling. Nonetheless, Sturm makes an important contribution to scholarship on modernization of schooling in nineteenth-century Germany.

Nathalie Damesme's study, originally a law dissertation, focuses on the administration of Cologne's public secondary schools for boys during the Napoleonic-era French occupation. Seeking to replicate the French school system in the Rhineland, French authorities closed Cologne's three very old *Gymnasien* and replaced them, first with a single *Zentralschule*, and later with a pair of boys' secondary schools. Three successive administrative reforms, coinciding with Napoleon's growing power, brought increased central control over the organization, supervision, and curricula of these schools. Damesme concludes that the introduction of modern school administration was an important and lasting French contribution in these areas.

As in Sturm's study, school funding is a major theme in Damesme's book. The Cologne *Gymnasien* were beneficiaries of a complex but well-funded group of endowments, often with specific stipulations governing their uses. Persistent efforts by a series of local school committees to retain control over these endowments form a central thread in this book. Repeatedly, authorities in Paris acknowledged the extraordinary financial circumstances in Cologne and, making exceptions to usual policies, charged local officials with administering the endowments. The results were both more efficient management of the funds and their continued use to support Cologne's public secondary schools for boys.

The transitions from the earlier *Gymnasien* to the *Zentralschule* to the two secondary schools saw changes in curriculum but considerable continuity in the composition of the faculty. The *Zentralschule*, established after

the closure of Cologne's university as well as of its *Gymnasien*, employed some former professors and included courses in law and medicine as well as mathematics, philosophy, natural sciences, history, and ancient and modern languages and literature, with emphasis on French. A striking degree of *Lehrfreiheit* prevailed, with students choosing their own program of study and professors determining the content of their lectures. When the *Zentralschule* closed in 1804 and two new secondary schools opened, most of the new schools' faculty had prior experience teaching in the city. The academic level of the two new secondary schools differed, but both emphasized classical languages and literature, French, and mathematics. In line with Napoleon's accommodation with the Catholic Church, weekly attendance at mass also became a requirement. Both schools were small, with combined enrollment peaking at 234 in 1811. During the later years of the Napoleonic Empire, school inspectors and administrators exercised greater external supervision over the inner workings of the schools and teachers were required to join the *Universitäts-Inspektion*, the new structure established to regulate and control all French public schools.

Damesme provides a clear, detailed, well-documented account of administrative changes in the Cologne secondary schools under French occupation. Placing her story within a broader context, however, would have made it relevant to more readers. Comparison with administrative policy involving other agencies and institutions would show the reader how typical, or atypical, policies governing these schools were. Learning more about how Cologne's teachers and local administrators regarded France and the French would also have been interesting.

Delphine Prade has written about a single secondary school, the Reismann Oberschule, during the Nazi era. She developed an interest in the topic while serving as a French foreign language assistant at the Paderborn school in the late 1990s and wrote the original version while a student at the university in Montpellier. Klaus Hohmann, a history teacher at the Reismann School, revised Prade's work for publication in a series on Paderborn's history. Prade asks how curriculum, instruction, and extracurricular activities changed under National Socialism. Though cautious in drawing conclusions about the level of support for National Socialism in the school, she shows that, while a number of the teachers and pupils were apparently not enthusiastic Nazis, most quickly joined Nazi organizations, notably the Hitler Youth and the National Socialist Teachers' League (NSLB), and oth-

erwise cooperated with the new order. Relying heavily on the school's annual reports and recollections of a half dozen former pupils, Prade often finds her data "contradictory" (p. 36) or inconclusive, and in her conclusion she writes, "Es lässt sich nicht eindeutig sagen, ob Lehrerschaft und Schülerschaft wirklich vom Nationalsozialismus überzeugt waren oder nicht" (p. 126). Despite the difficulty of reconstructing the mindsets of teachers and pupils, Prade shows how National Socialism, and the war it spawned, altered their lives.

A Catholic school in a Catholic town, the Reismann School experienced a reduction in religious instruction, the closing of the school chapel, and, despite protests, the removal of images of saints from classrooms after 1933. Lessons on race and heredity entered the biology curriculum, and instruction in English expanded in the 1930s, reflecting a new emphasis on Aryan brotherhood. Exam and essay questions assigned as early as the 1933-34 school year reflect Nazi themes. Sport, with emphasis on boxing, grew in importance, displacing other subjects. Jewish enrollment declined from 5 percent in 1928 to 0 in 1937. Nonetheless, the composition of the faculty did not change, and former students had little or no recollection of politicized instruction.

Experiences at the Reismann School also show how Hitler Youth activities, political holidays, and special field trips cut into class time even before the war, which caused a teacher shortage as teachers entered military service. In addition, growing numbers of pupils left school early to enter the military or the Labor Service. Duties during air raids kept those who remained in Paderborn awake at night, and bombs finally destroyed the school building in March 1945. Consistently with other accounts of education during the war, Prade's description of the Reismann School describes extensive disruption of education. Rich detail and examples are the strength of this book, enhanced by the inclusion of eighty pages of documents and illustrations. Nonetheless, the inconsistencies in the interviews with former pupils serve as a reminder of the limits of both memory and oral history. A stronger analytical framework would have enabled Prade to explore in more depth the obvious complicity of the Reismann School with the regime that undermined and ultimately ended the school's academic mission.

All three of these studies of schools in predominantly Catholic towns in northwestern Germany add complexity and detail to scholarship about the history of German education. Although the two books about boys' sec-

ondary schools might have been more explicit about the role of class and gender in defining these institutions, all three authors successfully convey the significance of a particular place and time in their case studies. In addition, while all demonstrate the agency of local teachers, officials, and, to some extent pupils, in challenging or selectively implementing mandates from an increasingly insistent and demanding state, the state, in each instance, ultimately achieved many of its administrative and cur-

ricular goals. Obviously, these books address three very different situations. Sturm and Damesme both detail administrative and financial reforms from above that contributed to building a Prussian educational system that, while separating children by class, religion, and gender, came to be widely regarded as well-developed and modern. The Reismann School, like most in the Third Reich, was Nazified and finally destroyed.

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