

the previous stress on the relatively passive role of African slaves in shaping their societies, aside from dramatic revolts, but it does not realistically include the jockeying and conflicts amongst the indigenous Afro-American populations. The article is a helpful contribution to the study of comparative change but has an idealistic tone.

Gutman provides a comprehensive survey of the study of Afro-American family structure, which outlines the major, almost diametric historical shifts in analysing similar materials. The present research phase stresses, again, the role of the Afro-American in making choices. It is a worthy counterbalance to previous mechanical studies, but it downplays those political and economic factors which set parameters on possible alternatives of family members.

Mintz, as always, dramatically but delicately breaks new ground. His article provides a structure for future research in a critical area. Social scientists have generally avoided the question of transformations or large-scale changes. Mintz deals with the changes between the period of slavery and the rise of peasantries. The characteristics of control of land and labour clearly demarcate two distinctive periods. Although Mintz does not discuss the utility of the concept of mode of production he employs that of contradiction in the changing societies and alludes to the changing structural features in the process of transformations, and how some ideological and cultural features were manipulated by the ex-slaves in their adaptations. Mintz ends on a positive note avoiding grandiose theories and hoping for fresh empirical studies.

The closing article by the late Walter Rodney relates past slavery to contemporary problems. It, therefore, is appropriately the most political, controversial and debatable. The two central themes are the effect of slavery on economic underdevelopment and stagnation and the question of whether the slave mode of production can be theoretically employed within a capitalist context. The article is loaded with symbolic rhetoric, but the references are not empty of meaning.

The implicit message of the book is clear — the comparative study of slavery has achieved a new level. The articles articulate the multiple directions in which future work will move and the variety of complex problems to be faced; not much more could be demanded from a conference.

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THEODOR SCHIEDER and OTTO DANN, eds. — *Nationale Bewegung und soziale Organisation*, 1. Munich and Vienna: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1978. PP. xix, 571.

Comparative history has in the last two or three decades become one of the established fields in the discipline, alongside such other new ventures as cliometrics, psychohistory and interdisciplinary analysis. The underlying assumption of the comparativists is that the examination of a series of historical processes which, though culturally or chronologically distinct, represent the response of diverse social groups to common collective experiences will reveal essential similarities,

making possible broad generalizations and perhaps even valid predictions. Although on occasion a single scholar will conduct the entire investigation, it is more usual for a group of specialists to combine their expertise in a joint study of a variety of periods and environments.

The book which Theodor Schieder and Otto Dann have edited belongs in the latter category. It would appear to have been conceived under particularly favourable circumstances. Schieder is the doyen of the history of nationality and nationalism, having for many years published important studies in the field. More than that, the contributors to this work — a second volume is scheduled to appear shortly — have all studied under Schieder in the Historical Seminar of the University of Cologne, and their essays thus have the advantage of a common origin and outlook. Finally, the problems under consideration are of one kind and one period: the organization and structure of national movements among oppressed nationalities in Europe during the nineteenth century. In this volume Peter Alter examines national organizations in Ireland in the period 1801-1921; Hans Henning Hahn looks at the organizations of the Polish "great emigration" between 1831 and 1847; and Gerhard Brunn analyses the organizations of the Catalan movement in Spain from 1859 to 1923. The second volume will deal with the national movements of the South Slavs, Greeks, Italians, Scots, and Germans. The work as a whole will thus be a detailed scholarly investigation of an important historical problem based on a vast body of data.

Seeking to give the book even greater focus and direction, the editors have asked the contributors to organize their essays around a core of nine central issues in order to enhance their comparability. Each of them is supposed to present first of all a sketch of the constitutional, political, economic and social situation of the country under consideration. Then comes an account of the legal conditions and political controls over organizational activity. The third topic is the development of the national ideology and the political and social objectives of the national movement. This is followed by an analysis of the various types of national organization. Next is a description of the structure of the national movement. The sixth topic deals with the quantitative development of the national movement and of its regional subdivisions. Then comes the social structure of the national movement in its individual phases and tendencies. Next, the political practices of the national organizations. And finally, there is a summary evaluation of the national movement and of the network of organizations which it established. The work thus seeks to examine systematically one of the crucial problems of European society during the last two centuries by a careful study of several of its aspects or manifestations. It is a bold, imaginative, and ingenious experiment in comparative history.

Yet somehow it fails to come off. After we finish reading this book, we are no closer than before to a typology or morphology of national movements and their social organization. The trouble does not lie in the individual contributions. Far from it. These are sharp and perceptive essays which can be read with profit for what they have to say about their respective subjects. The problem is rather that the whole is less than the sum of the parts. Alter's article, based on a mastery of the secondary literature, is a skillful condensation of what he had to say in his book on the Irish national movement between 1880 and 1918. Hahn's contribution is a by-product of his work on the exile diplomacy of Adam Czartoryski in the period 1830-40, more literary than Alter's, less social-scientific, but readable and interesting. The best essay is by Brunn. It is twice as long as the others, and is really a monograph in its own right. Relying on archival as well as published primary materials, it makes a significant contribution to a field which has been neglected outside Spain. In short, the book as a whole is useful not for what is essential but for what is incidental to its central purpose. It is useful because those

interested in Irish or Polish or Catalan history will find in it something to satisfy their interest. On the other hand, those looking for common patterns emerging out of a juxtaposition of separate and distinct national movements will look in vain. Nothing really emerges.

Why? Why should a study which has been so carefully prepared produce such meagre results? Perhaps there was some deficiency in the planning. Perhaps the comparativists make the mistake of compiling disparate essays by distinguished scholars, hoping that common features will become apparent without a common design. That may be a miscalculation. It might be better to entrust a single author with the analysis of different areas and times, sacrificing technical expertise for methodological uniformity. In general, the arrangement of books of this sort around distinct regions or periods may also be a source of weakness. Perhaps it would be wiser to cut across geographical and chronological boundaries in dealing with problems of comparative ideology, structure, organization, or loyalty. Or is it possible that the shortcomings of such books are inherent in their underlying assumption? Is it possible that the diversity and uniqueness of historical experiences are such that they do not lend themselves to fruitful comparison? To examine side by side the national movements in the nineteenth century of Irishmen, Poles, Catalans, South Slavs, Greeks, Italians, Scots, and Germans may enhance our understanding of each of them separately. But could it be that the differences in their history are so great that no meaningful pattern becomes discernible? Is that basically the trouble with this book? I wonder.

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FRANZ IRSIGLER. — *Die wirtschaftliche Stellung der Stadt Köln im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert.* Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1979. Pp. 413.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Cologne remained the largest and economically strongest city in German-speaking Europe. This principal assertion of Franz Irsigler's fine monograph may come as little surprise to most students of medieval or urban history, though there are perhaps two reasons for the author's defence of the traditional view of Cologne's leading position. Impressive work over the past two decades has made Nuremberg the best researched of all German cities and has drawn much scholarly attention toward Cologne's major competitor for economic primacy in the period. In 1970, moreover, Wilhelm Schönfelder published a quite negative assessment of the city's economic development from 1370 to 1513. Now, Irsigler's firm command of the sources, broad comparative perspectives, and concern for making clear, significant generalizations on the basis of his very detailed research have resulted in a first-class book, one that offers the most judicious interpretation, as well as a vigorous reassertion of the importance of Cologne's role in the late medieval economy.

The focus of the study is the interpenetration of industrial production and commerce, a combination that distinguished Cologne and Nuremberg from other German towns (even Lübeck, the official leader of the Hanseatic League) and ranked them in type, though not in size, with great European cities like Florence