

Saxony in German History: Culture, Society, and Politics, 1830-1933

(Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany)

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Abstract

During the hundred years examined in this volume, ordinary Germans discovered a new and powerful attachment to the nation. But throughout this period, national loyalties competed with preexisting loyalties to the locality and the region. The resulting tension made it difficult for Germans to assign clear priorities to one kind of symbolic attachment over another.

Focusing on the east German state of Saxony, the contributors to this volume refuse easy resolution of that tension, seeking instead to illustrate how local, regional, and national cultures commingled, diverged, and influenced each other over time. By considering both the erosion and the persistence of traditional identities and regional boundaries, these essays help to restore an appreciation of regional ways of seeing, suggesting they really did matter in their own right, and for the nation as a whole.

Topics considered include the expansion of a German reading public, Jewish emancipation, the formation of socio-moral milieus, working-class leisure, the expansion of the public sphere, the rise of consumer co-operatives, gendered attempts to fashion the new liberal man, and degradation rituals in the 1920s. Presenting to English-reading audiences the fruits of cutting-edge research conducted in Saxon archives since 1989, the contributors offer innovative ways to reassess the larger sweep of German history.

This book serves as a how-to guide for the study of any region in history. Beyond its primary appeal to European historians, it will also speak to students and scholars in comparative politics and sociology.