

on Napoleon's Prussian policy were concern for Russia and, after 1808, the distraction of the Spanish Ulcer.

This is essentially a political history, in contrast to the mass of socially-, culturally-, and institutionally-focused scholarship lavished on Napoleonic Germany in recent decades. The Prussian reforms appear here not as the inevitable product of long-term forces or as a pre-meditated scheme to transfer power from the king to bureaucrats. Rather, they are shown as responses to dire circumstances that created great popular suffering. Trade liberalisation, for example, was driven less by the ideology of Adam Smith than the desire to preempt attempts to bundle Prussia into Napoleon's "France first" Continental System to the detriment of the kingdom's producers. The sense of permanent crisis of these years is well charted also in those sections dealing with internal divisions within the Prussian elite. Opposition to King Frederick William III's official policy of avoiding an open break with Napoleon after Tilsit went beyond the realm of legitimate channels with the emergence of conspiratorial networks of officials and officers who plotted away in the shadows. That things did not go further was largely due to a general acceptance that the king, whatever his faults, remained a popular and unifying symbol. Also important in challenging royal supremacy were the provincial estates, whose prospects for survival (and hence ability to raise credit) looked at times more promising than the future of the central government. All this provides a useful corrective to general accounts that see this period as a preordained triumph for bureaucratic state absolutism.

Prietzl concludes with some brief reflections on the extent to which the reforms, designed for the short term, nonetheless succeeded in placing Prussia on a more stable footing over the longer term. In the final analysis, the impression left is that they did not succeed in this. Rather, they contributed to a further politicisation of the population without providing an adequate structure to meet the resulting demands for greater participation in decision-making. These pressures would build up in the following decades and explode in 1848.

In the round, Prietzl's book is a convincing account of the early Prussian reforms, when the situation was especially desperate. Though essentially a history of Prussia, this work is also very informative about Napoleon, his wider empire, and the European state system. What comes across from this broader perspective is that whilst Prussia's existence looked at times precarious, the French *Grande Empire* was doomed for the very reason that it proved so utterly incapable of establishing a stable order based upon legality and moderation. These two qualities, both hallmarks of Frederick William III's kingship, would, in contrast, prove much more durable, even if they also stymied far-reaching reform in the years immediately after Tilsit.

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## **Revolutions at Home: The Origin of Modern Childhood and the German Middle Class**

**By Emily C. Bruce. Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2021. Pp. xii + 246. Paperback \$27.95. ISBN: 978-1623545622.**

Joanne Schneider

Rhode Island College

Historians specializing in women's and children's issues often confront the problem of sources—very few can be found, or they have been destroyed because archivists have

considered them not worthy of saving. Emily Bruce confronts this challenge and creates a fascinating window into lives of children of the German *Bildungsbürgertum* (educated middle class) as their world changed in the wake of Enlightenment-inspired reforms in education. Her study addresses a gap in the historical scholarship concerning how children absorbed these educational reforms. Countless books explore Enlightenment-era reformers and their ideas about how and what to teach children. The question arises: how did the children respond to these efforts? How did they participate in the changes that shepherded in the Modern World? Bruce describes this study as a melding of a cultural history of changing sentiments and a social history of children's lived experiences.

Bruce unpacks this topic by looking at literature addressed to children and, when possible, their reactions to it. She visited public archives and libraries across Germany for research as well as found sources from the children themselves in private archives. The book's five chapters consider children's periodical literature, fairy tales, geography textbooks, children's letters, and children's diaries. Bruce presents insights about all these genres to reinforce children's role in the development of a self-conscious *Bildungsbürgertum* in Germany.

Reading material for children in the wake of the Enlightenment included subscription periodicals. Their content aimed to teach representative class values, but in an entertaining fashion. The periodicals suggested a variety of activities directly related to the illustrations, music, and dramatic readings found in them, which were intended to facilitate character development. Children were to enjoy what they read but learn from it as well. Bruce shares two interesting observations: some pedagogues feared too much emphasis on reading because it was a solitary occupation. Moreover, many texts were developed especially for girls to train them to become selfless women.

Bruce's discussion of fairy tales highlights the Grimms' magnum opus, *Kinder und Hausmärchen* (KHM) and carries through the discussion of the moral cultivation of children. The KHM went through seventeen revisions between 1812 and 1857. Over the decades, the book's original purpose of cultural preservation morphed into one of moral instruction. The fairy tales themselves were edited for content not suitable for children. Bruce suggests these changes reflected the social reality of mid-nineteenth-century "Germany," especially in its attempt to develop an ideal of how girls and women should behave in the family.

Geographical texts and their goals fall under scrutiny as well. What roles did race, religion, nationalism, politics, and imperialism play in these books? School geography texts in the early nineteenth century contained maps and illustrations and encouraged children to play geographical board games. Gender also enters this discussion, as special geography texts were published for girls' schools, which taught about the past but eschewed military history. In her study of these books, Bruce found students' marginalia, which indicated their engagement with the wider world. The "reading child" was expected to become the imagined explorer. The two-fold aim of these books involved endorsing European hegemony in the world and cultivating the concept of a united Germany.

The last two chapters examine children's writing, using their letters and diaries. Albeit not an exhaustive sample, Bruce has discovered some compelling sources. Why did nineteenth-century German children write letters? Their efforts recounted topics such as travel, health, religion, and the weather, often connected with specific family experiences. Children learned to write letters by reading how-to manuals and epistolary novels. Bruce asserts that this experience helped them develop the values of the *Bildungsbürgertum*.

The six diaries Bruce examines reveal how children forged their identities. She maintains that diaries served two purposes: self-surveillance and self-formation. With respect to the former, children knew parents or tutors might read their diaries, so they wrote about how hard they worked on school assignments. They dissected their feelings about various personal events as well. In terms of self-formation, children's diaries contain evidence of editing, developing literary taste depending on books read, and cultivating social relationships, which might even include family conflict. They also reveal the writers' maturation toward the values of their class.

This well-written and easy-to-read study makes a sound contribution to the historical scholarship about the nineteenth-century German family and childhood as well as educational practices often tied to gender. Scholars in the field will enjoy some of its details; moreover, anyone generally interested in this topic would find it interesting as well. The chapters discussing literature aimed at children offer useful insights about juvenile periodicals, the KHM, and geography texts' content, which worked to develop appropriate social values in the German middle-class child. The most original contribution involves the children's sources, which provide access to how these youthful writers digested what their parents or tutors wanted them to learn and how they reacted to these experiences.

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## **Emanzipation und Recht. Zur Geschichte der Rechtswissenschaft und der jüdischen Gleichberechtigung**

**Edited by Till van Rahden and Michael Stolleis. Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 2021. Pp. 314. Paperback €69.00. ISBN: 978-3465045359.**

Daniel Siemens

Newcastle University

This collection of essays, edited by the historian Till van Rahden and the legal scholar Michael Stolleis (who died in 2021, shortly before publication), documents the papers as well as the commentaries of a symposium that took place at the Forschungskolleg Humanwissenschaften near Frankfurt in 2019. It starts from a well-established observation that Jewish emancipation in German-speaking Central Europe led to a significant increase in the number of Jewish students who opted for law (and medicine) in order to prepare for a career in the so-called free professions and later, from the second half of the nineteenth century, potentially also a career in the civil service. The liberal promise of equality proved attractive until the National Socialists came to power, yet – as the editors carefully note in their introduction – the social realities often did not meet the increasingly optimistic expectations. Emancipation was more easily achieved in the wording of the law than in society, where antisemitism, social marginalization, and personal rejection remained everyday experiences for Jews.

Against this general background, the contributors provide detailed analyses of which branches of jurisprudence proved particularly attractive to Jewish students and scholars, and why. The focus is on the eighty years between the revolutions of 1848–1849 and the end of the Weimar Republic, a period in which more and more German states allowed Jews to actively participate in the administration of justice. As the different essays demonstrate, Jewish students' choices often reflected the liberal, optimistic mindset of the urban bourgeoisie, yet they can be interpreted also as the result of the functional needs of industry and concern for the ever-more pressing social question. However, the extent to which the individual authors subscribe to this general thesis varies considerably. For example, Boudewijn Sirks, in his essay about Jewish legal scholars who were forced to emigrate in the 1930s refutes the view that there was a genuine “Jewish perspective” of law, or at least carefully notes that the number of cases under analysis does not warrant such sweeping generalization. Yet he does not exclude the possibility that Jewish legal scholars might have opted for Roman law because of their longing for a “higher social order” (69). Gilad Ben-Nun