



The Ideological Origins of Nazi Imperialism

By Woodruff D. Smith

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This study traces the evolution of imperialist ideology in Germany from Bismarck in the mid-19th century through Hitler and the Third Reich. Although much has been written about the virulently racist and anti-communist ideologies of the Nazi party, this is the first book to treat Nazi imperialism as a separate ideology and set it within a sturdy theoretical framework. Smith contends that Nazi imperialism represented the last, ambitious attempt to integrate two century-old ideologies--the elite, pro-industrial *Weltpolitik* and the popular-based, pro-agrarian *Lebensraum*--into a single system. In fact, Smith argues that it was largely the way in which the Nazis attempted to reconcile these contradictory ideologies that explains Germany's disastrous policies during World War II. This wide-ranging study also contributes to the debates over several other aspects of German history, including German military aims in World War II, the continuity--or discontinuity--of German policy from Bismarck to Hitler, and the relation between ideology and social-political life.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Smith has written a scholarly and intelligent study of the nature and evolution of the ideologies of imperialism in Germany during the century leading up to Nazi expansionism in World War II. He identifies two distinct types or "aggregates" of imperialist ideas in German politics: a migrationist colonialism (later Lebensraum) and an economic imperialism (later Weltpolitik), both of which evolved in the Wilhelmine years and continued to influence policy through World War I, Weimar, and into the Nazi era. These ideologies of imperialism, though logically inconsistent, were followed in various forms by the Nazis, and culminated in the catastrophe of Hitler's war. This is an important, challenging, and difficult book, recommended for academic libraries and collections with a German emphasis. James B. Street, Santa Cruz P.L., Cal.

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Review

"An excellent study--probably the most thoughtful, detailed, and erudite account of this subject that has yet been written."--*American Historical Review*

"Teachers of contemporary European history will find that Smith's book contains a great deal of fascinating material as well as many stimulating ideas. The book is based on impressive research."--*The History Teacher*

"Fascinating...Includes a most interesting analysis of the structure and functions of ideologies."--*New York Review of Books*

"A splendid synthesis of the numerous detailed studies of German chauvinism."--*Journal of Modern History*

"A significant contribution...A prodigiously researched, cogently argued, and forcefully written book that deserves wide attention."--*Journal of Interdisciplinary History*

About the Author

Woodruff D. Smith is at University of Texas, San Antonio.

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