Recent research on Germany 1900 - 1945

TEACHER CONFERENCE - TEACHING HISTORY AT A LEVEL

17 JUNE 2014

Professor Bob Moore
Dr Julia Moses
Today’s Lecture

- **The Second Reich**
  - To what extent was Germany responsible for the outbreak of the First World War?

- **The Democratic Experiment, 1919-29**

- **The Rise of the Nazis**
  - How popular and efficient was the Nazi regime in the years 1933-39?

- **Life in Wartime Germany, 1939-45**
Germany, 1900-45: A Special Path?

- Friedrich Meinecke, Fritz Fischer and Hans-Ulrich Wehler
  - A positive special path?
  - A negative special path?

- Jürgen Kocka, David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley
  - False comparisons and neglect of transnational connections
  - Complexity and multiple modernities

- Helmut Walser Smith: continuities and the ‘vanishing point’ of German history
  - How do we write German history if the start and endpoint is 1941? If it is 1871? If it is 1989?
The Second Reich

- John Röhl: the failings of Kaiser Wilhelm II

- Kevin Repp: anti-modernism, modernism, social reform, civic associations and middle-class life

- Isabel Hull: ‘Absolute Destruction’ – genocide and violence in German colonial Africa

- H. Glenn Penny: German diaspora communities around the world

- Eve Rosenhaft and Robbie Aitken: ‘Black Germany’
The Second Reich

➔ To what extent was Germany responsible for the outbreak of the First World War?

- Fritz Fischer: German war aims
- Jeffrey Verhey: the ‘spirit of 1914’?
  - Focus increasingly on war experiences:
    - e.g., Richard Bessel, Benjamin Ziemann
- Christopher M. Clark: ‘Sleepwalkers’
The Democratic Experiment, 1919-29

- Peter Fritzschke: ‘Did Weimar Fail?’
  - Benjamin Ziemann: ‘Weimar was Weimar’

- Dirk Schumann, Sven Reichardt: political violence

- Harold James, Gerald Feldman: hyperinflation and depression

- Moritz Föllmer: focus on the ‘self’, individuality and life in Berlin

- Eric D. Weitz: vibrant culture in Berlin

The Rise of the Nazis

• How popular and efficient was the Nazi regime in the years 1933-39?
  ▶ Consent vs. Coercion: Robert Gellately
  ▶ Victims, Perpetrators and Bystanders: Raul Hilberg
  ▶ The ‘Racial State’: Michael Burleigh
  ▶ The role of propaganda: David Welch
Life in Wartime Germany, 1939-45

- Antisemitism and intentional violence vs social psychology: Daniel Jonah Goldhagen and Christopher Browning
- The Bombing War: Joerg Friedrich, Frederick Taylor, Richard Overy
- Discipline and Prisons: Nikolaus Wachsmann
- Childhood: Nicholas Stargardt
- Women as Perpetrators? Wendy Lower, Elizabeth Harvey
- Bloodlands: Timothy Snyder
- Hitler’s Empire: Mark Mazower, Shelley Baranowski
- Wages of Destruction: Adam Tooze
The Special Path?

The Second Reich:
- Global and Imperial Turn: emphasis on continuities in genocide, racial categorization and violence
- Emphasis on modernity, the vibrancy of the middle classes, the richness of political and associational life
- The Outbreak of the First World War: sleepwalking, not intention

The Weimar Republic:
- Emphasis on Individuals and the ‘Self’, anxieties about the future, experiences of modernity, sexuality and the city – especially Berlin
- The role of political violence and ethnic tension in the East
- The border question and ‘Gemaness’
The Special Path?

- Nazi Germany
  - Victims, perpetrators and bystanders: complexity
  - Consent, Conformity and Opposition

- The Second World War
  - The experience from below, including during the bombing war and childhood
  - The dynamics of the war in the East
  - The Nazi economy and the war