

possible. Further, he argues that intervention expanded in scope in the twentieth century as individuals, insurers, and states began to explore ways to prevent natural dangers rather than simply protecting people from their consequences. This sparked political conflicts. Central Europeans agreed on the need for collective protections, but often disagreed on what those protections should be.

Hannig makes clear that the modern fixation on natural dangers went hand in hand with capitalism. He describes various kinds of “catastrophe commerce” (239): tourism at disaster sites, postcards of natural disasters, and films and books that used stories of natural disasters as entertainment. Floods, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions were nothing new, but they became a presence in daily life through newspapers, films, postcards, and advertising. Yet these are just side notes to Hannig’s main story: the starring role of the insurance industry in making prevention of natural dangers a leitmotif of modern life. Insurance companies expanded dramatically in the nineteenth century, especially from the 1880s on, and played a crucial role in early efforts to minimize risk on a large scale. They sponsored research, promoted the idea of protection, and lobbied for state interventions as part of their business strategy. Their efforts not only provided a model for state research and public insurance initiatives, but also resulted in state insurance mandates for the insurance sector to cash in on. Further, insurance companies made natural dangers a global issue. Insurers felt the impact, quite literally in some cases, of earthquakes in San Francisco and Ljubljana long before central European governments did, and they brought those experiences and interests back to central Europe.

Hannig’s study is the product of his habilitation and has all the detail and heft of such studies. Some arguments are not as novel as the book claims—David Blackbourn and others have described the drive of modernizing states to “conquer” nature from the eighteenth century on. At the same time, Hannig makes a compelling case that risk—and its mitigation—plays a central role in modernity. What Ulrich Beck calls the risk society did not appear until the late twentieth century, but has roots reaching back to at least the eighteenth century. Hannig tells a central European story firmly grounded in a broader European and global context and connects sometimes disparate threads—state formation, industrial capitalism, insurance, nature protection—into a single, sweeping story. As a result, this book offers insights for scholars with a variety of thematic and geographic interests.

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Beyond the Barricades: Government and State-Building in Post-Revolutionary Prussia, 1848–1858. By Anna Ross. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. Pp. v + 223. Cloth \$85.00. ISBN 978-0198833826.

This well-researched study of government initiatives in Prussia following the revolutions of 1848–1849 features two underexamined statesmen: Count Friedrich Wilhelm von Brandenburg and Baron Otto Theodor von Manteuffel. Although the book focuses on the 1850s as a watershed period in state building, it links government policies back to the Stein–Hardenberg Reforms during the Napoleonic Wars and looks forward to initiatives

under Otto von Bismarck, offering new insights into the theme of continuity in German history as well as the role of Prussian state building prior to unification.

Anna Ross's focused study of the state's response to the revolution is not a rehash of conservative reaction; rather, her work adds to several recent innovative studies that reevaluate conservative politics and policies to highlight flexibility, pragmatism, and bureaucratic reform. Instead of ideologically charged politics, Ross argues that Brandenburg and Manteuffel sought to restore the monarchy as they consolidated and expanded state power by pragmatically recasting bureaucratic structures. Unlike earlier historians who judged conservative reforms in Prussia as defensive modernization or simply unintended modernization, Ross casts these efforts as realistic reform to ensure social order and political stability for the kingdom.

Ross effectively underscores Manteuffel's pragmatic acceptance of constitutionalism as a tool to win public confidence without weakening the monarchy. Like conservatives in Frederick Wilhelm IV's court, Brandenburg and Manteuffel were not fans of a constitution, but both recognized the necessity of bringing Prussia into the constitutional era and controlling structural changes within the government. Likewise, they understood the importance of information on the nature of the Prussian state that spanned from the Rhineland to East Prussia to better manage growing social tensions, evident during the recent revolutionary upheaval. The Prussian Central Statistical Office and Meteorological Institute was crucial for collecting and disseminating data to reform structures and administrative practices.

Ross's chapter on the Prussian state's engagement with urban communities clearly presents the reliance of the government's policies and procedures on statistical information. Designed to undercut revolutionary discord in crowded cities, Manteuffel's policies sought to extend the reach and power of the state into Prussian urban life. His introduction of the Municipal Ordinance in 1850—developed by Baron von Stein in 1808—increased effective administration and energetic policing. Ross highlights the Berlin Model and the fascinating influence of Carl Ludwig Friedrich von Hinckeldey to demonstrate the strong link between statistical data and urban reforms. In this case, information about crowded neighborhoods generated new building policies and ordinances enforced by the police to prevent overcrowding and a public health crisis. Once the purview of a self-governing urban administration, housing and building oversight, the widening and cleaning of streets, the regulation and containment of brothels, the centralized jurisdiction over new advertising columns to control posters and the expansion of the city fell to police and state control during the 1850s. In these respects, the public, especially affluent Berliners, viewed police conduct favorably.

Ross emphasizes pragmatic structural changes in additional chapters on judicial and penal reforms, agricultural legislation, and commercial and communication innovations. These new policies tended to favor the professional classes, not the nobility. In addition to the standardization and professionalization of court structures, the establishment of state, appeal, district, and jury courts transformed the judicial terrain and impeded traditional judicial privileges of the nobility. Similarly, Manteuffel's redrafting of the redemption law and regulation law continued the work of the October Edict of 1807 to free Prussia's remaining peasants from manorial obligations. State control over trade advanced, as the state used the Ministry of Trade to professionalize commerce and expand the telegraph system. State investment in commercial infrastructure also contributed to state building that accelerated Prussia's economic expansion in the following decades.

Ross's chapter on the press and public opinion, however, is less about reform and more about management. Instead of relying on repressive censorship to control Prussia's varied and highly politicized media, Manteuffel sought to manage the expanding press. Part of this process required information gathering and led to the establishment of the press office that reviewed and reported on dailies from across Prussia and Europe. In addition, this office explored new avenues to influence public opinion in favor of the government. The bimonthly publication of the *Mittheilungen des statistischen Bureau's in Berlin* disseminated government data from various ministries, especially in the form of statistics to demonstrate effective governance and progressive state building. Furthermore, Ross points out that other papers often reprinted these statistics, thereby expanding the state's positive message and legitimizing the government's pragmatic policies. The importance of sharing government-friendly statistical data, she notes, is that the "numbers appeared to be a seemingly neutral source to support realistic policies" (71).

Ross's study of conservative politics offers important insights on Prussia's post-revolutionary era. Appointed to restore the monarchy and strengthen the state, Brandenburg and Manteuffel often frustrated the king and the ultraconservatives at court by rejecting their ideological agendas in favor of pragmatic solutions that would ultimately extend the power of the state across Prussian society. The two statesmen drew on reforms from the Napoleonic era, which consequently diminished noble privilege and their policies gained support from the professional classes. Manteuffel employed an effective bureaucracy armed with useful data, and expanded state regulation to ensure social stability. These pragmatic state-building policies predated Bismarck's *Realpolitik*. For this reason, Ross sees the 1850s as an overlooked and crucial watershed of state intervention and engagement in Prussian society.

Ross also explores similar pragmatic conservative policies across the German Confederation and in other European states throughout her study. Her approach provides a context for her examination of Prussia as well as suggests that the pragmatism of Brandenburg and Manteuffel embodied a shared European response to the revolutions of 1848 and political upheaval. This thorough study of the work of key statesmen in the 1850s makes important contributions to our understanding of continuity in nineteenth-century state building as it heightens our understanding of post-revolutionary conservatism in action.

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The Scholems: A Story of the German-Jewish Bourgeoisie from Emancipation to Destruction. By Jay Howard Geller. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2019. Pp. x + 329. Cloth \$29.95. ISBN 978-1501731563.

Memorable protagonists make a story, and the Scholem family members lend their impressive personalities to this engaging tale by Jay Howard Geller. Indeed, the Scholem family as portrayed here calls to mind the merchant family in Thomas Mann's epic novel, *Buddenbrooks: The Decline of a Family* (1901). The Scholems were printshop owners in