

Menno Spierling and Michael Wintle (eds), *European Identity and the Second World War*, Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011; xv + 273 pp.; £52.25 hbk.; ISBN 9780230273238.

Inspired by the omnipresent place of memories of the Second World War in contemporary debates on European identity, the authors of this edited volume focus on the meaning of that memory for feelings and ideas of Europeanness in an earlier period of time. After the cataclysmic experience of the Second World War, how could Europeans come up with convincing propositions of self-definition?

In the first part of the book, three authors analyse discussions on fundamental freedoms in various multilateral institutions during the early postwar period. They examine how increased respect for human rights was brought about by the verdicts of the judges of the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights, the meetings of the participants in the Congress of Europe and the Council of Ministers, and the work of the designers of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The authors convincingly react against attempts to present the Rome Treaties as a foundation myth of human rights concern in the European Community.

This is followed by a section on narratives of European civilization and war memory and a section on visions for an early postwar European future. These contributions show that only some commentators in the immediate postwar period moved beyond national frameworks of interpretation, and that important voices in Great Britain, Denmark and France responded to the war that Europe had experienced with attitudes of national detachment. Albert Camus understandably felt isolated when he uttered his innovative visions of an economically and socially united Europe. Visions for an early postwar European future included diverse elements, ranging from the elimination of nation-states for the sake of European federalism to pro-US feelings, partly coming from the successful Atoms for Peace programme, to ongoing imperial and colonial thinking in narratives of Europeanness.

The volume ends with a section on the role of Holocaust memory in thinking about Europe's identity. One contribution points out that Zionism and diasporic individualism have continued to alternate in postwar Jewish thought about Europe, with the former predominating in the immediate aftermath of the war but notions of a distinctive European–Jewish identity reviving by the 1980s. Another contributor discusses how writers struggled with understandings of the Holocaust either as a universal crime, underlining the importance of a shared humanity, or as an experience structured by cultural difference, underlining the importance of multicultural coexistence.

In their introductory essay, the editors argue that in the early postwar era, the causes of and the remedy for the cataclysm of war were sought in multilateral state relations rather than within European civilization itself. The combined focus on European institutions and literary thinking about European identity presented in this volume is undoubtedly inspiring for scholars and analysts working on contemporary politics of European institutional integration. However, historians may be disappointed by the traditional perspective on historiography, which fails to make

use of ideas of Central Europeanness, new Cold War Studies, or recent scholarship on the Second World War and its memory. With their argument that after the Yalta Agreement Central Europe fell under the Soviet sphere of influence, the authors tend to marginalize all of the ideas Central European writers, former politicians and others produced in the early postwar years. It is significant that only one page of the book speaks about Oscar Halecki, a Polish historian who lived in the USA after 1940. Central European thinkers such as Halecki always imagined their homelands as within Europe and could not imagine a national identity without Europe.

New Cold War Studies have found that below diplomacy and political decision making, lower-level structures facilitated interaction and connections between various actors. A contribution on the contacts of European writers across the Blocs would have been a useful addition to the section on European visions of the future, giving this section a more pan-European focus. I am also convinced that consideration of a larger group of actors — in this volume narrowed down to Western European politicians and writers — could have contributed to a broader understanding of European identity in the early postwar era. Arguing that European identity politics only shifted to its citizens when self-reflexivity became an issue in the 1970s, the volume gives the impression that what citizens did before was of no importance for feelings of Europeanness. However, this is contradicted by a number of studies that show identification with Europe among ordinary migrants from Central Europe who had settled in the West in the aftermath of the Second World War.

Finally, the section on the Holocaust and European identity feels out of place in the volume for two reasons. Whereas the other contributions focus on the late 1940s and 1950s, the last chapters mainly discuss later evolutions of Holocaust remembrance. One could have compared the role of resistance movements in thinking about Europe's recovery during the early postwar period, since it was they, and not the Holocaust victims or survivors, who were central to dominant narratives on war memory in the early postwar period. Focusing exclusively on the Holocaust as a European experience also excludes recent historiographical work on Soviet politics of mass murder on European territory. This could have been the starting point for an interesting discussion about the extent to which the moral importance of mass murder shaped European identity on a pan-European level in the early postwar period.

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Jennifer L. Foray, *Visions of Empire in the Nazi-Occupied Netherlands*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012; xiv + 337 pp.; £60.00 hbk; ISBN 9781107015807.

The role of the clandestine press in Nazi-occupied Europe has been extensively discussed in the voluminous national historiographies of the Second World War.