

Szöllösi-Janze, Margit (Hrsg.): *München im Nationalsozialismus. Imagepolitik der »Hauptstadt der Bewegung«*. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag 2017. ISBN: 978-3-8353-3090-0; 283 S.

**Rezensiert von:** David Clay Large, Institute of European Studies, University of California Berkeley

As the birthplace of National Socialism, personal residence of Adolf Hitler, and official headquarters of the Nazi Party, Nazi-era Munich has understandably received considerable attention from scholars of the Third Reich. Less investigated, though, have been how Munich's self-anointed roles as „Capital of the [Nazi] Movement“ and „Capital of German Art,“ along with an aspirational image of exceptional worldliness, actually played out over the course of Hitler's twelve-year rule. Put in another way, what has been missing is a good close look at how the rubber of dictatorial Nazi control met the road of Munich's communal politics and socio-cultural traditions. *München im Nationalsozialismus: Imagepolitik der „Hauptstadt der Bewegung,“* edited by Margit Szöllösi-Janze, addresses this lacuna via ten separately-authored essays covering such diverse topics as municipal image-boosting through honorary titles, literary prizes, and inspirational films; bitter competition between local Nazis and Catholic groups over control of public spaces (the Marienplatz in particular); and the exploitation of high-level sporting events (i.e., the 1936 Olympic Winter Games and the annual „Braune Band“ horse-racing competition) to put Munich in the center of international attention.

As editor Szöllösi-Janze candidly admits, putting together a multi-authored volume on a common theme is always a challenge – the literary equivalent of herding cats. One of the refreshing aspects of this particular corraling effort is that the individual pieces actually fit together, yielding a coherent, closely-argued narrative. Another nice surprise is the high level of quality distributed liberally and evenly across the entire volume. Given the expansive and finely-meshed net that the editor has cast over her topic, this review will have to eschew any detailed discussion of in-

dividual contributions in favor of highlighting principal arguments and methodological strategies showcased in the book as a whole.

Following and refining a relatively new approach in Third Reich scholarship, the contributions to this volume investigate NS-Munich's image-politics not as top-down manipulation of a cowed populace by a domineering national leadership, but as a hands-on, participatory process involving local agents acting together to achieve desired results in the realm of propaganda. Yet, for Nazi functionaries operating at the communal level, the work of municipal image-making was not merely propagandistic; its purpose also was to better integrate ordinary citizens into the National Socialist project by making them part of the process, and by giving them palpable investments in the outcome. Extrapolating from the municipal stage to the broader national scene, one can better understand how the Hitler regime managed to bring people together as successfully as it did despite often competing agendas and personal rivalries at the very top of the political pyramid. Munich's special claims for itself notwithstanding, this municipality was by no means unusual in combining local idiosyncrasies with socio-political behavioral patterns typical of other major cities across the Reich.

That said, NS-Munich did labor under major challenges peculiar to its self-proclaimed status as chief keeper both of Nazism's political and cultural flames, as well as the Reich's most appealing showcase to the outside world. The sheer scope of Munich's ambition pitched the town into a dizzying, and extremely expensive, spiral of image-competition with other cities in the Reich. Munich had to keep finding new resources, new angles, to buttress its claims to supremacy. Moreover, the Bavarian capital's many-faceted ambition was rife with internal contradiction. On the one hand, the city was working to make its public space more thoroughly Nazified than that of any other German city. This goal inevitably generated clashes between local Nazis and the municipal defenders of another, much older, regional loyalty – namely Catholicism, as Beatrice Wichmann demonstrates by ana-

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lyzing the „Katholischen Gesellentag“. On the other hand, Iris Vogeltanz and Mathias Irlinger show that local boosters hoped to make their town Germany's number-one destination for international tourism (hence the largely futile efforts to attract foreign visitors to Munich during the 1936 Winter Olympics in Garmisch-Partenkirchen and the campaign to cast a pokey new airport in the suburb of Riem as „Munich's Door to the World“). Annemone Christians looks at another instance of thwarted Bavarian ambition, an expensive and technically accomplished film touting Munich's cultural glories failed to pass muster by Reich censors because it said too little about the city's political place in the Nazi Reich. In the end, Munich's efforts at worldliness conflicted both with the harsh realities of rule from Berlin (Tempelhof Airport was not about to be eclipsed by Riem) and by Bavaria's own deeply ingrained provincialism and prejudices, evidenced by the area's staunch resistance to demands from Berlin for a temporary elimination of all anti-Semitic displays and actions during the Winter Olympics. To achieve last-minute compliance with Berlin's Olympic decrees, SS-chief Heinrich Himmler had to threaten Bavarian Nazis with arrest and concentration-camp incarceration should they, in effect, too overtly display their Nazi ideals during the Games.

As expansive and fulsome as this collection is, its central arguments might have been buttressed via an additional chapter explicitly comparing Munich's image politics with those of rival „Führer-Cities“ like Berlin, Hamburg and Nuremberg. The rivalry that developed between Munich and Vienna over claims to cultural supremacy in the expanded German Reich would also fit in nicely here. Helpful, too, might have been a discussion of how the outside world, especially the democratic world, assessed Munich's efforts to put itself forward as Nazi Germany's „Volksgemeinschaft“ par excellence. And finally, to put NS-Munich's image politics in larger perspective, it is useful to recall that, as hard as local officials worked to bolster the city's political and cultural credentials during the Third Reich, once that Reich collapsed they worked just as hard, if not harder, to make the world forget that, among other claims to

Nazi fame, Munich was the only city in Germany that had a swastika in its municipal coat of arms.

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