

misunderstandings, perceived injustices, and concrete problems in a (mostly) cooperative manner. It highlights urgent questions of language and skills, which were the source of the majority of identified conflicts, accidents, and misunderstandings. In response, the companies used interpreters and language courses. The book finally addresses questions of discrimination but remains cautious, arguing that it was rather “subliminal” and “unconscious” (270), despite many examples of stigmatisation in the analysis itself. This also hints at the limits of the empirical sources: The study mostly relies on contemporary concepts and vocabulary of “foreign workers” and nationalities. Unfortunately, the book does not reflect approaches from migration history or (global) labour history. We learn little about the different groups of people themselves (e.g., geographical distribution, socio-economic background, workplace distribution, internal hierarchies).

Overall, Lena Foerster’s book gives instructive insights into migrant labour relations in the iron and steel industry of the Ruhr area, which is long overdue. Regarding the central question of sources of power and enforcement of interests, it shows that migrant workers were underrepresented and demonstrated “low confrontational behaviour” towards general strikes and trade unions (276). Conflicts and discontent moved to different arenas of negotiation but were actively and continuously used in the examples analyzed. The book thus lines up with several studies that, especially in addition and in comparison to each other, shed new light on questions of labour relations and “guest workers” in the FRG. However, Foerster’s is mainly a business-historical perspective (and published in a series on business history). Questions of labour history are relegated to the background – in contrast to what the title word “Maloche” (hard work) and the cover picture might suggest. However, this is not a sign of the book’s limited merit but rather an indication that there is still promising work to be accomplished at the nexus of business, social, and labour historical approaches.

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## **Pink Triangle Legacies: Coming Out in the Shadow of the Holocaust**

**By W. Jake Newsome. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2022. Pp. xiv + 286. Cloth \$34.95. ISBN: 978-1501765155.**

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Most people – queer or not – who politically came of age in the United States, West Germany, and other Western countries during the 1980s or 1990s can no doubt recall the pink triangle as one of the most important and ubiquitous symbols of gay rights. How a Nazi concentration camp badge worn by male homosexual prisoners became a transnational emblem of gay pride is one of the questions W. Jake Newsome tackles in this remarkable study of queer memory politics and the uses of history. Drawing on archival sources and interviews with activists from the 1970s till today as well as plays, novels, and newspaper articles, Newsome argues that the pink triangle was vital to forging “a collective queer identity” (6) starting in the early 1970s. While the Nazi past loomed large in the minds of German queer activists as a form of what Marianne Hirsch has called postmemory, *Pink Triangle Legacies* also explains how activists outside of Germany, particularly in the U.S., used Nazi

persecution as their own history, a process Newsome calls “grafted memories” (7). Though there were and are differences between the memory politics of German and U.S. activists, the book highlights the transnational exchanges that were central to both as well as the hurtful exclusions – of lesbians, transgender individuals, and people of color – that often accompanied them.

The book opens with a lucid and efficient introduction that makes the case for why the Nazi past became an important strategy for demanding civil rights for queer individuals in different countries. The first chapter then offers a succinct and gripping account of the history of persecution under the Nazis, based on archival material, autobiographies, and the growing body of excellent scholarship. After shutting down queer venues, the Nazis expanded Paragraph 175, which outlawed consensual sex between men, and used it to arrest more than 100,000 men, many of whom ended up in concentration camps. (Newsome also explains that an uncertain number of lesbians and gender-nonconforming individuals were also arrested and sentenced to concentration camps under other pretenses.) The second chapter carefully elucidates Hans-Joachim Schoeps’s famous 1963 observation that “for homosexuals, the Third Reich hasn’t ended yet” (79) by documenting the disturbing legal continuities between the Nazi regime and the Federal Republic. Unlike the German Democratic Republic, West Germany retained the 1937 version of Paragraph 175, using it to deny compensation to former concentration camp prisoners as criminals rather than victims; meanwhile, between 1949 and 1969 West German authorities also arrested over 100,000 men (56,000 of whom were convicted).

The next four chapters delve into the efforts of individuals and groups to understand this past and use it to develop a common identity and political agenda. Chapter 3 pursues the impact of the 1972 publication of Heinz Heger’s *The Men with the Pink Triangle*, the first autobiographical account of a gay concentration camp survivor. In response, West German activists agitated for the full decriminalization of consensual sex between men (beyond the 1969 revisions), demanded compensation for former inmates of concentration camps sentenced under the law, and urged gay men to come out and become visible, in part by donning the pink triangle at public protests. Chapter 4 traces the transnational collaborative efforts undertaken by American gay activists to deepen the understanding of Nazi persecution and use it to fight homophobic campaigns in the U.S. as well as the silence and inaction around AIDS. The fifth chapter focuses on the role of various fictional narratives in raising awareness of gay persecution under the Nazis, which ranged from misinformed accounts of a “Homocaust” involving the murder of 750,000 gay men and lesbians in Auschwitz to novels and Martin Sherman’s hugely successful 1979 play *Bent*. It also appropriately celebrates the achievements of grassroots historians, largely working outside the academy, to collect archival materials, mount exhibitions, and write informed histories of the Nazi persecution of gay men and lesbians. The final chapter turns to the many efforts to commemorate the Nazis’ queer victims through plaques and memorials in Germany and abroad. Such undertakings in Germany produced divisive debates as gay male scholars and activists repeatedly sought to exclude or downplay lesbian suffering. Finally, the book’s epilogue addresses the eclipse of the pink triangle by the rainbow flag during the 1990s and its occasional return in intersectional and transnational activism.

One of the highlights of this comprehensive account is the critical attention to the groundbreaking contributions of Jim Steakley, David Thorsten, Rüdiger Lautmann, Claudia Schoppmann, and other activists in the 1970s and 1980s. Newsome deftly supplements their voices with a broader and more diverse set of contemporary interlocutors to assess the messy, lived reception of the pink triangle as a queer symbol that variously both does and does not address the experiences of lesbians, bisexuals, transgender individuals, and queer people of color. At times, however, I found myself wishing for even more messiness and critical suspicion about the eagerness with which new generations of Germans and non-Germans rushed to see the Nazi persecution of homosexuals as part of “their” shared history. Such concerns extend beyond allegations of instrumentalism – a critique that Newsome addresses – to

raise thorny questions about psychic or cultural investments in vicarious suffering, claims to empathy, and a politics of innocence built around symbolic victimhood. Memory studies scholars may miss a more sustained engagement with concepts and debates in the field, including how “grafted memories” differ from “screen memories,” “prosthetic memory,” and other terms. Meanwhile, many queer studies scholars may also have concerns about the book’s triumphant narrative of queer identity formation. But these criticisms should not detract from Newsome’s book, which hoes new terrain at the intersection of queer studies, transnational history, and memory studies. Written in accessible prose free of academic jargon, it deserves to reach a large readership of scholars, activists, and thoughtful individuals of all stripes.

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## **Prussia in the Historical Culture of the German Democratic Republic: Communists and Kings**

**By Marcus Colla. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. Pp. xiv + 309. Cloth \$100.00. ISBN: 978-0192865908.**

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The long-standing fascination with memory *of* and memory *within* the former German Democratic Republic has been an uninterrupted phenomenon since the state’s dissolution a quarter of a century ago. The past few years alone have welcomed dozens of books and edited volumes on the rich literary, cultural, and historical legacies of the GDR. Joining them is Marcus Colla’s study, which traces the Prussian revitalization within the GDR. The apparent revival of a Prussian past associated with nationalism, imperialism, and even the seeds of National Socialism within the self-proclaimed antifascist state seems a curious incongruity, and yet Colla’s monograph illuminates the complex practice in the GDR of both revitalizing and suppressing Prussia’s lingering ghosts. As the first study dedicated to analyzing the Prussian afterlife in the GDR, the book centers the political and cultural contexts fueling this “renaissance.” Via a theoretical lens informed by historical culture, a multidimensional framework that articulates how people relate to and construct the past, Colla’s book examines how “history” in the GDR was constantly (re)negotiated, renewed, and defined. This focus on historical culture also sheds light on the GDR’s efforts to self-legitimize through a turn towards a shared German history.

Given its emphasis on temporal configurations of past, present, and future, it follows that Colla’s text eschews a linear chronological or even thematic structure in favor of what he describes as a “series of concentric rings” (16), rippling out from a narrower focus on specific East German policies and concluding with a discussion of the GDR’s historical culture within a broader European context. As the innermost “ring,” chapter 1 traces the reception of Prussia in the immediate postwar years in the GDR, from the general sense of Prussophobia to the eventual exploitation of Prussian history to encourage regional tourism. Here, Colla’s focus on GDR policies rewards readers with a deeper understanding of the state’s reception of and attitude toward Prussia, revealing a much more intricate set of values than prevailing notions of a straightforward, no-nonsense GDR morality tend to imply. The author then initiates a closer examination of Prussia’s