

The Vanished Kingdom:**Travels Through the History of Prussia***James Charles Roy*

Westview Books, 1999

There may, for all I know, be an entire literary genre that could be described as "traveling histories." This book is, however, this reviewer's first experience with it, and I found it delightful. James Charles Roy has travelled from place to place in what was once Prussia, often camping out in the countryside, and telling of the ghostlike bleakness there today after 55 years of socialist suffocation and cultural obliteration. His observations and interviews of old timers pass seamlessly into a recounting of the history of the particular place, a process through which he is able to tell coherently the various historical episodes in Prussian history. Midway through the book, it struck me that the transitions from present to past had hardly seemed like transitions at all, causing me to go back to look at how he had achieved the synthesis. The answer is that there are no transitions – just an easy flow into history-telling.

Roy's other books on European history have been Book-of-the-Month Club and History Book Club selections. With *The Vanished Kingdom*, he has chosen as his subject one of the more pivotal areas in Europe, which makes it an important book for most readers, who will have had only a passing awareness of Prussia's long history. It is surprising, and somewhat amusing, to learn that the Teutonic Knights began as the monkish 'Order of St. Mary's Hospital' taking care of injured Crusaders in Jerusalem. From being just a minor appendage to the Crusades, they became the dominant power in north-central Europe, conducting incessant warfare with the neighboring (and also fiercely warlike) peoples. They reached the height of their power in the fourteenth century, but collapsed shortly after their disaster in the (first) Battle of Tannenberg in 1410.

Perhaps their most significant residual was the rise of the Junker class. The Junkers were small landowners, chronically poor, who had been given land in exchange for military service over a two century period and who continued as military men to provide themselves a needed source of income. The Junkers were reminiscent of the Old Romans of Cato the Elder's day: austere, disciplined, aristocratically contemptuous of the common man. The fact that they detested

central authority meant that, contrary to the stereotype, they later weren't given to supporting Bismarck or Hitler.

The Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) was one of "indescribable butchery," but out of it arose the unification of Brandenburg and East Prussia under a Hohenzollern in 1618. It was under the Hohenzollerns that Prussia rose to the position of a major European power, particularly under the Great Elector, Frederick William, who reigned for 48 years starting in 1640. The army was central to the Hohenzollern dynasty. Frederick the Great, who assumed the throne in 1740, created a united Prussia after his victory in the Seven Years' War against Austrian, French and Russian armies.

Little more than half a century later, Prussia was again embroiled in war. Napoleon won the battles of Jena and Auerstaedt in 1806, occupying Berlin. The tide turned, however, during the rest of the nineteenth century, as Germany passed through "a period of liberation, reform, consolidation, [and] industrial growth." Prussia took the lead in the eventual consolidation of Germany's 26 states and cities into a united Germany under Bismarck. After Bismarck's defeat of Napoleon III in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, the new German empire was established in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles Palace in early 1871.

Roy continues the history on through to the present, but that history is less in need of being recounted here, since most readers will be familiar with it. Many people do not realize, however, that at the end of World War II Poland was moved westward, with much of eastern Germany becoming a part of Poland and, at the same time, eastern Poland becoming part of the Soviet Union. The result is that, as Roy tells us, "Prussia today does not exist." Its territory was divided "among Poles, Russians, [and] Lithuanians."

Nevertheless, Prussia was for centuries the very heart of the German psyche. "The idea of Prussia," one of Roy's interviewees told him, consisted of "our notion of purpose, service, steadfastness, and duty to both our race and our land. Also, to the idea of permanence." Roy grapples with the question of whether the separation of Prussia from Germany will become a major source of conflict in the future, despite the acquiescence of present-day Germans, but of course can't provide a long-term answer.

Dwight D. Murphey

The Menace of Multiculturalism:**Trojan Horse in America**

Schmidt, Alvin J.

Praeger Publishers, Westport, CT. (1997) ISBN 0-275-95598-2.

The word multiculturalism is commonly used with two opposing meanings. On the one hand, there are those who would like to strengthen what is known as Western or European culture by including the best ideas from all other cultures so that it might become a universal model for human behavior. These might be called "cultural inclusionists." On the other hand, there are those who want to destroy Western society by reducing it to chaos so that they can rebuild it according to the same naïve egalitarian dream that motivated Pol Pot of Cambodia. These insist that all existing cultures are equal in value except for European culture, which is bad.

Schmidt's book is about the second kind of multiculturalism, and that is the meaning your reviewer will adopt when using the word. Schmidt acknowledges the first kind of multiculturalism by calling it "multicultural education," of which he heartily approves.

The strength of the book lies in the fact that it can be read with interest by readers at any level of intelligence if it matched by an appropriate level of sophistication.

Schmidt is a sociologist and is perhaps not aware that most natural scientists, if they have an opinion, believe that: (1) Homosexuality has a genetic basis. (2) The fully established 15-point average 10 difference between U.S. blacks and whites is largely genetic. (3) The population/environment problem is the foremost challenge of our time, outweighing all others by far. (4) With millions dying of starvation and disease elsewhere in the world, and with our country facing an uncertain future, abortion is not a transcendent evil but must be weighed against its realistic alternatives both at home and abroad.

Chapter 1: Schmidt defines multiculturalism as follows (p. 3):

Multiculturalism is a leftist political ideology that sees all cultures, their mores and institutions, as essentially equal. No culture is considered superior or inferior to any other; it is merely different. Criticism of other cultures, especially non-Western/minority cultures,